



**Public consultation on making a new Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO)
for and area of Rushden town centre, North Northamptonshire**

Consultation results

Appendix D – Report to Executive 16 January 2024

January 2024

Introduction and background

1. North Northamptonshire Council (NNC) is considering making a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) to cover part of the town centre of Rushden, North Northamptonshire.
2. A PSPO is an order under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, and prohibits certain activities and behaviours from taking place that cause harassment, alarm and distress to other users of the area.
3. NNC has the power under the 2014 act to make PSPOs across the area it is responsible for. Before doing so, it is required to seek the views of local people and businesses on whether a PSPO should be made, and the prohibitions it should cover.
4. The proposed Rushden PSPO has five prohibitions:

Alcohol consumption - Being in the possession of any open vessel suspected of containing alcohol, having been requested by an Authorised Officer to surrender the same, unless it is being consumed on a licensed premise i.e. a pub or a restaurant.

Rowdy or inconsiderate behaviour - Acting in a manner that causes harassment, alarm or distress or acting in a way that an Authorised Officer reasonably perceives to be intimidating and/or aggressive as a result of consuming alcohol.

Using the public space as a toilet - Urinating or defecating other than in a facility specifically designed and intended for such use.

Begging - by making any verbal, non-verbal (excluding busking) or written request from a standing, sitting down position for money, donations or goods - including the placing of hats or containers for money.

Misuse of motorised or powered vehicles - Using a motorised or powered vehicle within the prohibition area causing unreasonable anti-social noise, public nuisance, or danger to others, and or refusal by a person in possession or control of a motorised or powered vehicle, to remove the vehicle from the prohibition area when requested to do so by an Authorised Officer

5. The consultation for this PSPO began 13 November 2023 and ended at midnight 31 December 2023. It was run online via NNC's Consultation Hub and paper copies were available for anyone who had limited or no access to the internet.
6. NNC's Executive will consider the proposed PSPO at its meeting 18 January 2024.

Response to the consultation

7. There were **148** responses received overall. Of that 127 are complete responses and 21 are incomplete responses. A complete response is where a respondent completes the whole questionnaire and submits their feedback. The online facility has an option to save your responses and return to it later to complete and submit it. Where a respondent has worked partway through and not submitted it before the deadline, these are recorded as incomplete responses. As some of the 21 incomplete responses had partially answered the questions, and provided some comments, they have been included in the analysis.
8. Question 1 asked people to say whether they agreed or disagreed on whether a PSPO for Rushden town centre was required. The following responses were recorded:-

Response	No.	%
Strongly agree	96	64.8
Agree	28	18.9
Neither agree nor disagree	2	1.3
Disagree	0	0
Strongly disagree	0	0
Did not answer	22	14.8

Question 2 and 3: The PSPO has a designated area (restriction area) where the prohibitions will apply to. These questions offered people the opportunity to suggest areas/streets etc. in the town centre that they feel should be added to the restricted area (q2) and locations that people think should be removed (q.3). The following responses were received:-

Q2	Q3
Midland Road and Station Road. The church doorways and grounds frequently (2 or 3 times a week) have people around them drinking and taking drugs.	None to be removed Rushden is a terrible place to live now, people drinking on streets begging don't feel safe
Area containing Asda	
Add Asda that's where all the begging and ASB occurs	
Jubilee Park as there are regularly people there being disruptive and taking drugs at all hours of the day and night	
Queen Street. Hayden Road when football is on or private parties.	
All areas of the greenway need to be covered. The greenway in Higham Ferrers that links Higham and Rushden where it is so unsafe for children at the Ferrers school with	

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teachers having to stand outside the gates and break up fights and try to move on older kids who hang around and make threats and start fights.	
Map should also include the cemetery and surrounding areas like Harborough Road with drug related issues mainly, constant misuse of motor bikes cutting through cemetery or the alley way top of Harborough Road which cuts through to the new estate Oakpits road.	
Hall Park/Jubilee Park - Both parks will be the new location for drunks and drug users Jubilee park already has issues with the use and sale of drugs around the skate park.	
Moor Road	
Hall and Spencer Parks	
Cromwell Road/Queen Street and High Street	
All of the Town Centre and surrounding areas should be included. I live in Church Street and work in the High Street. Drugs, alcohol, speeding cars, vandalism and a gang of youngsters that are causing mayhem need to be stopped.	
Upper Queen Street/King Edward's pub and Asda should be added	
Higham Road (my road) there is often people shouting early in the morning on Fridays and Saturdays.	
Hall Park and Spencer Park	
Home Bargains Car Park/North Street. Regular evidence of drug exchange.	
Higham Road Rushden, we got a lot of rowdy shouting. Loitering and dangerous use of scooters. Alcohol use on the Road outside.	
Spencer Park and Asda area... as well as Hall Park due to the small children being exposed to disgusting behaviour and violence	
Any hot spots showing public disorder on a domestic level. Violence on street. Urinating on streets happens outside my front door. I hate it.	
Fitzwilliam St. and the whole of Duck	

