

Item 12 – Public Spaces Protection Order – The Vine Consultation Response and Order

The attached report was considered by the People & Places Advisory Committee on 30 November 2023. The relevant Minute extract is below.

People & Places Advisory Committee (30 November 2023, Minute 28)

The Health & Communities Manager presented the report, which outlined the consultation responses regarding the proposed Public Spaces Protection Order for The Vine, Sevenoaks. The consultation ran from 14 August to 24 September 2023, and was sent to four schools within the district, and to selected schools in Tunbridge Wells and Tonbridge. 253 responses were received in total. 83.4% of respondents supported bringing in an Order prohibiting engaging in anti-social behaviour (ASB) and returning to the area within 24 hours after being asked to leave.

Members' attention was brought to the results of the consultation within Appendix A to the report. Of the 253 respondents, 228 answered that they had not reported ASB at The Vine. Work was ongoing to help more reports be made to the Police and Community Safety Unit, to allow ASB to be recorded and addressed quickly. The PSPO would stand for 3 years, and would be reviewed after 2 years.

Members asked questions of clarification of the officer. They were advised that the PSPO would not limit the consumption of alcohol, as the Town Council were licensed for the area. The PSPO had been created in partnership with the Town Council, Police and other partners and would be managed and maintained in conjunction with them. The PSPO would apply to groups of two or more causing ASB, intimidation, or harassment, but would not prevent people from meeting at The Vine. West Kent Housing Association and Kenwood Trust youth workers would continue to attend The Vine in the evening to provide assistance and advice, and activities would be organised at the House in the Basement to provide an alternative forum for meeting. The police would gather information regarding ASB and the Council would issue Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) or restorative work. The type of enforcement issued was at officer discretion. The police would also monitor sites at Greatness and Bat & Ball, as it was understood that the groups may instead meet there.

The officer explained that pupils from certain schools were known to coordinate large gatherings at The Vine, which had resulted in ASB, and these schools were targeted for consultation. Presentations were offered to all schools, targeting Years 10, 11, and 12 specifically, as that demographic was the subject of the complaints. It was felt that a consultation concerning a demographic should make specific efforts to engage them in the process, though it was noted that only 7 of the 253 responses were from students. Members discussed the number of responses. The officer explained that the

number of responses was high, when considering that the consultation was targeted to a small area and the issue had a limited geographical impact.

Members discussed the report, and noted that Laura Trott MP had written to the Portfolio Holder in support of the PSPO.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Members noted that consideration had been given to impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Resolved: That

- a) The contents of the report and the outcome of the statutory 6 week public consultation be noted; and that
- b) The recommendation to Cabinet for the implementation of a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) and its two measures at The Vine, Sevenoaks and surrounding grass areas for a period of up to 3 years be supported.