



**HIGHFIELD RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION COMMITTEE RESPONSE**  
**TO**  
**THE PORTSWOOD CORRIDOR SCHEME PHASE 2 CONSULTATION**

**SUMMARY**

The HRA Committee welcomes and supports the Council's aim of making Portswood Broadway more attractive in the context of improving the city's environment as well as responding to demographic and climatic changes. However we are not convinced that the putative benefits of what is proposed will outweigh the potential detriments. This is especially with regard to the community and amenity of local residents, the health of our much-valued local shops, and the reduction of pollution across the city more widely.

If, despite these continued reservations, the Council decides to implement the Scheme, the HRA Committee urges it to do so in phases with the opportunity for modifications or reversal at each stage. This could begin with an enforceable 20 mph speed limit across the whole area without the Bus gate, effective enforcement of the existing parking restrictions, and some enhancement of the street scene, including tackling crime and anti-social behaviour. Each of these would in itself contribute greatly to the achievement of the aims of the scheme.

The HRA Committee would welcome the opportunity to explore such a phased approach with the Council.

**BACKGROUND**

In its response to the Phase 1 consultation, HRA Committee noted that the majority of residents who had responded to the Association were unpersuaded that the area as a whole would gain from the proposals. This remains the case with the Phase 2 proposals in spite of,

and in some respects because of, the additional information that has been supplied by the Council and what is still missing. There are three principal issues: the impact on the immediate neighbourhood, the impact on local business, and the impact on traffic more widely.

## **THE NEIGHBOURHOOD IMPACT**

It is widely accepted that with the Bus gate in place there is a considerable risk of traffic previously using Portswood Broadway diverting to Brookvale Road, Abbotts Way and Russell Place, rather than Thomas Lewis Way. This risk would be increased if the present 'no right turn' from Portswood Road into Highfield Lane were to be removed at any stage.

Most concern about the scheme arises from the effect of closing Portswood Broadway to through traffic and the resulting increase in vehicles forced into a small number of Highfield residential roads, the ATZ, as the data now shows (See Annex A).

Two ATZ schemes, Light Touch and Modal Filters, have been proposed as a response to deal with potential rat-runs. Modal Filters would effectively penalise residents for living close to Portswood Broadway by restricting free access to their homes as well as forcing them to go much further, take longer, sit in traffic causing emissions, and use more fuel to use local supermarkets and other shops. This option does not give any confidence to the residents and effectively splits the local community in two.

Although a Winter 2023 ATZ Co-design Workshop is proposed with residents, there is no indication that any other ideas to reduce non-residential traffic would be considered.

The Portswood Project could in fact, increase congestion on Highfield Lane, Lodge Road and The Avenue all of which are already heavily used during the day.

One way of mitigating this risk would be for the Council to introduce an ATZ Residents' ANPR system in place of the proposed Modal Filters. These have been adopted elsewhere in the city. This idea originated in the Oakmount Triangle and it has attracted support both there and within HRA (See Annex B).

Another idea would be to introduce a 'no left turn' for northward bound traffic at the junction of Portswood Broadway and Brookvale Road, effectively dissuading non-residential traffic.

Despite the reduction of bus transit times through Portswood being a key objective, no data on bus times or routes, current or future, was provided, even though this would have been available from bus GPS tracking. Without such data, the assertion, 'that traffic and congestion can cause significant delay to bus and taxi services and that existing congestion through Portswood Broadway is currently causing delays to journeys across the area for those wanting to use public transport' is non-specific and has not been quantified.

There are already at least four crossing points, including two pedestrian crossings on the Broadway. The proposal for two new zebra crossings would further add to bus journey times.

From local knowledge of the Broadway, the following is factual: cars parking on the Broadway, cars conducting U-turns when leaving a parking space, delivery lorries and trucks parking on pavements, and existing pedestrian crossings not being synchronised with traffic lights all cause delays to buses. If these were dealt with by prohibiting on-street parking, except for disabled badge holders, then delays to buses would be much less likely. This raises the broader issue of how any of the proposed changes would be imposed given the feeble level of enforcement of current restrictions by the Council and the police.

Most local residents are already walking or cycling to use local shops except when their bags are likely to be too heavy. Most local residents would be unlikely to choose bus travel to visit local shops so the scheme has little benefit to them, but much potential disruption.

The impact of increased traffic on Lodge Road and Bevois Valley Road, including delays to their bus services, have not been included in the data presented. This could be more significant if vehicle movements on Thomas Lewis Way were to increase by 38% per day as the SCC data projects.

