

APPENDIX 3

West Midlands Police

I am Police Inspector 1863 David Mason of West Midlands Police currently based at Coventry Central Police Station. I currently lead the Coventry Partnerships team for West Midlands Police which plays an integral part in our neighbourhood Policing strategy. My department works closely with partner agencies in the Coventry Community Safety Partnership to address matters concerning crime and anti-social behaviour in the city.

Coventry has had measures in place to address public consumption of alcohol for many years and they have been well established and largely effective in preventing significant disruption from people drinking alcohol and causing issues. Measures that allow us to be proactive rather than having to wait for a significant escalation in behaviours that become a criminal offence are preferable to us, and are usually a better use of our resources.

The recent expiry of the existing PSPO has led to a spike in incidents in the City Centre, most notably Broadgate, and has resulted in additional Police resources being needed to address matters and we have not been able to de-escalate matters by measures such as confiscating and disposing of alcohol, which we have previously been able to do, and which would be available in the proposed order.

Instead, we have to wait for a criminal offence to occur which means concerned members of the public have to make more calls requesting Police attendance and Police officers have to repeatedly attend, which is not good for public safety or a good use of Police resources.

The nuisance of off-road motorbikes in the City is a constant issue and one that is not easy to address. There are risks to all parties involved when these bikes are being ridden in public places. Often they are ridden in parks and other open spaces and can present a danger to other members of the public using these parks and open spaces.

It is not easy to apprehend the people using these off road bikes in an illegal and anti-social manner as we are prevented from pursuing them by our own Policies in relation to the safe pursuit of vehicles. Pursuing vehicles increase risk of personal injury to the rider of the off-road bikes, the Police officers and other members of the public.

Riders of off-road bikes are often able to escape down small alleys and through bollards not large enough for Police cars to be able to follow. It is difficult to identify the riders and take retrospective action against them because they will often have their faces covered sometimes with a crash helmet or other covering. Much of the locations that the bikes are used in are not covered by CCTV.

West Midlands Police are leading on Operation Prosperity, a multi-agency response to address nuisance off road bike use in the City. This is helping us to identify areas, patterns and good practice from elsewhere to tackle nuisance off road bike use.

We have access to regional resources such as drones and specially trained officers and we are looking at methods to encourage more public reporting as analysis of reports received indicate significant under reporting of the issue across the City. It is preferable to intervene as quickly as possible with off road bikes, ideally before people even get on them to ride so that we can prevent anti-social behaviour and maximise public safety. Existing legislation doesn't allow that, but the proposed order would.

There are no legal venues in the City Boundary where people can pay to ride their bikes and to my knowledge no significant landowners allow their land to be used. Therefore, if we encounter anyone in possession of an off-road bike in a public location, there is a high likelihood they will be intending to ride it in a nuisance manner.

This order will allow officers to challenge and if necessary enforce action against those in possession of off-road bikes and make it clear that people in possession of off-road bikes that intend to ride them in a nuisance manner will be challenged at every opportunity.

I have searched Police data covering the city of Coventry and can state that there have been the following number of incidents relating to either the antisocial, nuisance or dangerous use of off-road bikes. In reality there are likely to be higher numbers of incidents through as some incident logs may have not been tagged correctly and there may be under reporting by members of the public.

Number of incidents relating to anti-social, nuisance or dangerous use of motorbikes

January	5
Febraury	14
March	22
April	31
May	34
June	15
July	26

For the reasons outlined in this statement West Midlands Police are supportive of the proposed order being granted for use in the City.

Parks and Greenspaces

My name is Mark Yates, I work as assistant parks manager for Coventry City Council.

Within our parks and greenspaces, we experience issues with both people consuming alcohol in public, and the nuisance use of off road bikes and similar vehicles.

The consumption of alcohol within parks can bring with it anti-social behaviour. People come to parks to enjoy the facilities, play with their children, meet friends and similar. People consuming alcohol usually make people fee uncomfortable and people consuming alcohol can become unruly, verbally abuse parks staff and engage in other types of anti-social behaviour such as public urination and similar.

Empty cans and bottles of alcohol are often strewn around grass areas, particularly when people access parks late at night to drink. This causes the areas to look untidy and creates additional work for staff to clear. It also presents a safety issue for people if glass bottles are broken and can put staff at risk if mowing equipment drives over cans or bottles. In sunny conditions glass bottles can pose a fire risk on dry grass or woodlands.

We experience issues with off road bikes and similar vehicles being driven in a nuisance manner in many of our locations across the city. These riders place pedestrians, dog walkers and other parks users in danger as they regularly ride in a manner that places people at risk and can deter many people from visiting parks and greenspaces.

Significant damage is committed by these riders in many sites. They churn up massive areas of land and the remedial work needed costs significant amounts in terms of expense and staff resources.

Because of the issues recorded above I would strongly support the creation of a city wide PSPO to address these issues.

