

**Council**2<sup>nd</sup> November 2017**Agenda Item 41**

Brighton &amp; Hove City Council

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>George Street Opening Hours</b>
	<b>Extract from the proceedings of the Environment, Transport &amp; Sustainability Committee Meeting held on the 10 October 2017</b>
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>2 November 2017</b>
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Executive Lead for Strategy, Governance &amp; Law</b>
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<b>Wards Affected:</b>	<b>Central Hove</b>

**FOR GENERAL RELEASE*****Action Required of the Full Council:***

To receive the item referred from the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee for information

**Recommendation:**

To note the report.

## BRIGHTON &amp; HOVE CITY COUNCIL

## ENVIRONMENT, TRANSPORT &amp; SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE

4.00pm 10 OCTOBER 2017

## COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL

## MINUTES

**Present:** Councillor Mitchell (Chair) Horan (Deputy Chair), Wares (Opposition Spokesperson), Atkinson, Brown, Nemeth, Page, Peltzer Dunn, Robins and West.

PART ONE**27. GEORGE STREET OPENING HOURS**

- 27.1 The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director, Economy, Environment & Culture that proposed amending the opening hours to traffic in George Street, Hove. A report setting out options had been requested by the committee at its previous meeting held on 27 June 2017.
- 27.2 Councillor Moonan addressed the Committee on the proposals. Councillor Moonan noted that her fellow ward councillor, Councillor Wealls, was also fully in support of the proposals but was unable to attend the committee due to prior commitments. Councillor Moonan stated that a petition had been collated by the local traders and residents that had acquired over 2,600 signatures and a survey carried out and circulated to members of the committee in advance of the meeting that showed 74% support for the proposed change. Councillor Moonan stated that the issue was a difficult one with strong feeling on either side however; the proposals detailed in the report represented a compromise that kept George Street viable to the benefit of the community. Councillor Moonan explained that the removal of the two hours free parking by the local supermarket had led to a huge impact upon levels of trade on George Street with many reporting a 10% to 32% decline in takings. Councillor Moonan added that 75% of those who had answered the survey that also had mobility or visual impairment had said they could visit George Street more easily if the road was open to traffic earlier in the day. Councillor Moonan supplemented that the key to making the proposals a success was increased enforcement as well as increased signage for disabled users and pay and display parking machines. Councillor Moonan stated that the proposals were the beginning of a wider campaign to improve the pedestrian environment on the street and that could include taking action on the persistent driving of cars and bicycles the wrong way down the street, improving safety for pedestrians, introducing street planters and furniture and undertaking measures to reduce anti-social behaviour. Councillor Moonan reminded the committee that the proposals were for just a trial undertaking and she hoped they could be supported by the committee.

- 27.3 Councillor Peltzer Dunn stated that the change in parking arrangements had exacerbated existing issues on George Street. Councillor Peltzer Dunn added that it was uncertain whether trading issues in the street were related to its closure to traffic or a separate issue and a trial arrangement would be a worthwhile exercise to investigate. Councillor Peltzer Dunn stated that the recommendations were incorrect in so far that the trial period would be for seven months, not six.
- 27.4 Councillor Atkinson stated that the proposals struck a balance between the comfort of shoppers and the need of local businesses. Councillor Atkinson noted that the proposals were for a trial and was by no means permanent and the committee owed it to traders to take action on the concerns they had raised.
- 27.5 Councillor West asked if there had been any consultation on the proposals with Brighton & Hove Bus Company and other partners and whether the committee decision to be made was to undertake consultation via the advertisement of an experimental order. Furthermore, Councillor West noted that the Road Safety Manager had observed in 2015 some risk associated with right turning traffic and asked whether those concerns remained. Councillor West enquired as to how the trial would be properly evaluated as there was no detail on assessments within the report.
- 27.6 In response to the questions raised by Councillor West, the Head of Parking Services replied that formal consultation would be undertaken with Brighton & Hove Buses and other partners and stakeholders as part of the six month consultation period, confirmed that if the committee were minded to approve the recommendations that the trial would begin on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 and provided assurance that throughout period of consultation that there would be ongoing dialogue with road safety and accident prevention officers who would also have input into how the trial was working. The Head of Parking Services clarified that the main evaluation would be the comments received to the consultation that would then be presented to the committee alongside the view of officers to make a decision on whether to make the order permanent, revoke the order or amend the order.
- 27.7 Councillor West stated his shock at the proposals detailed in the report. Councillor West observed that in response to a deputation presented to the committee in June, the Chair had highlighted the reasons behind not changing the access arrangements two years previous, including licensing arrangements, that the consultation had reported 85% of people against any change and that a number of road safety issues had been identified. Councillor West noted that there had been no further consultation with partners or the public and he had hoped to see a report that restated the concerns from 2015 with further assessment on the possible causes of a fall in trade on George Street such as the rise in online shopping, whether there was insufficient strength of draw and quality of public place improvements. Councillor West stated that in his view, the problems experienced on George Street were not related to traffic and parking and opening the street to vehicles earlier in the day risked public safety. Councillor West outlined his concern that relations with Brighton & Hove Bus Company were deteriorating and that such a proposal could further sour relations put potential investment opportunities at risk. In addition, the report did not quantify the effect of the earlier opening of George Street on other road users and residents. Councillor West stated that he fully supported the traders on George Street and that the council was doing them a disservice in not considering the wider reasons for a drop in trade. Councillor West repeated that the council needed to support sustainable transport initiatives and it was well researched