Despite the traffic movement data predicting a decrease in traffic along Winn and Westwood Road, this would be through traffic. Conversely, local traffic would be forced onto these two

roads and is very likely to increase. Vehicles needing to turn right onto The Avenue would back up, further slowing the bus times.

## **THE BUSINESS IMPACT**

Following the concerns expressed previously, the Council commissioned an independent economic impact assessment of Portswood District. At Annex C, there is a review of this work by a former HRA Committee member [and consultant to HM Government]. This review shows that there are serious methodological flaws with this assessment, not to mention a very obvious bias, which in themselves undermine its validity.

Nevertheless it seems clear that there will be a differential effect on local businesses, with a particularly serious, negative impact on a number of shops at the southern end of the Broadway which rely upon vehicular access for the carrying of loads.

The review also points to the risk of increased crime and anti-social behaviour from the proposals. This is already an unwelcome feature of the Broadway and a rising concern for shops, residents and the police. It is not very long ago that HRA persuaded the Council to remove the bench outside Coffee1# because of the number of daytime drinkers that it attracted. More recently, the area has been made the subject of a Public Spaces Protection Order following good work by Ward Councillors. There is no reference to this, or the wider social impact, in the current proposals. Without mitigation measures being in place from the outset the Bus gate zone would make an attractive place for daytime drinkers, including using the suggested new benches. This might make the anti-social behaviour issue worse. Current proposals in this aspect are far too woolly.

## **THE WIDER IMPACT**

The Council seeks to justify the scheme on environmental grounds, yet there is no assessment of the planned reduction in emissions from queuing traffic. This might actually negate the whole scheme, for example, the additional traffic on Highfield Lane aiming to turn right onto The Avenue where the junction already suffers from heavy use and long queues, almost throughout the day.

The Travel Hub proposal is less likely to be of interest to local Highfield residents as there are bus stops throughout Highfield. Highfield demographics are divided at either end of the scale. They fall into a high proportion of more senior residents who probably already walk locally, use their own bicycles or can't walk and carry and therefore need to use their car. There is also a high proportion of young students. The travel hub and its opportunity to hire bikes, cargo-bikes, electric scooters etc would be more likely to target their needs. It is not clear how private cars would access the electric charging points and these might be more useful in an improved car park in Westridge Road.

## **CONCLUSION**

The HRA Committee welcomes the Council's commitment to improving Portswood Broadway. It acknowledges the further work that has been put into the proposals. However, the further information supplied has not provided the necessary reassurances about the impact on the local community, on local businesses or about the wider impact on the city's traffic and environment. These reassurances are essential to allay the very serious concerns that have been raised.

The HRA Committee cannot therefore support the proposals as they stand. However, it would be ready to explore with the Council what a phased introduction of the scheme might look like. This would enable the impact of the various aspects of the scheme to be assessed and any modifications to be implemented. We very much hope that the Council will be prepared to agree to this suggestion.

ANNEX A: Projected Data Analysis and Commentary

Portswood Project Phase 2 Consultation Traffic Movement Data and Projections (ATZ roads in yellow shading)										
Road	April 2023 Datum	No Mitigation			Light Touch ATZ			Traffic Filter ATZ Road block		
		Projected	Variation April 2023	% Var	Projected	Variation April 2023	% Var	Projected	Variation April 2023	% Var
Portswood Road (Sainsburys)	11000	6500	(4500)	-41%	7100	(3900)	-35%	7100	(3900)	-35%
Portswood Broadway Bus-Gate Zone	13800	500	(13300)	-96%	500	(13300)	-96%	500	(13300)	-96%
Portswood Road (Brookvale-Westridge)	14500	3500	(11000)	-76%	3500	(11000)	-76%	3500	(11000)	-76%
Portswood Road (Brookvale-Lodge)	12000	7400	(4600)	-38%	6400	(5600)	-47%	5900	(6100)	-51%
Highfield Lane	10200	9000	(1200)	-12%	8000	(2200)	-22%	7800	(2400)	-24%
Upper Brookvale	3800	5600	1800	47%	4400	600	16%	250	(3550)	-93%
Lower Brookvale	5100	7200	2100	41%	5700	600	12%	4800	(300)	-6%
Abbots Way	1600	3400	1800	113%	2700	1100	69%	92	(1508)	-94%
Russell Place	1600	3400	1800	113%	2700	1100	69%	41	(1559)	-97%
Winn Road	2300	1700	(600)	-26%	1400	(900)	-39%	1900	(400)	-17%
Westwood Road	3500	3300	(200)	-6%	2700	(800)	-23%	2700	(800)	-23%
Thomas Lewis Way (Location not specified)	21000	26000	5000	24%	27500	6500	31%	29000	8000	38%
<b>Total Traffic Movements</b>	<b>100400</b>	<b>77500</b>	<b>(22900)</b>	<b>-23%</b>	<b>72600</b>	<b>(27800)</b>	<b>-28%</b>	<b>63583</b>	<b>(36817)</b>	<b>-37%</b>
Traffic movement has been surveyed in both directions										
Ref: <a href="https://transport.southampton.gov.uk/tcf/eastleigh-to-southampton-corridor/portswood-project/additional-information-and-assessments/">https://transport.southampton.gov.uk/tcf/eastleigh-to-southampton-corridor/portswood-project/additional-information-and-assessments/</a>										

