

Arun District Council

REPORT TO:	ECONOMY COMMITTEE – 22 NOVEMBER 2022
SUBJECT:	PIER ROAD (LITTLEHAMPTON) CONSULTATION
LEAD OFFICER:	KARL ROBERTS, DIRECTOR OF GROWTH
LEAD MEMBER:	COUNCILLOR ANDY COOPER
WARDS:	RIVER
CORPORATE PRIORITY / POLICY CONTEXT / CORPORATE VISION: Fulfilling Arun's economic potential - working closely with our towns and other organisations on strategies which support vibrant and attractive town centres. Positive and focused promotion of Arun's tourist destinations as more than a 'day trip'.	
DIRECTORATE POLICY CONTEXT: Improving the social, economic, and environmental wellbeing of the District along with those who live, work, and play within it.	
FINANCIAL SUMMARY: There are no financial implications arising directly from this report for this financial year.	

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to inform the Committee of the results of the Pier Road Consultation carried out in August and September 2022 and agree next steps.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.2. It is recommended that the Committee:
 - 2.1.1 Supports the principle of permanently closing Pier Road to through-traffic.
 - 2.1.2 Authorises officers to engage with West Sussex County Council as Highway Authority in order to appraise the feasibility, process, legal requirements, costs (both capital and revenue), timescales, and necessary agreements to deliver the preferred option of a permanent closure.
 - 2.1.3 Authorises officers to explore the opportunity of increasing the length of the proposed closure area to include the area of highway as far north as the Gravy Boat restaurant; and
 - 2.1.4 Requests that officers provide a report to a future meeting of the Committee setting out officers' findings and conclusions in respect of recommendation 2.1.2 and 2.1.3.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1. In March 2022 the Committee agreed the undertaking of a consultation and survey regarding the future of Pier Road in Littlehampton following the positive response to the two Covid19 emergency/temporary road closures.
- 2.2. The consultation survey gave respondents the option to indicate their preference and comment on how they would like to see Pier Road developed in the future. This report asks the Committee to review the consultation results and to agree the next steps now that we are in receipt of the consultation and survey outcomes.

3. THE CONSULTATION

- 3.1. The consultation took place from August 8 to September 23, 2022, available online, in person, via telephone and email. The survey was located on the Council's website and available as a paper copy by request. The five options that respondents could indicate on the survey as their preference were:
 - Permanent closure
 - Annual seasonal closure
 - One-way running to the north
 - One-way running to the south
 - Do nothing
- 3.2. Respondents were asked for their postcode to enable us to identify the geography of responders. They were also invited to add any comments and invited to suggest ideas for enhancing the option they had selected if relevant.
- 3.3. The respondents were asked to indicate if they were: Pier Road residents, Pier Road businesses, Littlehampton residents and visitors to Littlehampton. Some respondents indicated they met more than one of these categories.
- 3.4. The consultation was promoted via a news release to all local media, our website and social media channels, local statutory and community partners, a targeted house to house flyer delivery, and person to person at live town centre events.

4. SURVEY RESULTS

- 4.1. A total of 864 people completed the survey.
- 4.2. The preferred option respondents selected was permanent closure, with 44% of all respondents indicating this option. The breakdown of all options, in order of preference, is as follows:
 - Permanent closure – 44%
 - Annual seasonal closure – 39%

- Do nothing – 9%
- One way running to the south – 5%
- One way running to the north – 3%

5.3 A breakdown of each of the options selected can be found in Appendix 1. Pier Road Survey Results. This also details how many respondents from each category took part and what their preferred options were, and the local geographical spread of the respondents.

5. OPTIONS CONSIDERATION AND NEXT STEPS

6.1 The results of the consultation and current proposals will now inform the further discussions between Arun District Council and West Sussex County Council.

6.2 The option of one-way traffic to the north or south would lessen the amount of traffic using Pier Road and would increase the pedestrian space footprint. Although a one-way road may not necessarily resolve the issues of vehicle speeds and illegal parking thus causing a threat to pedestrian safety.

6.3 The annual seasonal closure option was very popular following the emergency Covid19 closures in 2020 and 2021, those closures increased pedestrian safety and addressed parking issues. They added to the ambiance of the area in general, encouraging visitors to stay longer and revisit. Future annual seasonal closures would involve internal annual revenue costs for the temporary diversion and closures, officer resources to manage the set-up and take down, provision of an on-call resource, storage of street furniture/dressing and planters. Long-term annual seasonal closures are not generally supported by West Sussex County Council – there are currently no other seasonal closures within the county.

6.4 The preferred option of permanent closure would require significant capital costs. This option does increase overall pedestrian safety and resolves the parking issues. Being a permanent feature, it will add to the overall ambiance of the area, increased footfall and dwell time, year-round space for entertainers and pavement dining. It would allow for seasonal activities throughout the year which would benefit the local economy overall.

6.5 Officers will submit a further report to the Committee in 2023. Given the steps that are necessary it is unlikely that any works if approved would be undertaken until at least late 2024 and therefore consideration will be given to shorter seasonal closures in the interim.

6. CONSULTATION

6.1. Consultation to date is as detailed in this report and further required consultation will continue with our partners.

7. OPTIONS / ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

7.1. Not to undertake the proposed next steps.

8. COMMENTS BY THE INTERIM GROUP HEAD OF FINANCE/SECTION 151 OFFICER

8.1. As there are no direct financial implications arising from the consultation, no comment is made.

9. RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

10.1 A risk register is being prepared to support this project.

10. COMMENTS OF THE GROUP HEAD OF LAW AND GOVERNANCE & MONITORING OFFICER

10.1. The report sets out how the Council has undertaken a full consultation process with a wide range of stakeholders, together with officers' assessment of the consultation responses and analysis of its preferred option for the next stage of the proposal.

11. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT

11.1. There are no HR impacts arising from this report

12. HEALTH & SAFETY IMPACT

12.1. Full risk assessment and an event safety management approach will need to be employed for any short seasonal closures that take place in the future. Should a permanent closure be supported by West Sussex County this will need to be fully risk assessed including ensuring appropriate integration with existing pedestrian and cycle routes.

13. PROPERTY & ESTATES IMPACT

13.1. Early desktop checks show that there would be no immediate impact to Arun District Council Assets. However, the proposed road closure and associated works may impact the East Bank works and legal advice would be required to check implications.

13.2. Agree and ensure ongoing maintenance responsibility on completion is clear

13.3. The positive impact of the proposed road closure is likely to have wider reaching benefits to Arun District Council commercial tenants who operate in the local vicinity

14. EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA) / SOCIAL VALUE

14.1. The recommendations in this report do not affect disproportionately one or more of the nine characteristics outlined in the Equality Act 2010.

15. CLIMATE CHANGE & ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT/SOCIAL VALUE

15.1. The support and promotion of good local businesses and local destinations encourages less travel contributing towards less carbon emissions on a local level.

16. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT

16.1. There are no direct impacts on the above areas arising from this report

17. HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACT

17.1. There are no relevant implications arising from this proposal that will affect or potentially affect any individual.

18. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION / DATA PROTECTION CONSIDERATIONS

18.1. There are no specific FoI or Data Protection issues arising from the proposals in the report.

CONTACT OFFICER:

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BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

Appendix 1 Pier Road Survey Results

Appendix 2-5 Illustrative Plans