

Subject:	Madeira Drive - Items referred from the Special Council meeting held on the 13 August 2020		
Date of Meeting:	29 September 2020		
Report of:	Executive Lead Officer for Strategy, Governance & Law		
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Wards Affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 To receive the following petitions for consideration which were debated at and referred from the Special Council meeting held on the 13 August 2020.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the petition calling for Madeira Drive to be re-opened be noted;
2.2 That the petition calling for Madeira Drive to remain closed be noted.

3. CONTEXT / BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The petitions are detailed below:

(i) RE-OPEN MADEIRA DRIVE

- 3.1.1 We the undersigned petition Brighton & Hove Council to reopen Brighton's Madeira Drive to all users without further delay to save the businesses operating there, reinstate access for motorcyclists, scooterists, taxis and coaches, and enable visitor parking.

Brighton and Hove has suffered enormous economic damage owing to lockdown and needs all the help it can get to recover.

Lead Petitioner – Laura King

(ii) KEEP MADEIRA DRIVE CLOSED

- 3.1.2 We the undersigned petition Brighton & Hove Council to extend the road closure of Madeira Drive for the rest of the year, since it provides crucial exercising space for local residents to use (whilst following social distancing) without the risk of road traffic accidents.

Since its closure to road traffic in April due to COVID-19, Madeira Drive has provided lots of additional safe space for walking and exercise and is always busy. There is plenty of road parking on Marine Parade, which is always empty.

Lead Petitioner – Ian Ross

- 3.2 An extract from the minutes of the special council meeting held on the 13 August 2020 is detailed below setting out the petition and recommendations for the committee to consider:

SPECIAL COUNCIL

4.30pm 13 AUGUST 2020

VIRTUAL MEETING - SKYPE

MINUTES

Present: Councillors Robins (Chair), Mears (Deputy Chair), Allcock, Appich, Atkinson, Bagaeen, Barnett, Brennan, Childs, Clare, Deane, Druitt, Evans, Fishleigh, Fowler, Gibson, Hamilton, Heley, Hill, Hills, Hugh-Jones, Janio, Knight, Lewry, Littman, Lloyd, Mac Cafferty, McNair, Miller, Moonan, Nemeth, Nield, O'Quinn, Osborne, Peltzer Dunn, Phillips, Pissaridou, Platts, Powell, Shanks, C Theobald, Wares, West, Wilkinson and Williams

PART ONE

32 PETITIONS FOR DEBATE.

- (2) (i) RE-OPEN MADEIRA DRIVE**
(ii) KEEP MADEIRA DRIVE CLOSED

32.1 The Mayor stated that where a petition secured 1,250 or more signatures it could be debated at the council meeting. He had been made aware of six such petitions and would take each in turn, although those relating to Madeira Drive and Old Shoreham Road would be taken in one debate as there were petitions in favour and against the proposals.

32.2 He noted that there were amendments to the cover reports' recommendations for the first petition, the second and third petitions which would be taken as part of the debate on the matter in question.

32.15 The Mayor then invited Ms. Laura King and Mr. Ollie Wilson to present the petition calling for Madeira Drive to be re-opened. However, due to technical difficulties Ms. King and Mr. Ross were unable to join the meeting and the Mayor therefore called on Mr. Ross to present the petition calling for Madeira Drive to remain closed.

