

Cabinet



Date of meeting:	08 September 2025
Title of Report:	Proposed Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) for the management of anti-social behaviour in designated Plymouth City Council Carparks
Lead Member:	Councillor Sally Haydon (Cabinet member for Community Safety, Events, Libraries, Cemeteries and Crematoria)
Lead Strategic Director:	Gary Walbridge, Strategic Director for Adults, Health and Communities
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Your Reference:	TN/O5/08/25
Key Decision:	No
Confidentiality:	Part I

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet approval for the implementation of a new Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) for a period of 3 years in nine council-owned car parks across Plymouth. These locations have experienced a sustained increase in anti-social behaviour (ASB), resulting in heightened safety concerns, a rise in complaints to both the Council and Devon and Cornwall Police, and reports from members of the public and local business owners indicating that they no longer feel safe using these facilities.

The proposed PSPO is intended to promote the safe and appropriate use of these car parks, ensuring they serve their intended purpose and support a positive experience for those visiting the city for work, leisure, and shopping. The order will enable enforcement action against behaviours that are persistent, unreasonable, and detrimental to the quality of life of those in the locality.

Consultation took place with key stakeholders and partners; 23 responses were received. Feedback was that key stakeholders would welcome this proposal with 88% showing support.

Public consultation was conducted and received 372 responses, with the overwhelming majority expressing support for the proposal. 94% of respondents agreed that the proposed prohibitions were fair with only 3% disagreeing.

The PSPO will contribute to improved public safety, particularly for women and girls, and aligns with the Council's commitment to tackling Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG). It will also help restore confidence in the use of these facilities and support the city's economic vitality.

Recommendations and Reasons

1. That Cabinet approve this proposal and support the making and implementation of the PSPO with the suggested prohibitions.

Reason: PSPO's are designed to empower local authorities to deal with anti-social behaviour that adversely affects other people using public spaces. In this case the introduction of a PSPO is a reasonable, legal and proportionate response to ongoing anti-social behaviour. It will increase feelings of public safety and support our police colleagues in tackling behaviours that are persistent and detrimental to residents. The proposed prohibitions are measured and considered and suitably justify the restrictions imposed by the notice.

Alternative options considered and rejected

1. Maintain Current Arrangements Without a PSPO

Rejected: This option was not considered viable due to the persistent and escalating nature of anti-social behaviour in the affected car parks. Existing enforcement mechanisms have proven insufficient to deter repeat offenders or address the full scope of the issues.

2. Increased Police, PARC or Council Patrols Without a PSPO

Rejected: While increased patrols may offer short-term visibility, they lack the legal framework and enforcement powers provided by a PSPO. Without the ability to impose restrictions or issue penalties, this approach would be limited in effectiveness and resource-intensive.

3. Environmental Design Improvements Alone (e.g. lighting, signage, layout changes)

Rejected: Although environmental improvements can support crime prevention, they do not directly address behavioural issues. These measures are best used in conjunction with enforcement tools like a PSPO, not as standalone solutions.

4. Targeted Youth or Outreach Interventions Without Enforcement

Rejected: While outreach and support remain essential components of the wider ASB strategy, they must be complemented by enforcement powers to manage persistent and disruptive behaviour. The PSPO framework allows for both intervention and enforcement.

The proposed PSPO offers a balanced and proportionate response, combining enforcement with opportunities for support and signposting, and is therefore recommended as the most effective and sustainable option.

5. PSPO With the recommended prohibitions to cover all council Carparks

Rejected: This is not proportionate, and agencies do not have evidence linked to ASB in all car parks. Only Car parks with recorded ASB meet threshold.

Relevance to the Corporate Plan and the Plymouth Plan

The Plymouth Plan sets out a long-term vision for the city to 2034, aiming to create a healthy, prosperous, and safe city with a high quality of life for all residents. The proposed PSPO supports several key objectives of the plan:

Improving public safety and wellbeing: By addressing persistent anti-social behaviour, the PSPO contributes to creating safer public spaces, which is central to the Plan's ambition for a healthy city.

