

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL
CABINET – 6 FEBRUARY 2018

Recommendations from the Social Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 17 January 2018:-

36. PUBLIC SPACE PROTECTION ORDER

Report of the Executive Director (Housing and Communities) informing the Committee of the outcome of the public consultation on proposals to implement a Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) which was designed to tackle anti-social behaviour in Hatfield Town Centre and seeking approval to a draft order. Public consultation took place between 12 and 26 November 2017.

The Committee noted that Hatfield Town Centre had a long standing issues with street drinking, rough sleeping and begging associated anti-social behaviour; with the people involved in such activity, urinating or defecating in public spaces. These specific behaviours caused harassment, alarm and distress to members of the public, but were particularly difficult to deal with through other legal channels due to the burden of evidence required to pursue them as a criminal act. In addition local residents who were affected by the behaviour were often unwilling to act as witnesses.

Rough sleeping was one of the issues of concern raised by consultees. The PSPO could be used against rough sleepers but only as a last resort, where the person persistently failed to engage with the Council. Council Officers were committed to providing support to rough sleepers and signposting them to the other specialist agencies. The Council had introduced a new initiative 'Housing First' to reduce the number of rough sleepers in Welwyn Hatfield.

During discussion it was accepted that there was a risk of raising expectations by making an Order, but the Council had an excellent working relationship with its partners, supported by the Police who wanted to be able to use the Order.

There would be signage and the operation of the Order would be monitored and could be varied if felt to be appropriate.

Having considered the issues of anti-social behaviours in Hatfield Town Centre and the views of consultees the Committee fully supported making an Order.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the formal consultation responses received on the proposed PSPO for Hatfield Town Centre be acknowledged.

- (2) That the results of the consultation undertaken be noted and the Cabinet recommended to consider this proposal and agree to the implementation of a zoned PSPO for the designated areas within Hatfield, as recommended by the local Community Safety Partnership Joint Action Group.
- (3) That the Council be recommended to agree to discharge the current PSPO (automatically created by the legislation from the current Designated Public Place Order).