



## Impact of HMOs on the Local Community

We have represented businesses in the Eastbourne area since 1892 and are the largest Town Chamber in the South East. We are also part of the Alliance of Chambers in East Sussex representing 4,000 business members.

Over the last 18 months the situation on Eastbourne seafront has become untenable and we have received countless complaints from members, staff and residents in what is one of the most disadvantaged wards in the country.

Our members have worked hard to create a thriving community in Devonshire Ward but this has all been undone by the placement here of people from Brighton & Hove with extremely complex needs.

The aggression exhibited to our members is unprecedented and is impacting the business environment right across the town centre. This is made worse by placing vulnerable people here without any forewarning to the Police or agencies that need to provide them with support.

Drug dealing is constant, and the Police are stretched to breaking point. Break-ins in the wider area have increased so much that the government has been forced to fund the Secure Redoubt programme to introduce movement sensitive security lighting and CCTV infrastructure to protect residents' homes.

Please tell us, how do we:

- Prevent B&H from sending more people to our town and get the current cohort returned to B&H?
- Protect Eastbourne retailers and hospitality businesses who are threatened with closure? They are barely surviving the pandemic and this anti-social behaviour is pushing many over the edge. In fact, hotels reported after lockdown 1 that guests checked out early and will not be returning to Eastbourne.
- Protect the safety of our members, their customers, and Eastbourne residents?
- Train and support the BID team to manage the increase in anti-social behaviour caused by people with serious mental health and drug and alcohol issues?
- Protect our staff, residents, and businesses from the increase in serious organised crime operating drug supply into the town via HMO hotels?
- Encourage visitors to return to the town?

We understand that government funding to a City is much greater than to a Borough and so we do not understand why B&H Council is exporting problem residents to a smaller town with a fraction of their funding.

After lockdown we want to reopen the town centre in a safe and positive way. Local businesses are investing £300,000 each year in the BID to create an attractive place encouraging visitors back into the town, however this initiative is being destroyed by the aggressive, anti-social behaviour that is now rife across the town.

Please, do everything you can to get B&H Council to use their own government funding to manage their own vulnerable residents. These are real people with real issues who need to remain near their support networks and not be exiled to a new town without friends or support.



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**Be under no illusion, the threat to Eastbourne posed by this anti-social behaviour, coupled with the pandemic and ensuing economic crisis is greater than at any other time since WWII. We cannot stress enough the damage this policy is doing to our residents, to jobs and to the local economy.**

**This is clearly unfair to the people removed from Brighton and is unacceptable to the business community in Eastbourne.**

Nicky Fisher  
President

Christina Ewbank  
Chief Executive

Eastbourne *unLtd* Chamber of Commerce

## **Impact of temporary accommodation placements on Eastbourne's Town Centre**

I write to you today to express the concerns of Your Eastbourne BID, which represents 634 local and multinational businesses from all sectors including retail, hospitality, leisure, professional and manufacturing within Eastbourne town centre, with regards to Brighton & Hove City Council's policy of placing their homeless community out of area in our town.

Since last year, we have extensively lobbied and wrote to Brighton and Hove City Council (BHCC) alongside our partners at Eastbourne Borough Council and the Routh Sleepers Initiative to raise our concerns at the alarming influx in emergency accommodation placements that continue to be placed in Eastbourne.

Many of our BID businesses are in close proximity to a number of the buildings and hotels that Brighton & Hove City Council have chosen to use for emergency accommodation placements. Many of these buildings are not dedicated temporary accommodation sites for the purpose of supporting placements.

Many of the individuals that BHCC place in Eastbourne have multi complex needs that require a high level of resource to deal with, a resource in which BHCC does not provide and unfortunately falls on the shoulders of our rough sleeper's initiative and local emergency services to provide instead. This is a completely unacceptable scenario as our local resources are already at a stretch dealing with our own cohort of entrenched street community with multi complex needs.

As the Vice Chair of the Town Centre Safety Panel and a member of the Rough Sleeper Initiative group I am hearing regular reports of the disruption caused by these placements. This situation has unfortunately escalated to a stage where it causes a real risk to public safety and presents a huge challenge to our businesses. As we are all aware, many of these individuals have a long history of being involved with drug dealing, shoplifting and anti-social behaviour, which we unacceptably feel the full brunt of on a day to day basis in our town centre. Several of the individuals that have been placed in Eastbourne have in fact been banned from Brighton in the past for causing similar disruption and crime – this further shows the challenge that BHCC is placing on our doorstep.

I am disappointed to report that since the replacement programme began, our lobbying has fallen on deaf ears. We have not yet received a response from BHCC on this matter and the latest figures show that an additional 50 emergency accommodation placements were placed in Eastbourne from Brighton in January alone. On the back of this we have furthermore seen a huge increase in shoplifting and ASB reports – many of which come from our businesses that have been targeted by these individuals at a huge expense.

At this stage I would politely ask Eastbourne Borough Council councillors to support our lobbying on this matter with BHCC and ultimately see a stop to this practice. I am aware that BHCC has received

a large amount of government funding to support them with this matter and they have plenty of available rooms in their own emergency accommodation sites to house their multi complex needs individuals.

Our business community fear that if nothing is done about this matter it will significantly impact the long-term reputation of our town and threaten our local economy as visitors choose to stay away.