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St. Car park including the alleys to Fitzwilliam St. and Wellingborough Rd. as there has been repeated vandalism and anti-social behaviour in these areas. The street signs for Fitzwilliam St. have been missing and vandalised for months and both need replacing.	
Along Park Road and the surrounding Hall Park area. Reasons - the fallout from the high street area, fall out of events at hall park i.e Party in the park, bonfire night etc. And types of shared accommodation around Park Road.	
Should include ASDA area, front and car park	
Queen Street - due to continuous high crime rates Spencer Park - as a personal victim of crime in this park (multiple times over many years) and feeling unsafe to walk there alone as a result.	
It needs to cover Asda's grounds	
I think the Hall Park should be included as on occasions there are drunks & people sleeping rough. People having a picnic with a responsible drink are fine & are usually families just enjoying the Park	
Any public or private (residents') car parking areas abutting but currently outside the area shown red.	
Spencer Park, Highfield Road, Tennyson Road, Westfield Avenue,	
If possible, add in the grounds of the church, as it would be a shame for the usual war memorial crowd to migrate to the church. I appreciate they could go anywhere, but i think the church needs to be protected.	
Park Road - Lots of Drug and vape deals happening along street and used by electric scooters rather than using the main roads	

Questions 4 to 8 focused on the prohibitions in the proposed PSPO, as set out earlier in this report. These questions asked people say whether they agreed or disagreed with them being in the PSPO. The following responses were received:-

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	Alcohol consumption	Rowdy or inconsiderate behaviour	Using the public space as a toilet	Begging	Misuse of motorised or powered vehicles
Strongly agree	105	114	114	84	109
Agree	14	12	8	21	13
Neither agree nor disagree	6	1	2	13	3
Disagree	1	0	2	5	0
Strongly disagree	0	0	0	2	0
Did not answer	22	21	22	23	23

Questions 9 and 10 asked people to indicate whether they felt there should be other prohibitions included in the PSPO (q9) and whether they felt any provisions should be removed (q10). The following responses were received:-

Q9	Q10
Smoking drugs	Begging as there is little help available for the homeless and it isn't a major problem in Rushden.
Children under 16 in gangs smashing windows	The "Rowdy" provision is only when related to alcohol, why is the latter constraint required? Surely it should to any instance howsoever caused since the alcohol constraint means that drug related rowdiness is fine!
Men outside Costa in Rushden are very intimidating...also the beggars outside Asda	There should be more provision for homeless people so that begging is not an issue
To act in a manner likely to cause harassment alarm or distress (not as a result of alcohol)	The begging should be removed from the proposal; there are multiple reasons that someone might beg, and largely these reasons are not for "fun" or "because they can" but because they need to, they have other issues and vulnerabilities and/or they know nothing else. Putting begging on this PSPO only moves the problem to another area of the town.
Drug taking needs to be properly stamped out	

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Teenage gangs causing chaos	
Any evidence of drug dealing. There is a bad drug problem in Rushden. Police need the power to be able to search these teenagers and confiscate anything they shouldn't have.	
Known shoplifters and alcoholics to be moved on and not to hang around the town shops and war memorial making it feel unsafe	
Carrying a dangerous weapon	
Please deal with this gang of youngsters that are causing so much damage to property in Rushden, they have no respect for anybody or anything. We need more police presence in our town as a deterrent	
There is often a strong smell of Cannabis in these areas but it's not often on the actual High Street.	
Parking misuse	
Drug misuse and selling	
Loitering outside Asda on the hill to the left of entrance. Also huge use of cannabis in Rushden. High Street stinks of it and lime Street in Rushden.	
Dogs off leads in the town centre Litter, cigarettes butts being dropped	
Stop Drug dealers operating openly in the street, Stop local shops selling illegal tobacco and alcohol	
Littering	
I think this might be covered by the motorised vehicle misuse but I feel very strongly that illegal parking should be clamped down on in this area. I am a disabled person with a Blue Badge as I have limited ability to walk. It is often impossible to park in the High Street because of illegally parked vehicles.	
Rowdy or inappropriate behaviour - should not just be as a result of alcohol consumption. Smoking Weed in public - it's not a pleasant smell and is a reason I now avoid the shops that are left in the high street.	

