



Project Harmony and Public Spaces Protection Order Updates

Development & Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny
Commission

Date of meeting: 27th February 2025

Lead director/officer: Sean Atterbury / Nicola Odom

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: Castle and Westcotes
- Report author: Nicola Odom
- Author contact details: Nicola.odom@leicester.gov.uk
- Report version number: V.1

1. Summary

- To provide the Scrutiny Commission with updates and an overview on the work of Project Harmony.
- To provide the Scrutiny Commission with a detailed overview of proposed Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) and plans to implement.

2. Recommendation(s) to Lead Member:

- Scrutiny Commission are invited to:

Comment, on the work that is being carried out within the City Centre in relation to the Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) and Project Harmony.

3. Detailed report

What is Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)

3.1 **Definition:** Antisocial behaviour is defined as 'behaviour by a person which causes, or is likely to cause, harassment, alarm or distress to persons not of the same household as the person'. For the purposes of this report and the work carried out by the Community Safety Team the definition of ASB is applied in all circumstances.

Project Harmony

3.2 Project Harmony has been developed as Community Safety's response to street lifestyle issues in the city centre and across hot spot locations. Aimed at identifying and disrupting those causing the most harm, particularly aggressive begging in and around the inner-city centre, including, Clock Tower, Belgrave Gate, Granby Street, Charles Street, Humberstone and Gallowtree Gates. Using a tiered approach to disruption which will target those causing the most harm along with liaising with other services, such as Outreach and Turning Point.

3.3 62 Incidents of ASB and related crime for City Centre were reported and responded to by the Project Harmony Officer during the Q3. There is Currently a large increase in a variety of issues which are being tackled as they occur, including an increase in encampments. Not all encampments remain in situ and are often quickly moved on by the police, or by their own accord.

3.4 **Current re-occurring or complex matters:**

- **Encampments** – All services alerted including LFRS and daily engagement being conducted by Community Safety and Changing Futures.
A spreadsheet has been created to allow multiple teams to input and alert Community Safety in real time. An encampment process is defined within Community Safety, however, this is resource intensive and requires an ‘Encampment Strategy’ that has input from more than one department.
- **Legal Action - Injunctions:** x2 injunctions in progress due to significant city centre disruption by individuals, referred by police as part of partnership commitment.
- **Car Parks** – Rough sleepers, anti-social behaviour, lack of security - Ongoing work to liaise with the owners of the car parks and for notices to be served if no improvement.
- **Kent Street Day of Action** – A multi-agency response to complaints by businesses in the area concerning sex work, illegal parking and abandoned vehicles, litter, overgrown areas and lack of CCTV coverage. Community Safety led work to improve and clean up the area and improve security.

3.5 **Other routine work carried out as part of Project Harmony:**

- Op Pedalfast – Police led operation to disrupt illegal/modified ebikes and scooters in the city centre. Community Safety staff support with these Ops and engage with members of the public and offer advice to those affected. An additional four days of action have been agreed to take place by 31st March.
- Patch walks – Community Safety officers carry out regular patch walks across the City centre area disrupting ASB and engaging with members of the public and businesses in the area.
- Dynamically applied the incremental approach to disrupt street lifestyle behavior.

Street Lifestyles
2 x Community Protection Notice Warnings issued for sleeping in a public place
1 x Advice letter given for shouting and swearing
1 x Verbal advice for begging
4 x Verbal warnings issued to street lifestyle individuals for blocking business fire exits
2 x Community Protection Notice Warnings issued for begging
2 x Advice letters given for begging
2 x Written warning letters given for aggressive begging
Amplified Noise
4 x Advice letters were given to religious groups
1 x Advice letter was given to busker

- Disrupted encampments including increased accountability for landlords to be responsible for dispersing the encampment.

Encampments
7 x Formal written notices given to vacate
2 x Verbal advice given to vacate

Businesses
4 x Community protection notice warnings issued to business
1 x Closure warning issued to a City Centre car park
1 x Cease and desist letter issued
1 x Community protection notice issued to the land owner to secure site and remove detritus
1 x Community protection notice warning issued to the land owner to secure site and remove graffiti and detritus

- Met with businesses to share the work of the team and council which was well received.
- Engaged businesses on the patch walks to demonstrate the action of the council.
- Promoted the work of the team on Radio Leicester

