

**NEIGHBOURHOODS,  
COMMUNITIES & EQUALITIES  
COMMITTEE**

**Agenda Item 35 (c)**

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject:	Extract from the proceedings of the Council Meeting held on the 20 October 2016 – Deputation – Protect our Community from Alcohol Misuse and Anti-Social Behaviour
Date of Meeting:	28 November 2016
Report of:	Monitoring Officer
Contact Officer:	Name: Mark Wall E-mail: mark.wall@brighton-hove.gov.uk
Wards Affected:	All

**BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL**

**COUNCIL**

**4.00pm**

**20 OCTOBER 2016**

**COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL**

**MINUTES**

**Present:** Councillors West (Chair), Marsh (Deputy Chair), Allen, Atkinson, Barford, Barnett, Bell, Bennett, Bewick, Brown, Cattell, Chapman, Cobb, Daniel, Deane, Druitt, Gibson, Gilbey, Greenbaum, Hamilton, Hyde, Hill, Horan, Inkpin-Leissner, Janio, Knight, Lewry, Littman, Mac Cafferty, Meadows, Mears, Miller, Mitchell, Moonan, Morgan, Morris, Nemeth, A Norman, K Norman, O'Quinn, Page, Peltzer Dunn, Penn, Phillips, Robins, Simson, Sykes, Taylor, C Theobald, G Theobald, Wares, Wealls and Yates

**PART ONE**

- . **Spokesperson** – Sir Ron de Witt
- Subject matter** – Protect our Community from Alcohol Misuse and Anti-Social Behaviour

Our residents have been experiencing a steep upsurge in levels of street drinking, alcohol related antisocial behaviour and drug crime which are adversely affecting and compromising their quality of life.

Many now describe Norfolk Square as a no go area and in fact recently it has been designated as an antisocial behaviour hotspot by the police. Dealing and drug litter

are commonly seen in the Brunswick Road and Waterloo Street communities. Brunswick and Palmeira Square have also had problems this summer with tented communities and the associated anti-social behaviour. There is a clear and well evidenced relationship between alcohol consumption and antisocial behaviour and crime there is also a clear evidenced relationship between alcohol availability and consumption. We also believe there is a direct causal relationship between the disappearance of our PCOs and the upsurge in antisocial behaviour.

We have therefore raised a petition which we will present today but first a few examples. The Co-op on Western Road has expressed the same frustrations with the lack of visible police presence which we generally feel in our area. In August and September the Co-op recorded 40 incidents of theft of alcohol from its premises that also saw this being consumed on the street. The signs of abuse in our area are written all over; just talk to business owners in Western Road, how many times they've had to replace smashed windows. This isn't just about street drinking it is also yobish behaviour and not to forget the death of a young man outside Temple Inn not so long ago.

For a predominantly residential area we have a very high proliferation of licenses. Within a ten minute walk along less than half a mile of Western Road there are 67 on and off sale licensed premises a high number are after midnight on weekdays and after 11pm on Sundays. Coupling this with the increasing number of students, HMOs, stag and hen houses this is propelling a vibrant night-time economy. Booze and the culture of drugs is increasing and spreading from central Brighton along the road to common areas which are residential. This anti-social behaviour may be a low level threat in policing terms but it blights people's lives. Ask Steven a Norfolk Square resident who commutes every day to London but doesn't get to sleep until 3am, ask Olive an elderly Brunswick Road resident who says "I don't feel safe in the area any longer" or Fiona of Brunswick Square who witnessed the event in the Co-op she said "it would have been funny if it hadn't been so violent". Then there was the disappointing article in the press recently saying the Police can't investigate every incident. Our experience is that we don't even see the Police and if they appear at all when contacted it is too late and then they don't get out of their vehicles. Amy called 999 to report a drug dealer in action and was told you shouldn't be ringing 999. John says "I waited 30 minutes for someone to reply to my telephone call, by the time they answered it was too late". Recently the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner Katy Bourne was quoted as saying "the front line for neighbourhood policing is moving off the street and into our front rooms", in our opinion this isn't good enough. Police recorded crime in 2015 increased by 4.5% it has now continued to rise until it has reached 11.8% in the first 4 months of 2016. LATs were set up to bring communities and policing together the Police now no longer attend taking the action out of the Local Action Team.

Therefore we would ask the council to give grave concern at the increasing frequency and severity in incident of antisocial behaviour in the Brunswick and Regency areas and take a firmer stance with alcohol related antisocial behaviours, firmly adhere to its statement of licensing policy and undertake to quickly review the licenses of alcohol outlets that breach license conditions and closely monitor and advises premises with the new café licenses. We request a written response to our petition."

## Response from Councillor Daniel

“Thank for bringing this deputation to full council. I first want to acknowledge the issues that your area has experienced in terms of antisocial behaviour and to talk about the street community which is made up of both rough sleepers and people who are accommodated but due to their alcohol or other substance misuse and often other mental health problems spend time on the streets.

At times behaviour due to substance misuse and mental health complex needs can become frightening to communities and not just the noise and littering issues that you described. The Council and the Police do tackle areas of the city that are particularly impacted by this antisocial behaviour however I recognise that as resources get ever more limited and stretched public bodies cannot always respond as quickly as communities would expect and I recognise that the Police must sometimes prioritise emergency situations as their resources diminish, however we are not decision makers relating to PCSO as you are probably aware and that is the remit of the Police and Crime Commissioner. People should still report issues to 999 or 101 as appropriate and I too have spent over 45 minutes waiting for a response at times.

Use online reporting if it's not an emergency and if you see someone sleeping rough we would ask you to report them to Street Link which is [www.streetlink.org.uk](http://www.streetlink.org.uk) so we can insure an outreach worker finds them and helps keep them safe. Working with a street community to help prevent antisocial behaviour is part of our rough sleeping strategy as well and there are two key actions relating to this that we have agreed. First ensuring that in priority areas such as yours where there is a large street community that our staff and other staff have clear guidance on how to deal with issues effectively and who's accountable for making those actions happen. Secondly a wider piece of work on communications working to discourage people who are really kind and giving money to beggars but ask them instead to please give that money to charities where they can as that will get people off the streets quicker. We also want to try and make sure all food donated to rough sleepers and the street community not all of whom are rough sleepers is provided inside buildings so people can eat food with dignity and with volunteers who are trained and able to help them off the streets and help them with their alcohol and substance misuse issues if that's what is keeping them there.

On the second point the wider issue of alcohol. As you're probably aware in 2011 the council increase its cumulative impact zone (CIZ) for alcohol licensing to include your area and we now have the largest CIZ in the country and our 2013 'Sensible on Strength' scheme encouraged off-licenses to voluntarily agree to stop selling cheap super-strength beer and cider all of them in the area except the Sainsbury's have signed up to that scheme and I thank them for that and I'm sure your community does too.

In short I believe we have taken every available step to reduce the impact of alcohol related antisocial behaviour and our officers are constantly monitoring this and those hotspots. I do believe that the parts of our rough sleeper strategy which I highlighted demonstrates that we haven't taken our eye off the ball on this issue and I want to encourage you and residents to continue to report issues to us and to the Police.”

