



Devon & Cornwall  
**POLICE**

## Chief Constable Shaun Sawyer QPM

Police Headquarters, Middlemoor, Exeter, Devon, EX2 7HQ

- |                                |                          |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
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### Sent by email

Mr Simon Lane  
Service Lead  
Environmental Health & Community Safety  
Exeter City Council  
[Simon.lane@exeter.gov.uk](mailto:Simon.lane@exeter.gov.uk)

22 December 2021

*Dear Mr Lane,*

### **Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 ('the Act') Consultation on varying the Public Spaces Protection Order for Exeter City Centre ('the PSPO')**

I am writing in response to your letter dated 15 November 2021, seeking the views of the Chief Constable of Devon and Cornwall Police on the proposed variations to Prohibition E of the Public Spaces Protection Order (the PSPO) currently in place in Exeter. The proposed variations you outlined are as follows:

- Prohibition E is varied so that any individual who behaves in a manner that has caused or is likely to cause a member of the public to suffer harassment, alarm or distress by that behaviour can be dispersed. At present this prohibition can only be applied to individuals whilst in a group.
- Varying the time that a dispersal from the PSPO area may last, from the current six hours to a maximum of 24 hours.

Anti-social behaviour continues to have a considerable impact on the quality of life of many people who live in, work in, and visit Exeter City Centre. Whilst I am aware of the considerable partnership work underway to tackle the causes of anti-social behaviour in Exeter, the PSPO remains a very effective tool to dynamically defuse instances of this behaviour.

Since its inception in 2017, the PSPO has allowed police officers, working in partnership with colleagues from Exeter City Council, to respond to anti-social behaviour in a proportionate and timely way. The proposed variations to the PSPO will enhance the effectiveness of our response and help to prevent anti-social behaviour from reoccurring.

The professional experience of officers in Exeter has found that because the current terms of the PSPO do not allow the dispersal of an individual, it is often the case that an escalation of behaviour can occur. This escalation can be in terms of the length of time that the behaviour is experienced, or in the number of people who are drawn into carrying out anti-social acts. Through the proposed variation to the PSPO, the power to disperse an individual rather than a group would allow a quicker and more proportionate resolution to incidents where one person is causing an issue, preventing any escalation in behaviour from them or others.

The proposed extension to the dispersal period will more effectively allow the police and partners to disrupt anti-social behaviour. The current six hour dispersal period is often found to be too short with those who have been dispersed returning later the same day and continuing to display anti-social behaviour. A twenty-four hour dispersal period is a considerably more effective preventative power.

I am therefore supportive of both the proposed variations to the PSPO.

Your sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shaun Sawyer', written in a cursive style.

**Shaun Sawyer QPM**  
**Chief Constable**