

FORCE response to the Public Space Protection Orders consultation April 2017

General

FORCE welcomes these proposals in principle and has also set out a few comments and concerns on the specific proposals. We reserve the right to amend and develop our views in the light of comments from members and others, and the availability of further information, as the consultation and implementation progresses.

We have the following suggestions and queries:

- It would be helpful to have a section on the council web-site that sets out the rationale for the proposals put forward and also sets out good practice suggestions with respect to some of the key issues raised. This would be helpful for the council, ourselves and others to explain the purpose behind the orders and encourage informed good practice from park users
 - A regular (maybe annual) update from the council (and/or SWLEN) would be of value, as and when these PSPO's go live, summarising their use and effectiveness in controlling and regulating behaviour in parks and open spaces
 - How are the PSPO's to be displayed? We would not be supportive of new boards covered in regulations. However an A4 sheet on existing boards that summarises them (with a link to a web-site) may be appropriate
 - The orders tend (perhaps inevitably) to be negative in flavour. It would be helpful to also see a positive statement to encourage people to use the parks and open spaces, maybe on the lines of; "There are lots of benefits to using parks and open spaces and we know that they are a valuable asset for local people. We have put these PSPO's together to try to ensure that you have a positive experience in your park. This is what you can do if you are not happy..... This is how we are going to enforce these regulations"
 - How are the PSPO's to be regulated and will there be a simple means for the public to report potential transgressions?
1. **Dogs – includes proposed reduction of numbers for any individual from 6 to 4.** FORCE supports these proposals. The use of parks to exercise dogs is an important and largely beneficial activity. However, dogs can be a nuisance to other park users and to the wildlife that lives there. These PSPO's will help to balance the needs of dog owners with other users and the wildlife in open spaces. Public education as to the potential impacts of dogs on the community and wildlife value of parks and open spaces, and setting out best practice, would also be welcome alongside these proposals
 2. **Other animals – feeding animals and control of horses.** FORCE supports these proposals. The feeding of wild animals (such as ducks and other birds) can provide a valuable introduction to wildlife for young children in particular, as well as pleasure for people and a source of food for wildlife. However, the uncontrolled use of food, and the use of inappropriate food (such as bread for ducks), can provide harm and nuisance. This activity would benefit from these controls as well as public education on both potential impacts and best practice.
 3. **Bicycles.** FORCE supports these proposals. Cycling in parks and open spaces is an important use and largely beneficial activity. However, cyclists can be a nuisance to other park users. These PSPO's will help to balance the needs of cyclists with other users of open spaces. Public education

as to the potential impacts of cyclists on the community value of parks and open spaces, and setting out best practice, would also be welcome

4. **Fires.** FORCE supports these proposals. Fire is a major risk to parks and open spaces and we consider these orders are proportionate to managing this risk
5. **Fireworks.** FORCE supports these proposals. It is not appropriate to set off fireworks in public open spaces
6. **Alcohol.** FORCE supports these proposals, which seem to be proportionate to any problems associated with alcohol in public open spaces, subject to good judgement being applied by any authorised person
7. **Camping.** FORCE supports these proposals
8. **Drones.** FORCE supports these proposals
9. **Wildlife and Environmental protection.** FORCE supports these proposals subject to the addition of; “except with the consent of the council” to part A
10. **Sport.** FORCE supports these proposals
11. **Behaviour.** FORCE supports the majority of these proposals. However, due to the general lack of toilet facilities in parks and open spaces, there are times when the use of a secluded location for urination, first ensuring a low risk of disturbance, is considered acceptable behaviour
12. **Motor vehicles.** FORCE supports the majority of these proposals. However, motor vehicles are often required to deliver tools and materials for improvement works in the parks, including volunteer works carried out by FORCE and others. Where there is agreement with the council to carry out these works then we consider there should also be implicit approval for the use of motor vehicles to support these activities.
13. **General.** FORCE supports these proposals