

Appendix 4A

Responses from Open Public Meetings in December 2016

Members felt that it was particularly important to ascertain whether there was support for the revised proposals from those actually living and working in and adjacent to the proposed PSPO area, as it was they who were primarily experiencing any antisocial behaviour, and the proposed restrictions would apply to the public spaces within their community. It was also felt that a public meeting that allowed officers to explain the revisions and proposals, and answer questions to help clarify matters, would be a particularly effective way of relaying to residents and businesses how the proposed PSPO would operate in Exeter.

In order to gauge whether the revisions that followed the formal consultation to the proposed PSPO had the support of local residents and businesses within and around the proposed PSPO area, a series of four open public meetings were carried out in the evenings of 5th – 8th December 2016.

For residents, these meetings were held at accessible meeting places within St. Thomas, St. David's, and St. James wards, whilst an open meeting for businesses was held at the Guildhall, High Street, in the city centre.

Notification of these meetings was either by leaflet posted through letterboxes of residential properties, or for St. James ward, by an advert posted in the St. James community newsletter that was distributed to all residences in the ward. Around 100 posters were also displayed in local notice boards, shops and other public places within the proposed PSPO area. In addition, local residents associations highlighted the meetings via their respective networks. A press release was also issued in the weeks leading up to the meetings, resulting in an Express and Echo article publishing the dates of meetings, and the Portfolio Holder for Place being interviewed for radio and television.

In the case of the business meeting, this was notified to businesses through the offices of BID, EBAC, Chambers of Commerce and small business associations.

The meetings took the format of a presentation outlining the legal parameters of PSPOs, the results of the formal consultation that had ended on February 29th 2016 and the proposed revisions in response to that consultation. The presentation then focussed on the proposed restrictions to be put to Council in February 2017, and the audience were asked to indicate their support or otherwise by holding up a green or red card respectively (anyone wishing to abstain could do so by not holding up a card). The audience were encouraged to ask questions throughout the presentation, as well as at the end.

The Assistant Director Environment gave the presentation and chaired the meeting, supported by the Environmental Health & Licensing Manager and Police (although the Police were unable to attend the meeting in St. James). A number of Ward Members and Portfolio Holders were also present for all meetings with the exception of St. David's, and participated in the question and answer sessions.

All open public meetings were well-attended with the exception of the business meeting that attracted fewer attendees; over 105 people attending (excluding officers and Members). In all meetings there was a robust discussion and healthy airing about the PSPO proposals; for example, how they would operate in terms of dealing with anti-social behaviour in the respective localities, whether they were needed in terms of existing powers, would they unfairly target certain communities such as the street attached, whether they would be used in a heavy-handed way by the Police,

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and whether they may inadvertently capture law-abiding citizens that had for example, just purchased a bottle of wine to take home. The presence of the Police was particularly useful in reassuring people that in practical terms this would assist the Police as an extra tool in dealing with problematical anti-social behaviour in a proportionate and measured way.

Attendees at the meetings were also encouraged to complete a survey form about any anti-social behaviour that they may be experiencing in the locality, if they so wished. The results of that survey is presented below.

Level of support for the revised restrictions

In terms of the revised restrictions, the public attending the meetings showed their support or otherwise as follows.

Restriction A (Intoxicants)

Public Meeting	Support	Not support
St. Thomas	27	0
St. David's	25	0
St. James	15	8
Businesses	10	0
Total	77	8

Restriction B (Urinating)

Public Meeting	Support	Not support
St. Thomas	27	0
St. David's	22	8
St. James	14	11
Businesses	10	0
Total	73	19

Restriction C (Aggressive Begging)

Public Meeting	Support	Not support
St. Thomas	27	0
St. David's	28	2
St. James	10	10
Businesses	10	0
Total	75	12

Restriction D (Antisocial individuals/groups)

Public Meeting	Support	Not support
St. Thomas	28	0
St. David's	33	2
St. James	11	9
Businesses	10	0
Total	82	11

Restriction E (Dispersal of antisocial groups)

Public Meeting	Support	Not support
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St. Thomas	28	0
St. David's	31	2
St. James	13	4
Businesses	10	0
Total	82	6

Summary table of totals

From the responses received at the meeting, it can be seen that there is a large majority (89%) of support from local residents and businesses for the revised restrictions being proposed.

Proposed Restriction	Support		Not support	
A (Intoxicants)	77	91%	8	9%
B (Urinating)	73	79%	19	21%
C (Aggressive Begging)	75	86%	12	14%
D (ASB Individuals/Groups)	82	88%	11	12%
E (Dispersal of Groups)	82	93%	6	7%
Total	389	89%	46	11%

In addition, the audience at the St. Thomas meeting felt strongly that the proposed PSPO boundary within St. Thomas was too constrained and did not adequately cover the residential streets and open spaces immediately either side of Cowick Street that had been recently suffering from persistent antisocial behaviour. The audience were therefore asked whether they would be in support or otherwise of retaining the existing boundary and not to include those immediate areas, with the following result.

Keeping to the proposed PSPO boundary in St. Thomas and not include adjacent streets and public spaces.

Public Meeting	Support	Not support
St. Thomas	0	28