

Briefing Note – Town Centre PSPO Cabinet Report

Harrow Council is committed to improving the environment, maintaining low crime and improving community safety. Directly relating to this commitment is the Council's action to address anti-social behaviour and related complaints in its main urban centre.

On 1st February 2021, the Borough Wide Public Spaces Protection Order was renewed which included controls around alcohol consumption in public places as well as urinating, defecating and spitting. But the town centre faces specific issues that were addressed through consultation and included

- Amplification of music and voice
- Financial Agreements (people trying to get visitors to sign up to them)
- Placing of tables, chairs, stands and other fixings / furniture on the street (not associated with a business, which is covered under other licensing)
- Feeding of birds and vermin
- Distribution of leaflets
- Illegal street trading (not associated with a business which is covered under other licensing)
- Begging
- Wheeled vehicles

Consultation was not a tick box exercise, and taking into account concerns of negative impact on the homeless if begging was targeted, as well as concerns over the use of scooters and bikes amongst the young, the aspect of begging and wheeled vehicles was removed from the final PSPO proposed.

The main issues raised with amplification was concern that this would stop good busking taking place in the town centre. This is addressed by the fact a busking pilot is in place for this area to ensure busking continues, with permitted amplification, but in a controlled way. The proposed PSPO does not seek to stop busking or free speech but stop the war of sound from various parties using amplification to preach, play music or to carry out other activities.

As with any enforcement discretion is key, and will be enforced sensibly. Failure to comply with a PSPO is an offence and can lead to a summary conviction and fine not exceeding level 3 on the standard scale. All enforcement officers as well as Police are authorised to take action under it.

The PSPO will be in place for a maximum 3 years as per the law, but will be reviewed to ensure it is effective in its approach in tackling issues that affect businesses and the public,