

Brighton & Hove City Council's "Kingsway to the Sea" application

To whom it may concern,

I am writing in support of Brighton & Hove City Council's "Kingsway to the Sea" application

I coordinate Scope's community work in Brighton and Hove, through our Local People Programme since 2015 and now our Active Communities programme since 2021, funded by People's Health Trust with money raised through Health Lottery South East.

Scope is the disability equality charity in England and Wales. We provide practical information and emotional support when it's most needed, and campaign relentlessly to create a fairer society.

The Local People Programme supported disabled people and unpaid carers in specific localities to identify issues, share experiences and come together to design improvements and solutions to local access barriers. This happened in many ways depending on the needs on those involved, including one-to-one conversations, correspondence, small workshops and larger meetings. Intended outcomes include increased social connectedness, longer-term community links, individual capacity-building and local structural change. Some activities were supported as part of the programme, and a large focus was on supporting local project and campaign work.

Since the start of our community work in 2015, beach and seafront access has been highlighted as a significant inequality and frustration for local disabled people and those with other access needs. We have been working slowly with local people to research and improve matters, and the Beach Access Team, Brighton & Hove group formed from this work and are achieving great things. They are formed of a core Committee of disabled people and unpaid carers, and have a wider membership of the same as well as community support from other residents. BAT continue to be

supported through Scope's current Active Communities programme. I also sit as an advisory member of their Committee and am part of Brighton & Hove City Council's working party on beach access with other Beach Access Team members and stakeholders.

Better access to the seafront in West Hove (where things can often be quieter and more accessible on a sensory level than the very busy and crowded areas) would make a significant difference to the many disabled residents (whether adults or children) and their loved ones, who can currently not fully enjoy or benefit from the facilities and spaces available. As so much of public life in the city revolves around the seafront, this exclusion from equal access to social activities and public spaces has a big impact. The area that the application relates to has fallen into significant disrepair and many issues make access for disabled residents and tourists difficult if not impossible. The location is one which our community research identified as a priority area for disabled people.

Brighton & Hove City Council, and in particular the Seafront Team and Toni Manuel, have been very open to transparent partnership working and utilising all available resources to make sure that their work adds the most value possible for all potential beneficiaries and users. At least 1 in 5 people in the UK are disabled, and this will only increase in the future as the UK has an aging population. Information and advice previously given has been acted upon. However, they do not have the funds which are needed to transform and regenerate this space to make it as fully accessible as it can be.

I fully support their application, and think it could be a real turning point for increased access to activities and public space on the seafront in West Hove. Having such transformed access to support disabled residents and visitors with all impairments would be fantastic for the city, and enable disabled people can access the wide variety of activities already on the seafront as well as be able to spend time with loved ones in a way that so many others take for granted.

Please contact me in writing if you require any further information.

Yours faithfully,

Harriet Cavanagh