Public Health

This Briefing Note is supporting the restriction of the drinking of alcohol in public areas as this will support the aims of Coventry's Drug and Alcohol Strategy to reduce drug and alcohol use, reduce drug and alcohol related harms and deaths and increase effective engagement in drug and alcohol treatment (Coventry Drug and Alcohol Strategy Summary - [coventry-drug-and-alcohol-strategy-summary](#)). All of these factors contribute to maximising the health and wellbeing of those that live in, work in and visit Coventry. Drinking alcohol in public places can have a negative effect on those involved and on those who witness it, including children, older people and vulnerable people.

A drug and alcohol needs assessment ([coventry-substance-misuse-needs-assessment](#)) was completed in 2022, including significant engagement with stakeholders and service users. Some of the key findings are summarised here.

In Coventry, there is a disproportionate amount of harm caused by alcohol use. Alcohol-related mortality and hospital admission rates are higher than the national average and amongst its nearest neighbours. Despite a decrease in admissions at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic (between 2020-21 and 2019-20), alcohol-related hospital admission rates are still high among males and females. There is work to be completed on identifying those with an alcohol need earlier to try and reduce hospital admissions and deaths.

Analysis of unmet need information indicates the work to be done to encourage those with an alcohol need to seek help. Data on unmet needs shows that only 13% of those with a dependent alcohol problem are accessing treatment services, a much lower figure than the England average of 20%. Over the past year, there has been an increase in the proportion of alcohol users accessing services. The increase in

engagement was partially attributed to the new methods of accessing services introduced during the COVID-19 pandemic (phone appointments and virtual access).

Those involved in public drinking often experience a range of other problems, such as dependence on alcohol or other substances, homelessness, sexual and domestic violence, mental or physical health problems. Restricting alcohol in public areas may have a negative impact on those groups, aggravating their social marginalisation if they are displaced, or their economic marginalisation if they are fined. This may also make it more difficult to find and access the services they need, leading to a range of other potential health issues and increasing health inequalities. If those involved are supported and encouraged to access services, this could help to tackle a range of other issues in addition to substance misuse.

Key to ensuring the wellbeing of these individuals is ensuring that those involved with enforcement are trained and skilled to understand and identify alcohol dependence and that they know where to go for appropriate support if needed, for example local drug and alcohol recovery and treatment services or medical support should someone be experiencing alcohol withdrawal. We note that this has been referenced in the Equality Impact Assessment and that there is acknowledgment of the need for enforcement staff to work closely with Specialist Services for direction. We recommend that the staff involved in enforcement receive training in recognising those who might be at risk of harm from alcohol and alcohol dependence and how to support access into services.

Public Health have already been involved in the plans to reinstate Coventry's Local Case Management Forum, which will look to identify some of our most vulnerable people in the city and ensure that a systems approach is taken offering support alongside enforcement. The plan is that both Public Health and Change Grow Live (Coventry's drug and alcohol treatment service) will be invited to be involved in this forum.

Business Improvement District (BID)

Since the expiration of the Public Space Protection Order (PSPO), Coventry City Centre has experienced a notable increase in public drinking-related issues, significantly impacting the safety and wellbeing of residents, businesses, and visitors. The PSPO previously empowered authorities to manage and mitigate such activities effectively, and its absence has highlighted several critical problems:

Visible Intoxication: There has been a marked rise in visible intoxication in public spaces, leading to disturbances and a sense of unease among the public.

Nuisance Behaviour: Instances of anti-social behaviour associated with public drinking, such as loud and disruptive conduct, littering, and vandalism, have become more frequent. The increase in public drinking has elevated safety concerns, with more incidents of aggressive behaviour, fights, and other violent acts being reported.

Impact on Vulnerable Populations: Vulnerable groups, including the elderly and families with young children, feel less safe in the city centre, reducing their willingness to visit and utilise public spaces.

Local businesses have reported a negative impact on trade due to the decline in foot traffic as people avoid areas known for public drinking and related disturbances. The city's reputation as a safe and welcoming destination is at risk, potentially deterring tourists and affecting the local economy. Increased public drinking has led to more littering, including broken bottles and other alcohol-related waste, degrading the cleanliness and aesthetic appeal of the city centre.

The demands on police and emergency services have grown, with more resources being diverted to address issues related to public drinking.

Reinstating the PSPO and granting the authority to seize alcohol would offer several significant benefits, addressing the issues outlined above:

Enhanced Public Safety:

The ability to seize alcohol would deter public drinking, reducing the instances of intoxication and associated anti-social behaviour. A proactive approach to managing public drinking would enhance the overall sense of safety, encouraging more people to visit and enjoy the city centre.

Reducing public drinking-related disturbances would create a more inviting atmosphere for shoppers and diners, boosting local businesses. Ensuring public spaces are safe and welcoming for all, including vulnerable populations, would promote social cohesion and community engagement.

Reducing litter and waste associated with public drinking would enhance the cleanliness and aesthetic appeal of the city centre.

With fewer alcohol-related incidents, police and emergency services could allocate resources more effectively, focusing on other critical areas of need.

Reinstating the PSPO and enabling the seizure of alcohol are crucial steps in addressing the challenges posed by the expiration of the previous order. These measures would significantly contribute to making Coventry City Centre a safer, more vibrant, and welcoming environment for everyone.

Joanne Glover

Chief Executive

Coventry BID LTD