## Commentary on Portswood Project Phase 2 - Traffic Movement Data and Projections

(SCC give no commentary)

The traffic movement data was obtained on a weekday over a twenty-four-hour period. The data has been transferred to a spreadsheet for easier comparison from the four maps on the SCC website.

It is important to note that the figures do not refer to individual vehicles but traffic movements past a survey point. Most vehicles travelling through the area could have been recorded more than once in the figures (for example, a vehicle travelling from the Avenue to Sainsburys appears five times in the data as it passed survey points on Westwood Road, Brookvale Road, Portswood Road, Portswood Broadway and Sainsburys).

The roads in the ATZ are shaded yellow, pink text represents a predicted reduction.

Comparing the overall traffic movements between April 2023 and projected movements with a Bus gate installed, there would be between 22,900 and 36,817 fewer traffic movements overall. No information is provided regarding where these have gone but it is not to Thomas Lewis Way as increases in the Thomas Lewis Way traffic have already been included in the figures.

The data collection location on Thomas Lewis Way is not specified. However, this would have an impact on the relevance of the data to the Portswood scheme.

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 (Road Blocks) 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

#### Extract from the Questionnaire:

#### Proposals for Highfield Active Travel Zone

Traffic modelling in the area predicts that with the introduction of the bus gate up to 8,000 vehicles would choose to use A335 Thomas Lewis Way (TLW) as a faster alternative, depending on the level of mitigation we adopt for the area to prevent rat running. This will

be supported by the recent improvements along TLW such as the introduction of additional turning lanes and an upgrade to smarter junctions which has improved journey times along TLW to make it more reliable and increase capacity to ensure it is the preferred option for through traffic.

Some remaining through traffic is likely to choose to rat run through local roads though. To prevent this and protect local roads for those who live in the area, we could introduce an Active Travel Zone for Highfield to prevent this. The Council is committed to providing an Active Travel Zone for the Highfield area ahead of any improvements to the Portswood Broadway area.

Active Travel Zones (ATZs) are neighbourhoods that encourage active travel through a range of measures which calm or discourage traffic, reduce rat running and instead prioritise people walking and cycling while at the same time maintaining motor vehicle access for those who live there. Interventions for ATZs are scalable and can range from speed cushions, improved crossing points or road closure points which would be designed with local residents at co-design meetings.

The Council has delivered an ATZ in the St Denys area in conjunction with local residents, and is now implementing ATZs in the Polygon, Woolston and Itchen areas.

New traffic data has been provided in this consultation to better inform residents of the impacts of various options for an Active Travel Zone for the area, but no decision will be made on the type of Active Travel Zone without community co-design with residents.

However, the following conflicting statements are made (Blue text lifted from the SCC Website or the Questionnaire):

[‘and the impact the introduction of an Active Travel Zone \(ATZ\) would have \(if the community wishes to have one – to be decided in community co-design\).’](#)

[‘Bus gate + no mitigation - This is not something that would be implemented’](#)

This conflict in intention needs to be clarified by SCC officers.

Further on:

[‘We understand that by installing filters, local journeys will need to find a new way to travel to their destinations around the filters which may increase local journey times for local residents.’](#)

Although it is stated that there will be community input into the ATZ style, only two options have been proposed, Light Touch and Traffic Filters (road blocks). There seems to be no possibility of proposing alternative solutions including that of not implementing any mitigation measure within the ATZ.

