

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