

Date: 08/06/2020
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Dear Geoff

We are submitting the following letter under Council Procedure Rule 23.3 to be included on the agenda for the Environment, Transport and Sustainability Committee (ETS) meeting on 23rd June 2020.

As elected representatives of a seafront ward, we have increasing concern over the proliferation of seafront litter and the threat this poses not only to our communities but also to our fragile marine life. Only this week a plastic crisp packet wrapper manufactured 26 years ago was discovered on our beach [1]; while the RSPB has just published a poll that 81% agreed the pandemic has shown the importance of protecting and restoring nature.[2]

Over the last few weeks, many residents have also contacted us to share this concern and ask for the council to take more action.

As the city recovers from the pandemic, it is clear a 'business as usual' approach to seafront litter is no longer an option. With an increasing number of food outlets moving to takeaway-only in response to Covid-19, the weather warming, but with no venues open to manage waste, more people are eating and drinking on the beach.

Meanwhile, the new bins on the seafront which offer residents the chance to separate their waste are routinely overflowing, though communal bins next to them are often empty. There is clearly still inadequate education about bins and action on plastic waste has not been taken fast enough, despite powers to enforce maximum fixed penalty notices for littering and a pledge to work with local traders to reduce waste at source.

We welcome the news that the Environmental Enforcement team will now resume fining litter bugs with the maximum fine, however we do not feel this is enough.

The city council has committed to a single use plastic free city but action so far doesn't appear to reflect the "action plan detailing the timeframe for achieving the goals set out in the policy, until such time that the committee is confident that the city council has done all it can to reduce and eliminate SUPs use in the city" agreed at ETS in 2018 or existing corporate policy commitments from Policy and Resources Committee in 2018 [3]

To support Brighton & Hove rapidly becoming a single-use plastic (SUP) free city, we therefore ask the committee to consider:

- How the council can more effectively implement the council's existing SUP policy, including working with businesses to prevent use of single use plastics;

- Reiterate work with beach front traders advising them on responsible sustainable packaging options; lobbying big business which generate plastic waste to contribute to clean-up efforts; and investigate enforcement measures to pursue these to prevent single use plastic waste at source, including providing e-guidelines for all seafront traders north to North Street, Western/Church/ New Church Roads and Edward St/Eastern Road;
- How it can support the call from Surfers Against Sewage to issue volunteers with more litter pickers for example by increasing promotion, support and budget of the council's Tidy Up Team;
- A heightened communication campaign over the summer to decrease littering; with an increase in signs, permanent or temporary, reminding residents of their responsibilities around waste, including the use of creative and strong messages [4]
- Further redeployment of staff to the Environmental Enforcement Team who are dedicated to patrols of Hove Lawns, the promenade and the beach and more dedicated seafront resources;
- Promotion of resident tidy ups to increase awareness in the reduction of waste;
- To look at other comparator councils for prevention of SUP litter schemes.

Yours sincerely,

Councillors Hannah Clare and Phélim Mac Cafferty
Brunswick and Adelaide Ward.

Notes

[1] <https://www.theargus.co.uk/news/18504398.amp>

[2] <https://www.rspb.org.uk/our-work/rspb-news/news/stories/poll-shows-people-in-england-support-nature-in-covid-recovery/>

[3] <https://present.brighton-hove.gov.uk/documents/s129128/Phasing%20out%20single%20use%20plastics%20SUPs.pdf>

<https://present.brighton-hove.gov.uk/documents/s129129/Phasing%20out%20single%20use%20plastics%20SUPs%20APX.%20n%201.pdf>

[4] <https://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/your-environment/litter-and-illegal-dumping/epa-work-prevent-litter/dont-be-a-tosser>