

Version	1
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Review of Anti-Social Behaviour PSPO

Background

Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPOs) were introduced in October 2014 as part of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014. PSPOs allow councils to place restrictions and requirements on certain behaviours in an area, to make sure we can all use and enjoy public spaces, safe from anti-social behaviour. They can be used to protect the public from behaviour that is having, or is likely to have, a detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the area. The behaviour must also be ongoing or happening regularly and be unreasonable.

PSPOs replaced powers to make Gating Orders, Designated Public Place Orders (street drinking restriction powers) and Dog Control Orders.

Failing to comply with a PSPO is a criminal offence and could result in a Fixed Penalty Notice of up to £100, or a fine of up to £1,000 if prosecuted. The Fixed Penalty Notice fine level has now been increased within the Crime & Policing Act 2026.

When considering what could be included in a PSPO, we know that we need to balance things that people want in order to feel safer and happier in the town, whilst at the same time not being seen to be stopping people enjoying themselves or introducing rules and regulations that can't be enforced.

Spelthorne Borough experiences anti-social behaviour, and this had a significant impact on the local community. In 2025 we implemented a PSPO to tackle anti-social behaviour that the community reported as unacceptable.

The first consideration was '*anti-social use of e-bikes and scooters.*' These had been used, predominantly by teenaged males to cause intimidation and distress in the community.

The second consideration was the '*wearing of face-coverings when engaged in acts of anti-social behaviour*'.

Thirdly, the '*possession and use of catapults*' – This was reported as adversely affecting the community in relation to criminal damage and cruelty to animals, in particular waterfowl.

It is a legal requirement under Section 60 Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime & Policing Act 2014 that Public Space Protection Orders are reviewed by the issuing body to

establish whether they are still required to address the problem. If they are not, then by virtue of Section 6 Human Rights Act 1998 they must be discharged.

What restrictions are in place

- **Prohibited behaviours**

The list below outlines the prohibited behaviours that are proposed as part of the PSPO.

A. An authorised person may request a person to dismount if they are e-cycling, cycling, skateboarding, hover-boarding, e-scootering or using similar devices on the borough where they reasonably suspect that the person is riding in a malicious and/or dangerous manner as to cause harassment, alarm or distress to any person within the borough of Spelthorne.

B. A person is prohibited from wearing face coverings in an attempt to conceal their identity to cause harassment, alarm or distress to any person; this includes scarves, balaclavas and masks. This would not include face covering worn in respect of religious or cultural beliefs/medical reasons.

C. In the borough of Spelthorne, a person commits an offence if without reasonable excuse he or she does any of the following:

1) Possesses a catapult, slingshot or similar item capable of launching a missile that could cause harm or damage to a person, animal or property. This does not preclude the powers of the police with regard to an item recognised in law as an offensive weapon;

2) Fails to surrender any catapult, slingshot or similar item capable of launching a projectile in their possession when asked to do so by an authorised person.

3) Possesses stones, ball bearings, pellets or similar item(s) capable of being launched as a projectile, by a catapult, slingshot or similar item or by manual force, that could cause harm or damage to a person, animal or property.

4) Fails to surrender any stones, ball bearings, pellets or similar item(s) capable of being launched as a missile by a catapult, slingshot or similar item when asked to do so by an authorised person.

This does not include lawful possession of such items for legitimate uses such as fishing.

A person will commit an offence if they fail to comply with a request by an authorised officer to cease any of the controlled behaviours within the specified area. Breach of the PSPO could result in either a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued, or prosecution.

What is the evidence to support a continuance of the PSPO?

The PSPO can legally be enforced by Police Officers, PCSOs and Council Officers. It is a preventative tool and provides a level of protection for business and the community. Authorised officers use discretion when enforcing the PSPO which is one tool at their disposal.

To date a wide-scale advertisement campaign of the PSPO has taken place with multiple banners and metal signs placed throughout the borough and in the most prominent of places. To date £1036 has been spent on PSPO signage.

The PSPO has also been advertised on the council website as well as across both police and local authority social media.

Discussions with over 1000 year 6 youths attending the Junior Citizen Project in March 2026 revealed that the vast majority were aware of the Public Space Protection Order.

To date, the police have reported 28 interventions with individuals in possession of catapults, resulting in confiscations and warning letters. All offenders were under the age of 18. This has meant that Fixed Penalty Notices cannot be issued. Furthermore, there has been a reduction in the number of reports of injuries to wildlife and the use of catapults coming to the police and local authority.

JET officers regularly manage the use of e-bikes within Staines Town Centre. This has been largely successful with e-bikes congregating at either end of the town rather than blocking the thoroughfares. No prosecutions have been necessary.

Although there have been no interventions, community liaison and police observations have revealed a significant reduction in the use of face coverings when engaged in acts of anti-social behaviour. This is in stark comparison to problems across the border into the London Borough's of Hounslow and Richmond-upon Thames where the problem still persists.

It is clear that the PSPO is disrupting offenders. Education and intervention can be seen to be working. As the PSPO is only within it's first of a three-year term we have the opportunity to further reduce the problems outlined.

What the options are

Under the Act a PSPO may be discharged if no longer required. The two options for Spelthorne Borough are:

Option 1: The PSPO is discharged, which means it will no longer be in place after the Community Wellbeing & Housing Committee Meeting on 29th September 2026.

Option 2: The PSPO continues past the review period until the next review in summer 2027.