

Public Space Protection Order Consultation Analysis

Introduction

1. Fareham Borough Council undertook consultation with residents and interested organisations regarding proposals to initiate a Public Spaces Protection Order in the town centre between 17 August and 27 September 2016.
2. Respondents were asked a number of questions relating to the introduction of a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) to give Police Officers and Police Community Support Officers extra powers to tackle instances of street drinking, drug taking, begging and sleeping rough in the Town Centre.

Our principles for consultation

3. The Council aims to give everyone an equal opportunity to influence and comment on changes to services. Our engagement and consultation will:
 - **Have a purpose:** We will consult on policies and plans at a formative stage and only ask questions on issues that have not been decided on yet
 - **Be informative and clear:** We will provide information in plain English that is clear and balanced and helps everyone contribute to the process
 - **Be promoted and targeted:** We will promote consultations widely and target people, businesses and organisations who may be most affected by a policy.
 - **Use a variety of methods:** We will understand the needs of different audiences and engage and consult in a way that suits them, making best use of new technologies and methods
 - **Be open and transparent:** We will publish feedback and responses to the consultation in a timely fashion and explain how consultation responses have informed decision making.

How did we engage people during the consultation?

4. In order to allow as many people to take part as possible the survey was available online via our website and paper copies were provided at the Civic Offices and also on request.
5. The six week consultation period was judged to be a sufficient period of time to gather the views of a range of interested parties and is in line with reasonable expectation for this type of proposal.
6. The structure of the questionnaire allowed explanatory and supporting information to be presented to respondents. This included information on our work with the police and a range of specialised organisations such as local substance misuse support groups and a homelessness charity, to support people and help them to try and turn their lives around. This helped to ensure that

participants were aware of the background and context to the Council's proposals.

How did we promote the survey?

7. As with all the Council's consultations, we worked to ensure that the proposals were presented in a clear and easy to understand way. Every effort was made to ensure that as many people as possible were aware of the proposed changes and had an opportunity to have their say during the consultation. The following promotional channels were used:

- **Social Media:** The consultation was promoted with links to the survey on Facebook and twitter. The posts were shared by residents and groups a number of times during the consultation per
- **E-panel requests:** Emails with links to the survey were sent to over 2,000 residents.
- **Council Connect:** The consultation was accessible on the Council's digital service and information point in the shopping centre in Fareham Town Centre.
- **Contacted local sheltered housing schemes:** Paper copies of the survey were sent to schemes within the town centre.
- **Press release:** An initial press release was sent out followed by a reminder one during the consultation. This resulted in significant coverage in the local press as well as on Radio Solent.
- **Website:** The consultation was promoted on the Council's homepage throughout the consultation period.
- **Notice boards:** The consultation was promoted on all of the Council's 43 public notice boards around the Borough.
- **Partner Invites:** Relevant partner organisations were invited to take part by email.

