

Possability People and BADGE - Disabled Car User Advisory Group special meeting about B&H Red Routes and Accessibility – Wednesday 4 June 2025

**Overview and Purpose**

This meeting gathered input from disabled residents and their carers, community organisations, and council officers regarding the impact of the existing Red Route schemes in London and Lewes Road, and the new proposed one for Western Road, in Brighton & Hove. It included discussion during the meeting and submitted written evidence from people unable to attend. The focus of the meeting was on how the red routes have affected mobility access and community equality for disabled people and their carers living in the city.

# Traffic Flow and Enforcement

Council officers described red route schemes as successful in improving traffic flow and reducing illegal parking.

“We’ve got very significant numbers of people illegally parking and being quite blatant about it.”

There was support from some participants for better bus reliability due to traffic management.

“We can get buses on time… there’s been real positive improvements for bus users.”

However, there were serious concerns raised about how enforcement practices and changes to yellow lines have impacted disabled people who rely on door-to-door vehicle access.

# Accessibility Concerns

A wide range of mobility-disabled people, many not wheelchair users, explained the practical and essential role private vehicles play in their daily lives:

“A car is not a luxury – it’s my mobility aid.”

“I can’t leave home without significant help and need door-to-door transport.”

“Being ‘dropped off’ even a short distance away is not an option.”

Red routes were described as eliminating access to essential services like opticians, GPs, or community facilities:

“Western Road red route will block access to my newly found optician… It repeats the earlier loss from London Road red route.”

Attendees raised the issue of non-obvious accessibility:

“People have to assess each building’s whole situation… this is what accessibility is in ‘real-disability’ world.”

“Loading bays and scattered Blue Badge bays are not viable if you can’t move safely outside the car.”

Community organisations echoed these concerns:

“Our members find it very difficult to navigate pavements when there are spill-outs from pubs or parked cars. They feel intimidated asking people to move.” (Speakout)

“Parking has become more challenging due to red lines and cycle lanes. Clients and staff with Blue Badges have received tickets.” (Southdown)

# Consultation and Communication

Participants felt they were poorly informed about timelines and that their feedback often goes unheard or is not meaningfully considered:

“As a disabled person… we never get to know about time scales.”

“Complaints go unrecognised, counted only as feedback. We’re forced to engage with inaccessible systems.”

Many reported a sense of isolation and distrust:

“There’s minimal engagement with severely mobility disabled residents.”

“We cannot risk our health by complaining anymore.”

# Additional Expenses for Disabled People

The benefits for the majority of residents around bus times and less obstructions are coming at the expense of access for disabled people:

“Policy intentions may be good, but the impact is exclusion.”

Disabled people expressed concerns that they need to do additional administration to dispute a penalty notice or make a complaint.

“I’m exhausted by needing to deal with the paperwork that is related to managing the letter when it comes”.

# Technical and Enforcement Clarifications

Officers clarified that red routes are enforced by human-reviewed CCTV footage, not automatic number plate recognition.

“Footage is reviewed on a case-by-case basis by officers.”

Concerns remain about fairness in enforcement:

“Disabled person without a Blue Badge was fined for taking too long to get back to an unspecified-timed loading bay.”

“If fined, it’s difficult to apply for the ‘money-back’. Disabled people often give up.”

# Participant Reflections and Lived Experience

Powerful personal reflections highlighted the emotional, physical, and financial toll of poor accessibility planning:

“Every ‘lost’ service means restarting the exhausting, demoralising process of finding a new one.”

“My appointment costs have increased, it’s £90+ just for two PAs and a vehicle. That doesn’t include the actual appointment.”

“These barriers cause emotional distress, isolation, and loss of dignity.”

Others highlighted broader systemic issues:

“There are no local strategies for car-dependent mobility needs. No data on how mobility-impaired people move about the city.”

“Road changes block vehicle access and push us into further isolation.”

Final reflections underscored a plea for leadership and inclusion:

“Stop deprioritising accessibility when it conflicts with other policy goals.”

“B&H is supposed to be an accessible city. Councils are legally required to reduce stigma, not contribute to it.”

# Recommendations from the group

* Protect existing Blue Badge and yellow line provisions.
* Co-design access strategies that reflect real lived experience.
* Gather and act on mobility-specific data - not just on wheelchair use.
* Include disabled people early in the decision-making process.
* Ensure complaint and feedback processes are accessible, proactive, and trauma-informed.
* Provide clear, accessible parking maps with updates about enforcement zones.
* Any change to the city infrastructure is a chance to improve access, supporting the ambition of the Accessible City Strategy, and go beyond the bare minimum.
* Further meetings with disabled people and carers are needed to work through these proposals.

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