

Public Spaces Protection Order for anti-social behaviour driving

To: Cabinet 20th October 2026

Report by:

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Wards affected:

All

Director Approval: Director Sam Scharf confirms that the report author has sought the advice of all appropriate colleagues and given due regard to that advice; that the equalities impacts and other implications of the recommended decisions have been assessed and accurately presented in the report; and that they are content for the report to be put to the Cabinet/Cabinet Member for decision.

1.	Recommendations
1.1	It is recommended that Cabinet: a. Note the work undertaken to date and the evidence currently available regarding anti-social driving within Cambridge. b. Approve Option 3 as the Council's preferred approach, namely a time-limited Call for Evidence to establish whether sufficient evidence exists to justify further investigation of a potential PSPO, with officers reporting the outcome to Cabinet. c. Note that any future proposal to introduce a PSPO would require further evidence gathering, statutory consultation, legal review, completion of an Equality Impact Assessment and a further Cabinet decision.
2.	Purpose and reason for the report
2.1	This report updates Cabinet on work undertaken in response to the commitment to explore the introduction of a citywide Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) to address anti-social driving in Cambridge. The report: • outlines the evidence currently available; • summarises feedback from partner agencies; • explains the statutory requirements for a PSPO;

	• identifies practical enforcement considerations; • sets out options for Cabinet; and • recommends a proposed way forward.
2.2	The report is required because officers have now completed an initial review of available evidence and discussions with key partners and are seeking Cabinet direction regarding next steps.
3.	Alternative options considered
3.1	The following options have been considered: Option 1 Take no further action towards a PSPO at this stage due to lack of evidence. Option 2 Commission active technical evidence gathering, including acoustic cameras. Option 3 (Officer recommendation) Undertake a time-limited (3 month) public Call for Evidence to determine if there is wider evidence that hasn't been reported currently.
4.	Background and key issues
4.1	As part of political commitments following elections in May 2026 officers have been exploring potential citywide PSPO for anti-social driving. A PSPO of this nature identifies behaviours typically covered by such orders, including vehicle cruising, racing, excessive revving, vehicle stunts, excessive noise, intimidation and nuisance vehicle gatherings. A PSPO is made under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 and may be introduced where the Council is satisfied that behaviour: • has, or is likely to have, a detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the locality; • is persistent or continuing in nature; and • is unreasonable and justifies the restrictions imposed. The Council must also be satisfied that any restrictions are reasonable and proportionate. The Council must identify the strength of the evidence base as the key factor in determining whether progression toward a PSPO is justified.

4.2**Current Evidence Position**

Officers have undertaken discussions with Cambridgeshire Constabulary and Cambridgeshire County Council to understand the level of current evidence and the position of both organisations given their potential roles in enforcement.

The position identified to date is limited:

- Cambridgeshire Constabulary has advised that it has received no reports relating to anti-social driving which would provide an evidence base supporting a PSPO.
- The Constabulary has indicated that, in the absence of evidence demonstrating a significant problem, it would not currently anticipate committing significant additional enforcement resources to a PSPO.
- Cambridgeshire County Council has identified one relevant complaint during the previous three years.
- Officers have not identified sufficient Council-held evidence to demonstrate a persistent and citywide problem at the level that would currently justify progression to consultation.

This does not necessarily demonstrate that residents or businesses are not experiencing anti-social driving. There may be under-reporting or concerns being raised through channels which do not presently form part of a clear evidential record.

However, on the basis of evidence currently available, officers do not consider there is a sufficient basis to recommend progression directly to consultation on a citywide PSPO.

Key Issues**4.3****Evidence Requirements**

There is no statutory minimum number of complaints required before a PSPO may be considered.

A robust evidence base would typically demonstrate:

- what behaviour is occurring;
- where it is occurring;
- how frequently it occurs;
- the impact on residents, businesses and visitors;
- the types of vehicles involved; and

- evidence capable of verification through partner records, CCTV, photographs, video footage or other sources.

