

Presentation to Cabinet 20th July 2021 18:30

I speak to the extant City Centre Security Plan in relation to the disabled and blue badge holders.

Our son is assessed as unable to walk more than 50 metres, & in receipt of mobility allowance. Last summer, he decided to invest 3 years of his allowance in a Motability car, so we could drive him right to where he needs to go. Imagine our shock when we learnt the Council was planning to make the centre of the city of his birth, and birthright, an exclusion zone for him.

I feel, given recent announcements, I am pushing at an open door, but the proposal was published under your watch, and the council, a *Liberal Democrat council*, is responsible for all the distress caused. I trust you agree that the rights of the disabled must not be collateral damage in a glorious climate emergency “revolution”, with barricades everywhere.

The plan is unlawful, in that it fails to meet the council’s equality duty. Were the council to proceed, it should be defeated at Judicial Review.

The premise on which the plan is presented, security, is flawed. I submitted a F.O.I. request for the discussions between the council and police, but was denied. There is no specific security threat, so there can be no grounds for denying the public access to the justification for infringing their freedoms. This is abuse of power.

The threat that the plan seeks to address is a vehicle used as a weapon, such as in the appalling Westminster Bridge attack. But the Bridge is not closed to traffic, a barrier has been erected between the roadway and the pavement, keeping pedestrians safe. Whitehall is open to traffic, pedestrians protected by bollards, as are Trafalgar Square and by Buckingham Palace. Yet these are orders of magnitude higher profile targets for terrorism than Cheap Street. We in Bath can protect pedestrians with bollards while leaving our roads open.

Your manifesto states “We will limit access to City Centre so that the vehicles that need to be there can get in”. No mention of security. Nobody would reasonably have expected that you would consider that the disabled don’t need to get in. You have no political mandate for this plan. So chuck it out.