4. Public Space Protection Order (PSPO)

- Under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 local authorities have had the power to implement public space protection orders (PSPO) in areas of public land where there is or where there is likely to be anti-social behaviour. PSPO can cover a range of anti-social behaviours such as dog fouling, street consumption of alcohol and behaviours such as begging to name a few.
- 4.2 Leicester City Council has had PSPO's in place since 2014 covering dog fouling, street drinking and consumption of psychoactive substances. The most recent PSPO covering street drinking and psychoactive substances expired at the end of 2023 and a thorough assessment has since taken place to research and prepare a new proposal to consult with members of the public that is for purpose and relevant to the changing economic and emerging issues. Psychoactive substances have been dropped from any proposals because the last government made it illegal to possess or to consume these and it is therefore not a requirement of a PSPO.
- 4.3 Because complaints have primarily been concentrated in the city centre a zonal system has been created that includes the city centre to allow for successful reduction of the anti-social behaviours. In response to complaints from visitors, those living and working in the city and businesses a consultation has been prepared that proposes to address the most relevant anti-social behaviours affecting the city centre, or zone one (**Appendix A**).

- 4.4 The consultation was made available on the council's website, with the link shared via the council's social media channels from 11am on 20th January 2025 until midnight on 17 February 2025. A total of 1139 responses were received, along with several additional emails. The overwhelming feedback indicates strong public support for the PSPO and all its proposals.
- 4.5 Throughout the formulation process of the PSPO legal advisors were regularly consulted and will continue to be engaged until the order (**Appendix B**) is sealed and fully implemented.

5. Next steps

- To consider the consultation responses, finalise the draft Order, seal the Order and publish on the council's website and agree implementation date.
- Train frontline officers ie city wardens and community safety to enforce on the PSPO
- Recruit additional officers to support the work and enforcement of the PSPO
- Arrange consultation on rest of the city (outside zone 1)
- Continue to gather evidence to disrupt activities.
- Encourage businesses to continue reporting issues.
- Work in partnership with other agencies to reduce the issues and provide support.
- Continue to conduct regular patch walks
- Frontline Street Lifestyle Group (FSLG)

5. Financial, legal, equalities, climate emergency and other implications

5.1 Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

Signed: Stuart McAvoy, Head of Finance

Dated: 18th February 2025

5.2 Legal Implications

This report identifies the proposal to implement a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) Legal advice has been sought and will continue to be provided in regard to the consultation exercise for a PSPO.

The Gunning principles, and other legal requirements, will need to continue to be followed in the conduct of the consultation. This includes the need for clear evidence that the decision-maker has considered the consultation responses, or a summary of them, before taking its decision. The decision making must be lawful, follow a fair process and be reasonable.

Ongoing legal advice and assistance should be sought to ensure continued compliance with all legal requirements.

Signed: Zoe Iliffe, Principal Lawyer (Property Highways & Planning)

Dated: 18th February 2025

5.3 Equalities Implications

When making decisions, the Council must comply with the public sector equality duty (PSED) (Equality Act 2010) by paying due regard, when carrying out their functions, to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a 'protected characteristic' and those who do not.

We need to be clear about any equalities implications of the course of action proposed. In doing so, we must consider the likely impact on those likely to be affected by the proposal. Protected characteristics under the public sector equality duty are age, disability, gender re-assignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The report provides an overview on the work that is being carried out within the City Centre in relation to the Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) and Project Harmony.

Leicester is proposing to introduce a PSPO in the city centre or zone one to reduce anti-social behaviour and this is currently out for consultation. While PSPOs are intended to maintain public order, they must be implemented in a way that ensures fairness and does not disproportionately impact certain groups. An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken and this will need to be updated to take into account the consultation outcomes/findings. The EIA has identified several mitigating actions that can be put in place, such as providing additional support and signposting for individuals who may need it, to support them through the process.

The update and overview of the Harmony Project highlights the work being undertaken to address street lifestyle issues in the city centre and across hot spot locations. It aims to target those causing the most harm, who will be from across a range of protected characteristics and takes a partnership approach.

Signed: Sukhi Biring, Equalities Officer

Dated: 19th February 2025

5.4 Climate Emergency Implications

There are no direct climate emergency implications arising from this report. However, if the work outlined in the report is successful in ensuring the city centre is attractive for shopping and leisure visits, this may have a beneficial effect on reducing carbon emissions from travel by encouraging the use of public transport and reducing the 'pull factor' of alternative

destinations which tend to be accessed by car.