Enforcement

Given the type of PSPO, Police commitment is a significant factor in the effectiveness of any anti-social driving PSPO. Whilst Council officers can undertake certain enforcement activities, only the Police have powers to stop moving vehicles. Effective enforcement would therefore require ongoing partnership working and operational support from Cambridgeshire Constabulary.

Nature of Public Concerns

A further consideration is that public concerns may not relate solely to the types of behaviour traditionally associated with anti-social driving.

A future evidence-gathering exercise may identify issues including:

- cars and modified vehicles;
- motorcycles;
- mopeds;
- e-bikes;
- delivery riders;
- pavement riding;
- riding in pedestrian areas; or
- vehicle-related obstruction.

These issues may require different forms of intervention and may not necessarily support a PSPO.

Across the City there are 20mph zones to try and reduce speeding which would involve enforcement however, Cambridgeshire County Council recommend trying to consider alternatives when trying to reduce speeding, such as speed bumps and other interventions.

4.4

Evidence Assessment Criteria

Neither Cambridgeshire Constabulary nor Cambridgeshire County Council operate a formal threshold which would automatically trigger support for a PSPO.

	Officers therefore propose that any Call for Evidence should be assessed against the following criteria: Scale Evidence from multiple independent residents, businesses or organisations demonstrating that concerns extend beyond isolated incidents. Persistence Evidence of recurring behaviour over a sustained period. Impact Evidence demonstrating a detrimental effect on quality of life, including nuisance, disturbance, intimidation or safety concerns. Corroboration Evidence capable of verification through CCTV, audio cameras, photographs, video recordings, witness evidence or partner records. Enforcement Potential Evidence sufficiently detailed to identify patterns, locations and behaviours that could realistically be addressed through enforcement action. Following assessment, officers would then be in a position to report one of three outcomes to Cabinet as part of a next steps in considering consulting on a PSPO. • Outcome A: Insufficient evidence to justify further work. • Outcome B: Evidence of concerns better addressed through alternative interventions. • Outcome C: Sufficient evidence to justify further detailed investigation and consideration of a PSPO.
5	Options
5.1	Option 1: Take no further action Cabinet conclude that the lack of evidence currently available does not justify further expenditure or officer resources.

Advantages

- reflects the current evidence base;
- avoids additional costs;
- avoids progressing an order that may be difficult to enforce.

Disadvantages

- does not test whether concerns are being under-reported;
- may not provide assurance to those who believe a problem exists.

5.2 Option 2: Technical Evidence Gathering

Cabinet may approve investment in technical monitoring equipment, including acoustic cameras.

The July briefing estimated costs in the region of £100,000 for four acoustic cameras, excluding associated staffing and operational costs.

Advantages

- provides objective evidence;
- supports assessment of noise-related nuisance.

Disadvantages

- significant capital investment;
- additional staffing requirements;
- expenditure before the scale of the problem has been demonstrated.

5.3 Option 3: Undertake a Call for Evidence

Cabinet may agree a time-limited, staged approach for a Call for Evidence involving residents, businesses and stakeholders.

1. A time-limited Call for Evidence is undertaken.
2. Officers assess the results against the evidence criteria.
3. Officers return to Cabinet with findings and recommendations.

Advantages

- proportionate approach;
- minimises financial risk;
- enables evidence-based decision making;
- provides a clear basis either to progress or conclude the work.

