

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO)?

The Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 introduced Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPO's). PSPOs are used to protect the public from behaviour that is having, or is likely to have, a detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in a locality and which is (or is likely to be) of a persistent or continuing nature, and unreasonable. Councils can make PSPOs to prohibit specified activities, and/or to require certain things to be done by people engaged in particular activities, within a defined area.

Why is this needed in Cannock Chase?

Cannock Chase already has a PSPO in force to prohibit alcohol consumption in defined areas, which is due for renewal. This has been successful in reducing previously unacceptable levels of ASB linked to the behaviour.

We intend to renew this prohibition and also include restrictions on other behaviours within the district where there is evidence of problems:

Anti-social use of motor vehicles - We are seeking to prohibit any person within the District from engaging, assisting or causing anti-social behaviour connected to the use of a mechanically propelled vehicle in any publicly accessible space. The Police and the Community Safety Team have been aware of an increase in ASB linked to motor vehicles within the District over the past twelve months - this includes ASB involving cars, e-bikes, e-scooters, off road motorbikes and quad bikes. There have been 102 reports to Police linked to this behaviour in a rolling 12-month period. Behaviour has included up to 100 cars congregating and racing on highways, revving of engines, stunts such as handbrake turns and donuts being performed, loud music and dangerous operation of vehicles in parks, along with criminal damage. The behaviours often represent a significant risk to the health and safety of the general public, whilst also causing noise, alarm and distress to the community.

Unauthorised incursions onto buildings/rooftops - We are seeking to prohibit any person to access buildings/rooftops within without authorisation. There is an increasing issue within Cannock and Rugeley linked to young adults accessing rooftops and elevated buildings without consent. There have been 27 reports from the general public to Police in the last 12 months, and CCTV operators have made an additional 36 reports during the same period. This behaviour often leads to ASB and/or Criminal Damage, whilst causing high levels of concern and complaints from residents and businesses. It also places those partaking at substantial risk of injury or death.

Public urination/defection, and unsafe disposal of drug paraphernalia, including hypodermic needles - This is an issue which has begun to affect all three town centres within the district, but particularly Cannock Town Centre. There have been 18 known instances in the previous 6 month period. This behaviour and associated waste creates unappealing town centres, whilst also presenting a risk to public health within the community, including the potential transmission of blood borne viruses. A PSPO would enable the Police and authorised officers to address the behaviour more

adequately, whilst also enabling a greater understanding of any vulnerabilities, and providing an opportunity to engage and sign-post to appropriate support agencies.

Abandoned Items - We are seeking to prohibit the abandoning of items where they are posing a public health risk, or are blocking, for example, public thoroughfares, entrances to buildings, properties and fire exits. This is an issue which has begun to affect all three town centres within the District, but particularly Cannock Town Centre and Hednesford Town Centre. It is important to note, that the PSPO must directly address the behaviours which themselves are causing ASB, rather than any activities which may not, in themselves, be detrimental to the community's quality of life. We do not seek to unduly pursue individuals who are not causing any harm, or criminalise any person who is homeless, or is in need of additional support.

Loitering - The fifth new proposed prohibited activity within the PSPO would seek to prevent loitering, in circumstances where this is causing, or is likely to cause ASB. Loitering linked to ASB is becoming an increasing problem across the District, particularly in the three town centres and main parks._