Signed: Duncan Bell, Change Manager (Climate Emergency). Ext. 37 2249

Dated: 18.02.25

5.5 Other Implications

Signed:

Dated:

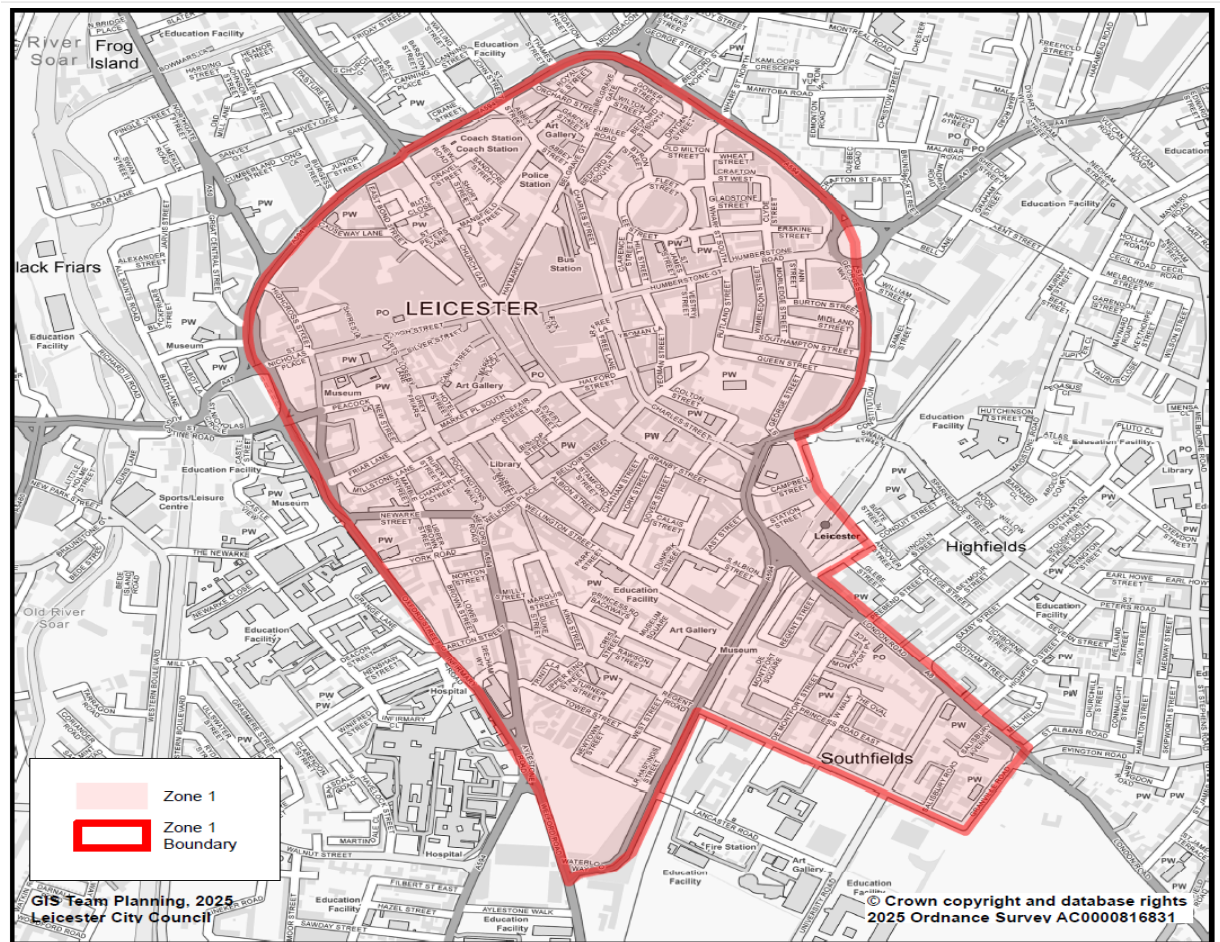
6. Background information and other papers:

7. Summary of appendices:

APPENDIX A - Map of Zone 1 Proposed Public Spaces Protection Order

APPENDIX B - Public Spaces Protection Order Proposal

Appendix A



Appendix B

LEICESTER CITY COUNCIL ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR, CRIME AND POLICING ACT 2014 PUBLIC SPACES PROTECTION ORDER

Notice is hereby given that Leicester City Council ('the Council') has made the following Order under section 59 of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 ('the Act') as follows.

This Order may be cited as the Public Spaces Protection Order (Leicester City Centre Zone 1) and comes into force on XXX. This Order will have effect for a period of 3 years, until XXX.