Supporting economic vitality: Ensuring car parks are safe and welcoming encourages footfall into the city centre for work, leisure, and shopping, aligning with the Plan's goals for economic growth and a vibrant urban environment.

Enhancing the experience of public spaces: The Plan promotes the appropriate use of public infrastructure. The PSPO ensures car parks are used for their intended purpose, improving the overall urban experience.

The Corporate Plan outlines the Council's mission to be a values-led organisation focused on fairness, environmental sustainability, and cooperation. The PSPO proposal directly supports several of the six priority areas:

Working with the Police to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour: The PSPO is a collaborative initiative with Devon and Cornwall Police to reduce ASB in key locations.

Keeping children, adults and communities safe: By improving safety in public car parks, the proposal contributes to safeguarding vulnerable groups and enhancing community confidence.

Supporting a vibrant waterfront city with outstanding quality of life: The PSPO helps ensure public spaces are safe and welcoming, reinforcing the city's vision and values.

Implications for the Medium-Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:

The resourcing of responding to this will sit initially for response with our Police partners. Any escalation through ASB escalation processes will sit into the Community Safety Team.

Legal Implications

A PSPO is designed to prevent anti-social behaviour in a public place. Public place is defined as 'any place to which the public or any section of the public has access, on payment or otherwise, as of right or by virtue of express or implied permission'.

There is a requirement to ensure that the relevant legislation is complied with when making a PSPO. As set out in the report, this includes ensuring the measures proposed are necessary and proportionate to the problem as well as giving due regard to the rights of freedom of expression and freedom of assembly set out in the Human Rights Act 1998. In addition, there is a statutory and legal requirement to consult on the PSPO proposals. The results of the consultation process that has been undertaken are set out in the report.

Any failure to meet the statutory requirements for the making of a PSPO carries the risk of a legal challenge as to the validity of the order. Therefore, before reaching a decision in relation to the making of the PSPO and its implementation, Cabinet must consider the results of consultation, be clear about what the detrimental activities are that the PSPO seeks to address and whether the prohibitions are a

proportionate means of effectively managing those activities. In addition, Cabinet should consider the areas covered and the period for which the PSPO will have effect.

Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:

Whilst this is not intended to be a carbon reduction initiative. One of the prohibitions is directly linked to prohibiting the “revving” of vehicles. Ensuring that vehicle engines are switched off when not in use and not being constantly and consistently revved will have a positive impact on the environment.

Other Implications:

A full Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been completed and is attached to this report. In summary, the assessment identified potential impacts on young people and street-attached individuals, who may be disproportionately affected by the proposed PSPO. Consultation was carried out with 22 young people aged 10–18 via a designated Youth Worker. Feedback revealed mixed views: while some understood the need to address behaviours such as noise and public urination, others expressed concern about losing access to what they perceive as safe social spaces.

The EIA acknowledges that PSPOs can unintentionally marginalise vulnerable groups if not implemented alongside supportive measures. To mitigate this, the Council will ensure that enforcement is balanced with outreach, youth engagement, and signposting to relevant services. The ASB process underpinning the PSPO includes pathways for support and intervention, helping to reduce the risk of exclusion or criminalisation.

Appendices

Ref.	Title of Appendix	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable) <i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</i>						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A	Proposed Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO)							
B	PSPO Prohibitions							
C	PSPO Map							
D	EIA							

Background papers:

**Add rows as required to box below*

Please list all unpublished, background papers relevant to the decision in the table below. Background papers are **unpublished** works, relied on to a material extent in preparing the report, which disclose facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the work is based.

Title of any background paper(s)	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable)						
	If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Sign off:

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Originating Senior Leadership Team member: Matt Garrett, Service Director for Community Connections											
Please confirm the Strategic Director(s) has agreed the report? Yes Date agreed: 26/08/25											
Cabinet Member approval: Approved by Councillor Sally Haydon (Cabinet member for Community Safety, Events, Libraries, Cemeteries and Crematoria) Date approved: 06/08/25											