

Member Briefing

Number: 1206

- Title:** Chester city Public Space Protection Order (PSPO), Home Office guidance and Cheshire West and Chester funded police community support officers (PCSOs)
- Summary:** Chester city PSPO was put in place by Cabinet in 2016 for a maximum period of three years. This followed a 12-week public consultation process and a lot of decision making to agree the final measures. The PSPO will be reviewed over the next few months as new, updated guidance was produced by the Home Office in 2017.
- Cheshire West and Chester funds three PCSOs to add to the Police and Crime Commissioner's officers for the borough.

Public Space Protection Order (PSPO)

In 2015, Cabinet approved a 12-week public consultation on the use of a PSPO in Chester city centre to help manage a range of issues, including begging, rough sleeping, busking, the use of novel psychoactive substances (known as legal highs in the PSPO), urination and defecation.

There was a good response to the consultation, resulting in Cabinet approving a three-year PSPO in May 2016. The approved order contained measures on alcohol consumption, legal highs, urination and defecation. In December 2017, the Home Office issued updated guidance to say that PSPOs should not be used to tackle homelessness or rough sleeping. A report will go to Cabinet in September 2018 with recommendations on consultation and measures to consider for the review of the PSPO.

Police community support officers (PCSOs)

Cheshire Constabulary and the police and crime commissioner have carried out a review of the PCSO roles and re-allocated officers across the borough to make sure that all wards have a named PCSO. In total, this is 39 PCSOs and some have two wards allocated to one officer. The Council has also allocated £100,000 to fund three extra PCSOs that are attached to the anti-social behaviour (ASB) units and will work with them to address local authority and community issues. The PCSOs started on 18 June and to begin with they will be attached to the Chester ASB unit to help out with begging and rough sleeping. But they are a borough-wide resource and can be allocated wherever there is demand across the three ASB units.

There is a Service Level Agreement in place with Cheshire Constabulary, which sets out key priorities that include the following.

- For orders to be attached to the ASB units depending on the demand in each unit or locality (Chester, Ellesmere Port and Northwich), and for it to receive direction, tasking and deployment from the ASB unit sergeant depending on the current ASB unit and wider Local Authority community issues.
- To take part in joint campaigns and operations with officers from Cheshire West and Chester Council in support of shared objectives and priorities.
- To investigate and enforce, where officers' powers allow, aspects of environmental crime, including but not limited to littering, dog fouling and abandoned vehicles. Fixed penalty notices also need to be issued where appropriate for relevant offences.
- To provide support to the ASB units and wider Council regulatory and enforcement officers in the discharge of their duties.
- To help identify and safeguard victims of anti-social behaviour, encouraging them to report incidents.
- To assist in promoting compliance with the provisions of all current PSPOs, as well as supporting the introduction of any new orders throughout the duration of this agreement. Where appropriate, the aim is to enforce the provisions of the order.
- Whenever possible, attend training or awareness sessions delivered by Cheshire West and Chester Council. These are aimed to make sure officers have an awareness of safeguarding and early help.
- Make sure officers have a presence and visibility, including attending youth provisions and community centres across the area to build trust, relationships, and allow effective intelligence sharing and increased partnership working.
- Ongoing support of the Council's prevention agenda and promote community resilience through participation in joint awareness and educational campaigns as directed.

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