

Public

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter:	Review of the Public Spaces Protection Order: Eynesbury
Meeting/Date:	Licensing and Protection Committee 16 October 2024
Executive Portfolio:	Executive Councillor for Residents Services and Corporate Performance, Councillor S W Ferguson
Report by:	Community Action Team Leader
Ward(s) affected:	Eynesbury

Executive Summary:

On 27th June 2024, the Licencing and Protection Committee supported the proposed implementation of a Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) to tackle anti-social behaviour that was occurring in a localised area of Eynesbury, St Neots.

On 17th July 2024, the PSPO came into effect, with public notices erected and offenders warned. The District Council's Community Action Team (previously Community Protection and Enforcement Team) have worked in partnership with the St Neots Neighbourhood Policing Team since then to facilitate a swift response to the issues. Following implementation of the Order, an overt CCTV camera was put in place on the corner of Berkely Street, Montagu Street and St Mary's Street to identify offenders breaching the PSPO prohibitions and to act as a deterrent.

Following a targeted response from HDC and Police, reports of anti-social behaviour in the area have reduced. Patrols in and around the location have continued as well as engagement with members of the public regarding the PSPO conditions.

The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with an update on the impact that the Order has had since implementation.

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 On 27 June 2024 the Licencing and Protection Committee agreed with the recommendation for a proposed Public Space Protection Order for Eynesbury, aimed at tackling anti-social behaviour linked to street drinking and public camping in the churchyard. Committee Members also requested that an update be provided, on enforcement outcomes following the implementation of the PSPO.
- 1.2 The PSPO for Eynesbury came into effect on 17th July 2024. On this date, Officers from the Huntingdonshire District Council's Community Action Team (CAT) and the St Neots Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT) patrolled the area, engaged with the community, warned people of the consequences of a PSPO breach and erected signage in the areas affected by the PSPO. Since then, the PSPO has been enforced effectively with excellent results.
- 1.3 On the day of implementation, a person who had been camping in the churchyard on Berkley Street since late 2023 was warned by HDC's CAT Officers and St Neots NPT Officers that they were now in breach of the new PSPO. On 22/07/2024 the person still had not moved on, so HDC CAT Officers and St Neots NPT Officers provided a 1-hour window to remove camping equipment from the area to avoid enforcement action. There have been no reports of camping at the location since.
- 1.4 It is believed that many of the incidents of anti-social behaviour occurring at the location were exacerbated by this individual and the prompt resolution of this issue through PSPO enforcement has resulted in a reduction of incidents occurring.
- 1.5 Following the implementation of the PSPO, an overt CCTV camera was erected on the corner of Berkely Street, Montagu Street and St Mary's Street to identify offenders breaching the PSPO conditions and to act as a reinforced deterrent from offending behaviour.
- 1.6 On 20th August 2024, representatives from HDC's Community and Housing Teams, Cllr Ferguson and Cllr Taylor joined the St Neots Neighbourhood Policing Team in engaging with a group of Eynesbury residents to receive feedback and provide updates on the PSPO and Nags Head. Residents were reassured on actions taken so far and reminded how to report concerns.
- 1.7 The following is a list of incidents reported to the Police in the vicinity of the PSPO area. Not all these incidents are directly related to the PSPO:
 - 12/07/2024: Reports of drug dealing in the area
 - 05/08/2024: Male seen acting suspiciously on Buckley Road
 - 12/08/2024: Group drinking outside the Nags Head this incident was resolved
 - 16/08/2024: Vehicle Nuisance people playing loud music from a vehicle

- 24/09/2024: Non dwelling burglary Montagu St Neots
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- 1.8 St Neots NPT have conducted regular patrols of the area along with Police Operation DANTE Officers. No breaches of the PSPO conditions have been witnessed. One male is currently under police investigation for criminal damage, after being witnessed on CCTV damaging one of the PSPO signs.

2. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

2.1 **Section 59** of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 makes Public Spaces Protection Orders a statutory provision of the Local Authority. To make a PSPO, the authority must be satisfied that on reasonable grounds two conditions are met:

- Activities carried on in a public place within the authority's area have had a detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the locality, or is likely that activities will be carried on in a public place within that area and that they will have such an effect.
- The second condition is that the effect, or likely effect, of the activities –
 - is, or is likely to be, of a persistent or continuing nature,
 - is, or is likely to be, such as to make the activities unreasonable, and
 - justifies the restrictions imposed by the notice.

2.2 **Section 60** of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 sets the duration of a PSPO for no more than 3 years, unless extended under this section.

2.3 **Section 66** of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 provides an interested party the right to apply to the High Court to question the validity of a PSPO, or variation of a PSPO within 6 weeks from when the order or variation was made.

2.4 **Section 67** of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 makes it an offence for a person without reasonable excuse to do anything that they are prohibited from by the PSPO or fail to comply with a requirement of the PSPO. Conviction may result in up to six months imprisonment, or a fine of up to £1000.

3. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

3.1 Continued enforcement of the proposed PSPO for Eynesbury will utilise resource from Cambridgeshire Constabulary and HDC's Community Action Team.

3.2 HDC's Community Action Team will respond to reports of anti-social behaviour, including PSPO breaches as part of their day-to-day duties.

- 3.3 A deployable CCTV camera has been provided by HDC's CCTV Department, at a cost of £1800 for 6 months. Funding for this camera has been sourced and funded by HDC's Communities Department.
- 3.4 HDC's CCTV Department will continue to conduct 24-hour monitoring and review of incidents at the location via HDC's CCTV Control Room.
- 4.0 This order will remain in place until July 2028. In this time, HDC and Cambridgeshire Constabulary will continue to ensure the conditions of the PSPO will remain enforced proactively and reactively. The Community Action Team will provide Licensing and Protection Committee Members with an annual progress report to notify of any amendments to the PSPO by the Community Services Manager, and to demonstrate the effectiveness of the works undertaken to tackle anti-social behaviour in this area of Eynesbury. From January 2028 the Community Action Team will begin a process of consulting with members of the public and Elected Members to determine whether there is necessity to extend the duration of the PSPO for Eynesbury. The results of this consultation will be shared with Licensing and Protection Committee members.

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