

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO)?

A PSPO is an order which aims to stop anti-social behaviour happening in a public place. . The failure to comply with the requirements of a PSPO is a criminal offence. In order to introduce a PSPO a council has to be satisfied that two conditions are met:

The first condition is that

- (a) activities carried on in a public place within the authority's area have had a detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the locality, or
- (b) it is likely that activities will be carried on in a public place within that area and that they will have such an effect.

The second condition is that the effect, or likely effect, of the activities

- (a) is, or is likely to be, of a persistent or continuing nature,
- (b) is, or is likely to be, such as to make the activities unreasonable, and
- (c) justifies the restrictions imposed by the notice.

PSPOs can only be introduced by a council after a necessary consultation, notification and publicity. A PSPO can last a maximum of three years, although it can be extended or varied (or discharged) during the course of its life.

Why is the council trying to bring in this PSPO?

We want to introduce a PSPO to make it easier to tackle problems such as public urination, dog fouling, smoking in children's play areas and driving over grass verges. If introduced, it allows a far more expedient means to tackle issues, through the use of fixed penalty notices, as well as prosecutions where required.

Smoking in children's play areas is becoming an increasing issue and one recognised as needing tackling. Hackney has already taken action, as well as City of London, and Royal Society for Protection of Health and the Chief Medical Officer recognise the benefit on children's health.

In terms of damage to footpaths and verges, thousands of pounds are spent annually carrying out repairs from damage by cars throughout the Borough. The Borough has introduced measures to try and counter this including double heightened kerbs, but this is expensive and localised.

Dog fouling is a very emotive subject, with dog mess blighting parks and streets and causing potential health issues. It is not acceptable and responsible dog owners ensure it does not happen. But it is important to ensure all play a part throughout the Borough, and this includes the means to pick up dog mess and dispose of it in a sensible way.

Spitting has already received a lot of attention in the Borough, with previous surveys showing strong support for this to be tackled. At present this is carried out under "littering" but can face challenges and a PSPO is a far more sensible way of tackling this.

And the same is the case with urination and defecation, which is becoming an increasing issue especially in the Boroughs open spaces, and is unacceptable.

We already have a designated public space order in place to tackle problem public drinking but it's due to run out in October 2017. We've found it a useful tool for responding to this problem and so would like to renew it, and the Police have supported this to tackle on street anti-social behaviour..

How will it be enforced?

A person authorised by the council, police officer or police community support officer can enforce a PSPO.

What are the fines for breaking a PSPO?

Fines will usually be £100, but prosecutions can be taken for particularly serious cases, repeat offences or where there's failure to pay an initial fine.

How will the PSPO be advertised/publicised?

If the PSPO is put in place, we'll publish it on the council's website, via social media and in local newspapers. Signage will also be erected in relevant areas in the borough.

Will it work?

We think a PSPO will be a useful tool to use alongside other initiatives, like education and will hopefully encourage behaviour change. We all want to live in a clean borough, which is why we're encouraging everyone in Harrow to take responsibility for their actions.

Is the proposal a done deal?

Absolutely not! We need to know whether the people of Harrow generally agree with us that bringing in a PSPO to tackle these problems is a good idea.

When will it come into force?

Consultation is due to end on 15th January 2016. If it's agreed we should go ahead with the PSPO, we expect it to come into effect in 2017

Where can I see the proposed PSPO in full?

A draft copy is available below.