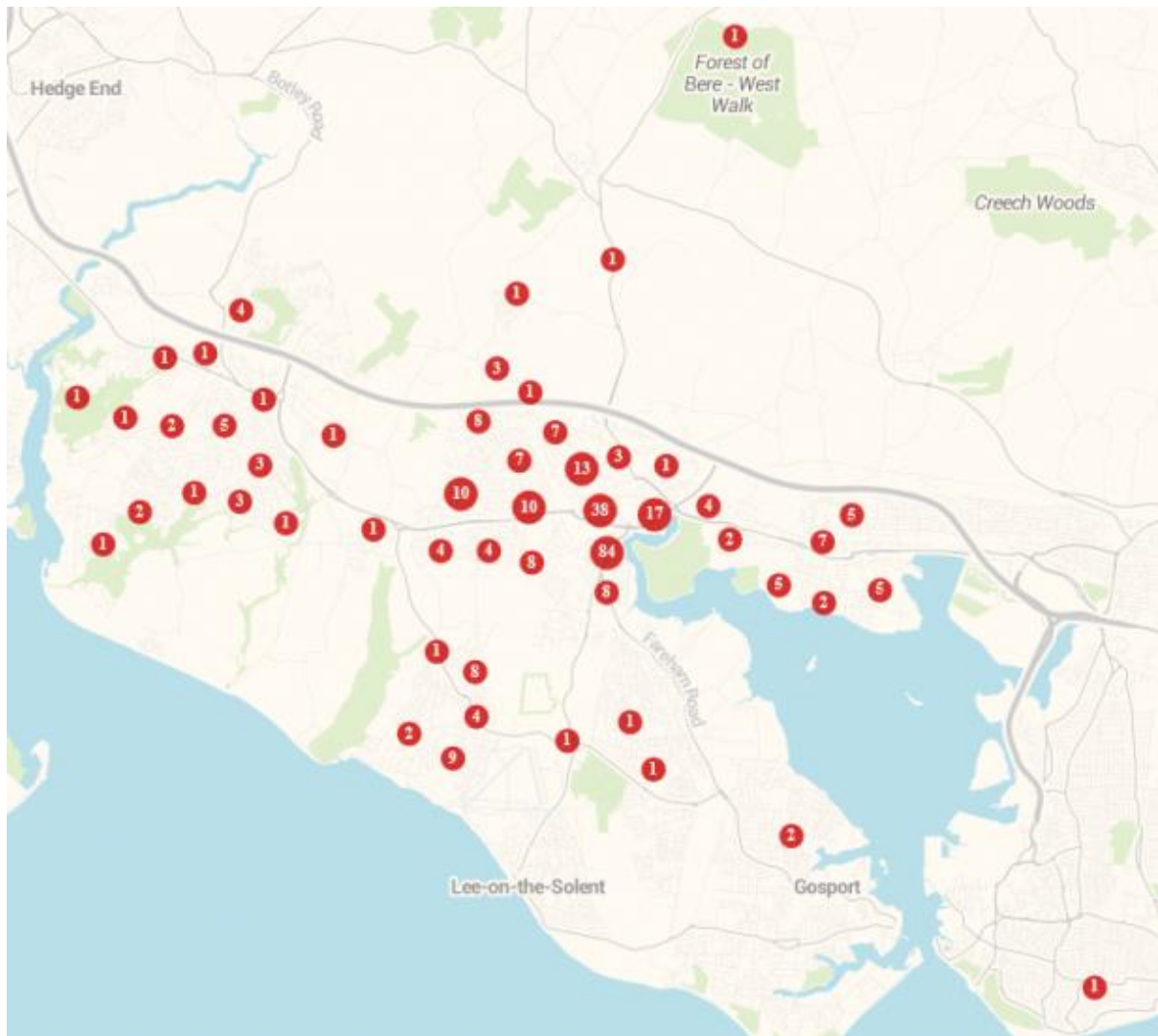
How many people took part in the Survey?

8. There were 544 respondents.

Where were the respondents from?

9. The map below highlights the home postcode of the respondents who provided them in the survey. It is clear that the highest concentration of responses came from people that lived or worked within the proposed PSPO area.

Map1: Map of responses by Postcodes given by respondents



10. There were a small group of respondents who identified themselves as representing local businesses or organisations based in the town centre.

Overall Results

11. Respondents were asked whether they were in support of the police having extra powers to tackle each of the following issues: street drinking, drug taking, persistent begging and rough sleeping. The levels of support expressed for a PSPO to tackle each of the issues shown by respondents who answered this question is below:

- Street drinking – 96% (481) of respondents in favour
- Drug taking – 98% (491) of respondents in favour
- Persistent begging – 91% (454) of respondents in favour
- Rough sleeping – 81% (406) of respondents in favour

12. The results of the survey reveal that a large majority of respondents were in favour of a Public Space Protection Order, particularly with regards to stopping people engaging in drug-taking and street drinking in the town centre. There were

slightly less respondents in favour of PSPO to help tackle persistent begging and rough sleeping. However, there was still a strong majority in support of a PSPO for both.

Respondents who said they lived in the town centre

13. Mapping the results based on the postcode given allows us to focus in on the views of those respondents from within the PSPO area:

- Street drinking - 97% (55) of respondents in favour
- Drug taking - 98% (56) of respondents in favour
- Persistent begging - 97% (55) of respondents in favour
- Rough sleeping - 91% (52) of respondents in favour

14. The results for respondents with a postcode within the proposed PSPO area, is broadly the same as the overall results when looking at street drinking and drug taking in the town. However, 8% more of the respondents with a postcode in the town centre area wanted to see the PSPO implemented to help with persistent begging and 10% more wanted it as a tool to help deal with rough sleeping when compared to the overall results.

People were also asked for their views on what impacts they thought a PSPO might have on the town centre or local people.

15. We wanted to understand what impact respondents thought a PSPO would have to help understand their views and to see whether there were any possible impacts that we were not aware of.