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Spitting/dog fouling and littering	
20 mph speed zone	
School children bullying shopper on and around Asda, both inside and in the carpark	
Verbal abuse	
Control of assembly by intimidating groups of primarily young men, particularly during evenings	
Cycling on pavements and cycling the wrong way on a one-way street. This happens frequently in the High St and is very dangerous to pedestrians and is already illegal!	
Main issues currently are with a Gang of Feral Kids causing major issues, and the use of electric scooters, both the Voi and privately owned machines, and petrol engined motorbikes being ridden on footpaths, the wrong way along one way streets and with no regard to anyone else.	
Loads of kids openly smoke drugs along the roads, parks and other public places. This is the start to the slippery slope and ignoring this issue will only cause further issues down the line. Please add in drug taking/smoking/anti-social behaviour. Likewise, you can walk past houses in Rushden with strong drug smells (obviously growing illegal drugs). This should be investigated and knocked on the head immediately to avoid further issues again.	
Walking the high street as much as you can I work in XXXXXX and we have had so many thieves verbal abuse, drunks and gangs of kids vaping in shop spraying urine in shop, we shouldn't have to put up with this	

Question 11 asked people to say if there was anything else they wanted to tell us that they hadn't already. Responses received were as follows:-

Get independent shops back on the high street! Big chains kill the high street and so do no shops with nowhere nice to eat/drink/shop/be social. The high street is a mess and a disgrace.
Surely a greater police presence in the first place would stop this sort of consultation being needed

If the police were able to do their job properly and enforce existing laws there should be no need for additional measures such as this
Rushden is desperately in need of more police presence on foot in the town. A gang of youths is causing so much damage and is very abusive. Alcohol, speeding vehicles, drugs and begging are what we have to deal with on a daily basis. The area has rapidly gone downhill.
Not safe going out alone, thinking of moving away from Rushden
I think some form of intervention is absolutely required to clean up Rushden town centre. Having recently moved to the town, I'm struck and disgusted by primarily the amount of litter in the town, overflowing bins and the amount of street drinkers around Rushden. I rarely spend much time in the town due to this issue and although i live in a nice house, the council have let the town down.
Feel that the council does not care about Rushden environment, the look and upkeep of the town
Investigate shops that only deal in cash only
I avoid Rushden High Street as I feel intimidated by gangs of men hanging around. This is in the daytime so I can only imagine how bad it would be in the evening
You're trying to be too specific in defining causation
The rowdiness and anti-social behaviour seem to be particularly bad around football season, and I'm glad to see that the council are looking to combat this.
The sale of illicit tobacco from shops in the High St. appears to continue.
Too much money and time invested in traffic / speed enforcement. Not enough investment in other local concerns.
This is only of any real value, if you have the drive and capacity to enforce it. I believe most of those points are covered by current legislation. The big issue is the effectiveness of the police. This summer a small group, mostly not even youths, wreaked havoc amongst the retailers and shoppers in the town centre. On one rare occasion when a police officer appeared, he was confronted by a shopper and asked what he was doing about it, the reply,,, 'we're building a case' translated, if we wait till the end of the summer the problem will solve itself. Another top tip, do the police really need to use sirens??? They only serve to warn the youths, who are gone by the time the police arrive, perhaps that's the purpose? This variety of behaviour just stops people visiting the High Street
I think the issue with noisy vehicles is most pronounced at night. The paving slabs along the high street are not all fixed in pace and can be hazardous. There are often groups of men hanging around outside of some shops/premises, they are often smoking/vaping (which I know is not illegal but it does make me not want to frequent there unless I have to).
Please open a Drop In centre for locals to discuss local problems now we have no Police Station and no Citizens Advice Bureaux.
The stench of drug use in parts of the High St, is unacceptable and also men loitering in the High Street
This would be a positive move in helping to make the people of Rushden feel safe in their HIGH street
I fear for my teenage boys walking around the town. I feel uncomfortable during

<p>the daytime walking along the high street. More visible Policing on foot. I have seen in increase in Police cars.</p>
<p>The youth population are extremely rude and use the outside of Asda as their hangout and playground. The security move them on but to them it is a game and they are abusive to customers as they make their way into the shop.</p>
<p>There is considerable anti-social behaviour in the town centre after 5pm. There are several shops which have sometimes large groups of individuals drinking/smoking on the pavement.</p>
<p>Working in the high street has become more and more dangerous and unpleasant over the last few years. Acts of violence, distribution etc in the shop I work in makes it no longer nice to go into work.</p>
<p>Speeding well above 20mph in Alfred Street NN10 9YS. Signs are badly placed to show this. Huge increase in traffic driving the wrong way along Alfred Street.</p>
<p>Concerned that potentially imposing this PSPO in Rushden town centre may just push certain groups to other parts of town such as Spencer Park or Hall Park for instance. Are there further provisions to be made if that happens to be the case? Will your attempt at stopping beggars just move the ones in town centre and outside Tesco down to Asda? The provision for Public Toilets in the town itself is very sparse. Are there plans to increase this? Or even extend the hours they are open? You want to clean up the streets but ALL the toilets are closed at the times urinating in public is a problem.</p>

Note:

- The responses received have been anonymised to protect people's identities. Names of shops or businesses have been replaced with XXXXX
- Not all respondents gave an answer to every question.