

Brighton & Hove City Council

Council

Agenda Item 90

Subject: Save Our Starlings. Petition for Debate

Date of meeting: 7 April 2022

Report of: Executive Director for Governance, People & Resources

Contact Officer: Name: Lisa Johnson
Tel: 01273 291228
Email: lisa.johnson@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Ward(s) affected: All

1. Purpose of the report and policy context

- 1.1 Under the Council's Petition Scheme if a petition contains more than 1,250 signatures and is not petition requesting officer evidence, it will be debated by the full Council.
- 1.2 The e-petition has resulted in triggering a debate at the council meeting, having exceeded the threshold with a total of 106,975 signatures confirmed at the time of printing the report.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the petition is noted and referred to the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee meeting for consideration.

3. Context and background information

3.1 The Petition:

BRIGHTON is famous for its iconic murmuration of starlings over the pier each winter, and people travel from far and wide to enjoy this wonderful natural spectacle. But tragically, our starlings are vanishing before our eyes, and Brighton's murmuration could be lost altogether as soon as 2026. Why?

Since the 1940s we have been waging a terrible war against nature. Unsustainable and intensive agriculture is killing our insects. Starlings eat insects (mainly). No insects = no birds.

Together, we, the people of Brighton and Hove, own a large section of the South Downs called The City Downland Estate.

We therefore kindly call on our council, elected members and officers, to immediately implement an outright ban on chemical fertilisers, herbicides, pesticides, fungicides and worming treatments across our entire City Downland Estate. We also call on our council to make concerted efforts to

reduce sensory pollution (noise and light), which also badly impacts on wildlife, through education and advocacy in the first instance.

Now it is time to make peace with nature and save our starlings.

Lead petitioner – Steve Geliot

4. Procedure

4.1 The petition will be debated at the Council meeting in accordance with the agreed protocol:

- (i) The Lead petitioner will be invited by the mayor to present the petition and will have up to 3 minutes in which to outline the prayer of the petition and confirm the number of signatures;
- (ii) The mayor will then open the matter up for debate by councillors for period of 15 minutes and will first call on the relevant Committee Chair to respond to the petition and move a proposed response. The mayor will then call on those councillors who have indicated a desire to speak in the matter, before calling on the relevant Committee Chair to respond to the debate;
- (iii) An amendment to the recommendation in paragraph 2.1 of the report or to add additional recommendations should be submitted by 10.00am on the day of the meeting; otherwise, it will be subject to the mayor's discretion as to being appropriate. Any such amendment will need to be formally moved and seconded at the meeting;
- (iv) After the 15 minutes set aside for the debate, the mayor will then formally put:
 - (a) Any amendments in the order in which they are moved, and
 - (b) The substantive recommendation(s) as amended (if amended).