

Geoff Raw  
Chief Executive,  
Brighton & Hove City Council  
Norton Road  
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20th September 2018

Dear Geoff

Support RSPB Campaign for swift boxes

I am submitting this letter under Council Procedure Rule 23.3 to be included on the agenda of the Tourism, Development and Culture Committee Agenda on 22nd November 2018.

Please can I formally request that the Committee considers how our city can support our swift population through active Planning Policy.

The RSPB and colleagues have made submissions to the recent consultation on the City Plan Part 2, and the purpose of this letter is to request that the Committee takes particular note of the comments and ensures that supportive policy is adopted in the Plan.

Since 1995, the UK swift population has declined by 51%. The birds are almost exclusively associated with buildings. Therefore our city's Planning Policy with respect to accommodating their habitat in all new developments, both residential and commercial should be considered a priority.

This means that Policy should require the installation of swift boxes as a standard Planning Condition for all urban development in our city and that all new builds, Council house repairs, maintenance and refurbishment programmes should incorporate this cheap and cost-effective way of supporting our swift population.

Swift bricks are easy to install and are inexpensive, if installed at the time of build or external renovation works undertaken. They are much more costly to fit retrospectively. I understand the swifts make no mess and do not bother the residents of the property.

Swifts return to the same premises every year, and so are threatened when their habitats are removed, altered or relocated. Please can the Committee consider how Planning Policy could protect their existing habitats as well as ensuring new habitat development? Should we be successful in incorporating this request into Planning Policy, it will be particularly helpful in securing existing swift habitats at the Brighton General Hospital site when it is redeveloped.

I do appreciate this request may well straddle the responsibilities of other committees, but it would be particularly helpful if the TD&C committee were committed to this support, given the responsibility for scrutinising and approving Planning Policy.

Thank you in advance.

Yours sincerely

Councillor Andrew Wealls