

HRA Member comments on Portswood Broadway Phase 2

Member comments without names

1) Portswood district centre proposed traffic alterations September 2023

1. Questions of 'pedestrianisation' always meet resistance - the unknown/fear of change. The pedestrianisation of Winchester High Street in the 70s/80s was resisted by many, yet no-one could now envisage the reintroduction of traffic between King Alfred's Statue and the Butter Cross as being anything other than harmful.

2. But Winchester has a much greater draw (tourists, locals and 'wider' locals - even residents of Southampton go to Winchester) because of the quality of environment and shopping. Portswood does not have that type of draw. Better analogy is Bitterne - where some think pedestrianisation has been damaging to the economy of the local/district centre.

3. What is the problem with Portswood? Where have the issues been comprehensively identified? That should be the start of the process - and identified 'bottom up' by interested parties/the public. Options for improvement can then be formulated and the pros and cons discussed before making a decision. Rather there is a feel of **'here is the solution, now what is the problem?'** Main issues on which the proposals seem to have been based are 1) bus times lengthened by traffic and 2) pedestrian/cycle/traffic conflict. But what about the overall quality of the environment of the district centre to create an enduring attraction to visitors that transcends the vagaries of retail economics?

4. A substantial investment was made a few years ago in reforming and upgrading the pavements at very considerable expense - the sort of sums that in the hands of the average Southampton household would be lifechanging several times over. Now we are going to dig all that up again on the basis of a new theory of what would be best for Portswood. Can we afford to make a similar mistake in future. Are we that flush?

5. Thus, whatever 'solution' is agreed should be implemented temporarily first to see if the actual effects, good and bad, are as predicted. Other places do this. Santa Barbara, California, has pedestrianised streets with large planters that can be relocated and even incorporated into a permanent scheme when decided upon. An obvious harmful effect would be use of Russell Place/Abbotts Way as a rat run. A temporary scheme would allow that to be assessed in practice rather than theory.

6. But even before that, the first stage should be to explore the effectiveness of other management measures at much less cost to deal with

the issues of bus delays and traffic/pedestrian conflict. For example 20mph limit and changing the priorities on the traffic lights at each end to favour cross town traffic rather than traffic running parallel to Thomas Lewis Way. That would also help pedestrians. And bus priority at the lights could be built in. How much would that deter through traffic without excluding it completely; and speed up buses; make it easier for pedestrians to cross safely?

7. The proposals concentrate on traffic engineering with the addition of some limited landscaping features - no more than a token gesture to improving the quality of environment. The whole effect is outstandingly ugly - see the picture on website. A cacophony of kindergarten colours and markings that make no sense whatsoever. Indeed the competence of the Council/Balfour Beattie must be called into question in producing a diagram that has bright double yellow lines down a lime green cycleway where vehicles cannot go and zig-zag lines along a bus only lane, presumably to remind buses not to park and stop other buses. The mixture and placing of surface materials and markings is totally confusing as well as ugly - who has priority in the illustration below - cyclists or pedestrians? It suggests that the (far greater number of) pedestrians (elderly/mothers with toddlers) would cross the lime green cycleway at their peril for fear of being hit by the much faster moving occasional cyclist given to believe they have absolute priority. The proposed signage, road markings and pink surfacing achieve a confusing and distasteful mix of features and materials that would seriously detract from, rather than improve, the environment.

8. A coherent approach to improving the quality of the environment of the public realm of the High Street/Broadway as a whole should be led by a competent urban designer - would you put design of your house in the hands of a traffic engineer? If not, why is your district centre different? SCC should have the aspiration/ambition to ensure the environment is tastefully improved, not degraded by traffic engineers devoid of any aesthetic sensibilities. Visit Romsey for an example of careful design and tasteful use of materials in town centre improvement and traffic management.

2) Dear Secretary/Chair,

We will be spending some time looking in depth at the current proposals, but note that there is no option being given for the status quo!

Under the Freedom of Information legislation is it possible for the Highfield Residents Association to ask

- * how many responses were received from residents stating that they were against the proposals?
- * what has been the formal response from shopkeepers and local businesses?
- * If none, what consultation has there been with them?

We are perturbed that even the current road works has had an impact on the footfall in Portswood. On that basis, the traffic hub is likely to have an even greater negative impact.

- 3) I am not sure that the Portswood Corridor questionnaire should be taken seriously as last time I put in three on Bedford Place Traffic Changes and two on Portswood Corridor.
- i. It does not want my email address or my name and house address, only my postcode which covers houses 2 - 60 in Harborough Road.
 - b. So if I used two computers, a tablet and phone how many could I put in and would they all have different URLs ?
 - c. I did complain to Keogh but he never replied.
 - d. A woman explained that if " a lot " came in from one URL they would be suspicious but I said that no one could tell which one was my true opinion as I had made them all different.
 - e. It all needs looking into, and more people try the experiment.

- 4) I've just been to the SCC session in Portswood and managed to get clarification on a couple of points.

The proposals for the changes at the Lodge Road/Portswood Road junction have been approved by SCC and are **not** part of the current consultation.

