

Findings of the Alcohol control Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) Consultation 2023

Background to the consultation

In October 2014 the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 (the Act) introduced powers to tackle anti-social behaviour (ASB), including the power to make Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs).

PSPOs can be used to regulate activities in public places that can have a detrimental effect on the local community. They can help by giving local councils and local police additional powers to tackle ASB in specified locations.

Local powers to control the consumption of alcohol in a public place were introduced in Cheshire West and Chester in 2011 under a former Designated Public Place Order (DPPO) which was transitioned into a PSPO in 2017 and subsequently renewed every three years in accordance with the requirements of the Act.

This PSPO gives the police and authorised Council officers the authority to confiscate alcohol from any person who is drinking alcohol in a public place and is causing, or likely to cause, ASB, disorder, nuisance, or annoyance to members of the public.

The existing PSPO powers relating to the consumption of alcohol in a public place are due to expire in October 2023. The Council is required to carry out a review every three years and consider whether the PSPO should be renewed. This report summarises feedback received from residents about the PSPO relating to the consumption of alcohol in a public space and whether the current measures should remain in place.

How the consultation was carried out

The consultation was open for a period of eight weeks, starting on 27 June 2023 and closing on 21 August 2023. There were multiple ways in which stakeholders could respond to the consultation and ensure their views were heard. Views were gathered using an online survey tool, and, to ensure as many people could take part as possible, respondents could also share their views via email, telephone or in writing. Alternative formats including paper and easy read options were also available.

Targeted communication methods were used to ensure that key stakeholders were made aware of the consultation and given the opportunity to have their say. This included sending direct invitations to groups such as residents' association groups, town and parish councils, business networks, Business Improvement District (BIDs), rough sleeper support groups, the purple flag network, Pubwatch, statutory consultees and Elected Members.

The consultation appeared on the consultation pages of Council website and was publicised through general communications such as social media posts, media releases to engage with a broader spectrum of potential participants.

The online survey received 197 responses, and a further two responses were submitted via email.

Overarching key messages

- 87 percent of respondents to this consultation support the renewal of this PSPO for a further period of three years.
- 79 percent of respondents were either ‘very concerned’ or ‘fairly concerned’ about ASB associated with consumption of alcohol in public places across Cheshire West and Chester.
- 78 percent of respondents have witnessed ASB resulting from consumption of alcohol in a public place within Cheshire West and Chester over the last year, and over a third of these respondents had witnessed it ‘almost every week’.
- The majority of respondents were residents of Cheshire West and Chester.

Summary of consultation findings

Question 1 - Respondents were asked to what extent they were concerned about anti-social behaviour (ASB) resulting from consumption of alcohol in public places within Cheshire West and Chester.

Graph 1

Q1. How concerned are you about anti-social behaviour resulting from consumption of alcohol in public places within Cheshire West and Chester? (Respondents were asked to select one option)				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Very concerned		43%	84
2	Fairly concerned		36%	70
3	Neither concerned nor unconcerned		9%	17
4	Fairly unconcerned		8%	15
5	Very unconcerned		5%	9
6	Don't know		1%	2

How concerned are you about anti-social behaviour resulting from consumption of alcohol in public places within Cheshire West and Chester?




Very concerned 43 percent, Fairly concerned 36 percent, Neither concerned nor unconcerned 9 percent, Fairly unconcerned 8 percent, Very unconcerned 5 percent, and ‘Don’t know’ 1 percent.

Answered by 197 respondents. Please note that due to rounding to the nearest whole number, percentages do not total 100%.

Graph 1 above shows that the majority of respondents (79 percent) were very or fairly concerned about ASB associated with the consumption of alcohol in public places in the borough. Nine percent answered they were neither concerned nor unconcerned and 13 percent said they were fairly or very unconcerned.

Question 2 - Respondents were asked whether they had witnessed any ASB resulting from the consumption of alcohol in public places in Cheshire West and Chester over the last year.

Graph 2

Q2. Have you witnessed anti-social behaviour resulting from consumption of alcohol in public places in Cheshire West and Chester over the last year? (Respondents were asked to select one option)				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		78%	153
2	No		20%	40
3	Don't Know		2%	4
Have you witnessed anti-social behaviour resulting from consumption of alcohol in public places in Cheshire West and Chester over the last year?				
Yes 78 percent, No 20 percent, Don't know 2 percent.				

