

## **Public Space Protection Orders**

### **Key concerns around antisocial behaviour across the Borough of Stockton-on-Tees**

Any antisocial behaviour (ASB) around the Borough is a concern. We utilise police systems to monitor ASB and we direct our activity based on that data.

At present our area of focus remains the Stockton Town Centre area. The core of ASB sits in the area from the High Street and immediate surrounding areas that are part residential, part retail such as Hartington Road, Rose Street and Yarm Lane.

There are many persons within these areas that have complex needs and are in fact vulnerable. It is important that the Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) differentiates between those that are vulnerable and those that are not. This is difficult to quantify and would require review on a case by case basis.

A wider view also shows that there is ASB from the bottom end of Thornaby that moves into the town centre area.

#### Key Concerns:

- Organised Crime
- Violence
- Alcohol and Substance misuse
- Begging
- Theft and Acquisitive crime (includes offences such as burglary and shop theft)

### **Views on a potential PSPO in the Borough**

A PSPO needs to be proportionate to the problem that it is there to prevent. As seen above, the High Street has a complex array of problems that not only affects our most vulnerable residents, some with very complex issues, but also will affect people visiting the High Street for social purposes, people working in the area, potential retail premises that would be attracted to the area and existing retail premises.

The needs of these people need to be balanced with the needs of those people it will potentially affect; however tackling ASB and crime, protecting our communities and addressing vulnerability are key priorities for Cleveland police and if the PSPO assists in achieving these priorities, as long as the measures are proportionate, then it would be of benefit as it would provide extra powers to the police in order to address those very issues in addition to more traditional policing tactics.

Areas of focus for the PSPO could be antisocial alcohol misuse, begging and aggressive begging, misuse of prohibited substances and similar examples that have an adverse negative effect on a particular area.

## Benefits / challenges this may bring to both Cleveland Police and the wider Borough

### **Benefits**

- Additional powers to assist with the reduction of crime and ASB in the locality of the PSPO.
- Reduction in the fear of crime and/or perceived fear from within the community.
- Reduction of intimidating behaviour brought on by some of the prohibited acts with the use of additional powers.
- Reassurance and increased confidence of retail workers, visitors, residents and others.
- Increased partnership working between police and Stockton Borough Council further strengthening the existing partnership.
- The encouragement and confidence to visit the area where the PSPO is in place.

### **Potential challenges**

- Public perception around limits to freedoms.
- Sufficient staffing levels to meet demand created by PSPO alongside competing demands across borough for traditional tackling of Crime and ASB
- Negative press.
- The PSPO not being utilised to target a specific problem in a specific area, for example the order being too broad. Those enforcing the PSPO require education around proportionate use in a targeted manner.
- A perception that they target the poor and vulnerable members of society.
- Lack of public awareness leading to decreased confidence.
- Displacement of problem to other areas.
- Ensuring identification of those that are vulnerable and need help and assistance from police and partners such as homeless people.

## Any awareness of / information on PSPO use elsewhere and the impact of this?

There are multiple examples of PSPOs throughout the country and they are utilised in many different ways to tackle wide ranging problems from dog fouling, misuse of vehicles, to traditional issues such as ASB and alcohol misuse.

I have provided links to news stories concerning PSPOs below, however I do not have specific examples of either positive or negative impacts as this is specific to each policing area and given a PSPO can last up to three years this is difficult to quantify.

### Examples:

<https://www.kentonline.co.uk/maidstone/news/police-say-task-force-crackdown-is-having-positive-impact-on-253014/>

The above is an example where police say they have ‘anecdotal’ evidence that the PSPO has had a positive impact on retailers and visitors and the PSPO was extended.

<https://www.doncasterfreepress.co.uk/news/crime/doncaster-suburb-plagued-by-antisocial-behaviour-police-and-council-will-enforce-protection-order-3369662>

The above is an example of residents criticising a PSPO as the perception is that the issues that the PSPO is designed to tackle aren’t enforced.

### Conclusion

Cleveland Police will use a Public Space Protection Order as a proportionate tactical tool. Use is on a situational basis alive to the benefits and challenges discussed in this document. We would offer reassurance that if PSPO is granted locally, then it has been well considered and we would encourage partners to be part of any conversation around the use of PSPO.

*Cleveland Police  
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