

CABINET

RECORD OF DECISIONS of the meeting of the Cabinet held on Tuesday, 21 January 2014 at 12.00 pm at the Guildhall, Portsmouth

Present

Councillor Gerald Vernon-Jackson (in the Chair)

Councillors Hugh Mason
Jason Fazackarley
Mike Hancock
Lee Hunt
Rob Wood
Darren Sanders

13. Apologies for Absence (AI 1)

These had been received from Councillors Eleanor Scott and Leo Madden.

14. Declarations of Interests (AI 2)

There were no declarations of members' interests.

15. Palmerston Road (AI 3)

Kathy Wadsworth, Strategic Director for Regeneration, introduced the report and set out the history of the plans for the Southsea Retail Centre and consultation exercises. Following the decision to invest in Palmerston Road South before Osborne Road, work had started in 2012. Members had requested further consultation which had taken place with businesses in November 2012. 59% had indicated they would prefer the road to stay as it had been developed or to be further pedestrianized (17 out of 29 businesses, only 12 wanted it opened up). A further consultation with residents took place with hand delivery of letters in December 2013; by 10 January there had been 40 responses with 26 indicating to keep the road as implemented or be fully pedestrianized; 65% wanted full pedestrianisation. There would be further consideration given to the plants to be used for the planters, and discussion with business regarding loading and unloading solutions. The intention was to revive the retail centre.

The Leader announced that the time allocation would be for a couple of minutes each, which was extending the usual time allocation of 12 minutes for or against. Councillor Luke Stubbs, who had registered to speak, asked that his time allocation be given to those wishing to speak against the proposal to allow them more time. The following deputations were then heard, whose points are summarised:

- (i) Peter Young (of Hong Kong Charlie Bar spoke against the pedestrianisation as during the year of the road closure there had been

very few people using the area until the evenings, so the traders had suffered.

- (ii) Mr Mohammed (Akrams Southsea) whose points against included there was a lot of local support for his family business and people came in from afar due to its unique nature. They were suffering a 50% decline in business and had problems with unloading items and felt that the alcohol consumption was being abused in the area asking that a one way system be introduced.
- (iii) Nazrul Ahmed whose points against included he was also running a well-established local business and the restaurant had seen a dip in trade due to the problems of access and there was a knock-on effect to the surrounding roads. He felt that the consultation process had been flawed and the planters outside his own property prevented his business from joining in the café culture.
- (iv) Tony Meaden whose points against the proposal included as a local resident he had witnessed a decline in this part of Southsea and lessons had not been learned from the drinking culture in Guildhall Walk which had spread here. He was also concerned that not all traders had been consulted and the loss of visitors through the number 700 bus and there would be an additional cost of the road barrier.
- (v) Sophie Curtis spoke as the manager of Preloved Portsmouth whose concerns included the lack of free parking in the area and the lack of access for elderly customers who wished to be within easy walking distance. She spoke of 18 businesses disagreeing with PCC's plans some of which had gone out of business or suffering significantly reduced business and she felt there was more crime in the area.
- (vi) Tony Brown whose points against the proposals included it was an unpopular project; businesses were suffering; this was unsuitable as a pedestrianised area. There were a significant amount of premises selling alcohol with disturbances at night caused by those drinking. The proposal had compromised the 700 bus route.
- (vii) Kirsten Woodgate spoke against the proposal - her own solicitors' business had suffered with the closure to traffic with clients not being able to park nearby for limited periods. The planters were eyesores and full of rubbish, there were problems caused by the traffic flow and the u-turns by those going the wrong way up Auckland Road East; the pedestrianisation was unrealistic and so the road should be reopened.
- (viii) Helen Hughes spoke of her concerns regarding her family who lived at the corner of Palmerston Road and suffering at night regarding the anti-social behaviour caused by the "café culture", problems of cars trying to get out of Villiers Road and turning round. She requested that the road be reopened.

- (ix) Sandy Peters whose points against were that there was not a café culture being experienced and there had been a loss of business, with a more regular presence of police vans in the precinct.
- (x) Jon Spencer spoke on behalf of Portsmouth Cycle Forum to relay their concerns as Palmerston Road is an essential link from the seafront and if this was fully pedestrianised there would be problems with access. He hoped that cyclists would be able to enjoy harmonious use with pedestrians in this area which would promote a healthy lifestyle.
- (xi) Steve Hudson from the Drift Bar spoke in favour of the pedestrianisation and his points included that to encourage continental café culture there was a need to ensure that buses did not go through the road and he felt there should be the chance for local premises to have tables outside.

Councillor Peter Eddis spoke as a ward councillor whose points included that he had met with a lot of residents on the issue and views were split. The ward councillors had tried to implore Stagecoach to keep the No. 700 bus for Southsea but they had requested too large a subsidy for this to happen, but instead the No. 23 bus would run more frequently with the No.700 terminating at The Hard but connecting to the No. 23. It was hoped that the pedestrianisation would encourage shoppers. Not many parking spaces had been lost.

Councillor Donna Jones then spoke stating that there had been inadequate consultation and businesses should be allowed to thrive and there was a great strength of feeling as witnessed by the number of people attending the meeting. She also raised questions regarding the No.700 bus route and associated talk of compensation and the plans for Osborne Road and requested a list of the names of businesses that were in support of the pedestrianisation.

Councillor Stubbs had registered to speak but had given his allocation to the objectors so did not address the meeting.