Answered by 197 respondents. Please note that percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

Graph 2 above shows that 78 percent of respondents had witnessed ASB resulting from consumption of alcohol in a public place within the last year. 20 percent of respondents had not witnessed any of this type of ASB, and two percent answered 'Don't know'.

Question 3 – The 153 respondents who had witnessed ASB resulting from public consumption of alcohol (78 percent of the total respondents) were asked how frequently they had observed this ASB within the last year.

Graph 3

Q3. If Yes, how often have you witnessed anti-social behaviour resulting from consumption of alcohol in public places in the last year? (Respondents were asked to select one option)				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Almost every week		43%	66
2	More than once a month		19%	29
3	Once a month		13%	20
4	About once every two months		9%	14
5	About once every six months		9%	13
6	Less than every six months		3%	5
7	Rarely or never		2%	3
8	Don't know		2%	3

If Yes, how often have you witnessed anti-social behaviour resulting from consumption of alcohol in public places in the last year?




Almost every week 43 percent, More than once a month 19 percent, Once a month 13 percent, About once every two months 9 percent, About once every six months 9 percent, Less than every six months 3 percent, Rarely or never 2 percent, Don't know 2 percent.

Answered by 153 respondents. Please note that percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

Graph 3 above shows that of the 153 respondents who had witnessed ASB associated with public consumption of alcohol, 75 percent indicated that they had witnessed this behaviour at least once a month in Cheshire West and Chester.

Question 4 – Consultees were asked whether they support the renewal of the PSPO for the consumption of alcohol in public places for a further period of three years.

Graph 4

Q4. Do you support the renewal of the current PSPO for consumption of alcohol in public places for a further period of three years from October 2023? (Respondents were asked to select one option)				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		87%	172
2	No		8%	15
3	Don't Know		5%	10
Do you support the renewal of the current PSPO for consumption of alcohol in public places for a further period of three years from October 2023? Yes 87 percent, No 8 percent, Don't Know 5 percent.				

Answered by 197 respondents. Please note that percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

Graph 4 above shows that the majority (87 percent) of respondents support the renewal of this PSPO for a further three years. Eight percent of respondents said that they do not support the renewal of the PSPO, and a further five percent answered 'Don't know'.

Respondents were asked to say why they had chosen their selected option.

Below are the key messages from the 125 comments received in response to this question:

- Many of the respondents said that public consumption of alcohol is often a contributing factor to ASB.
- Many respondents felt that this PSPO improved public safety.
- Many of the respondents described public alcohol consumption as intimidating and that where the measures are applied, they have a positive effect on the local community.
- Many respondents told us that they had witnessed problems caused by people drinking in public, including shouting, swearing and other ASB.
- Some respondents were concerned that incidents of ASB caused by public alcohol consumption would increase if the PSPO is not renewed.
- Some respondents described incidents where they had been direct victims of ASB caused by public alcohol consumption.
- Some respondents commented that they felt that the PSPO was sensible and a proportionate measure.
- Some respondents felt that all alcohol consumption in public places should be prohibited.
- A few respondents felt that public spaces should be for everyone and capable of being enjoyed without fear of ASB.
- A few respondents said that they felt people drinking in public had a negative impact on tourism, visitors, and residents in the borough.

- A few respondents disagreed with elements of the PSPO, for example, that the PSPO deals with the symptoms and not the cause of the behaviour; the terminology “or likely to cause ASB” is too draconian, that an exemption is needed if indoor gatherings are restricted again, that the measures could be used to target the most vulnerable people in society, that Police have the powers to deal with public alcohol consumption without the PSPO.

Question 5 – Respondents were given an opportunity to provide any further comments about the PSPO for the consumption of alcohol in public places.

Below are the key messages from 61 comments received in response to this question:

- Many respondents felt that more enforcement of the measures is needed.
- Many respondents indicated that the PSPO improved public safety.
- Many of the respondents had experienced persistent problems caused by people drinking in public, including shouting, swearing and other ASB.
- Many respondents commented that they felt uncomfortable or unsafe when exposed to people drinking alcohol in public.
- Some respondents commented that public consumption of alcohol often causes other types of ASB such as urination or littering.
- Some respondents indicated that the PSPO prevents drunk and disorderly behaviour.
- Some respondents said that alcohol or drug use in public was increasing.
- Some respondents said that instances of ASB would increase without the PSPO.
- A few respondents commented that they were concerned about public alcohol consumption and ASB associated with race events in Chester.
- A few respondents commented that the measures should go further and prohibit all alcohol consumption.
- A few respondents commented about areas where ASB associated with the public consumption of alcohol are occurring most frequently, including the benches on Frodsham Street, around the Chester Bus Interchange, Foregate Street, Eastgate Street, The Rows and the meadows.
- A few respondents commented that public alcohol consumption as a serious problem in our public spaces and that additional measures and support is needed to stop people using alcohol or drugs on the streets.