At the session, SCC claimed that turning right from TLW into Portswood Road will be made easier, but there are no documents available to show how they intend to achieve that. The new road layout is specifically designed to impede access to Portswood by car from both the south and the west: "Northbound vehicle traffic guided *away from* Portswood Road" (my italics) and "Slower traffic turning left from Lodge Road on to Portswood Road" (from the 2022 consultation document).

One over-riding aim of the overall scheme is to get all north-to-south traffic on to TLW, therefore the map I have prepared can stand, including the "pinch-point" at the Lodge Road junction.

Most seriously for Highfield, I have discovered that the modelling for the ATZ was carried out assuming that the no-right-turn from Portswood Road into Highfield Lane would remain. It now seems likely that this restriction will be lifted, channelling southbound traffic through Abbots Way/Russell Place/Brookvale Road. Thus the modelling of the "light-touch" scheme is worthless.

Not good news on either front, I'm sorry to say!

I will update my appraisal once I've been to the PRG meeting, which is tomorrow evening.

5) Hi

I recently attended a forum in Portswood Road re. the proposed possible Precinct. I was very disturbed to be met by 3 very unqualified people from the Civic Centre to supposedly answer questions relating to the above. The meeting was very amateurish and loudly supported by a Socialist group brandishing red flags. I do worry that the left-wing Council will try to push this thing through if there is any apathy from Residents.

Sorry about my little rant, but I have seen Portswood and parts of Highfield become ghettos for all day drinkers, drug supply and taking, begging and more recently a large influx of foreign asylum seekers.

I know Highfield Residents Association will do all they can to get a fair reflection of its members concerns.

Kind Regards

6) Dear HRA,

Prior to the meeting this coming Tuesday 12th September, I am emailing to lodge my objection to the progression of the scheme as it stands, including the options for the Active travel zone, on the following grounds:

- The second phase consultation survey, despite what is stated in the consultation documents, is still biased in its design
- Information I have been supplied with from SCC, indicates that there has been no air quality data collected from various monitoring points along Portswood Broadway since 2018
- Arguably, the 11 recommendations resolved by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee have not been sufficiently addressed

I look forward to attending the meeting

7) Hello,

After attending the PRG meeting about the corridor plans last week we were encouraged to drop you a note to let you know our view.

We live on XX Brookvale road and have two small children. As we see it if the bus gate goes ahead, it is essential the ATZ with road blocks happens, otherwise our roads will become dangerous rat runs.

Personally I am also pro the bus gate, I think Portswood is in desperate need of investment and this is our best shot at getting some.

Do let me know if we can help out at all, Many thanks

- 8) My wife R and I are currently travelling and cannot attend meetings.

We live at XX Russell Place.

We do *NOT* support the proposed scheme which we believe will severely impact local residents.

At no point have the various options presented included a clear 'SHOULD NOT PROCEED' option - as was verbally promised by the council at a meeting in the pavilion some time ago. This is highly unsatisfactory.

If, despite its impact, the council proceeds with this dreadful scheme we *STRONGLY* support the modal filters in Russell Place and Brookvale road. Without them these roads will become a 'rat run' nightmare. This is strictly on the basis of the 'lesser of two evils'!!

- 9) I hope to attend the 'drop-in- session tomorrow evening. However, I know from my experience of the Trago one that I am unlikely to get answers other than from the team's song-sheet. This is not only my reading but also that of others who had serious questions about the scheme. As the HRA Committee will be discussing the matter I attach a somewhat amended rant which I sent out at the end of last month to some PRG folk. It may or may not contain some points and suggestions of interest to your Committee.

The Portswood Corridor Consultation Phase 2.

- a. I have serious reservations about many aspects of the second Phase of consultations about closing part of Portswood High Street to private traffic.
- b. **Geography.** Southampton city sits at the end on a peninsula. It is bounded by rivers. Roads into the city are constricted by the geography. On 26 August the Avenue had solid traffic from Burgess Road downwards (a home match, which is not uncommon). Traffic was also heavy on the other approach roads. Football, sales, school hours and liners will continue to cram the roads, and it is senseless to close one main artery.
- c. **The ethical use of Government money.** The current Member of Parliament and the adopted candidate/s should be asked the (purely hypothetical) question: "Is it ethical for a Council to spend a Government grant on a project which is deeply flawed or should this money should be returned to Government coffers?"
- d. **Finance.** The Council has stated that the costs of the scheme would be covered by the Transforming Cities grant. Will the Council give not assurances but guarantees that the grant would cover the full costs including the implementation of any ATZ and the associated works, signage, changes to traffic regulation signals, and a contingency for unforeseen costs including those of reverting to the present situation when the closure proves unworkable? Bearing in mind that, under its recently adopted financial regulations attempting to avoid a Section 114, any scheme must be fully costed and have no uncosted or unbudgeted impact on other parts of the Council's operations, will the Council guarantee to the voters that this will happen?
- e. **Democratic process.** The electorate put councillors into office to run an efficient service at a reasonable cost. This scheme is one in which the electorate is being told what to accept by a

governing body whose policies have led the city to verge towards a Section 114 situation. It is also noticeable that the ‘consultations’ taking place are mainly drop-in presentations or street corner events and not large meetings between the elected representatives and their electorate. Perhaps these would be inconvenient? The whole scheme is redolent of power without accountability.