fact that people that arrived in shopping areas on foot or by bike spent more money in shops. Councillor West stated the survey and report before the committee was not based on fact and was reckless in its approach to road safety.

- 27.8 On behalf of the Green Group, Councillor West moved a motion to defer the report to consider wider issues.
- 27.9 Councillor Page formally seconded the motion.
- 27.10 Councillor Wares stated that the two Central Hove ward councillors had worked very hard on the matter and it was wrong of them to be accused in such a way by a fellow councillor. Councillor Wares noted that the traders campaigning were well aware of the licensing requirements of their premises. Councillor Wares noted that the 2015 consultation resulting in 85% of people being against the proposal to open George Street earlier to traffic was based on thirty three email submissions yet the petition conducted by the ward councillors and traders had received over 2,600 signatures. Councillor Wares that the committee were uncertain of the reason for the drop in trade in George Street and advertising the experimental order would provide them the information required to make a sound decision, based on fact from officers, traders, local councillors, partners and stakeholders.
- 27.11 Councillor Page stated that George Street had become more pedestrian friendly over time and the only change that had triggered the proposals was the decision of the nearby supermarket to begin charging for parking on their premises. Councillor Page noted that clear evidence had been provided by a local sustainable transport organisation that demonstrated that more money was spent in shops by people arriving by foot or by bike. Councillor Page stated that the survey by the ward councillors appeared to be contradicted by evidence provided by Brighton & Hove Buses. Councillor Page highlighted that the issue was not one simply relating to transport but covered air quality, public realm, road safety and equality of public spaces and the proposals went against the council's own sustainable transport ambitions.
- 27.12 Councillor Nemeth stated that in the context of a unified approach from the George Street traders and ward councillors and it was important for the committee to be minded towards that in reaching a decision.
- 27.13 Councillor Robins concurred with the comment made by Councillor Nemeth and reminded the committee that the proposals were for a trial period alone.
- 27.14 The Chair moved a motion to correct the typographical error on recommendation 2.1 to read "7 months" rather than "6 months".
- 27.15 The Committee were in agreement with the proposal.
- 27.16 The Chair then put the Green Group motion to the vote which failed.
- 27.17 The Chair then put the recommendation to the vote that was agreed.
- 27.18 **RESOLVED:** That Committee agrees that a trial takes place through an experimental Traffic Regulation Order for George Street to open to traffic from the months of April

2018 to October 2018 after 4pm (instead of 6pm). An Experimental Order would be advertised before April 2018 through a notice on street, in the press and on the Council website which would allow comments from the start of the trial for a 7 month period.

## **32 ITEMS REFERRED FOR FULL COUNCIL**

- 32.1 **RESOLVED:** That Item 27: George Street Opening Hours be referred to Full Council for information.

