



14th June 2024

Dear John,

I am writing in response to the consultation that is currently open to the public which looks at tackling issues of anti-social behaviour in Durham City. As you are aware, I have expressed my support and have advocated on a number of occasions for the use of a PSPO in Durham City.

As I begin my new term in office, I continue to be committed to working closely with partners to tackle all forms of anti-social behaviour. The public have told me that it is their top priority, so I have made it mine. Crime and anti-social behaviour, particularly that which is linked to drugs and alcohol will be the focus of my new Police, Crime and Justice Plan over the next 4 years.

This order would give police and local authorities the needed tools to address begging where it is causing a public nuisance such as through the obstruction of doorways and pavements, and more direct begging in which members of the public are approached and harassed for money or donations. I believe the power to intervene here is necessary to protect both the individual and the member of public.

Durham City is one of the Operation Trailblazer hotspot areas which has seen my office bring in over £4m to put additional officers on the streets of County Durham. Police and partners are working tirelessly to make our streets and neighbourhoods safer all the while supporting those who are vulnerable into the support that they need and reducing the presence of anti-social and intimidating behaviours. Darlington Borough Council have had this at their disposal for 3 years now and have reported positive feedback and a significant reduction in ASB.

The local Parish Council have also increased the precept to pay for additional policing as part of Operation Lentil on Wednesday, Friday and Saturday evenings. These additional targeted safety patrols sit alongside the additional Neighbourhood Wardens the Parish Council has through a Service Level Agreement with the County Council. The Community Safety and Engagement

Officer who works with the local neighbourhood policing team is working with charities to bring about educating the public on donating directly to homeless charities rather than those begging on the streets.

There is a lot of additional work going on in Durham City to help makes those working, living and visiting feel safer and to offer a pathway to those who are vulnerable and in need of support.

I recognise as do all the partners working across the city that this will not be a “silver bullet” and I will continue my work with businesses in the City Centre as part of the Safer Business Group to further drive down retail crime and create a safer environment for all.

A PSPO would be a tool that would drive deterrence efforts further in Durham City as police and partners deal with anti-social behaviour issues proactively, effectively and proportionately. As the chair of the Local Criminal Justice Partnership, I will work tenaciously to hold each and every one of the Criminal Justice partners to account to stop the “revolving door” for those that choose to defy the PSPO.

I look forward to the review of the consultation and it’s finding in the hope that the strong evidence base allows for the adoption of the legislation in Durham City.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joy Allen', written in a cursive style.

Joy Allen

Durham Police and Crime Commissioner