- f. After attending the first Trago Lounge area ‘drop-in’ a number of us came away with the distinct impression that its only purpose was to reinforce the Council’s determination to press on with the closure and not to listen to reservations and suggestions. For example, when asked ‘will there still be a no-right-turn policy in force when approaching the junction from Swaythling?’ the presenter dealing with the ATZ maps appeared not to know about the restriction and just repeated that traffic would be sent to Thomas Lewis Way. Neither could the presenters clarify how disabled people would be to access the shops etc in the closed area, merely saying that alternatives to the bays would be in the detailed plans, perhaps by providing more spaces in the car park. How that helps a person using a walking frame reach the shops and Library is not clear. The plan is discriminatory.
- g. **Preconception of implementation.** Throughout the documentation for Phase 2 the implicit assumption is that the Plan will be executed and that only modifications, not an alternative strategy, will be tolerated. An example is in the Council email of 24 August announcing Phase 2, where no mention is made of the very strong opposition to Phase 1...It misleadingly reads “*The Phase 1 consultation showed support from residents and businesses, with many people saying that the proposed measures would make the area more attractive.*”
- h. **Overview Committee.** Its Overview and Scrutiny Committee made some fairly trenchant recommendations to the Council on the conduct of Phase 1. The Council might like to pay attention to its Recommendation 11: “**That the Cabinet Member recognises the strength of feeling and opposition to the proposed closure of Portswood Broadway to through traffic and goes back to the drawing board and scraps plans to close the road to through traffic and instead comes back with alternative proposals for Portswood Broadway that will make the district centre greener and more attractive.**”
- i. **Clean air.** Much is made of improving air quality. The pollution in a wide road with transient pedestrians would be reduced but the pollution levels in all other roads affected by re-routing will increase. These are mainly residential areas with residents having longer exposure to poor air quality. The ATZ proposals make a nonsense of the promise to improve air quality as they impose longer journeys with more changes of speed. A two minute run would become a 14 minute drive with four main junctions, stopping and starting along already congested roads.
- j. **Private vehicles.** Private vehicle use will remain a fact of life until robot cars and a properly integrated public transport system become a reality. The population is aging and trying to make people like me, aged 78, revert to using a bike or trying a scooter is lunatic. I have a car but have driven about 200 miles in the last four years, because I can still walk. I would love to see cars disappear but I won’t live that long. The Plan might work in 20 years’ time but it won’t now.
- k. **Day to day management and the security of pedestrians and traders.** What provision will be made for the policing (by the Police or Council wardens etc) of the public spaces? Walking around the area recently it was noticeable that the number of drinkers at the junction with Westridge Road had increased again. I have been told that a number of people are reluctant to walk past them. This is the main route for pedestrians to the car park.
- l. Questions to shop staff confirmed that there are effectively no patrols by police or Council wardens. The last remembered presence was of enforcement officers during the first lockdown. The shop staff told me that they have given up trying to get Police to attend the rapidly increasing cases of shoplifting and theft attempts, both on the Broadway and from the back lane. One said that Boots are losing large sums each week to theft. At least one place (Ashleigh’s) is operating a locked door policy when there is only one member of staff present, and appointments are required.

- m. This situation is not acceptable. The High Street needs patrolling properly NOW. Decreasing the traffic flow means reducing possible witnesses. Increasing open spaces means more 'gatherings'. The plan would exacerbate the situation. It would certainly not alleviate the concerns of current users and traders and would enable criminals to 'leg it' across the High Street with greater ease.
- n. **Alternatives.** The Overview and Scrutiny Committee said that alternative proposals should be drawn up. As a user of the Portwood Centre I can suggest that there are immediate improvements which should be a normal part of Council operations anyway. Mend the broken gutters and get rid of the regular floods in gutters which constrain pedestrians to wade on crossings and cause great gouts of water to shoot over pavements from passing traffic etc. Police the pavements and penalise the use of bikes and scooters and parking on them. Impose a 20mph speed limit on the Portwood Road and throughout the area to make it less attractive to motorists and a better environment for pedestrians. This might encourage (rather than force) people to use alternative routes with higher speed limits.
- o. One could even try considering the provision of cash incentives to would-be traders hoping to open useful shops. The large and increasing number of fast food outlets does little to help the Council's hope to provide us with Healthy Living. Mind you, nor does the probable impact of Phase 2 on air quality in residential streets.
- p. **Possible further actions.** In addition to pressing the elected representatives to meet their constituents in large meetings I believe that the time has come to reflect on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's recommendations and to ask that Committee to consider how the present consultations fit with them. The threat of a Section 114 appears to be very real (The 'i' and other media sources) and the Council should be asked to guarantee that the scheme will have no financial impact outside the Transforming Cities grant. I believe that even on the present evidence there is a *prima facie* case of maladministration and/or misuse of power which might be submitted to the Ombudsman for Local Government and Social Health. Consideration might also be given to seeking a judicial review.

10) I'm afraid I'm not going to be able to get to tomorrow's meeting. I'm ringing the bells at the Cathedral for the induction of the new bishop and the times clash almost exactly.

