

## Consultation – PP poor showing. Statement to BANES Council 25<sup>th</sup> March 2021

I want to speak tonight on something that I really sense the Council need to be held to account over – which is by my estimation the poor level of consultation that we are experiencing in the City.

I was minded to do this after an ever-increasing series of examples became apparent to me, and the online clamour was breaking the noise levels, and so I genuinely felt something should be said at Council.

It has not been the easiest of years for any local authority, and I am certain that our Council has done some good work in keeping services going and progressing their own manifesto.

The difficulty I have, however, is that too big a proportion of the things being put through are not clear in the manifesto and appear to be more of a hidden 'Agenda', do not have sufficient or sometimes any consultation, and all too often even when there is some, the timeframe is too short, or the questions are too skewed. I am suggesting that Bath really should have better!

Let me give you some examples:

1. North Road Busgate - – 'no meaningful consultation-gate' might be a more appropriate phrase! Neither the public nor the stakeholders on the hill such as KES have been consulted correctly – just Quoting from a letter to all parents from the School:

a. The current proposal does not seem to be supported by data

b. The School is also disappointed that key Council Officers and Councillors in the Cabinet had not taken the opportunity to visit the School prior to the final scheme being published

I genuinely wonder how the 'Experimental Traffic Regulation Order' was chosen, as there are so many comments locally as to its 'madness' and lack of foresight. Fine to use in areas where there is unlikely to be so much opposition – poor conclusion – inept!

I also note that a former LD candidate Adam Reynolds appears to be very supportive of it, indeed appears to have a lot of 'inside'

information on it – I have often wondered if he was in some way employed by the Administration ...although perhaps not, as he appears to have rather spectacularly fallen out online with the Mayor on this subject – Will he stand again I wonder; I rather hope so...

Anyway, I'm assuming it wasn't him (or indeed the Mayor and Cllr for North Road) that chose the scheme – so who did, and why didn't they consult? In any case, it doesn't take a huge intellect to conclude that a bike 'route' that is not as direct and has over a 500-foot climb is likely to be massively more used than it presently is.

2. Entry Hill – Not properly consulted on and have completely failed to properly model on dispersed Traffic pollution. Specifically, and pretty worryingly, I have been informed the New Residents Association on Entry Hill excluded any non-LD from attending or speaking in order to give false evidence to the Council that the Community wanted it.
3. High Common Approach Golf cse – No consultation at all – in this instance as it was claimed that a Frisbee course was the same as a Golf one. Thousands disagreed, which resulted in a climb down by the Council.
4. Low Traffic Neighbourhood questionnaires, done by a no doubt expensive London agency and in my view very poor value for money. There is massively insufficient "internal reliability" and therefore psychometrically flawed. The report notes that the level of bias introduced is 'unknown', but wrongly concludes that this was not a serious issue. It is.

Overall, this scale would be laughed out of town if submitted to a peer reviewed academic journal and a well-trained undergraduate student could have done a much better job.

There was no question on political views, household income or education levels.

What was apparent on the Entry Hill skewed consultation was that cyclists from as far away as the North of Scotland were expressing their view – hardly local or representative consultation!

There are SO many other examples to quote from such as the excessive 'Ring of steel' and no mobility impaired access never mind looking appalling.

, but sadly no time left, so I will just leave you with a summary from the Councils own

'Community Engagement Charter' when it states what it will do:

- \* discuss a proposal when it is at a formative stage. **North Road / Approach Golf Cse**
- \* provide sufficient information to allow intelligent consideration. **Skewed questionnaires not fit for purpose.**
- \* ensure there is adequate time for a considered response. – **too often only 2 weeks!**
- \* conscientiously take responses into account. – not fully **published for the public to see and scrutinise.**
- \* provide feedback on our decisions. – **Not seen anything meaningful yet, apart from U-turns.**

Please can I request that you follow your own Charter and just - 'do better by Bath'.