What consideration has been given to Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) for all residents’ vehicles within the ATZ? Ref: [Example proposed East-Reading ANPRS](#)



It is local residents who will be affected by the Bus gate plans. Journey times, additional fuel costs, and general inconvenience to residents will result.

Filters are road blocks for vehicles but allow bikes, scooters and pedestrians to pass.

'This would however result in quieter residential roads which will make walking, wheeling and cycling more pleasant and safe.'

Local residents are more likely to already walk, cycle or possibly take a bus to Portswood.

The vehicle movement data shows that only the road block scheme would result in quieter local roads. In this scenario, residents would be restricted in the routes they could take to leave and arrive at home. This may spread Highfield residential traffic along Burgess Road, Highfield Lane, Grosvenor Road, The Avenue, Lodge Road and possible Outer Avenue cut-through-ways where this is possible.

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 potentially become virtually stationary as with no traffic lights, turning right into the Avenue would be exceedingly difficult. This would simultaneously block any traffic turning left into the Avenue and be particularly problematic during rush hours. Wider impacts have not been assessed.

### **Lodge Road end of Portswood Road**

Traffic movement projections of the effect of the Bus gate on Lodge Road and the directing of additional traffic along Thomas Lewis Way from south and north is missing. Lodge Road is a single carriageway road with some on street parking, and already carries a heavy east / west flow of vehicles. If more traffic were to use Lodge Road because roads within Highfield are closed, it may be that long traffic queues would result adding to car emissions from waiting traffic.

It is understood that the improvements to the junction of Lodge Road and Portswood Road have already been approved i.e. that it will be made more difficult to turn left into Portswood Road from Lodge Road. If the current left turn filter lane is removed, then traffic trying to go straight on to TLW may be held in long queues backing up traffic at these lights.

Travelling south, the TLW ends in a pinch point into a single traffic lane at Bevois Valley Road. Vehicle movements are predicted to increase by at least 38% on TLW. What effect will this have on traffic jams and an increase in fuel emissions at this pinch point?

Several buses use Lodge Road. What effect will an increase (unknown/not predicted) in vehicle movements along Lodge Road have on bus times along Lodge Road? Wider impacts have not been assessed.

## **Highfield Lane**

It is understood that there may be plans to allow vehicles to turn right at the Sainsburys' traffic light junction into Highfield Lane. This would increase the projected vehicle numbers on Highfield Lane and change projections in the proposals. If this change is to be implemented, why has it not been included in the Proposals?

## **Conclusion**

There is serious conflict for residents who might agree that Portswood centre could be improved, that alternate, greener forms of transport should be encouraged or that the air could be cleaner at the cost of their locality being subjected to restrictions in vehicle movement which affect them personally and split the community in two.

It is believed that residents local to Portswood centre already choose to walk or cycle when visiting and leave their car at home. However there is a high proportion of elderly people living in Highfield who need their car when doing a supermarket shop. For them walking, wheeling and cycling are not options. Even travel by bus is not a realistic option as they may need their car for heavy bags. The Bus gate splits the two major supermarkets, Sainsburys and Waitrose, and should the road block ATZ be implemented, residents would have to use a long detour to reach the store on 'the other side'.

## **Key Questions:**

- What is the main objective of the Scheme?
- Is the Bus gate central to the Council securing the Central Government funding?
- Could other options for the ATZ be genuinely considered?
- Why is there no data on impact on bus times or mention of the Uni-link bus service?
- What is the likely impact on Lodge Road / Bevois Valley end of Portswood Road?
- Is the opening of the right turn at the Portswood /Highfield Lane (Sainsburys') traffic light junction planned?
- What would it be like to live in a Highfield split community?

*BJC 19/09/23*

## Annex B: Highfield Active Travel Zone (ATZ) 2<sup>nd</sup> consultation (2023)

### Highfield Active Traffic Zone (ATZ) 2nd consultation (2023)

As part of the development of the Portswood Project bus gate and travel hub, the council is proposing an ATZ for Highfield to prevent our local roads from becoming rat runs.

See here for more information: <https://shorturl.at/lsOQ2>

The second-phase consultation survey outlines two possible scenarios :

1. **ATZ light touch** traffic calming (speed humps and buildouts)
2. **ATZ traffic filters**, blocking all motorised traffic (as in St Denys; Alma and Avenue Rds).



Traffic calming may not decrease through traffic, merely slow it down. But traffic filters (**permanent roadblocks**) could cause greater congestion, poor air quality, and impact road safety; and will split the community and create inconvenience for residents who need to use motor vehicles for journeys beyond Portswood. They will also block emergency vehicles.