Please make sure that the Councillors have all seen the front page of today's Telegraph and the letter inside from Dame Sharon White, chairman of John Lewis, in which she calls for a Royal Commission to review dying town centres and rising crime rates. While the cause of the problems may be different in her case, there seems little doubt that the result of the proposed Broadway scheme, if it goes ahead, will be quite similar. We are lucky in having a post office, two chemists, a library, a greengrocer, an international shop, a bookshop and a hardware shop. All of these are at risk. I gather we may even lose one of our supermarkets.

For someone like myself in their 70s, the idea of being able to walk to the Broadway and carry their shopping home, is wishful thinking. And the idea of the Broadway as somewhere to go to relax is simply nonsense. I hope the councillors will do what they were elected to do and look after the community rather than spending money on a scheme likely to be highly detrimental to it.

We already have an epidemic of shops closing, not helped by an epidemic of shoplifting (the Coop reports a 35% increase since the beginning of this year). More imaginative solutions are needed and I am not qualified to say what these may be. They might include making the Broadway one way for cars (using Thomas Lewis Way in the other direction), using the resultant increase in road space to *increase* parking facilities

(perhaps diagonally). An *increase* in the number of shoppers using the Broadway is what is needed to keep the Broadway alive.

The council's questionnaire reset itself when I had spent a good 15' on it. And the address they ask you to write to (portswoodcorridor@southampton.gov.uk) is not recognised. Am I the only one?

Yours sincerely,

11) For me it is the ATZ filters (roadblocks) that I am **strongly** against, more so than the Bus gate. So if this can't be resolved then I am against the whole scheme as it affects too many residents of Highfield who chose to live there with freedom of movement.

So how possibly to resolve this?

Choice of ATZ might depend on where you live.

Would other options for the ATZ be genuinely considered?

With a Bus gate in place and with **no mitigation**, traffic movements increase in certain roads of the ATZ and reduce in others.

With **no mitigation within the ATZ**, the projected variation would be an increase of 37% in vehicle movements compared to the 2023 datum. In this scenario, no residents would be forced to make any material change in their vehicle travel as there are local ways around the Bus gate.

With **Light Touch mitigation within the ATZ**, the projected variation would be an increase of 9% in vehicle movements compared to the 2023 datum. No residents would be forced to make any material change in their travel by vehicle as there are local ways around the Bus gate.

With **ATZ Filters (Roadblocks) within the ATZ** on Abbots Way and Brookvale Road, the projected variation would be a decrease of 45% in vehicle movements compared to the 2023 datum. This option would restrict the movement of residents by vehicle and split the community in two.

The ATZ

With a bus-gate in place and with no mitigation I favour this option at the moment) as traffic movements increase in certain roads of the ATZ and reduce in others (see spreadsheet) but it seems to have been ruled out without any discussion with residents of the ATZ. With no mitigation, traffic movements in the ATZ could be modified further by the adoption of an enforced 20mph limit across all roads in Highfield including Highfield Lane

With no mitigation, traffic movements in the ATZ could then be further reduced by making the turn from Portswood Road into Brookvale Road a 'No Left Turn'. This would prohibit south to north through traffic using Brookvale Road as a cut-through to Highfield Lane but would allow free movement of residents and would not split Highfield in two

With no mitigation, traffic movements in the ATZ could also be further reduced because there would be no through way into Highfield from the Sainsburys Portswood Road junction at the lights with Highfield Lane (that is why establishing if that 'no right turn' will remain is important)

Other issues apart from the ATZ

Remove all parking except any disabled or taxi spaces on Portswood High Street, as cars parking or turning round are often the cause of bus delays

Use the saved space from the on-street parking to expand the pavement areas south of the Bus gate to promote business in this part of the Broadway (which is largely ignored in the scheme as are the needs of businesses south on Brookvale Road

The additional space would provide a complete cycleway from St. Denys Road to Brookvale Road

Use smart signal technology to improve bus transit times. For example the pedestrian lights and the traffic lights at the Highfield Lane / Portswood Road junction are not in sync so that you may be stopped twice within 50m or stopped at the pedestrian lights when the traffic lights are green. By the time you reach the traffic lights they have turned red and you have to stop again (more emissions)

The proposed scheme has not made a strong enough case for any environmental benefit.

The overall proposed scheme (2) may not reduce traffic at all but could squeeze it onto other surrounding roads especially with Traffic filters in the ATZ

Although the Traffic Movement Data Projections show an overall reduction in traffic movements of 40,000 across the whole area it is not clear where these vehicle movements have gone because it is not on TLW. However a conclusion cannot be made that this vehicles travel has been converted into bus, cycle or other forms of transport.

12) Hi Barbara. Hope you are well. Thank you for the update in the recent HRA newsletter.

We live on Highfield Lane, thus naturally we have been taking a keen interest on proposals.

Below is a list of queries/concerns regarding the proposals. We would be grateful if you can raise these questions, as the current proposals and assessments are not clear:

1. Grosvenor Road / Richmond Gardens –

To assume vehicles coming up portswood road (from swaythling) will be forced to go down A3035 towards st denys /thomas lewis way is not accurate. Many vehicles will simply use the back roads to get to highfield / portswood / westwood rd, which is via Grosvenor Road / Richmond Gardens / Shaftesbury Road / Highfield lane. Vehicles will then simply head through the ATZ area (Abbots Way / Brookvale Road). This is the route chosen by sat-nav. Has this been considered/assessed in the plan?

