

Road Space Audit

Everyone who lives or who visits Chichester will be affected by the Road Space Audit which is open to consultation until the end of October. City Councillor, Sarah Sharp, met with residents to encourage taking part in the survey. The Road Space Audit aims to look at how the road is shared between different road users but in reality it confirms the dominance of the car. Charging on every street for Residents' permits and adding to that permits for commuters and visitors during the day will boost the councils' coffers but comes at a cost. Residential streets will effectively be used as day-time car parks, reducing peace and quiet for elderly residents and children. Conflicts could arise in the afternoons as residents return from work and commuters have not yet left the city. This sort of situation will be carefully monitored we are told but the Green Party urges caution.

The Audit dismisses the need for safe cycle lanes. It fails to prioritize bus use or putting aside bus lanes. It could ruin the view of streets such as Via Ravenna or Avenue de Chartres. Dual carriageways are clearly not appropriate for city centre locations but adding a parking lane without considering the use of a cycle lane introduces more risk of car dooring*. The Audit claims to support the idea of "To not Through" but there is little evidence of how this will be achieved. The Green Party points out that greater emphasis on sustainable modes and Park & Ride would have a bigger effect on people's travel modes.

Sarah and colleagues are targeting problem streets over the month of October and encourage people who live or visit the city to fill in the on-line form: <https://haveyoursay.westsussex.gov.uk/highways-and-transport/chichester-rsa/>

The document attached to this consultation is over 100 pages long. Sarah also raised concerns that expecting people to read and understand such a long report is unrealistic. More effort should have been made to present the scheme in an easy to understand and more readable form. Few people have the time to devote to reading such a complex paper and failure to present key information in an easier to digest form is a real let down. Parking is a burning issue for many people. The ramifications need to be easily understood as costs will rise for many people who now park on outlying streets to avoid parking costs. At a time of rising food and fuel poverty this will cause some households distress. Residents too will be expected to bear extra costs without having the assurance that they will be able to get a place on their return home. On the other hand imposing charges on those who use the roads and pollute the air could have benefits - the polluter pays. But we need to ensure any revenues are ploughed back into real sustainable modes that will solve our congestion problems in the long-term. Without making bus fares more affordable, this Audit doesn't help those on low incomes to get access to jobs or services - for many the bus fare from Chichester to Bognor** or Selsey*** is a real barrier to employment or education chances.

* Car Dooring - risk to cyclists from motorists opening car doors without looking properly <http://www.cyclingweekly.com/news/latest-news/car-dooring-needs-to-be-addressed-by-government-says-cycling-group-350678>

** Bognor to Chichester return fare: £7.00

***Selsey to Chichester return fare: £7.10