16. There were 481 comments given by people in support of a PSPO. Of these, 453 were considered positive. A number of themes emerged from the positive comments given by respondents in favour of the PSPO:

- Have a positive impact on anti-social behaviour
- Make Fareham town centre a more pleasant and safe place to be
- Make residents feel safer when visiting the town centre at night
- It would help the police do their job
- Help deter any more anti-social behaviour

17. 28 comments given by respondents in favour of a PSPO that were considered either neutral or negative. These covered the following themes:

- The PSPO would direct the anti-social activity elsewhere
- The PSPO would have little impact
- The PSPO was not necessary
- The PSPO would only work in combination with other measures e.g. alcohol support

18. It is also important to consider the views of the minority of people who did not support the implementation of a PSPO. From these, there were 69 comments given which covered the following themes regarding the possible PSPO:

- Have little impact upon the Town Centre or local people
- Drive the problems elsewhere in Fareham or underground
- Too difficult to enforce
- There were too many laws already
- Cause further distress to vulnerable people

People were asked to comment on what impacts they think a PSPO would have on the people involved in the anti-social behaviour

19. There were 475 comments given by people in support of a PSPO. Of these, 425 expressed an opinion that the PSPO would have a positive impact on the people engaged in anti-social behaviour. There were a number of themes to emerge from the comments given:

- Hoped it would encourage people to get help and support
- It would stop some of the anti-social behaviour
- It would deter people who engage in anti-social behaviour from coming to Fareham

20. Of those in support of the PSPO, 50 comments were provided that were either neutral or negative about the impact the order would have on the people engaged in the anti-social behaviour. A number of themes emerged from these comments:

- It would have no impact on behaviour
- It would only work in combination with support from other agencies e.g. drug rehabilitation and homelessness support
- It would put further pressure on people with a complex range of problems
- It could move them to places where children congregate e.g. parks

21. Again, it is important to consider some of the views of the minority of people who did not agree with implementing a PSPO. 34 comments were given and focused on the following:

- It could marginalise those involved in the anti-social behaviour even further
- It would do nothing constructive to help these people with their problems
- Fines wouldn't work as these people have little or no funds to pay them
- More support was required to help these people

General Comments about the possible PSPO

22. Respondents were asked for general comments about the possible PSPO. 261 comments were given by respondents in support of a PSPO. Of these, 244 were considered positive. These are the main themes to emerge:

- It is a great idea
- It would make me feel safer in town
- Do it – the sooner the better!
- The boundary of the PSPO should be increased to cover the whole borough
- Don't understand why the police didn't already have the power to tackle these issues
- Should also include cycling through the pedestrian area and on pavements in the PSPO

23. Of those in support of the PSPO, 17 general comments were provided that were either neutral or negative. These focused on the following:

- The PSPO would only be effective if combined with other support mechanisms
- It would have little impact on the people engaged in anti-social behaviour
- It would only move the issues onto other parts of the Borough.
- There are sufficient laws already to tackle the issues

24. Again, it is important to consider some of the views of the minority people who did not agree with implementing a PSPO. 34 comments were given and focused on the following:

- Agencies already have the powers needed to deal with the issues
- Issues are complex and need joint working amongst support agencies to deal with complex problems
- A PSPO could be abused by those in power
- It will just alienate vulnerable people

Addressing the concerns of consultation respondents

25. Whilst the majority of respondents were in support of introducing a PSPO, it is important to consider and address the concerns raised in the consultation. The following outlines the main concerns expressed by respondents and outlines how the Council and our partners will mitigate them:

- **Concern:** A PSPO would only work in combination with support from other agencies e.g. drug rehabilitation and homelessness support
- **Mitigation:** The Council works closely with support agencies. It is recognised that there needs to be support for those who have problems of substance misuse and homelessness and the council and police will continue to work with charities and substance misuse and housing services to try and help those in need. The support needs of individuals are considered including their housing situation, physical and mental health needs. Their offending behaviour is assessed at fortnightly Tactical Planning Meetings and the

monthly the multi-agency Fareham Partnership Action Group meetings and an appropriate plan put in place to provide them with support.

- **Concern:** It would put further pressure on people with a complex range of problems.
- **Mitigation:** Prohibitions on behaviours that affect clients with complex physical and mental needs are mitigated through access to appropriate services, with trained staff skilled at dealing with the needs of the client group.
- **Concern:** It would just move the behaviour to other areas in Fareham.
- **Mitigation:** The Council will continue to monitor issues on a daily basis through 101 call data, partnership working between Two Saints, Police, Fareham Borough Council Community Safety Team and the Car Parks Manager. The issue will be further monitored and evaluated at the fortnightly Tactical Planning Meeting and the monthly the multi-agency Fareham Partnership Action Group.