2. Highfield Lane / Portswood Road Traffic Lights –

Even today, at peak times (3.30 to 6pm), the traffic backs up highfield lane. Sometimes, the traffic is so bad, it is backed up to the church lane roundabout. If ATZ is introduced through Abbots Way / Brookvale, more vehicles will be forced to go down highfield lane (to avoid ATZ) and vehicles can no longer use the right hand filter lane to turn right along portswood road. This will cause the traffic to back up highfield lane even further, beyond the church lane mini roundabout and towards the school/church/zebra crossing where many children/parents are crossing.

Also, having cars blast out fumes when stuck in traffic is worse for the environment, not better. Has this been considered/assessed?

3. Local Shops –

We currently use the local portswood high street 3-4 times per week. We visit the post office, hardware store, international food, fruit & veg shop and Waitrose. If ATZ (with traffic filter) is introduced we will simply switch to buying our local purchases online, as it will be easier to get items delivered to our house. I believe many local residents will do the same. Has this been considered when assessing whether local shops will benefit

from the scheme?

4. Local Culture –

I do acknowledge the high street will look better after the investment. However, does the local council have plans to make the street safer. For example, my mother is 80 years old and she often gets approached by local men who sit in shop doorways or gather near the homeless shelter spots (bingo hall / corner of westwood road). Hence, whilst the street will benefit from wider pavements and outside seating, I am not convinced people will feel safe sitting outside and being approached by strangers. In addition, wider pavements means wider areas for these individuals to gather.

5. Traffic Lights at top of highfield lane / the avenue –

Traffic is already bad at these lights. In addition, at peak time, you often have to wait considerably longer at these lights, as traffic is heavy up and down the avenue. The introduction of ATZ with traffic filter will push more vehicles up highfield lane. Which means towards the schools and will make the traffic heavier at the top of highfield lane / the avenue traffic lights. Has this been considered/assessed?

Please shout if you need anything else.

Thanks.

13) *"I live off Highfield Lane. If I want to drive to The Avenue, I use Winn Road, as Highfield Avenue involves unacceptable delays. If Brookvale Road is closed, I will have to go via St Denys Road and TLW, which is ridiculous. Also, the impact on traffic flow at the Highfield Lane junction with Church Lane has not been measured."*

14) Just confirming, following our meeting on Tuesday evening, that both my husband and I are firmly opposed to the 'Portswood Project' - stopping through traffic in Portswood Broadway. If, as seems likely, the change is introduced, we consider neither of the two ATZ proposals is acceptable as it stands. A third option outlined by the PRG committee, in which ANPR cameras would allow residents' cars through the filters, we would be happy to support

Many thanks,

15) So if we assume the bus gate will happen, then the 2 options being proposed are:

1. ATZ to slow cars down ie humps/pitch points
2. ATZ with filters to stop cars passing through

b. Option 1 means more cars pass through but at lower speed.

- c. Option 2 means no cars pass through, but it really impacts local residents using cars to get through portswood/highfield/westwood road.

Do you have a sense of people's preference at this early stage, or do you feel people are on the fence?

Also, forgot to mention earlier, can the council do a trial for a few weeks, where they close the high street to cars and put temporary speed humps or blocks in ATZ area, to get a true reflection of impact on local roads/businesses/schools etc? That would provide more accurate results. Really appreciate your help.

16) Barbara et all,

As far as my own observations are concerned and the feed-back I gained from last night's gathering, I would reply as follows...

The Council claim on the latest "Connecting Southampton" leaflet that there is "support for the scheme", is being conflated with what I am sure we would all largely agree on, the desirability of a more environmentally sustainable future; however this scheme is fundamentally flawed and will actually have the opposite effect. The Council base their assertion of the need for this scheme on out of date (2018) and erroneous statistics that seek to mislead the public into supporting this scheme. Their lack of local knowledge in the detailed needs of such a project are illustrated under the claimed "benefits" where they say "the installation of Benches, plus two new Zebra crossings" will be advantageous?! What this fails to take into account is we have already had to have such Benches removed because they became used by Winos, Druggies and other undesirables to the detriment of local businesses. Similarly, there are already at least four Pedestrian Crossings along the Broadway which is a major cause of delay for all traffic including Busses (!) and why would we need more anyway if there is no longer going to be any traffic ?!

"Impact on local economy" - Any claimed benefits are spurious at best and were effectively demolished by John Bradshaw's excellent analysis last night. Further, any claims that the scheme is supported by local businesses is entirely false, as a local survey has already shown, so why is this being disregarded?!

A petition carried out by local residents when this was first proposed obtained over 2,000 signatures in opposition; why is this being disregarded?

My understanding of these "environmentally friendly Traffic Schemes" is to divert traffic *away* from local roads, *but these proposals do the exact opposite* and will actually *increase* the pollution caused by vehicles being rerouted through residential areas.

The whole thing would be an absolute catastrophe for the local community and is a purely politically motivated misadventure by those who clearly neither live nor have any practical knowledge of the area.

17) I am writing as a resident of Winn Road to convey my support for the proposed pedestrianisation of Portswood High Street. As someone who regularly cycles, walks, and relies on buses, I am convinced that this initiative will bring tangible benefits to our area.

