

Southampton Business Improvement District Limited

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4<sup>th</sup> April 2019

Cllr Chris Hammond  
Leader  
Southampton City Council  
Civic Centre  
Southampton  
SO14 7LY

3<sup>rd</sup> April 2019

Dear Chris,

**Objection to removal of begging from the Public Space Protection Order (PSPO)**

We were very concerned to see that the Council is proposing to remove begging from the Public Space Protection Order when it is renewed. We would ask you – as a matter of urgency – to review this decision and to retain begging as part of the PSPO.

The presence of street beggars has increased noticeably since Christmas. They have pre-defined 'pitches' and appear to operate on a rota basis. They bring with them huge amounts of bedding and other materials. In our view most of them are professionals and should not be associated with genuine rough sleepers with whom we sympathise.

Over the last 12 months, 60% of our businesses have reported that anti-social behaviour issues associated with begging have impacted their business in some way. Our rangers have recorded aggressive begging patterns over the last year and the majority of aggressive begging happens between 12-1pm. 662 incidents of aggressive begging has been reported by our rangers since July 2018, with the majority of incidents occurring from London Road, along the QE2 mile to High Street.



PSPO is one of the few tools we have to combat the proliferation of beggars in the city centre and without this we believe the numbers of professional beggars will increase.

We would also like to query the diversion of the work of the Welfare Wardens to civil enforcement. When this service was introduced it was heralded as the Council's tool for combatting the impact of begging and rough sleeping in the main retail core. Working with our rangers and the police, the wardens did achieve measurable impact. We can only believe that the current worsening of the begging problem is due in part to the diversion of the Welfare Wardens to other duties, and we would ask that this is reversed.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Giles Semper".

Giles Semper  
CEO

Cc Cllr Jacqui Rayment, Cllr Satvir Kaur, Sandy Hopkins, Mitch Sanders, Tim Keeping