- 32.16 Mr. Ross thanked the Mayor and noted that the petition had secured 2,884 signatures supporting the continued closure of Madeira Drive. He stated that Covid-19 was far from over and the closure of the road had enabled people to take exercise safely and helped to improve the environment. He recognised the need for disabled parking to be available at both ends of the Drive so that people with disabilities could also enjoy the benefit of the road closure. He believed that the closure would not prevent the use of the Drive for specific events in the city such as the Brighton Marathon or the veteran car race. He believed the council had the opportunity to take a bold decision and stop Madeira Drive from being a seafront car park and to look at the long-term future for the area and the city.
- 32.17 The Mayor thanked Mr. Ross and noted that Ms. King was still having technical difficulties and stated that he would adjourn the meeting for ten minutes to enable officers and Ms. King to try to resolve the problem. He then adjourned the meeting at 18.07pm.
- 32.18 The Mayor reconvened the meeting at 18.15pm and invited Ms. King and Mr. Wilson to present their petition.
- 32.19 Ms. King and Mr. Wilson thanked the Mayor and stated that the petition which had been signed by 9,748 people called on the Council to re-open Madeira Drive. They believed that the closure had been a temporary measure and that there was now a need to recognise that lockdown restrictions had been lifted and to give access back to the many motorists who used Madeira Drive as well as enabling local businesses to re-open. The use of Madeira Drive for events such as the London to Brighton car run and filming of Quadrophenia brought visitors and tourists to the city and benefitted the economy. The continued closure would impact on people and prevent them from being able to gain access to the Pier etc. and be detrimental to the campaign to restore the Terraces. They therefore hoped that the council would see the need to re-open Madeira Drive and acknowledge the support for this request.
- 32.20 The Mayor thanked Ms. King and Mr. Wilson and invited Councillor West as Joint Chair of the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee to respond to the petitions.
- 32.21 Councillor West thanked the petitioners for presenting their petitions and acknowledged the strength and diversity of views held in regard to the matter. It does appear that a number of local people clearly support the continued closure of Madeira Drive, whilst others feel there is a need to open it to traffic to enable others to come into the city and enjoy the area. The intention is to review matter at the September Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee and I note that adjustments have been made to enable parking at the far end. It will not be possible to undertake any further changes as there is a need for consultation and review which will need to be considered by the committee. In regard to the two amendments to be put forward, it will not be possible to support either of these given the required work that needs to be undertaken and time constraints. I will take a personal interest in the situation to ensure that all concerns can be considered, and any minor alterations put in place as necessary.

- 32.22 Councillor Fishleigh moved an amendment as an Independent Member and referred to the Facebook page of the Blue Badge holders, BADGE who felt that their needs were not being addressed by the implementation of such changes in Madeira Drive and across the city. The closure of Madeira Drive meant that toilets were in accessible and permission had to be obtained from marshals. She also stated that a full environmental impact was required and should be completed as part of the report to the committee in September. There was also a need to fully quantify the environmental and traffic impact for the whole area to assist in a rational informed decision for Madeira Drive.
- 32.23 Councillor Janio formally seconded the amendment as an Independent Member and reserved his right to speak.
- 32.24 Councillor Wares moved an amendment on behalf of the Conservative Group and noted that a considered evidenced based decision would be required, and that the amendment sought to support local businesses ahead of the scheduled meeting in September. The council has taken decisions quickly and he believed that a report could be produced ahead of that meeting for an urgent committee as officers would already have been preparing information for the September meeting. It was possible to alter the traffic regulation order and it was possible to consider the petitions and a report on the 21st August if the Administration had the desire to do so.
- 32.25 Councillor Miller formally seconded the amendment and thanked the petitioners for their work. He noted that the closure of Madeira Drive had had some adverse impact for users and local business in Madeira Drive hence the importance to act as quickly as they had in determining the closure. He therefore urged all councillors to support the amendment.
- 32.26 Councillor Wilkinson thanked all the petitioners and commended the work of those involved in bringing them forward. He believed there was a need for the petitions to come to the ETS committee in September along with an officer report so that the committee Members could give full consideration to the issues. He noted that the Government had encouraged local authorities to take action and improve walking and cycling facilities and road layouts and there had already been a significant increase in the people cycling across the city and the country. There was a need to consider the impact of changes in terms of parking income road use, environmental improvements and people's health etc. and as such could not support the amendments that had been moved. He therefore looked forward to the petitions and the report being considered by the committee in due course.
- 32.27 The Mayor congratulated Councillor Wilkinson on his maiden speech on behalf of the council.
- 32.28 Councillor Janio stated that the decision to create temporary cycle lanes was not the answer and referred to the Dutch who he felt were the exemplar in relation to cycling. It has to be a shared experience and should not disadvantage any one group, and yet decisions were being taken without any real evidenced-based facts and such decisions should be stopped.