The prospect of a pedestrian and bus-only High Street is particularly appealing. This move promises a safer environment for pedestrians and cyclists, potentially rejuvenating the area and bolstering the local economy.

I appreciate the diligence shown in the second phase of consultation. Addressing concerns about displaced traffic and its effects on local roads is vital. Moreover, the scheme's alignment with the City's Net Zero target is commendable, emphasising a forward-thinking approach to local development.

I'm hoping that this proposal gains the traction it deserves. A more pedestrian-friendly Portswood High Street will surely benefit us all.

Kind regards,

18) There is just one other major aspect which, while referred to in the HRA response, does appear to be a particular area of major concern from talking to some friends/neighbours in the Crofton Close/OTRA area.

If modal filters were to be placed on the Brookvale Road roundabout splitting the community into two and preventing access to the Avenue via Highfield Lane, then queues onto the Avenue from Winn or Westwood Road could not only be backed up but could potentially become virtually stationary. With no traffic lights, turning right into the Avenue would be exceedingly difficult and dependent upon the generosity of traffic coming up/down the Avenue. This would simultaneously block any traffic turning left into the Avenue. The rush hour, in particular, would be a nightmare, and I am hearing genuine concern from people who might have to navigate this route daily, during the working week. There would also, of course, be an impact on the surrounding neighbourhood.

19) Hello Barbara and Roger,

Thank you very much for the HRA draft comments document which if excellent, I don't know if you want to mention that residents in the West Side of the ATZ Filters (Road Blocks) who wanted to travel North, would have to negotiate the junction of Winn Road / Westwood Road and the Avenue which is a very much more dangerous than the Highfield Avenue/ Avenue junction, in fact we did have a fatality some time ago at the Winn Road/ Avenue junctions when a car driver from Winn road pulled out in front of a motorcyclist, they were both heading North when the collision happened.

Plus I am sure SCC would not want to know about what happened in Bedford Place shopping area when they blocked off the road the businesses in the area suffered a 50% drop in income and when they opened the road up again the income (over a period of time) went back to what is was before the road closures.

20) THE HRA kindly hosted a public meeting during the first consultation. It was put to the presenters that nowhere in the questionnaire did it offer residents in the area to give an overall view of if they thought the scheme should proceed or not. There is widespread disquiet in the area over the proposal and it would have been good to quantify the level of support or opposition overall. It is disappointing this was not noted and acted upon.

Another point was raised at the same HRA meeting regarding the possible instruction of an Active travel zone. Fully aware of the options in the questionnaire a number of people raised the issue of an additional alternative not included. This is having traffic gates with ANPR cameras to allow registered local residents to freely pass through Brookvale Rd, Abbotts Way and Russel Place but restricting the use of these roads as a rat run by non-residents. It was most surprising this alternative was not added to the second questionnaire as this would alleviate a lot of the issues local residents have and the conflict in the existing options. That is a total blocking of traffic movement or only introducing traffic calming which will not stop rat running or use by delivery vans and taxis etc. Whichever option is adopted will lead to significant inconvenience and distress to local residents.

The result of this is people will be "voting" their preference without this key viable option on offer and so will not reflect potential local views. The option of other would rely on people instinctively knowing of this alternative which is quite unlikely.

Finally, although I've asked at the local presentations it is not clear how the local workshop on the ATZ will work. There are literally hundreds of people who will want to be involved and it is not clear how this will work in practise. Without the Traffic gate/ANPR option they will be an unresolvable conflict between traffic calming and traffic blocking.

21) In response to your email of 11th September we write to express our strong objections to the proposed scheme.

By way of background, we have lived with our family in the Highfield area since 2016 and have been a member of the HRA since this time, first on Khartoum Road and latterly on Abbotts Way.

We object on the grounds that the proposed scheme consultation contains misleading information, insufficient detail, lacks sufficient evaluation and is not adequately justified. The limited potential benefits if implemented appear to be far outweighed by the uncertainty in the extent of the adverse impacts.

There are two major concerns:

1 - traffic implications. Given the costal setting and the two rivers to the east and west, along with the common, the city road network is heavily congested. Adding a further constriction, on the Broadway, will further worsen the existing problem and the impacts cannot be predicted with confidence. There is insufficient data to allow predictions with certainty given the small, local traffic surveys conducted by the council. A broader study of the avenue, Highfield, Portswood, and the areas beyond is necessary. The proposed ATZ for Highfield appears to be a quick fix based on wishful thinking about future motorist

behaviour. The terms of reference are too narrow. Evidence from other schemes around the UK suggests modal shifts in travel behaviour are very modest and certainly cannot account for the several thousand vehicles that will be diverted daily under the scheme.

