

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
22nd February 2021

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.