

Appendix Two – Impact Statements

West Midlands Police

I am PC Nicholas Mansell and I am the ASB Coordinator for Coventry.

Coventry Police experience continuous demand in relation to anti-social behaviour and off-road motor bikes. There is not any area of the city that is not affected, but clearly there are areas where we experience greater demand.

There are currently a number of open investigations in Coventry where anti-social behaviour and off-road bikes are the main concern. These are in the areas of Keresley, Coundon, Wyken, Wood End, Canley and Willenhall. All involve relatively young people riding motor bikes on the public highway, in parks and using public footpaths. This is both dangerous for the general public and to the riders themselves.

There are a number of police tactics that can be used to tackle off-road motor bikes but education is clearly the most preferred. There are very few areas locally where an off-road motor bike can be ridden legally, which does mean that the majority of riders are committing one or more offences. Through the city wide PSPO the message that off-road motor bikes cannot be ridden within Coventry is very much beneficial.

Below are figures that demonstrate the monthly demand that motor bike related activity creates across the city. Seasonal trends show us that this sort of behaviour steadily increases throughout the summer to a peak in August/September time.

Police calls in relation to motor bikes:

March 2020 – 22 calls

April 2020 – 29 calls

May 2020 – 38 calls

June 2020 – 21 calls

It is well known now that police officers in Coventry will not pursue individuals on off road bikes due to safety concerns. In order to launch an operation in order do this, Coventry Police need to bid for central resources and specialist officers.

These officers are able to undertake pursuit work and also have additional equipment such as DNA spray. Coventry has bid for these central resources and the results have been excellent with off road motor bikes seized and then later destroyed and prosecutions of offenders undertaken. However, these officers are in high demand across the West Midlands Police area, so cannot be relied upon a regular basis.

West Midlands Police support the renewal of the PSPO and the benefits it brings.

Impact Statement – Parks and Greenspace

My name is Andrew Beechey and I am employed by Coventry City Council as a Parks Development Officer. Within the city we have a considerable number (over 350), parks and greenspaces that we are responsible for developing and maintaining, the intention being to give an attractive, pleasant environment for visitors and citizens to enjoy. Within our portfolio we have occasional issues with Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) and this can take several forms.

Since April 2020 we have had 138 incidents of Anti-social behaviour reported by CCC staff, this does not include any which are reported directly to the Police by members of the public.

Off road motorcycles and other vehicles cause considerable disruption and damage to land and property by their use and can also pose considerable safety risks to members of the public and parks staff. It isn't safe for parks staff to address off road bike use and as such any powers that can be used by others are appreciated and supported.

Alcohol use in parks can cause problems, often those drinking the alcohol can cause ASB themselves, they intimidate and discourage park users and can make areas in some of our Parks no-go areas at certain times of the day or night. They also cause a lot of litter and damage that is costly to address and takes up limited resources that could be better used elsewhere to improve areas.

As many people drinking alcohol are intoxicated and often confrontational it isn't appropriate for parks staff to approach them, and our staff will only visit some sites very early in the morning to avoid confrontation, so powers given to others is appreciated and necessary.

Recently we have seen a massive increase in the use of Nitrous Oxide (NOX) canisters, often in car parks but throughout parks and other spaces. The use of NOX is closely linked with ASB and alcohol use. We have spent a lot of resources recently dealing with increased littering of NOX canisters in Parks and Open Spaces across the City

As well as the litter the NOX canisters also pose a considerable risk to the safety of parks users and staff as well as to the machinery itself when we are cutting grass. We try to be as effective as possible when litter picking but it is inevitable that some NOX canisters will remain on greenspaces.

When they pass through lawn mowers, they have the potential to cause significant damage to anyone should they be struck as the canister takes on bullet like qualities as it is propelled by the mower or causes damage to the mower itself.

Drug dealing is another issue in some Parks, this can also cause problems, as the dealers often intimidate staff as well as members of the public.

Hopefully the information above clearly shows why, as a service we are supportive of the Citywide PSPO being renewed.

Impact Statement – Public Health

Coventry is a Marmot City, this means we are working to reduce health inequalities innovatively and looking to influence policy and strategy to help achieve this.

Alcohol is recognised as an issue for some within the City and we recognise the damaging effect it has on the health and wellbeing of those that drink at dangerous levels, as well as their family members and the excessive strain it can place on services, including on health services.

Coventry was estimated to have just under 5,000 alcohol dependent adults in 2017/18 ('Estimates of the number of alcohol dependent adults in each local authority in England' 2017/18). Public Health England estimate that Coventry has an alcohol-related mortality rate (the number of deaths from alcohol-related conditions for all ages, per 100,000 population) of 48.2, which is slightly higher than the national average of 46.5. In 2018/19 hospital admissions and deaths where alcohol consumption is a contributing factor, Coventry had 3,215 cases per 100,000 population, compared to a national average of 2,367 per 100,000.

In April 2020, there were 19 young people (under 18) in treatment for alcohol dependency in Coventry, down from 32 a year earlier and 36 in April 2017. The most common age for people in treatment for alcohol dependency in Coventry is 40-54, and in 2018/19, of those in treatment, the largest group, 35%, were in regular employment (34% were long term sick/disabled and 28% were unemployed).

We have seen an increase in the usage of Nitrous Oxide (NOX) in the city, particularly amongst the younger age groups. Our providers are working to increase messaging to ensure people are aware that NOX is not something that should be normalised and that taking it does have a negative effect on people's health and wellbeing and it is not a "safe" drug. There are a number of risks associated with use and it is known that death from suffocation or lack of oxygen can occur. Nitrous oxide can displace the air in the lungs and can temporarily prevent oxygen from entering the bloodstream

According to the 2018/19 Crime Survey for England and Wales, nitrous oxide use was the third most prevalent drug used by adults aged 16 to 59 (2.3%) in the last year after cannabis (7.6%) and cocaine (2.9%), with around two in three users aged 16 to 24. Among 16 to 24-year olds, nitrous oxide was the second most prevalent drug (8.7%) after cannabis (17.3%).

Legislation means that possessing it and consuming it is not an offence, so the powers that allow officers to seize and dispose NOX canisters are ones that we welcome.

For the reasons given above, Public Health support the renewal of the Citywide PSPO and would like to see those enforcing it to also provide signposting to support services for individuals as appropriate.