This map illustrates the implications of the proposed traffic filters for travel south-north and west-east, for residents either side of the proposed roadblocks, creating the potential for long queues at traffic lights and for cars attempting to turn right into and from the Avenue.

### THE SOLUTION:

A third option that doesn't penalise residents - **residents' filters**, with automatic numberplate recognition (ANPR cameras) at the same locations as the proposed traffic filters.

ANPR residents' filters would stop through traffic but allow residents and emergency vehicles to continue to use local roads.

**This is not included in the survey scenarios, but could be a better solution.**

### WHAT YOU CAN DO:

#### Fill out the survey (closes 1 Oct 2023):

<https://southamptoncitycouncil.welcomesyourfeedback.net/s/Portswood-project>

If you support the idea of residents' filters, on the survey page relating to the Highfield ATZ, you can select "Something else" and suggest ANPR residents' filters in the free text box.

#### Attend the events:

- **Wednesday 6th September (4-7pm)** and **Monday 11th September (4-7pm)** on the corner of Portswood Road and St Denys Road next to Trago Lounge.
- **Tuesday 12th September (5:45 - 7:15pm)** HRA-hosted member/public consultation event at Highfield Church Hall.

17 September 2023

TO: Highfield Residents' Association  
FROM: Prof Laurie Stras, 24 Oakmount Ave SO17 1DR

RE: ANPR and Highfield ATZ proposals

I attach the leaflet that I prepared for distribution to homes in the Oakmount Triangle, the Uplands Estate, and the Portswood Gardens area (Abbots Way and Russell Place) in the week prior to the HRA-hosted consultation on 12 September.

Some things to note that are not on the leaflet:

1. I ran a very brief poll on the OTRA members discussion forum – an online forum with around 80 active members, which ran for five days to 12 Sept. The question was “How should the council deal with the traffic diverted from Portswood Broadway into Highfield?” The results, with a total of 41 votes (**c. 50% response rate**) were:
  - ATZ light touch (speed humps and buildouts) Votes: 3 7.3%
  - ATZ traffic filters (permanent roadblocks at Brookvale Road and Russell Place) Votes: 1 2.4%
  - **ATZ ANPR filters (number-plate recognition cameras that can allow residents and emergency vehicles) Votes: 31 75.6%**
  - No mitigations for traffic diverted to residential roads in Highfield Votes: 6 14.6%
2. Southampton City Council has wide proposals to use ANPR as a means to enforce the School Streets Scheme, which closes roads to through traffic (but *not* residents) around schools in the city for specific periods during the day, as well as at various congestion and safety schemes: <https://transport.southampton.gov.uk/connected-southampton-2040/camera-enforcement-of-contraventions/>

According to the minutes of the most recent Council meeting (19 July, item 30a, page 9), the approval sought from Government was expected by the end of July. <https://www.southampton.gov.uk/moderngov/documents/g7006/Public%20reports%20pack%2020th-Sep-2023%2014.00%20Council.pdf?T=10>

3. I would stress that support for ANPR mitigations for the proposed Highfield ATZ (should the bus gate go ahead) does not imply support for the bus gate. Nor would ANPR mitigations for the ATZ present any solutions for the wider problems anticipated as a result of the bus gate implementation.

*Orchard Triangle Residents Association*

## **Annex C: Portswood Project: Phase 2 consultation (September 2023)**

*Comments on: “Areas of concern and requests for further information”*

<https://transport.southampton.gov.uk/tcf/eastleigh-to-southampton-corridor/portswood-project/>

### **1. Impact on local roads: Highfield Active Travel Zone**

More detailed modelling of travel flows (April 2023) confirms increased traffic through Brookvale Road due to the bus gate. However, SCC have confirmed that these models were based on the retention of the no-right-turn from Portswood Road into Highfield Lane, as at present, i.e. all southbound traffic was assumed to proceed down St Denys Road to Thomas Lewis Way (TLW). SCC are now actively considering removing this restriction, which would further increase southbound traffic flow through Abbotts Way/Russell Place/Brookvale Road.

Further consultation on these measures is planned and should be welcomed, but SCC should first be asked to repeat their modelling with the southbound turn into Highfield Lane added. The published projections are likely to be a considerable underestimate of “rat-running” through the Abbotts Way estate and are therefore misleading.

