



Item 9.2

Full Council – 18 November 2024

Liberal Democrats Group Motion

Time to get tough on chewing tobacco.

Brent Council are failing miserably to deal with the scourge of chewing tobacco (often referred to as paan) across our borough, particularly in the Wembley area. The problem of chewing tobacco has gotten far worse in recent years, which has led to the area looking dirtier than ever.

Red spitting stains across the area from Wembley High Road, Sudbury Town centre, Ealing Road to residential streets across this part of Brent are unsightly and have resulted in residents feeling that their area is being neglected and forgotten by Brent Council.

Declining cleanliness and standards on local roads, in part caused by growing levels of chewing tobacco has led to other issues, including increasing levels of rubbish dumping and fly tipping, street drinking (despite the boroughwide PSPO) and other forms of anti-social behaviour. This is cumulatively having a hugely negative impact on residents who deserve much better.

The Council's current strategy (*if there even is a coherent one!*) to deal with the issue does not go far enough. Campaigns over the years, fronted by Members of the Cabinet, have been a total failure. They have done very little to truly engage with the community, and beyond a few pictures in the Brent Magazine, there has not been consistent messaging about the harms of chewing tobacco and the impact it has in our area and on users.

The ineffective anti-paan stencils that were sprayed in certain locations on Wembley High Road, Ealing Road, have had no impact. In fact, just days after they were put down, some even had red spit stains on them!

Chewing tobacco not only causes our area to look filthy, but the impact on the user is significant too. More needs to be made of the considerable health implications of chewing and spitting tobacco. According to the NHS website, paan, a form of tobacco, is both addictive and can lead to the user developing mouth cancer and oesophageal (food pipe) cancer, as well as having a terrible impact on general oral/ dental health. A public health approach, that is effectively targeted is long overdue to ensure users are fully aware of the effects of this habit with the cost burden this habit places on the NHS also highlighted.

It is time that Brent Council got to grips with the issue of chewing tobacco in our borough – before even more damage is done to our area and residents.

The Council resolves to:

- Take the issue of chewing tobacco far more seriously and recognise the need to pursue targeted anti-chewing tobacco campaigns that reach members of the community who engage in this addictive habit.
- Immediately convene a special task group consisting of local councillors, Brent Council Officers, Enforcement teams and key members of the community, to devise a strategy to combat chewing tobacco that involves greater enforcement action, a public health approach and seeking to limit the supply.
- Urge the Labour Government to bring forward legislation that seeks to ban harmful chewing tobacco on health and environmental grounds.

Cllr Anton Georgiou
Alperton Ward