

POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

Pat Hagan
Head of Localities and Town Centre
Doncaster Council
By email only: TowncentrePSPOconsultation@doncaster.gov.uk
2 June 2020

Dear Pat,

Re: PSPO Town Centre

Thank you for your letter inviting comments on the renewal of the Doncaster Town Centre PSPO.

I am in full support of the proposed extension and variation to the existing Public Spaces Protection Order and trust you are able to use this letter for the purposes of your consultation.

All good wishes,

Dr Alan Billings
South Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner

BRITISH TRANSPORT POLICE

From: Lawrence, Gavin <
Sent: 17 July 2020 14:35
To: TownCentrePSPOconsultation <TownCentrePSPOconsultation@doncaster.gov.uk>
Subject: PSPO Consultation
Importance: High

To whom it may concern,

I am a T/Inspector with the British Transport Police (BTP) and have responsibility for policing matters affecting the BTP at Doncaster Station and the surrounding railway infrastructure. I fully support the continuation of Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) for Doncaster Town Centre which incorporates Doncaster Railway Station.

Begging, anti-social behaviour, damage and violent crime are significant problems for Doncaster railway stations. The railway station is the gateway to the town centre and is often the first impression a visitor gets of the area. Doncaster continues to be the host of some key events, increasing income to the local economy such as the Race Meetings and other sporting events as well as being a key transport hub for commuters to travel around the country. ASB can give a negative impression to the travelling public and can even deter people from using the station and rail services altogether. Rail staff and the public alike have been intimidated and abused by individuals loitering around the station area. No one should have to come to work and be subject of abuse and intimidation.

The PSPO has assisted in dealing with such issues and the above situation has improved since its' implementation. This has been supported by positive feedback to officers from the travelling public and from the station staff at Doncaster who are often the first to witness and be expected to try and deal with such behaviour – this can sometimes be first thing in the morning when staff are travelling to work alone and at times can make them feel vulnerable should they be faced with certain individuals.

BTP have used problem solving plans and joint operations to try and address the issues in the past - with officers deployed in uniform and plain clothes to prevent and detect offences with the aim of reassuring rail staff and the public. We have used criminal behaviour orders, community protection notices and a withdrawal of implied permission for the persistent offenders. BTP are part of a multi-agency group who meet on a frequent basis to work together to problem solve and make a better environment for people to live and work in. Despite the efforts some of these problems do continue and the PSPO has assisted in dealing with some of these.

I view the PSPO as a very positive and continued development for the town centre and fully support it's continuation and the variations proposed. It will continue to help all partner agencies tackle the problems affecting everyone in a consistent, effective and proportionate way.

Since its' introduction, the British Transport Police has seen an increase in partnership working and have conducted joint patrols with the Council Enforcement Officers to utilise the PSPO powers both on the railway station and in town and has given the officers ability to immediately deal with offenders breaching the legislation.

It is noted that the Covid pandemic and the requirements to manage this put upon the local authorities has seen a reduction in the requirement to use the PSPO, but since lockdown the BTP have seen a gradual increase in calls to service and have also seen an increase in breaches at the front of the station especially around begging, drunkenness and general nuisance (including drugs)

The following is a snapshot of the impact the order has had;

The PSPO has been a useful and effective tool, and the number of reports we have received from staff and the public at Doncaster Railway Station have reduced dramatically over the years. I reviewed months July, August and September for a snapshot:

July 2018 21 reports made

July 2019 7 reports

August 2018 24 reports made

August 2019 2 reports made

September 2017 13 reports made

September 2018 6 reports made

September 2019 3 reports made.

In addition, in total this year BTP have issued 47 dispersals (taking into consideration we have really only had Jan, Feb and March due to Covid)

Also - during Covid - 5 town centre nominals received FPN's re Health Protection Regs.

Finally, the number of arrests for ASB offences or of town centre nominals in 2020 so far: 18 (again taking into consideration we have really only had Jan, Feb and March due to Covid and the infrastructure effectively being closed down).

In summary, I really do feel that one of the greatest benefits of the PSPO is the stronger multi-agency relationships we have built with SYP, DMBC, Housing Associations / St Ledger, Drug and Alcohol services etc.

We are in contact with individuals from the various agencies on an almost daily basis and it's these partnerships that have widened our knowledge of names/faces, intel we would otherwise not have known, officer safety concerns, offending patterns etc, all of which has certainly assisted us in making the most positive and proactive engagements with nominals as well as aiding our ability to detect/investigate criminal cases involving such individuals.

The PSPO is the sole reason the working relationships we have with other partners re ASB is as it is and without it it's feared these relationships - and our work on the matter - would be negatively impacted.

I see that the designated area for prohibitions continues to include the railway station in their entirety. As already stated, the station is part of the gateway to the Town Centre and the PSPO will continue to allow us to manage the point of arrival into the Town effectively.

I fully support and request that the PSPO continue in line with suggested amendments contained within the consultation document.

Regards,

Gavin Lawrence

T/Inspector 7367

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