32.29 Councillor Williams stated that there was a need to remember that the swift action that had been taken was in response to the pandemic and it was far from over. She also noted that a consultation exercise was being undertaken and the results should be considered by the committee.

32.30 Councillor Mac Cafferty stated that the Green Group would not support the amendments and that having become Leader of the Council only in the last few weeks he had already met with interested parties and would continue to meet with those organisations with an interest in helping to bring the city out of the current economic climate. He was acutely aware of the need to invest in the area and noted that a review of the transport plan was due to come to committee in September. An urgent decision had been taken in relation to the pandemic and there was a need to consult with all users and local businesses involved. There were clear differences of opinion on the use of Madeira Drive and there was now an opportunity to give full consideration to best options for the area and how improvements could be made for everyone's benefit. He hoped that the cross-party working group would continue with its work and that funding streams could be identified to support the necessary improvements and looked forward to progress reports coming to committee in due course.

32.31 The Mayor thanked the petitioners for joining the meeting and presenting their petitions and noted that both of the amendments had not been accepted and he would therefore need to put each in turn to the vote.

32.32 The Mayor then put the Conservative amendment to the vote and called on each of the Group Leaders to confirm their position as well as the Groups in turn and each of the Independent Members.

Councillor Mac Cafferty stated that the Green Group were against the amendment and this was confirmed by the Green Group Members;

Councillor Platts stated that the Labour Group were against the amendment and this was confirmed by the Labour Group Members;

Councillor Wares stated that the Conservative were in favour of the amendment and this was confirmed by the Conservative Group Members;

Councillor Brennan confirmed that she was voting against the amendment,

Councillor Fishleigh confirmed that she was voting for the amendment;

Councillor Janio confirmed that he was voting for the amendment;

Councillor Knight confirmed that she was voting against the amendment.

32.33 The Mayor confirmed that the amendment had been lost.

32.34 The Mayor then put the Independent amendment to the vote and called on each of the Group Leaders to confirm their position as well as the Groups in turn and each of the Independent Members.

Councillor Mac Cafferty stated that the Green Group were against the amendment and this was confirmed by the Green Group Members;

Councillor Platts stated that the Labour Group were against the amendment and this was confirmed by the Labour Group Members;

Councillor Wares stated that the Conservative were in favour of the amendment and this was confirmed by the Conservative Group Members;

Councillor Brennan confirmed that she was voting against the amendment,

Councillor Fishleigh confirmed that she was voting for the amendment;

Councillor Janio confirmed that he was voting for the amendment;

Councillor Knight confirmed that she was voting against the amendment.

32.35 The Mayor confirmed that the amendment had been lost.

32.36 The Mayor then put the recommendations to the vote and called on each of the Group Leaders to confirm their position as well as the Groups in turn and each of the Independent Members:

Councillor Mac Cafferty stated that the Green Group were in favour of the recommendations and this was confirmed by the Green Group Members;

Councillor Platts stated that the Labour Group were in favour of the recommendations and this was confirmed by the Labour Group Members;

Councillor Wares stated that the Conservative were in favour of the recommendations and this was confirmed by the Conservative Group Members;

Councillor Brennan confirmed that she was voting in favour of the recommendations;

Councillor Fishleigh confirmed that she was voting in favour of the recommendations;

Councillor Janio confirmed that he was voting in favour of the recommendations;

Councillor Knight confirmed that she was voting in favour of the recommendations.

32.37 The Mayor confirmed that the recommendations to note the petitions and refer them to the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee had been carried.

32.38 **RESOLVED:** That the petitions be noted and referred to the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee for consideration.