Other comments:

The Member of Parliament for Chester, Samantha Dixon MP, provided a comment for the consultation by email:

As the current Member of Parliament for the City of Chester and as a former Cheshire West and Chester Councillor for the City Centre ward I am in regular contact with residents, our local police officers and Council officers about the issues they face. The Public Spaces Protection Order in Chester is invaluable in ensuring the public can enjoy Chester whether during the day or the night-time economy.”

Anti-Social Behaviour remains high on the agenda for the residents of Chester, and I believe this a proportionate measure to help reduce the amount of ASB that residents experience.

Thank you for providing me with the opportunity to share my thoughts on this issue.

Best wishes,

Samantha Dixon MBE MP
Member of Parliament for City of Chester










Next steps.

Feedback from the consultation on the current PSPO measures will be presented to Cabinet on the 18 October 2023 to inform the Cabinet decision whether to renew the PSPO for a further period of three years.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Profile of respondents

Graph 5: Type of respondent

Are you responding as...?				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	A resident of Cheshire West and Chester		83%	162
2	An employee of Cheshire West and Chester Council		10%	20
3	A representative of a local business		10%	19
4	An elected Member of Cheshire West and Chester Council		1%	1
5	A local Town or Parish Councillor		5%	10
6	A representative of a voluntary or community organisation		3%	5
7	A member of a local group with a specific interest		2%	4
8	Prefer not to say		2%	4
9	Other (please specify):		2%	4
<p>Are you responding as...?</p> <p>A resident of Cheshire West and Chester 83 percent, An employee of Cheshire West and Chester Council 10 percent, A representative of a local business 10 percent, An elected Member of Cheshire West and Chester Council 1 percent, A local Town or Parish Councillor 5 percent, A representative of a voluntary or community organisation 3 percent, A member of a local group with a specific interest 2 percent, Prefer not to say 2 percent, Other (please specify) 2 percent</p>				

Answered by 196 respondents. Please note that percentages do not total 100% as the respondents could select more than one answer and the percentages have also been rounded to the nearest whole number.

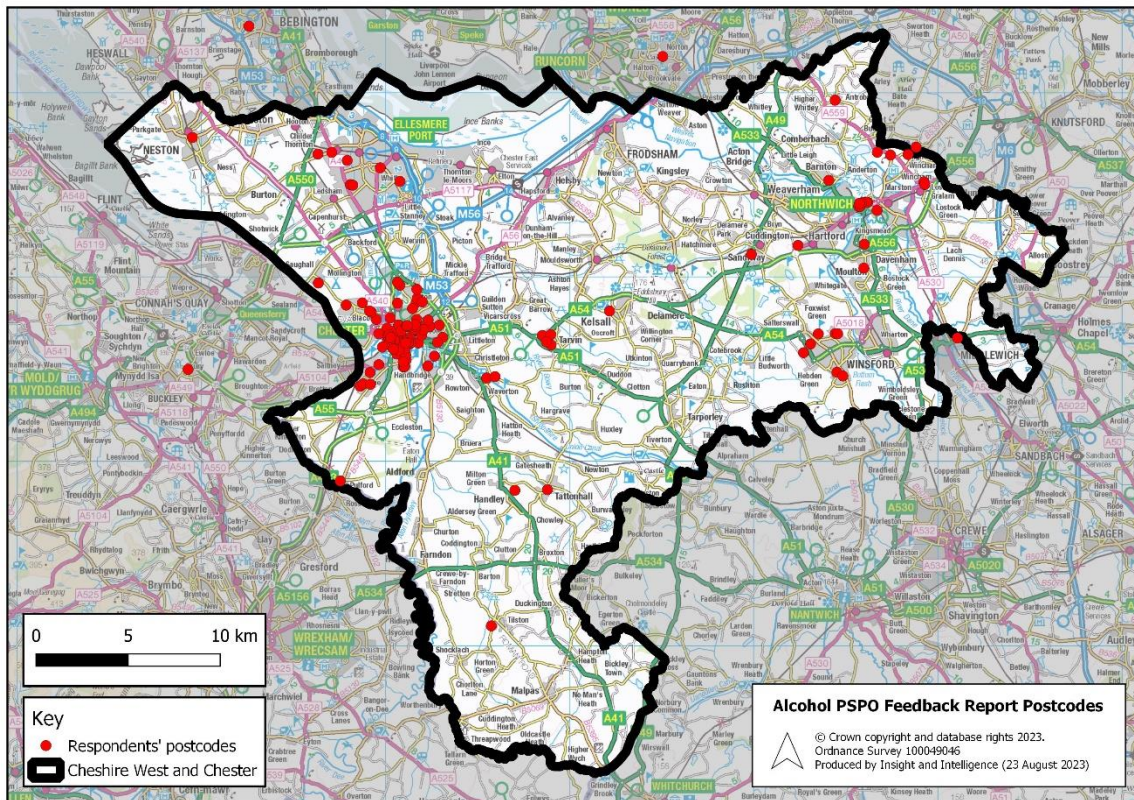
Responses were received from the following organisations:

- Office of the Police Crime Commissioner
- Cheshire West and Chester Council
- For Futures
- Sanctuary Housing
- Pubwatch
- Chester Aid to the Homeless
- Cheshire West Association of Primary Headteachers

- Public Health
- Qwest Services
- Northwich Town Council
- Soul Kitchen Chester

Postcode of respondents

The map below shows all of the postcodes given by respondents that could be mapped (154 postcodes):



149 respondents' postcodes were from within the Cheshire West and Chester boundary and five records were from outside the borough boundary. Please note that we were unable to map the postcodes where they were not provided, were incomplete or unmatched to our records.

Graph 6: Age profile

Which age group do you belong to?				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Under 16 (with consent of a parent/guardian/teacher)		0%	0
2	16 – 24		7%	13
3	25 – 34		11%	22
4	35 – 44		18%	36
5	45 – 54		17%	34
6	55 – 64		23%	45
7	65+		21%	41
8	Prefer not to say		3%	5

Which age group do you belong to?

Seven percent of respondents were between 16 and 24, 11 percent were between 25 and 34 years old, 18 percent were between 35 and 44 years old, 17 percent were between 45 and 54 years old, 23 percent were between 55 and 64 years old, 21 percent were 65 years old or older and three percent answered 'Prefer not to say'.

Answered by 196 respondents. Please note that percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

Graph 7: Long term illness, health issues or disabilities








Do you have a long-term illness, health issue or disability that limits your daily activities or the work you can do?				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		12%	23
2	No		82%	159
3	Prefer not to say		7%	13

Do you have a long-term illness, health issue or disability that limits your daily activities or the work you can do?

Yes 12 percent, No 82 percent, Prefer not to say 7 percent.

Answered by 195 respondents. Please note that due to rounding to the nearest whole number, percentages do not total 100%.

Graph 8





If you answered 'yes' please indicate which of the following applies to you?				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Physical impairment that causes mobility issues, e.g. wheelchair user		22%	5
2	Visual impairment		4%	1
3	Hearing impairment		4%	1
4	Learning disability or difficulty		0%	0
5	Mental Health issue		17%	4
6	Long standing illness or health condition		57%	13
7	Prefer not to say		9%	2
8	Other (please specify):		9%	2

If you answered 'yes' please indicate which of the following applies to you?

Physical impairment that causes mobility issues, e.g. wheelchair user 22 percent, Visual impairment 4 percent, Hearing impairment 4 percent, Mental Health issue 17 percent, Long standing illness or health condition 57 percent, Prefer not to say 9 percent, Other (please specify) 9 percent.

Answered only by the 23 respondents who said that they had a long-term illness, health issue or disability. Please note that percentages do not total 100% as the respondents could select more than one answer and the percentages have also been rounded to the nearest whole number.

Graph 9: Gender

Are you...?				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Male		49%	97
2	Female		46%	90
3	Prefer not to say		4%	8
4	Other (please specify):		1%	1

Are you...?

Male 49 percent, Female 46 percent, Prefer not to say 4 percent, Other (please specify) 1 percent.

Answered by 196 respondents. Please note that percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

Ethnicity

The vast majority of respondents (91%) identified as 'White British'.

Religious Belief/Faith

47 percent of respondents said they said they followed no religion, 39 percent said they were 'Christian', 12 percent preferred not to say, 2 percent said 'Other', and 1 percent said they were 'Buddhist'.

Sexual Orientation

The majority of respondents identified as 'heterosexual/straight' (78%), 15% preferred not to say, and 4% identified as gay/lesbian, 2% identified as bisexual and 2% said 'Other'.