

WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

The following questions have been received from Councillors and will be taken as read along with the written answer which will be included in an addendum that will be circulated at the meeting. A Member who asked a question may ask one relevant supplementary question which shall be put and answered without discussion.

(a) Councillor Nemeth

“At the last meeting of the Economic Development & Culture Committee, the Committee resolved to ‘request a full public statement from the Leader of the Council on the Administration’s plans for the Madeira Terraces, with specific reference to the recent Victorian Society report that gave much lower repair figures than official estimates....’ Will the Chair please provide evidence that the Committee’s request was made?”

Reply from Councillor Robins, Chair of the Economic Development & Culture Committee.

A bid to the Coastal Communities Fund for the Madeira Terraces was made in June 2016, and a report detailing this was presented to Policy Resources & Growth Committee on 14 July 2016.

The issue raised about referencing the Victorian Society report was covered in the committee report, and represents the Council’s current position.

If this could/should have been separately provided to members of the Committee in a letter, please find it reproduced here:

“Working with Historic England and other stakeholders

3.13 In order to adequately address the points made by heritage stakeholders and complete the Coastal Communities Fund application, the Project Team have been working on the following tasks:

- Developing a full and current Statement of Significance for Madeira Terraces. This document will serve to capture the various elements of the Terraces (engineering, social significance and value, architectural significance etc) and create the platform against which any future restoration or refurbishment proposals can be judged.

- Developing a “base case” restoration strategy based on a review of existing surveys and an up to date conservation structural assessment provided by Mott MacDonald’s structural engineers. This will address the comments recently made by the Victorian Society who have expressed reservations about some of the cost estimates previously produced.”

(b) Councillor Peltzer Dunn

“With the summer now over, will the Chair confirm what criteria he is now using to evaluate the success or otherwise of the summer tourist season?”

Reply from Councillor Robins, Chair of the Economic Development & Culture Committee.

“The key criteria we use to evaluate tourist seasons are the tourism figures for Brighton & Hove which are prepared for VisitBrighton by Tourism South East. The figures are 1 year in arrears as it takes a period of time to collect and review the data, therefore we currently have the figures for 2015.

The highlight figures for 2015 are shown below;

Total number of tourism day trips: 9,100,000 (9% decrease on 2014)

Day Trip Expenditure 2014 = £322 million (6.4% decrease on 2014)

This echoes a 5% decline in volume of trips in South East with a 12% decline in expenditure. England as a whole saw a 1% decline in volume with a 1% increase in expenditure.

Staying trips: 1,456,000 (1.5% increase on 2014)

Staying trips made by Domestic Overnight Visitors = 1,069,000 (2.1% increase on 2014)

Nights spent by Domestic Overnight Visitors = 2,726,000 (1.1% increase on 2014)

Staying trips made by Overseas Overnight Visitors = 387,000 (static on 2014)

Nights spent by Overseas Overnight Visitors = 2,268,000 (1.7% increase on 2014)

Staying Visitors Expenditure 2014 = £526 million (1.5% increase on 2014)

Total Number of Visitors = 10,556,000 (7.7% decrease on 2014)

Total (Direct) Value of Tourism in Brighton & Hove = £815 million (1.8% decrease on 2014)

Tourism Supported: 15,683 FTE jobs and 21,374 Actual jobs which equates to around 17% of all employee jobs in Brighton & Hove

However, we can also take note of information available from other sources For 2016 that a recent survey conducted by Epos Now of 320 hospitality businesses across the UK showed that credit card transactions were up between 17 July and 17 August compared to the same period last year and Brighton & Hove came top of 10 seaside resorts with an overall increase of 12.8%.”

(c) Councillor Nemeth

“Given the success of the campaign to save Hove Library, will the Chair confirm that the park behind Hove Museum is now safe from development proposals from Brighton & Hove City Council?”

Reply from Councillor Robins, Chair of the Economic Development & Culture Committee.

“The land behind Hove Museum is designated as Public Open Space under CP16, and at present the Council has no other plans to redevelop this land.”

(d) Councillor C. Theobald

“What meetings did the Chair hold in August with senior tourism figures in the city?”

Reply from Councillor Robins, Chair of the Economic Development & Culture Committee.

“The Chair has regular usually monthly meetings with the Executive Director for Economy, Environment & Culture, the Head of Royal Pavilion and Museums and the Head of Sport and Leisure. The Chair is also in regular contact with Head of Outdoor Events and the Seafront Manager. The Chair is therefore kept fully aware of the views of senior tourism figures through these meetings and via the many city networks. For example the Head of Tourism & Venues attended the Brighton & Hove Hotels Association meeting on the 9th August and also The Tourism Alliance meeting on the 7th September. The question of business sentiment is always discussed at these meetings and in general the vast majority of businesses were very positive about this year’s summer season.”

(e) Councillor Peltzer Dunn

“What representations has the Chair made to Administration colleagues about overflowing bins, overgrown pavements, aggressive street drinkers and other issues that deter tourists?”

Reply from Councillor Robins, Chair of the Economic Development & Culture Committee.

On information already given, this has been a very good summer season, so there is no reason to suggest that tourists are being deterred from coming to the city. However, the Chair works as a team with all administration colleagues to ensure that the city works well for residents and for tourists, and we are focussing on street cleaning and refuse collection. In the last City Tracker survey there was a 33% increase in residents’ satisfaction with refuse collection, and Cityclean has just won a national APSE award for the Best Service Team for Street Cleansing and Streetscene services. The administration has also just

rolled out Big Belly Bins across the city so that bins can take more rubbish and can be emptied as soon as they are full. Within available funds pavements are kept clear of vegetation. As part of the implementation of the Rough Sleeping Strategy 2016, the administration is engaging as fully as possible with the street community, including tackling issues where they arise when people are suffering from alcohol or addiction problems.

(f) Councillor Nemeth

“Given the dreadful image of the Planning Department in the eyes of public and industry, and given that the Department’s problems have been amply described by Conservative Councillors since at least May 2015, how long does the Chairman think that it will be before industry and public alike recognise any improvements?”

Reply from Councillor Robins, Chair of the Economic Development & Culture Committee.

“There is an item on the agenda of today’s committee meeting on the steps that are being taken to modernise the planning service following the Planning Advisory Service review. Officers will provide a presentation which will outline current and future service improvements. The Chair would also like to note that Planning Service is being turned around due to the priority it is being given under the Labour administration in contrast to the lack of priority under previous administrations. Its image is being restored and the Chair would like to put on record that this will be down to the hard work of the Officers.”

(g) Councillor Nemeth

“Given the status of the Madeira Terraces as a major project following years of neglect, will the Chair write to the Chair of the ET&S Committee to express concerns about the condition of the seafront railings in Hove, before fixing them requires a scheme of major project proportions?”

Reply from Councillor Robins, Chair of the Economic Development & Culture Committee.

“It is not necessary for the Chair to write to the Chair of ET&S Committee, as the need for considerable investment in Seafront Infrastructure was considered by the cross party Seafront Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel. A key recommendation of that panel was the development of a Seafront Investment Plan to identify potential options to achieve a sustainable Seafront. This is to be considered by the Policy, Resources & Growth Committee in October. Maintenance of the railings takes place when possible within available resources and the prioritisation of other maintenance requirements. Within the last 7 years works have been undertaken at different points totally over £100,000.