

Brighton & Hove City Council

Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee

Agenda Item 47

Subject: Litter on A27: Response to Notice of Motion

Date of meeting: 15 November 2022

Report of: Executive Director: Economy, Environment & Culture

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Ward(s) affected: North Portslade, Hangleton & Knoll, Withdean, Patcham and Hollingdean & Stanmer

For general release

1. Purpose of the report and policy context

1.1 At Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee on 27 June 2022, Members received and noted a Notice of Motion on litter on the A27. This report provides a response to the Notice of Motion.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That Committee notes the response to the Notice of Motion.

3. Context and background information

3.1 The A27 is a national trunk road owned by National Highways. Maintenance of the road is the responsibility of National Highways and under current arrangements, the council is responsible for removing litter. Brighton & Hove City Council must fund the clearing verges from within its existing budget and pay contractors for the necessary road closures.

3.2 The A27 was recently cleansed from Falmer to Dyke Road over six nights. 18 tonnes of rubbish were removed as a result and the cost of this clean up, excluding tipping costs, was £0.035m.

3.3 The Notice of Motion requested Officers to:

- liaise with Highways England to identify ways to mitigate and manage the clear up problem;
- bring a report to the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee setting out proposals for a long-term strategy to fund and execute clean-up operations;
- create a timetable for clearing litter that both Highways and the council agree to.

3.4 There are many challenges in clearing detritus from the A27:

- Cleaning activities on major highways must comply with Chapter 8 requirements to ensure the safety of operatives and road users. For Cityclean, a specialist Traffic Management company must be procured to

facilitate the regulations and appropriate training and supervision of staff must be provided.

- Cleaning is only permitted at night because of the diminished traffic flow
- Staff who work the night shift are not available the next day and so the work has to be planned outside of peak times and outside holiday periods
- Essential emergency works, such as electrical or drainage issues, take priority over any bookings which can lead to rescheduling – this is what happened in 2021
- Joining contractors to undertake litter picks within their closures is more cost effective however, their work takes priority and their site layouts may be unsuitable for cleaning purposes
- External contractors' eligibility requirements to be able to work on their site differ and Cityclean does not always meet their criteria.

Liaise with Highways England to identify ways to mitigate and manage the clear up problem

- 3.5 Over the last two years, Cityclean has developed its knowledge, understanding and experience of cleaning the A27 and as a result, has changed its approach.
- 3.6 Due to the issues previously experienced, council officers met with the Head of Maintenance for National Highways in May 2022 to discuss the issues and ways to improve joint working. Following the meeting, it was agreed for Cityclean officers to have priority access to booking slots for road closures by going straight to National Highways rather than through the application portal. This has reduced waiting time and confusion when applications are not approved. In addition, Cityclean previously applied for full road closures to clean all areas of the A27, including the central reservations and slip roads at the same time. Full closures are more difficult to get approval for owing to issues with diversions and traffic flow. Cityclean now request lane closures, rather than full closures.

Set out proposals for a long-term strategy to fund and execute clean-up operations and create a timetable for clearing litter that both Highways and the council agree to

- 3.7 The strategy for clearing the A27 is for litter picking to take place twice a year in April and September/October. These months have been selected because the weather is appropriate to the task. April is before the summer season when resources are deployed to the beach and city centre and September/October is before the weather gets too cold in the autumn. It is not possible to litter pick the A27 more frequently unless additional resources and budget is made available. The estimated costs for twice a year road closures and clearing is £120k to £150k, if including slip roads. The current budget available is £70k and Cityclean is looking at how to manage this budget gap.

4. Analysis and consideration of alternative options

- 4.1 An alternative option is to not clear the A27, but this would lead to risks of pollution of the environment; risks to wildlife and also would increase the risks to road users. The council would also be in breach of its statutory duty to remove litter.
- 4.2 Another option is to increase the number of litter picking sessions. However, two cleansing sessions, as described above, have not taken place before. The A27 was cleared in September 2022 and therefore, it is advised to allow for the next session to take place in April 2023 before seeking to increase the frequency. This will enable Cityclean to understand the impact of the two sessions per year. Any increases in frequency will require additional budget.
- 4.3 Also, as described above, the winter months bring inclement weather which has led to frequent cancellations in the past. In the summer months, resources are focused on the seafront and city centre. Therefore, any additional litter picking in the summer would require agency staff, which would be at an additional cost. It is difficult to secure the required number of agency staff for this task, alongside the other seasonal staff required to support Cityclean activities.

5. Community engagement and consultation

- 5.1 No community engagement or consultation has taken place with regards the recommendations of this report.
- 5.2 However, the A27 Campaign group have been an invaluable source of information, support and challenge in relation to the cleansing of the A27 and engagement with National Highways and the relevant government department.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 This report presents a response to a Notice of Motion relating to clearing the A27.

7. Financial implications

- 7.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report. Should a decision be made to increase the current litter picking frequency, additional funding would need to be identified. The current budget is not sufficient for the current two cleansing sessions per year, though CityClean is looking into how to manage this budget gap. Any significant variation to budget will be reported as part of the council's monthly monitoring process.

Name of finance officer consulted: John Lack Date consulted: 25/10/22

8. Legal implications

- 8.1 The A27 is a trunk road (and is not designated as a 'special road') and therefore under the general terms of the Environmental Protection Act 1990, the Council has a duty to keep the A27 within its boundaries, clear of litter.

Name of lawyer consulted: Alice Rowland Date consulted: 31/10/22

9. Equalities implications

- 9.1 There are no equalities implications resulting from the recommendations of this report.

10. Sustainability implications

- 10.1 There are no direct sustainability implications resulting from the recommendations of this report. However, there are environmental implications of detritus left on the A27. During the last clear up in September / October 2022, a total of 18 tonnes of detritus was removed including:
- 2 tonnes of litter
 - 13 tonnes of silt
 - 3 tonnes of fly tip.
- 10.2 Within this, approximately 40% was general rubbish, 40% was construction material and 20% was vehicle parts.