A 20-mph restriction throughout the area might be a useful addition to the measures proposed, noting that an extensive 20 mph zone has recently been introduced in Banister Park. However, enforcement, which is a Police responsibility, may be problematic.

### **2. Impact on the local economy: concerns the scheme would have a detrimental impact on local businesses.**

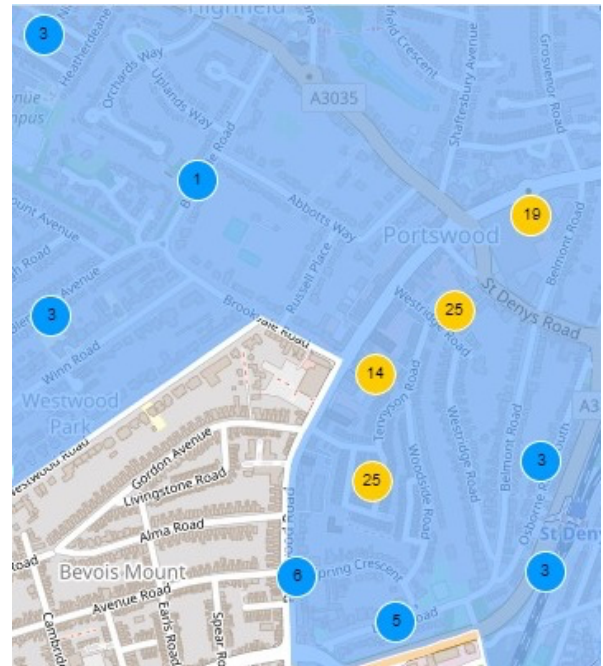
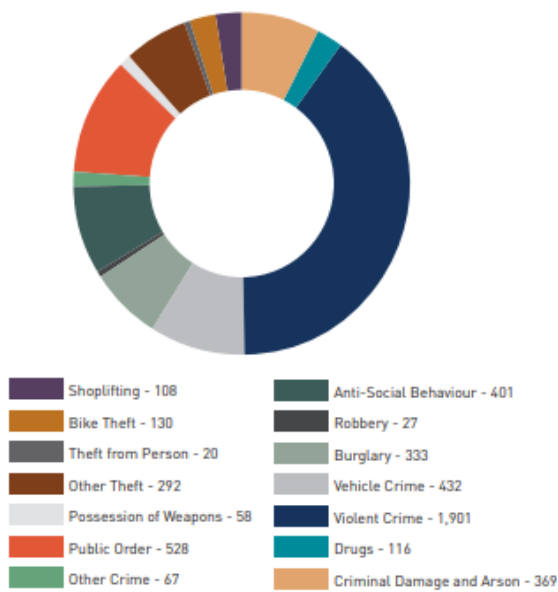
The “independent” report (Rise Associates/Dibobi, March 2023) emphasises the potential benefits of the scheme, dismissing all objections as ill-informed or misguided, and making accusations of intimidation by the scheme’s critics. Perhaps unsurprisingly, it predicts a modest growth in trade on Portswood Broadway once the changes have been made. However, the data on which the report is based are fundamentally flawed (see Appendix). Most seriously, it does not separate those businesses which are adjacent to the semi-pedestrianised area and should benefit from it, and those to the south which will suffer from decreased access by car, including three supermarkets, a hardware store and a furniture store, all of which might reasonably require a car to carry purchases away.

This and the other serious flaws and omissions in the report should have been apparent to SCC when it was received in March, and the report should have been sent back for modification before it was released to the public. At the very least, SCC should demand a more thorough breakdown of the data, and if necessary, a further survey of businesses in Portswood Road between the Lodge Road and Brookvale Road junctions, all of which will experience restricted access by car (see below). SCC should also consider whether it was appropriate to present the conclusions of the report as fact in the preamble to the consultation questionnaire, and whether their having done so may invalidate the results of the consultation.

### 3. Tackling crime and antisocial behaviour

Many residents will be unaware until now of the overall level of crime in the wider Portswood area: although shoplifting and anti-social behaviour are obvious in the shopping area, the average of 5 violent crimes reported each day should be deeply concerning to those living in relatively crime-free Highfield, Bassett\* and St Denys. Police data (June 2023) shows a high concentration of crime immediately to the east of the Broadway – **23% of the total crimes in just 2% of the area**. Residents’ concerns that the semi-pedestrianised area will become a focus for street-level crime therefore seem entirely justified. SCC’s response mentions CCTV and more collaboration with the police but is generally vague and unconvincing as to how these measures might work.

