

Tel: 01273 325311 Top Flat  
61 Lansdowne Place  
Email: colinbennett@onetel.com HOVE East Sussex  
BN3 1FL  
3 February 2005

Mr Alan McCarthy  
Chief Executive  
Brighton and Hove City Council  
King's House  
Grand Avenue  
HOVE  
BY HAND

Dear Mr McCarthy

#### PROVISION FOR DISABLED PEOPLE AT BRIGHTON TOWN HALL

I write further to my discussions with the Council about the lack of an induction loop or similar provision for hearing-impaired people in the Public Gallery to the Council Chamber at Brighton Town Hall.

I refer in particular to my telephone conversation with Heather Jones concerning the suitability of it for the Falner Public Inquiry which resumed on 2 February 2005.

In essence, Ms Jones trenchantly maintained that there was an induction loop in the Public Gallery and that it would be working from 2 February. I was sceptical, stating <sup>3</sup>We have been here before<sup>2</sup>.

As promised, I attended the opening of the Inquiry yesterday and was not at all surprised to confirm that there was indeed no induction loop in the PG.

I made this clear to the Inspector from the Public Gallery and he responded.

He invited me to sit in the seats reserved for direct participants. I

accepted that offer, having irrefutably made the point-in the presence of

many witnesses- including the Press-that there was indeed no induction loop

or similar technology in the PG. Once in the reserved seats, I was able to hear well those who used the microphones correctly by means of the induction loop skirting the reserved seats.

Where do we go from here? As promised should the mythical induction loop fail to materialise, I complained to the DRC and the Complaint No. is 499116.

There is a formal procedure to follow of which this letter is the first step. However, I want to make it clear that I am not looking for a fight or to rub the Council's nose in its shortcomings. I want us all to start with a clean sheet and for the Council to address the reasonable expectations of disabled people as set out in the DDA, 1995. I refer you to Sections 5.31 et seq. of the DRC's

Code of Practice.

I look forward to discussions with your staff so that, at last, problems can be resolved without acrimony, litigation or waste of time and money.

Yours sincerely

Colin B Bennett