2 - local economy and community. The council plans increased pedestrian areas for benches, tables etc on the Broadway. The direction of travel is a late night hub for outdoor street drinking and entertainment - making the Broadway a destination for those from outside the area, not for a range of shops that serve the local community. This is highlighted by responses to the initial perceptions survey - that locals had not asked for the scheme and when offered it, did not have an appetite for it. Existing problems with crime and antisocial behaviour will certainly be worsened. None of this is in the interests of the local community. The existing problems cannot be adequately managed by the police and council services and it not clear these resources would be increased if the Broadway plan proceeds. The study commissioned by the council suggest a return on expenditure but the growth model is around 0.4% per year for a decade - such a small percentage is lost in the noise when macroeconomic issues are concerned. e.g. impacts from covid, Brexit, the Ukraine conflict have had high single digit percentage impacts on the UK economy in a single year. Moreover, the predicted increase in FTE employment is negligible when measured against the base level. There is no understanding of risk and uncertainty: if, for example, the loss of motorist access leads to Waitrose leaving and the site not being similarly utilised what will the economic impact be on the local area? It is worth recalling that 85% of UK residents do their weekly shop by car. Making it harder to access Waitrose and Sainsburys will not be good for their businesses. The pedestrianisation model has worked best in town centres etc where there are no major supermarkets. The two we have in Highfield/Portswood are a defining feature of the local community - they are a huge advantage over other dormitory style residential areas such as Bassett.

As scientists, we are familiar with processing large amounts of complex data and drawing conclusions and making predictions about future trends. In short, the council data is woefully inadequate and insufficient to implement the scheme with any level of certainty in predicted impacts on the local community and and larger area. The motivation appears not to be based on need, rather that government money is available for spending, and that not to do so would be a missed opportunity. There is also an undercurrent of the council telling us how we should live and travel. The problem is that the local community will be left to pick up the pieces and to live in a changed and uncertain environment. Indeed, our homes and the fabric of the local streets will not be those we chose when moving into the area.

We are happy to discuss further with yourself or the HRA committee if you wish.

Please acknowledge safe receipt.

22) In response to HRA's request that we feed back following our completion of the Portswood Corridor Consultation Phase 2 Questionnaire.

In summary we still oppose the scheme, and basically could not see any changes from Phase 1 proposals. Our original concern as to why this scheme was invented in the first place has not been validated. We find it unacceptable that the City Council is proposing a scheme that will potentially divide, and/or adversely affect quality of life in Highfield.

The increase in pollution and safety issues etc by shifting traffic onto residential roads is indisputable. However, the proposed schemes to offset this, such as roadblocks or traffic

calming in our opinion, are not acceptable because they will impact on the social character of the area. Also the increase in journey distances caused by detours will add additional pollution, and we take issue with the Council's assertion that this would not be the case. We feel the Council is not coming clean with what they will actually do to alter current traffic circulation. For example there are rumours of a right turn into Highfield Lane outside Sainsbury's which would make a considerable difference to the traffic models shown.

The results of the E-Petitions on the Council's web site around Christmas seem to have been completely ignored, the vast majority being opposed to the scheme.

The proposed ATZ appears to be very similar to an LTN, which the government says are being reviewed. Whilst it is commendable to encourage more activity, in our experience having lived in Highfield for nearly 50 years, we and our neighbours already walk or cycle when possible, to the shops in Portswood. Ironically businesses could in fact lose trade if there were no passing motorists.

- 23)** Some improvements could be achieved without closing Portswood Road/Broadway which don't require so much expenditure, upheaval and harm to the community, such as the Travel Hub. Looking at Portswood as it is nowadays being mainly take-aways, cafes and charity shops, why such a grandiose scheme - unless of course there is another agenda? The words thrown under bus spring to mind!

Many thanks to you and other members of HRA who are working hard to give residents a voice.

With best wishes,

- 24)** We strongly object to the plan to close off Portswood Broadway to traffic. Our reasons are:

1. It would extend our car journey to Waitrose and other shops at that end of the Broadway by over a mile, thereby adding to pollution. The distance to Waitrose from our house is two hundred yards.
2. We need to use the car for our shopping. We are elderly and the idea that we could cycle and carry the purchases home in panniers is a joke.
3. The pollution caused by the increase in traffic along our residential roads would be harmful to us all. Highfield Lane is an A road and is already busy. The extra traffic would cause even more pollution. There are two schools along that road and surely the air quality is important for the children.
4. The Broadway already has a problem with drunks and other anti-social behaviour and is frequented with rough sleepers. The benches were removed from there to discourage all these people. To close off the Broadway and to add street furniture would encourage more of them to congregate there. For many of us it is a no-go area after dark. We cannot remember the last time we saw a policeman in the Broadway. It was suggested that maybe Street Pastors could be called upon to help at night.

5. We are very concerned that many of the businesses will not survive. People coming from the Swaythling side of the Broadway may be put off by the longer journey along, what will be the increasingly busy, Thomas Lewis Way. One of the residents was told he could go to Sainsburys if the journey to Waitrose was much longer. We prefer to choose where we shop.

6. We already have a good bus service, which keeps good time, in the form of Unilink. This scheme would make no difference at all.

25) I have completed the survey and submitted it, asking for a copy to be sent to me. The main suggestion I have offered is that consideration should be given to the bus gate operating at peak travel times only, e.g. for an hour and a half to two hours morning and evening, with traffic being allowed to travel through at other times of day. This would lessen rat running through residential streets during the middle of the day and later in the evenings.

I suggested the above to one of the SCC officers at one of the consultation meetings; it was well received as an idea so thought it worth sending to you for possible inclusion in HRAs response if not too late?

