
**EXCERPT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE
HEALTH AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY PANEL
HELD ON 14 JANUARY 2021**

HWSP.08/21 REVIEW OF PUBLIC SPACE PROTECTION ORDERS

During consideration of the following matter the Chair left the meeting due to technical issues. Councillor Mrs Finlayson (Vice Chair) thereupon took the Chair.

The Neighbourhood Services Manager submitted report CS.05/21 which contained the revised Public Space Protection Order and the combined Public Space Protection Order for alley gates inviting comments from the Panel as part of the consultation on the revised Orders. Comments were also welcomed on the over-arching Local Environmental Crime, Action and Enforcement Strategy but the primary focus of the discussion would be around the proposed revisions to the Public Space Protection Order. Sergeant Blain, Cumbria Constabulary, was present at the meeting to support the discussion.

The Neighbourhood Services Manager briefly introduced the Local Environmental Crime, Action and Enforcement Strategy which outlined the Council's approach to maintaining clean streets and neighbourhoods and reinforced its commitment to taking robust enforcement action against those responsible for enviro-crimes such as littering, fly-tipping and dog fouling. The Neighbourhood Services Manager, further added that Panel Members would be interested in the work of the Council to influence positive behaviour change and also the action planned to tackle other negative behaviours for example, deploying a camera enforcement vehicle to tackle roadside litter and to give the Civil Enforcement Officers powers to challenge and potentially issue fines to motorists parked with engines idling, to support wider carbon reduction efforts and improve local air quality.

The Team Manager - Parking and Enforcement detailed the amendments to the PSPO as set out in appendix 2 of the report.

In considering the report Members raised the following comments and questions on the appendix:

- There was some concern regarding the safety of those removing alcohol containers from individuals who may suffer from addiction.

Sergeant Blain confirmed that Cumbria Constabulary were primarily responsible for the removal of the containers. He set out the safeguarding procedures that were in place for individuals who may have an addiction. In response to a further question he explained that any safeguarding needs were referred to the relevant organisation the following day. He added that the legislation within the PSPO for begging and rough sleeping was only used as a last resort, Cumbria Constabulary met weekly with key partners and exchanged information daily to avoid prosecutions.

- The Panel and the Economy, Enterprise and Housing Portfolio Holder felt that the links between Cumbria Constabulary and the Homelessness Services were critical in ensuring that the PSPO provided ongoing support to individuals and were reassured that the procedures in place were successful in reducing anti-social behaviour and providing help to those in need.

- How safe was it giving people the opportunity to move on and where would they go if they were rough sleeping?

Sergeant Blain confirmed that safeguarding was a major concern for those individuals who were rough sleeping and the Police did what they could to dissuade them or move them to a safer location. The Police engaged with individuals about options, however, often the individual was passing through. A head count of rough sleepers was taken each week and individuals were discussed at the weekly meeting to ensure support was offered. The latest head count for the city had been one.

- Did the Police liaise with Border Force when dealing with beggars and rough sleepers?

Sergeant Blain confirmed that the Police could check on an individual's status on the street and immigration were part of the weekly hub meetings. In addition Cumbria Constabulary worked closely with Dumfries and Galloway Constabulary to identify individuals who may be crossing the border.

- How did the Police deal with children who were begging?

Sergeant Blain explained that if the Police believed there was a safeguarding issue with a child they would invoke their powers to take the child into temporary care.

The Communities, Health and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder thanked Council Officers and the Police for their hard work in producing a sensitive yet firm document which ensured safeguarding procedures were followed and helped to make Carlisle an excellent place to live and work.

- How many individuals who were rough sleeping had refused offers of accommodation during the pandemic?

The Economy, Enterprise and Housing Portfolio Holder responded that the Homelessness Team worked extremely hard to provide support to those in need and to his knowledge only one individual refused the offer of accommodation.

- A Member suggested that authorised buskers and traders be issued with a permit or identification which showed that they had permission to be in the city centre.

The Team Manager agreed to discuss the matter with the City Centre Team. In response to a request the Team Manager informed the Panel that the Enforcement Team, City Centre Team and Police had prepared the Busker Code of Conduct and she would circulate a copy to Panel Members.

- How had the consultation process been undertaken?

The Team Manager set out details of the consultation process which included newspaper advertisements, social media posts, advertisement of the PSPO in affected areas and a survey of affected residents. Due to the current circumstances the consultation period had been extended.

- Referring to cars idling, a Member asked if this could be promoted as a public campaign to highlight the environmental impact.

- What work was being undertaken to change the behaviour of those who littered and was any work carried out with businesses?

The Neighbourhood Services Manager explained that the Council's Enforcement Officers were very proactive and worked seven days a week, they were visible and engaged with those seen littering. The Council did carry out prosecutions and this action was supported by the Courts. Littering was an ongoing issue especially with chewing gum and cigarettes, he reported that a bid had been submitted for grants to increase the recycling capacity in the city.

RESOLVED – 1) That the Panel had considered the Review of Public Space Protection orders (CS.05/21).

2) The Team Manager - Parking and Enforcement circulate the Busker Code of Conduct to Panel Members.