Disadvantages

	• requires officer resources; • evidence would initially be self-reported; • may create public expectations that a PSPO will follow
5.4	Officer Assessment Officers do not currently recommend progressing directly to consultation on a citywide PSPO. The absence of recorded evidence held by Cambridgeshire Constabulary, the limited evidence held by Cambridgeshire County Council and the absence of a sufficient Council evidence base mean that officers cannot currently demonstrate the level of persistent and evidenced harm that would normally support progression toward consultation. If Cabinet wishes to undertake one further proportionate step before reaching a final conclusion, officers consider Option 3 to be the most balanced approach. A Call for Evidence would establish whether anti-social driving represents a significant issue within Cambridge while avoiding the cost of technical monitoring equipment before the existence of a demonstrable problem has been established.
5.5	Resources and prioritisation The impact following any additional evidence could result in consultation on specific enforcement action. It should be highlighted that Officer time is already being prioritised on City Centre challenges where evidence is already available and requires more immediate enforcement action. This could mean that even with further evidence, that pursuing any enforcement would need to be prioritised amongst other critical City Centre management activity.
6.	Vision
6.1	This report supports the Council's vision of <i>"One Cambridge, Fair for All"</i> by helping to ensure that residents can enjoy a high quality of life and safe, welcoming public spaces. The proposed evidence-gathering approach will enable the Council to understand community concerns and determine whether further intervention is justified

7	Consultation, engagement and communication
7.1	Discussions have been undertaken with: • Cambridgeshire Constabulary; and • Cambridgeshire County Council. No formal consultation has been undertaken at this stage. Should Cabinet approve a Call for Evidence, officers will develop an engagement and communications plan and report the outcome to Cabinet.
8.	Anticipated outcomes, benefits or impact
8.1	The proposed approach will ensure that future decisions regarding a PSPO are evidence-led and proportionate. The anticipated outcome is a clearer understanding of: • whether anti-social driving is a significant problem in Cambridge; • the areas and behaviours causing concern; and • whether further work towards a PSPO is justified.
9.	Implications
9.1	Relevant risks
	Key risks include: • insufficient evidence to support a PSPO; • lack of Police operational support; • legal challenge; • reputational risk if expectations are raised; • expenditure without demonstrable benefit.
	Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)
9.2	No specific implications identified.
	Financial Implications
9.3	Option 3 can be delivered within existing resources. A Call for Evidence would require officer time within existing services. Acoustic camera deployment is estimated at approximately £100,000.

	Additional staffing and operational costs depending on enforcement requirements estimated at £15,000
	Legal Implications
9.4	PSPOs are governed by the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014. Any future order would require compliance with statutory consultation and decision-making requirements and may be subject to legal challenge.
	Equalities and socio-economic Implications
9.5	No direct equalities implications arise from this report. Any future proposal for a PSPO would require completion of an Equality Impact Assessment.
	Net Zero Carbon, Climate Change and Environmental implications
9.6	No significant implications identified.
	Procurement Implications
9.7	Procurement implications would arise only if technical monitoring equipment was subsequently approved.
	Community Safety Implications
9.8	There are potential positive community safety implications if evidence demonstrates a need for further intervention.
10.	Background documents Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985
10.1	• Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014. • Crime and Policing Act 2026.
11.	Appendices
11.1	<i>Appendix A</i> – Draft Call for evidence framework

	To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact Yvonne O Donnell; Strategic Environmental Health and Public Safety Lead; Email: Yvonne.odonnell@cambridge.gov.uk
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APPENDIX A - Draft call for evidence framework

Purpose

To establish whether sufficient evidence exists to justify further investigation of a potential PSPO relating to anti-social driving within Cambridge.

This exercise is evidence gathering only and does not constitute consultation on a proposed PSPO.

Information Requested

Respondents will be asked to provide:

- location;
- date and time;
- frequency;
- vehicle type;
- behaviour observed;
- impact experienced;
- details of any previous reporting; and
- any supporting evidence available.

Assessment

Officers will:

1. remove duplicate submissions;
2. identify hotspots and recurring patterns;
3. assess evidence against the agreed criteria;
4. review findings with partner agencies; and
5. report findings and recommendations to Cabinet.

Possible Outcomes

Outcome A

Insufficient evidence to justify further PSPO work.

Outcome B

Concerns better addressed through alternative interventions.

Outcome C

Sufficient evidence to justify further investigation and consideration of a PSPO.