26) Dear Hon Secretary

We made detailed responses to the previous survey.

We would wish to make the following points in relation to the Phase 2 Proposals.

The main point is that the City Council do not give the option of the status quo, and it is clear that they are not considering this.

Our serious concerns are that making Portswood into a Bus hub is that this will be the death knell for the various shops that remain.

There is a plethora of charity shops and takeaways, with some restaurants, many of the latter are clearly lacking in clientele when one walks past, even in the evenings.

We have spoken to proprietors and have been told that many shop owners are not intending to renew their leases. One example is the very useful hardware shop. We were told that there was the feeling that the City Council is not listening to shop owners/shopkeepers. Has there been adequate discussion with shopkeepers, with due weight being seriously given to their views?

It is clear that the council has made up its mind in advance, and the consultation options have been selected, in order to confirm this.

For those who live to the North of the hub, in order to access Waitrose, one would have to go up to the Avenue, down to Lodge Road, then up St Denys Road/Portswood Road before turning into the Waitrose car park. We realise this will be academic, as the indications are that Waitrose will close this branch.

Thomas Lewis Way is already congested, as is the access to this road, from Highfield Lane. The proposals will only exacerbate this situation.

Residents' filters will not resolve the problem for shopkeepers, as many, especially Waitrose, Farm Foods and Iceland rely on vehicles coming to them from out of the area.

We don't feel we cannot comment on which of the City's suggested options might work best, as it won't matter much when the key shops are no longer there.

We support the idea of greener cities and reducing unnecessary traffic... but perhaps this is another time when the city should be looking at effective Park and Ride systems that effectively serve all the main access routes into the City.

It also might be an opportune time to look at the pollution levels generated by the cruise liners in the city that do not link into an electric power source.

Many thanks for taking this forward.

27) I have completed the online consultation form for the Portswood Corridor project. I am a local resident and member of HRA who lives on Westwood Road, I regularly walk and cycle to Portswood and I drive through Portswood High Street four times a week on my way to work.

I have a number of other points to make on this scheme which did not easily fit into the response questionnaire so I hope that you will allow me to submit them via email.

I made comments by email on the phase 1 consultation, one which does not appear to have been addressed at all is the discontinuous **cycle lane provision** along the corridor outside of the short 150m covered by the Portswood Broadway bus gate.

Bus Transit Times

No information is provided for current bus transit times through Portswood Broadway or for any anticipated reduction in transit times with the project implemented. As this is a claimed benefit of the scheme this issue should have been addressed.

Every bus that currently passes through Portswood Broadway is tracked by GPS and transit time information will be available from the operators, in the absence of this data it is not possible to assess whether there will be any useful reduction in transit times. Can you confirm if the project has requested this information from the operators or not? If you have it can you publish it please?

Finally on this section, my own measurements over the last six months for travel time in a car between the traffic lights at St. Denys Road/Portswood Broadway and those at Portswood Broadway/Brookvale Road (half of them at peak time) provide transit times between 65 seconds and 185 seconds with 80% being less than 120 seconds.

Traffic Modelling

The traffic modelling data provided at this consultation stage is useful but incomplete. Traffic movements past a survey point are part of the story but, as each journey results in a thread of up to six movements (as a vehicle passes successive survey points on its trip) it

can be misleading when analysing possible effects of ATZ schemes.

Much more serious is the omission of any survey or modelling of future traffic on Lodge Road. This is already heavily loaded, especially at peak traffic times, and is a bus route. Vehicles forced to route around the bus gate/ ATZ may try to use Lodge Road as an alternative east-west route which will slow traffic and bus times and increase pollution on this road.

The data provided on traffic on Thomas Lewis Way appears to be the number of vehicles, all ATZ schemes predict increases in traffic on TLW with the modal filter proposal predicting nearly a 40% increase in vehicles. The St. Denys Road junction already tails back in both directions during peak periods and does not seem capable of absorbing this volume of additional vehicles. At the bottom of TLW vehicles will need to either use Bevois Valley Road (which carries heavy traffic flow at the present time) or Lodge Road (see comments above) and a 40% increase in vehicles on these roads is unrealistic.

I believe that the selective traffic monitoring and modelling data is missing an important part of the overall picture. Unless these proposals result in significant modal shift away from cars (no modelling or prediction has been provided on this) the overall effect will simply be to shift traffic and pollution from one area over to others with less capacity to handle them.

ANPR Systems

There are existing schemes in England that use ANPR systems to regulate the traffic using city streets, either by prohibition or charging. A much more elegant solution on Portswood Broadway would be to regulate traffic using an ANPR system which would allow local residents to continue to use the improved Portswood Broadway. This could be combined either with a charging scheme (whereby vehicles without permits would be charged) or a gate/prohibition system for vehicles without permits. The ATZ could also use this sort of system to regulate flow if required, another advantage would be that times/ access/ charges could be adjusted flexibly with experience of use.

Dividing the Community

This echoes a comment I have already made on the form but I do feel that the Bus Gate and any form of ATZ will split the Portswood / Highfield community in two between the north and south. It will inconvenience many of us and if the crime and the anti-social behaviour issues are not adequately addressed the effect may be, sadly, to make Portswood a less attractive place that is harder to get to for local residents.