Chart 6: UK Crime Stats – crime breakdown in Portswood, Feb 2022-Jan 2023



Numbers in circles are reported crimes + Anti-Social Behaviour for June 2023

\* Police statistics for "Portswood" combine Portswood, Bassett and Swaythling

#### Missing information

#### Lodge Road/Portswood Junction

The 2022 proposals included a scheme to alter the Lodge Road/Portswood Road junction, which would restrict car traffic northwards towards Portswood. SCC have confirmed that this has been approved in principle, because there were few objections in the 2022 consultation.

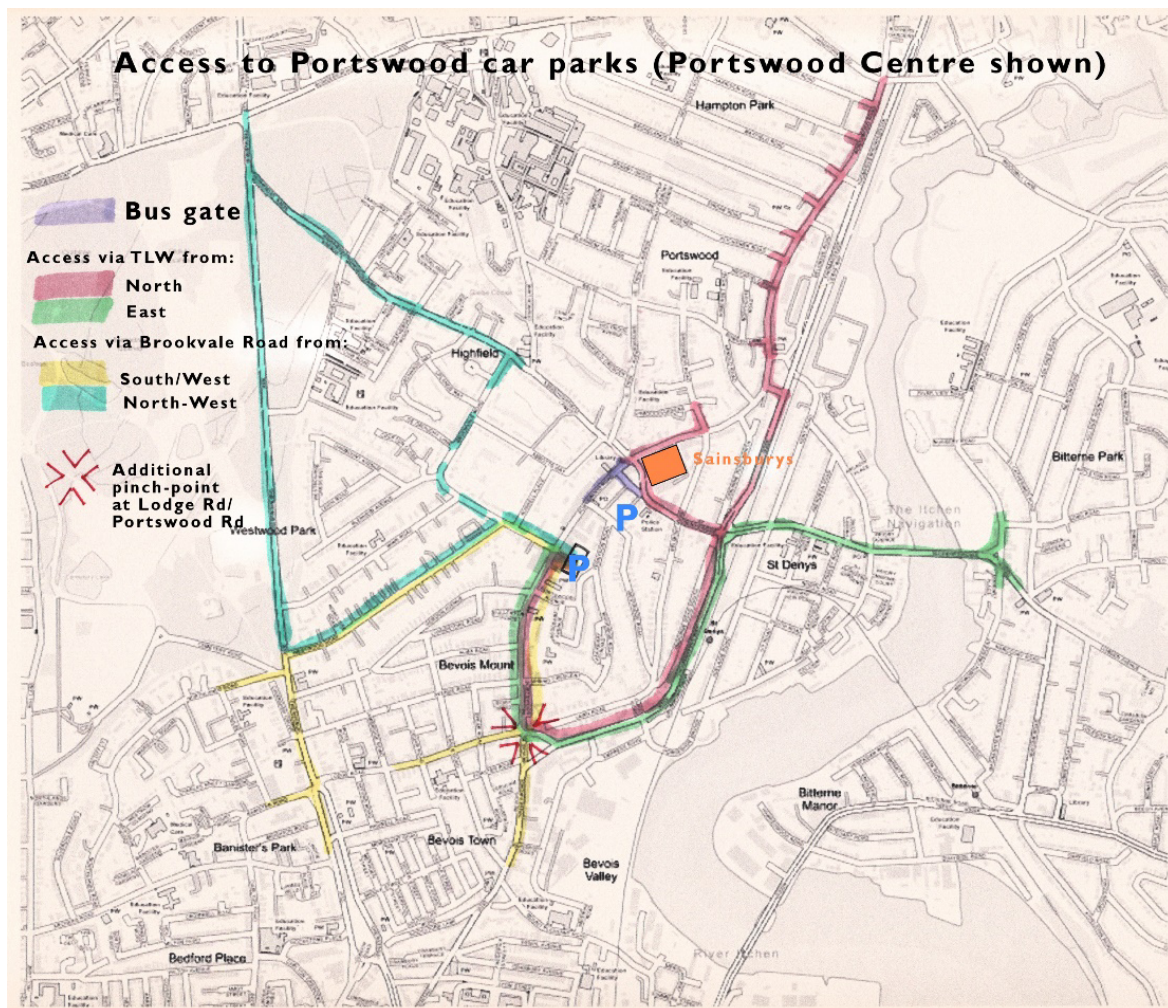
At the consultation session on 6<sup>th</sup> September, SCC claimed that turning right from TLW into Portswood Road will be made easier, but as yet there are no documents available to show how they intend to achieve this. According to the 2022 consultation document, the new road layout will be specifically 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".