Councillor Gerald Vernon-Jackson as Leader read out a communication from Stagecoach regarding the importance of the No.700 route and their plans (on the basis of a review of how their three commercial services operate within the City) to increase its frequency and linkage from North End to The Hard with connections through No.23 bus route into Southsea. They had asked for £285,000 as a subsidy to extend the route to South Parade Pier which the Cabinet could not support. The Leader of the Council also referred to the written representations, 13 of which had been circulated to members of the Cabinet for the meeting (from Peter Cairns, Alexander Lyle, Viv Young, Dean Kendall, Patrick Keyes, Jean Reno, Gill Norman, Victoria Leonard Kelly Brimmer, John Brookes, Diana Goss, Jocelyn Wace and Vincent Faithful for the Southsea Association).

The Assistant Head of Transport & Environment reported that the changes to the No.700 bus route would commence in May 2014.

The Cabinet Members felt that a decision had to be made either to open up Palmerston Road South to traffic or to commit to a full pedestrianisation (within the limits of the existing scheme) and there had been full consultation with 6,000 local households, most popular option had been for the full pedestrianisation. There would be an accompanying task force to crack down on anti-social behaviour and increased liaison with the police. Officers would look at the problems raised regarding loading bays needing access for the traders and the need to increase short term car parking in the area.

Councillor Fazackarley as the Cabinet Member for Traffic & Transportation offered to give Councillor Donna Jones a draft report being considered regarding Osborne Road.

It was noted that the town centre's occupancy rates were high and waiting lists for lets in the area. With regard to the comments made regarding the consultation process it was stressed that there had been face to face contact with the businesses requiring signed forms to be submitted and only two had not been able to sign these off as they were part of national chains. As the proposals by Stagecoach for subsidising the No.700 route were uneconomical for the council the solution of the linkage of the No.23 bus to link the shopping centres was welcomed. With regard to the night time activity there would be a new task force set up to look at the noise issues and address concerns linked to the night time environment. It was also felt that there was not a direct correlation between any anti-social late night activity and whether or not the road was pedestrianised.

DECISIONS:

- 1. Members noted the extensive consultation that has been undertaken regarding the Southsea Retail area, and the analysis of the current operation of the Palmerston Road scheme;**
- 2. Members noted the action required to facilitate full pedestrianisation of Palmerston Road with a physical barrier across the road at 11am each morning;**
- 3. That a taskforce is created to address the concerns of anti-social behaviour in Palmerston Road to be led by Councillor Vernon Jackson, and include representation from the following areas: Police, Legal, Licensing, Ward Councillors, PubWatch, the City Centre Manager, Environmental Health, Chair of Southsea Traders, Street Pastors, and a representative from each of the following residential blocks: Villiers Court, Palm Court, Queens Keep and Hamilton House; and the Chair of the Southsea restauranters;**
- 4. Members noted the advice from the City Centre Manager that pedestrianisation will enable the full benefits to be realised, improving the economy within Southsea. It is also noted that the pedestrianised area will enable the increased frequency of**

daytime, family-orientated outdoor markets (for a range of purposes).

5. **Members instructed officers responsible for environmental health, licensing and community safety to be more proactive in dealing with issues of noise and antisocial behaviour;**
 6. **Following representations from both the public and retailers, planters in Palmerston Road are retained as per the majority of the responses received, and there will be further dialogue regarding improvement before any installation of planters in Osborne Road;**
 7. **Relevant officers ensure that re-planting is carried out as a priority with suitable foliage;**
 8. **The Cabinet recognised that the licensing laws relating to the sale of alcohol, regulated entertainment and late night refreshment are deemed to be a non-executive function and therefore no decision making powers are available to it. However, the Cabinet strongly recommends to the Licensing Committee that in those cases where a premises licence allowing late night drinking is subject to review under the provisions of the Licensing Act 2003, serious consideration should be given to the modification of the licence so as to include a requirement that those individual premises should install a suitable system for monitoring persons entering the premises (e.g., ScanNet).**
 9. **The Cabinet acknowledged that in making this recommendation the Licensing Authority will continue to consider such applications on individual merit and will only exercise such powers where appropriate to do so.**
 10. **The Cabinet also recognised and is pleased to note that the majority of late night premises who primarily sell alcohol and provide regulated entertainment in Palmerston Road support the use of such systems as ScanNet and in particular it notes that following discussions with the Police the Slug and Lettuce, Lord Palmerston and Drift Bar are already using these systems and are commended for doing so;**
 11. **That consultation is undertaken to improve and increase short-term parking provision in the vicinity of the southern end of Palmerston Road to support local traders.**
- 16. MB Zone (residents parking - Orchard Road) (AI 4)**

Councillor Stubbs made a deputation and was surprised to see this item before Cabinet as it had not been on the original agenda. He felt this went against the decision made in November 2013 regarding consultation on the MB zone; that this would cause problems to be displaced elsewhere whilst

leaving empty spaces in the MB/MC zone; the correct thing would be to remove the MB zone.

Councillor Eddis then spoke whose concern was that the MB zone was not working and he would welcome a 2 hours exclusion within the day to tackle the problems with commuters parking in the locality. He therefore advocated a change to the scheme not its abolition.

The advice of the City Solicitor had been sought regarding the need for a different decision for the establishment of the MC zone as an experiment of a 2 hour exclusion zone. The City Solicitor requested that the revised plan regarding the MC zone be made available with decision papers.

The Cabinet Members welcomed the concept of restricted hours for parking zones therefore and supported the proposal.

The Assistant Head of Transport & Environment confirmed that there had not been a request from residents in the MB zone for the removal of residents' parking there.

DECISION:

Following the 4th November 2013 cabinet minute 82(1) which decided to extend the MB parking zone, this extension will now be a new zone (MC) operating as "permit holders only" for a 2 hour period each day.

The meeting concluded at 1.50 pm.

Councillor Gerald Vernon-Jackson
Leader of the Council