

## **Proposal to introduce a new Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) in Thatcham Town Centre**

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### **Background**

Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPOs) were introduced in October 2014 as part of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014. PSPOs allow councils to place restrictions and requirements on certain behaviours in an area, to make sure we can all use and enjoy public spaces, safe from anti-social behaviour. They can be 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 the area. The behaviour also has to be ongoing or happening regularly and be unreasonable.

PSPOs replaced powers to make Gating Orders, Designated Public Place Orders (street drinking restriction powers) and Dog Control Orders.

Failing to comply with a PSPO is a criminal offence and could result in a Fixed Penalty Notice of up to £100, or a fine of up to £1,000 if prosecuted.

When considering what could be included in a PSPO, we know that we need to balance things that people want in order to feel safer and happier in the town, whilst at the same time not being seen to be stopping people enjoying themselves, or introducing rules and regulations that can't be enforced.

Thatcham town centre is a repeat location for anti-social behaviour and this is having significant community impact. We've therefore been asked to consider the introduction of a new PSPO for this area.

### **What are we proposing?**

We're proposing a restriction to tackle anti-social behaviour (namely behaviour which causes, nuisance, harassment, alarm or distress) in Thatcham town centre:

- Any person behaving in a manner that has caused, or is likely to cause, nuisance, harassment, alarm or distress must leave the restricted area when requested to do so by an authorised officer for a specified time, and not return to that area for a period not exceeding 24 hours:

For example, a group is behaving anti-socially in Thatcham town centre and the police attend. The group are asked to leave the area by the police officers and are all given 'Direction to Leave' forms advising them not to return to the area for 24 hours.

- Some of the group leave the area when asked to do so and do not return – they have not committed a criminal offence and won't be fined.
- Some of the group leave the area when asked to do so, but then return to the area within 24 hours - they have breached the PSPO, committed a criminal offence and may be fined.



- Some of the group do not leave the area when asked to do so – they have breached the PSPO, committed a criminal offence and may be fined.

You can read the proposed order, our supporting evidence document to explain why we're proposing the restriction, and see a map of the proposed area in this pack.

### **Why we want your views**

We'd like the views of our local residents, businesses, agencies, and visitors to Thatcham in relation to the proposed restriction to be included in the PSPO and the proposed restricted area to be covered by the PSPO.

### **How to take part**

If you'd like to comment please complete our survey by **midnight on Sunday, 3 April 2022**, which should take about 5 minutes.

We'll also be holding pop-up events in and around Thatcham Town to learn more about your views.

If you have any questions about the PSPO, please contact our Building Communities Team either by email at [WestberksBCT@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:WestberksBCT@westberks.gov.uk), by post to PSPO (Thatcham town centre) Consultation, Building Communities Together Team, West Berkshire Council, Council Offices, Market Street, Newbury, Berkshire, RG14 5LD, or call 01635 503019.

If you have any concerns about anti-social behaviour, that aren't an emergency, please call the Police on 101.

### **What happened next?**

The initial findings from the consultation were taken to the Building Communities Together Partnership, a sub-group of the Health and Wellbeing Committee for recommendation on the final decision. The final decision will be made by Individual Executive Member Decision.

### **What you told us**

We received 282 responses from the 6 week consultation. We found that a large majority of respondents supported the proposed restrictions. **84.67% of respondents who answered the question, supported the proposed anti-social behaviour restriction**; 9.49% of respondents did not support the proposal.

## What we did

We would like to thank everyone that participated in the consultation.

The results of the consultation showed that a PSPO would be supported by those living, working and visiting Thatcham town centre. The local police area and Thatcham town council were also supportive of the application.

The Building Communities Together Partnership were advised of the results of the consultation on 05/05/2022. The Partnership **agreed** that it is appropriate to progress the application of the Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) for Thatcham town centre and recommended the Order is made as proposed as part of the consultation.

The recommendation of the Building Communities Together Partnership was taken into account when the final decision was made by West Berkshire Council's, Service Director – Development and Regulation on 12/07/2022. The Delegated Officer Decision was that the Public Spaces Protection Order for Thatcham town centre be granted and implemented for 3 years. The Order will come into effect on 11 November 2022.

