



Lewes District Council

Scrutiny Committee recommendations for consideration by Cabinet at the meeting on Monday, 2 July 2018

Scrutiny Committee – 28 June 2018

1 Lewes Bonfire Celebrations

Minute extract:

The Scrutiny Committee received the report of the Director of Service Delivery to consider the consultation event with Members held by the Chair of the Tactical Co-ordination Group for station closures on bonfire night on public safety grounds.

The Superintendent of Sussex Police, the Communications and Marketing Manager of East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service and Council Officers appreciated the cultural and historical significance of the event, along with the impact that the proposed station closures would cause; however, there was a notable correlation between attendance and injuries at the event, and the risk to life and property outweighed any inconvenience that may be caused.

Discussion included:

Why there was a need for station closures when the event would be taking place on a Monday which historically had a low turnout. Members were informed of the logistical challenge of not being able to assume how many spectators would attend the event, especially considering the lack of accessibility for the last two years. The proposal recognised that station closures would affect weekday commuters, however advanced warning would allow for ample opportunity to plan ahead.

Disappointment that Parish and Town Councillors were not invited to the consultation event held by the Chair of the Tactical Co-ordination Group which took place on 8 June 2018, and that District Councillors were given such short notice that not everyone could attend - members commented that this consultation was therefore not a fair representative sample. The Superintendent responded that this was the first year that they held a consultation and that feedback from Councillors would feed into their action plan for future events.

Disappointment that Falmer, Glynde, Southease and Cooksbridge would not be able to access Lewes, despite the Bonfire being a community event. Additionally, if this proposal were to go ahead then members

recognised that residents of Cooksbridge would not be able to travel home from London as no trains stop before 17:00. Members were informed that Southern Railway was aware of the inconvenience that the proposal would cause, but their priority was to minimise disruption and maximise safety for the event.

Members commented that last year Councillors were assured that the station closures at the Lewes Bonfire would be a one off and were therefore disappointed that it was once again being proposed.

Resolved:

That the Scrutiny Committee put forward the following recommendations to the Cabinet:

- (1) That train stations are not shut and access to the event is unrestricted; or
- (2) That trains stations reopen later in the evening;
- (3) That station closures are rethought with consideration for the Lewes wider community who wanted to access the Bonfire event; and
- (4) That there be an increase in carriages for alternative routes to accommodate for commuters taking alternative routes.

Reason:

Public safety at this event is of considerable concern and of paramount importance. The impact of station closures will undoubtedly cause inconvenience to the public but it is considered that the risk to life and property outweighs the inconvenience for one night of the year.