A redesign allowing more cars into south Portswood might mitigate some of the deleterious effects of the bus-gate, as noted below.

## Car traffic to south Portswood – access from neighbouring districts

Little consideration seems to have been given to the impact of the bus-gate on the businesses at the southern end of Portswood. Several of these self-evidently rely on customers arriving by car in order to transport heavy and/or bulky loads (three supermarkets, a furniture store and a hardware store).

Car journeys to the public car parks from Bitterne Park, St Denys, Swaythling, Hampton Park and Upper Highfield (“Portswood” on the map) will be increased by 1.5 km (see map below). Also, the additional “pinch-point” planned for the Portswood Road/Lodge Road junction will add to the time taken to make these trips.



Car Journey times from Highfield and Bassett will also increase, to an extent depending on the measures taken to reduce through traffic through Brookvale Road/Abbotts Way.

Businesses in this southern area will therefore most likely see a significant loss of trade to alternative stores nearby (e.g. Sainsbury's in Portswood, other supermarkets in Bevois Valley, Banister's Park, Bitterne). Those which are local stores may decide to close, those which are national chains to relocate. As the area declines, few new users will be found for the premises, which will likely then become a focus for criminal activity.

## **Appendix: ‘Portswood District Economic Impact Assessment’**

(March 2023, Rise Associates/Dibobi)

This report purports to present, “an objective and evidence-led approach” to the likely economic effects of the proposals for the Portswood District Centre. It concludes that these changes might lead to an improvement of about 5% in trade in the area, generating about 17 FTE jobs. This conclusion is unreliable since the survey is self-evidently neither objective nor properly conducted.

1. A bias in favour of the scheme is evident throughout the report, for example, “our history of working on regeneration projects across the country and studying other similar schemes tells us that change of this nature is often resisted” (p4). The opinions of businesses opposing the scheme are dismissed out of hand as the consequence of ignorance (“incredibly hostile ... often for reasons that didn’t stand up to much scrutiny” p21) and there are thinly veiled claims of intimidation directed at the scheme’s supporters (“Some of those in favour of the scheme did not want to be named and were fearful of reprisals” p21).

Given this systemic bias, the predictions of growth cannot be taken as reliable. Nonetheless, the conclusions of the report have been presented in the SCC questionnaire as indisputable fact.

2. There are serious flaws in the survey of businesses which make its conclusions unreliable.
  - a) The area covered by the survey of businesses is not made clear, other than that Sainsburys was arbitrarily excluded and 93 businesses were included. There appear to be about 90 businesses between the junctions with Highfield Lane and Brookvale Road, so this may have been the area covered. Were the businesses in the Portswood District Centre, and Waitrose (opposite), included? Why was Sainsburys excluded, when it might reasonably be assumed that shoppers who are primarily travelling to Portswood to use that store could be tempted to extend their visit by a new attractive area just across St Denys Road? How were the 30 businesses interviewed chosen? Were they concentrated in the area proposed for semi-pedestrianisation?
  - b) Any professionally conducted projection from a sample to a complete population should indicate how reliable that projection is, but the prediction of 5% growth is presented as fact. Put simply, what is the likelihood that the growth will be zero, or negative, or 10%?
  - c) The report makes no distinction between businesses that adjoin the area to be improved (north of Westridge Road) and those that do not (south of Westridge Road). Access to businesses to the south (and both public carparks) will be significantly restricted to those travelling there by car coming from the east, west and north of the city. There are at least five retailers in the southern area for which customer access by car may be considered essential.
  - d) The report makes no reference to additional restrictions on traffic turning northwards at the Lodge Road/Portswood Road junction. It is unclear therefore whether the businesses surveyed were made aware of this additional restriction on car traffic entering Portswood from the south.



- e) Taking points c) and d) together, it seems likely that the projection of 5% economic growth for the District Centre as a whole, even if correct, conceals a substantial disparity between a possible improvement in the north, especially if the potential for increased trade by Sainsburys were to be included, and a potentially catastrophic loss of trade in the south. Can the data be reanalysed to separate the northern and southern halves? If the data is biased towards the area to be pedestrianised, the survey should be repeated by a genuinely independent, unbiased, professional organisation, covering all the businesses from Sainsburys to Lodge Road.

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