The order relates to all public places within Leicester City Centre, the boundaries of which are edged red on the plan attached to this order at Schedule 1 ("the Restricted Area").

The Council is satisfied that the two conditions below have been met, in that:-

- a. activities carried on in the restricted area as described below have had a detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the locality, or it is likely that these activities will be carried on in the public place and they will have such an effect;
- b. 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 Order.

The effect of the Order is to impose the following prohibitions and/or requirements in the Restricted Area at all times, unless specifically stated:-

DEFINITIONS

"Council" – is Leicester City Council

"Authorised Officer" - could be a Police Constable, or an officer duly authorised by the Council.

Restricted Area – is the map attached to this order

“Loitering” – includes but is not limited to sitting or laying on the floor, in or adjacent to doorways or within 10 metres of cash machines (including banks, supermarkets)

“Begging” – includes but is not limited to any verbal, non-verbal or written request for money, donations or goods, including the placing of hats, clothing or containers. Begging with an intent to intimidate which may include repeated requests. Approaching or following a person whilst making a request. The use of false or misleading information. Attempting to provide or deliver unrequested or unsolicited services or products with a demand or pressure for money

A) Loitering or Begging

A person is prohibited from loitering or begging, in a manner that causes or is likely to cause harassment, alarm, distress, nuisance or annoyance to any person within the Restricted Area

B) Charity or commercial subscription collectors

A person is prohibited from, soliciting for the completion of subscription charity collections. Appropriate permission to carry out cash collections in the City Centre should be obtained from the Council in advance.

C) Pedal cycles, e-bikes, skateboarding and manual scooters

Any person riding a pedal cycle, e-bike, skateboard or riding a manual scooter must do so in a manner that does not cause harassment, alarm, or distress to any person in the designated area and must dismount if requested to do so by a Police Officer or Authorised Officer.

Exemption:

Nothing in this order applies to a person who uses a mobility scooter for access reasons or a person who uses an E-bike or E-scooter as a mobility aid and cannot safely dismount and push a cycle for any significant distance, but these persons must use these aids in a careful and considerate manner.

D) Alcohol

A person shall not within the Restricted Area:

- (i) continue to consume alcohol when asked to stop by an Authorised Officer, or
- (ii) fail to surrender any alcohol in their possession when asked to do so by an Authorised Officer

Any alcohol or container for alcohol surrendered to an authorised person may be disposed of by an authorised person as he or she thinks appropriate in accordance with Section 63(5) of the Act.

E) Microphones, loudspeakers, megaphones, loudhailers or any other equipment used to amplify the volume of speech, music

A person shall not within the Restricted Area:

- (i) Use microphones, loudspeakers, megaphones, loud hailers or any other equipment which are designed to amplify the volume of speech, music or instruments.

Exemptions

- Events activities, marches processions authorised by the council and/or the police
- Peaceful static gatherings or assembly
- Premises or vehicles where these activities are permitted under their licence conditions
- Performers that are permitted to so under a council scheme

F) Temporary structures

A person shall not within the Restricted Area:

- (i) Erect a temporary structure such as a gazebo, tent, marquee, table temporary stall, promotional flag / banner.

Exemptions

- Persons who have obtained prior consent or licence from the council
- Persons engaged in events, activities authorised by the council
- Emergency service or emergency responders

RIGHT OF APPEAL

There is a right of appeal against the making of this order to the High Court by an interested person with 6 weeks beginning with the date on which the order was made. An interested person is someone who lives in, regularly works in or visits the Restricted area. This means only those who are directly affected by the restrictions can appeal. The grounds for appeal are set out in section 66(2) of the Anti-social behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014

FIXED PENALTY NOTICES AND OFFENCES

1. It is an offence for a person without reasonable excuse to engage in any activity that is prohibited by this Order.
2. In accordance with Section 63 of the Act, a person found to be in breach of this Order by consuming alcohol or by refusing to surrender alcohol to an Authorised Person is liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 2 on the standard scale (currently £500) or to a Fixed Penalty Notice up to £100.
3. In accordance with Section 67 of the Act, a person found to be in breach of this Order, other than by consuming alcohol or by refusing to surrender alcohol to an authorised person, is liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 3 on the standard scale (currently £1000) or to a Fixed Penalty Notice up to £100.

**THE COMMON SEAL OF THE
LEICESTER CITY COUNCIL
WAS HEREUNTO AFFIXED
IN THE PRESENCE OF**

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**AUTHORISED SIGNATORY
DATED**

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