

Brighton & Hove Friends of the Earth

## News Release

For Immediate Release: Wednesday, 20 September, 2017

# Is Preston Barracks development legal?

Brighton & Hove Friends of the Earth (BHFOE) [1] while welcoming the proposals to redevelop Preston Barracks, is objecting to the big increase in car parking [2] on traffic and air pollution grounds. The development risks delaying compliance of nearby roads with the legal limits for nitrogen dioxide and could therefore be illegal [3]. It is being decided next Wednesday (27<sup>th</sup> September) [4].

What is astonishing is that the development is being promoted by the University of Brighton whose Vice Chancellor, Professor Debra Humphris recently called on the Government to take more notice of an air pollution crisis facing the planet [5].

Currently in Brighton & Hove there are around 175 premature deaths due to air pollution [6], mostly due to traffic. For most pollutants there are no known safe levels.

BHFOE is also objecting to the lack of improvements to accessibility to Moulsecoomb Station and has concerns about the operation of the cycle parking.

Chris Todd of BHFOE said:

“It is somewhat ironic that the University of Brighton is behind a development that will increase air pollution. Apart from the fact that it actively promotes its green credentials, its vice chancellor was recently warning of the need to urgently tackle air pollution. At the same time its academics have done groundbreaking work in this field and have strongly criticised the Government’s poor response to the whole issue.

“It’s time the University put its money where its mouth is. This is a much needed and welcome development in many ways, let down by an out of date approach to transport. It is quite easy to resolve. Cap the car parking at current levels for the whole site. That way traffic levels and pollution will not be made worse and public health will not be at risk.

“If a university with air pollution experts cannot get it right, what hope is there for the rest of us?”

**ENDS**

Notes to editors:

- [1] For more information on BHFOE see: <http://bhfoe.org/>
- [2] Car parking across the whole site is set to rise from the current 621 spaces to 800, a rise of 179 spaces or a 28% increase – figures taken from Brighton & Hove City Council [Highways report](#) (page 11) and Planning Committee [Draft Report](#) (page 27) for next week’s meeting. This represents 49 fewer spaces than first proposed.
- [3] Hollingdean Road, the Vogue Gyratory and Lewes Road south of the Vogue Gyratory have nitrogen dioxide levels above legal limits – from Environmental Health – [Air Quality report](#) (page 6)
- [4] Brighton & Hove City Council’s Planning Committee will meet at 1pm on Wednesday, 27<sup>th</sup> September, 2017 to decide the Preston Barracks redevelopment. It is a special meeting of the planning committee.
- [5] [Warning: act now over air pollution crisis](#) - article in The Argus, 23 July, 2017
- [6] There are around 175 premature deaths each year due to air pollution within the city. Information from the [Brighton & Hove City Council Air Quality Action Plan 2015 report \(page 2\)](#). Latest figures for air pollution in the city are in the [Air Quality Annual Status Report 2016](#).