

## **Hart District Council**

**Full Council Meeting, Thursday 30 November 2023**

### **Members Questions to Council**

#### **Agenda Item 5: Council Procedure Rule 14.4 – Questions by Members**

##### **From Councillor Dr Crampton:**

At last Full Council I highlighted that the Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) had expired at the end of May. I was assured by the Portfolio holder that the consultation was almost complete. The PSPO expired almost six months ago, and it is two months since the completion of the consultation but still there is no new PSPO. While we fail to have a PSPO in place there is no enforcement against dog fouling. Is the enforcement against dog fouling not a priority for the Council as it is for our residents? If it is a priority, why the delay? Given the reassurances given at last Full Council can the portfolio holder give a written reply circulated to members to explain the six-month delay and can she also give a date by when the new PSPO will be put in place?

##### **From Councillor Collins:**

Between 4 September 2023 and 2 October 2023, the Council carried out a consultation on the draft PSPO. A total of 123 consultation response were received, which in summary show clear support for renewing the PSPO, without any significant comments. I met with the Executive Director - Place in early October and we reviewed the consultation responses.

In light of the consultation responses, the Executive Director - Place is minded to adopt the PSPO in line with the delegated powers given to him in relation to this matter in the decision taken by Cabinet on 7 September 2023. This decision needs to follow the Executive Decision process, and this is expected to commence early next week. I am sure this would have commenced earlier, however there are a number of important projects at this time, and it is a small team.

I can assure fellow Councillors that the absence of an adopted PSPO does not prevent the good work Officers and our colleagues at East Hants do. As discussed at the Cabinet meeting in September, the PSPO as a tool is only used at the stage when an individual is served with a fixed penalty notice. However, the Council's Environmental Health & Licensing Local Enforcement Plan is clear that enforcement is always the last resort and sets out the process of the four E's - Engage, Explain, Encourage and Enforce.

##### **Supplementary question from Councillor Dr Crampton:**

My understanding is that officers from East Hants are employed to enforce and issue notices for this offence, if there is no PSPO in place, what exactly are they doing? If there was a resource issue, why have members not been made aware of this?

**From Councillor Collins:**

Resourcing issues have arisen due to the substantial number of additional Licensing Hearings that have taken place recently which have taken priority over other tasks. East Hants officers continue to work on the dog fouling issue, enforcement is a last resort, only one notice has ever been issued.