Yours sincerely,

Luke Johnson

Your Eastbourne Business Improvement District

# Eastbourne Hospitality Association

## Supporting statement for the motion submitted by Councillor Shuttleworth

### Re: use of Emergency Accommodation in Eastbourne



Submitted by Kristian Hayter, Vice Chair  
22<sup>nd</sup> February 2021

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The EHA represents over 130 hospitality businesses and around 95% of accommodation stock in Eastbourne. Eastbourne has a tourism led economy, which provides the foundation for many businesses in the town. Prior to the Covid pandemic and according to official research; in 2019 tourism was worth £529.7million to the local economy, with 8,460 tourism jobs directly supported and overall, 28% of the town's population was employed because of tourism in Eastbourne.

Covid has particularly hit hospitality hard and devastated the tourism industry - the effects of which are being felt across town and the supply chain. As with many towns and cities the third lockdown is pushing many businesses past breaking point, with what will be over 7 months of closure - sadly resulting in business casualties. Throughout the pandemic the EHA has been keeping a broad picture of the effects on members. Below are some sobering statistics:

- Initial loss of revenue from the first lockdown estimated at £38million.
- Losses by end of third lockdown estimated at £90million.
- Loss of foreign independent traveller, which previously accounted for 45% of guest demographic and worth £77 million.
- Collapse of the traditional coaching market.
- Job losses of 30% of workforce in hotels/guest accommodation.
- Multiple business casualties:
  - Guest accommodation
  - Restaurants/Pubs
  - Shops
  - Suppliers to the industry

It is critical for Eastbourne to be positioned for immediate recovery when national restrictions allow. Businesses have invested greatly to make their premises Covid-Ready and provide customers with the confidence to return. The majority of this investment has come from considerable lending that needs to be repaid and is the last chance of survival.

We believe that the single biggest threat to the recovery of Eastbourne after Covid is the emergency accommodation placements being made by Brighton and Hove City Council. The number of placements and locations being procured are in prominent positions on the sea front, which is causing serious reputational issues to Eastbourne.

The anti-social behaviour that comes from these placements due to their complex needs, has meant that businesses and customers no longer feel safe in our town. This can be seen from the online reviews that visitors were posting during the brief re-opening in summer of 2020. Since then, we understand that even more placements have been made and the problem is exacerbated.

We would like to thank the agencies for their interventions so far, including Eastbourne Borough Council and the Police service. However, now is the time for Brighton and Hove City Council to take responsibility and find alternative accommodation in Brighton.

The EHA cannot stress enough that should Brighton and Hove City Council fail to take responsibility; it could cause permanent damage to Eastbourne's recovery. This damage will lead to further business casualties, empty hospitality buildings and job losses. Thank you for your time.

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## **Statement to Eastbourne Borough Council from Heidi Lane, Proprietor of the Crown and Anchor**

### **Regarding the use of the Marine Parade Hotel.**

Over the last ten years I have built the Crown and Anchor into a thriving, successful award winning, family friendly pub with an excellent reputation, and fantastic staff team of around 30. One of the pub's attractions, is its location, opposite the seafront.

The pub is surrounded by hotels and guest houses and relies on Eastbourne's tourist trade and private events, held in the function room. Visitors could sit outside, to enjoy the sun and people watch.

The pub's licensed seating area and carpark is adjacent to the Marine Parade Hotel with just a narrow walkway separating the 2 businesses.

We had built a good relationship with the previous owners of the Hotel, being considerate of each other's businesses; we both lived onsite with our families. It was a lovely community.

#### Current situation

I could talk about the issues arising from the Hotel that is now housing people with complex alcohol and substance misuse issues; however, I feel that the people listening to this statement will have extensive knowledge of how this would impact on a pub next door.

What I would like to ask today from Brighton and Hove City Council and Eastbourne Borough Council is:

How do I:

- Save my business?
- Protect the team, customers and residents of The Marine Parade Hotel?
- Save the 22 jobs that we have saved so far?
- Train and support my team to manage and approach our neighbours when they are begging from customers, ensuring their safety at all times, whilst complying with strict Covid and licencing rules?
- Encourage these customers to return to the pub after such an experience - even if the team are so highly and extensively trained that they can manage the behaviour of people with extremely complex needs.
- Stop my business from being impacted by the negative press associated with the hotel?

I understand the difficulties and complexities of the residents of the Hotel, as before the Crown and Anchor I was the registered Manager of an adolescent care Home. Therefore, I recognise the importance of being able to manage that level of vulnerability and risk without negatively impacting on the local community.

Please help me and my team to not feel scared and anxious and not be overwhelmed with stress. We are already under such extreme pressure due to the pandemic, trying to keep ourselves and customers safe and survive the economic crises.

I am begging you to find suitable accommodation for our neighbours, if not this will destroy our business.

I hope to, once again, offer the function room to local groups such as plastic free Eastbourne, Green Peace, Fairtrade, Round table, various charities (including homelessness charities) and groups that attract the elderly. They need to feel safe when entering the building or sitting outside. They will not feel safe when they frequently witness drug dealing, fighting and anti-social behaviour and the overwhelming smell of marijuana coming from the open windows of the Hotel.

Can you honestly say that you would return with your family to this venue after witnessing these things?