

# **Appendix 6 - PSPO Evidence Pack – drugs and alcohol specific. London Borough of Lewisham Public Space Protection Order**

Supplementary information – this pack presents the case for the need for the drug and alcohol related PSPO powers. The case was made for boroughwide but ultimately some wards have been excluded from the recommendations.

# Introduction and overview

- As part of the process of introducing a Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) in Lewisham it is important to consider whether there is potential to limit the geographical spread of the powers due to a concentration of offences.
- This evidence pack sets out the available data showing the location of different types of ASB as well as a number of quotes from stakeholders alongside detailed case studies showing the variety of locations of ASB.
- Officers have reviewed this data and consider them to support the need for the implementation of a PSPO. Unfortunately, anti-social behaviour (ASB) is a widespread issue across the borough. While there are higher concentrations in some areas, the activity is not confined to these areas or by arbitrary ward boundaries. A flexible approach to dealing with situations as they arise, wherever they occur, is necessary to deal with the ASB effectively and consistently. It is also important to remember that in the recent public consultation there was overwhelming support for the boroughwide measures. The summary table on the final slide shows that 13 of the 19 Wards feature in the top 5 of at least one of the indicators for ASB.
- ASB complaints are reported to a range of organisations and recorded with varying detail. To build up a picture of ASB in Lewisham, several sources of information are presented in this document which provide insight into location and extent of issues from different perspectives. These should be considered in conjunction with each other while also taking into account the limitations explained on the next page.

# Note on the data used

- It must be noted that the data presented within this pack are limited to the directly reported or noted incidents of ASB. ASB has been linked to personal harm including avoidance behaviours, changed routines and an impact on quality of life. Other implications of ASB include negative mental health, such as living in fear and increased stress and anxiety, leading to experiences of panic attacks and depression. Furthermore, there is evidence to suggest that ASB is associated with negative impacts on the economy. These impacts are rarely directly report or ward based and include, but are not limited to, economic productivity, house prices, the success of local businesses and the prevalence of other crime types.

# Datasets & Limitations

- **Police ASB data:** Each ASB call is assigned up to three ASB categories (e.g. ASB Nuisance, Rowdy Behaviour etc). The number of alcohol- and drug-related ASB calls is likely to be underestimated: It relies on the caller knowing that any antisocial behaviour is linked to alcohol and communicating this to the call handler, and for the appropriate category to be selected. For this reason, the 'Rowdy and Inconsiderate Behaviour' category is considered instead. There is also no way to distinguish between ASB occurring in a public space, so all locations are considered as a proxy.
- **Police Crime data:** This includes all drug-related offences, including possession and drug trafficking.
- **London Ambulance Service dispatch data:** This includes callouts flagged as drug/alcohol-related. There is also no way to distinguish between ASB occurring in a public space, so all locations are considered as a proxy.
- **Cleaner Lewisham:** This portal is for residents to report online to the council any environmental ASB. Drug and alcohol paraphernalia is used as a proxy to show ASB activity. Given the large number of records, a program is used to identify relevant records. This will result in some false matches (which have been removed where possible) and some records not being identified at all.
- **iCasework Enquiries and Safer Communities ASB team records:** Council databases which are also filtered using the above methods.

# PSPO: Alcohol

**Proposed Measure: Authorised police and council officers may request alcohol consumption cease and any container be surrendered where anti-social behaviour is taking place. Under The Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.**

- Street drinking is sometimes associated with anti-social behaviour, causing high levels of noise, rowdy and nuisance behaviour, harassment and intimidation of passers-by, as well as the littering of cans and bottles, vomiting and urination in public spaces. There are often further concerns linked to underage drinking, sexual activity, criminal damage and/or substance misuse.
- A PSPO would not ban the consumption of alcohol in a public place, a PSPO would address alcohol related anti-social behaviour/nuisance. It would not be an offence to consume alcohol in a public space; the offence would be failing to comply with an officer's request to stop the consumption of alcohol or failing to surrender containers when requested to do so. Authorised officers could only request that alcohol consumption cease on the grounds that anti-social behaviour is or is likely to occur.

NB – following advice from support agencies it has been agreed that alcohol would only be confiscated in extreme circumstances.

- The enforcement of these powers would support the wider strategy in Lewisham to address alcohol related harm. This strategy includes signposting individuals with alcohol and substance misuse related concern to drug and alcohol treatments services in order to ensure appropriate support/treatment was available. The Strategy also includes engagement with local licensed premises to reduce the availability of high strength beers and ciders as well as ensuring that licensing objectives were promoted through responsible retailing of alcohol; and work by Public Health to promote responsible drinking, in partnership with health partners such as the NHS.

# PSPO: Drugs

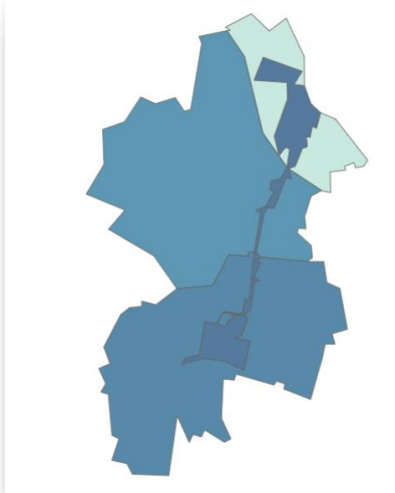
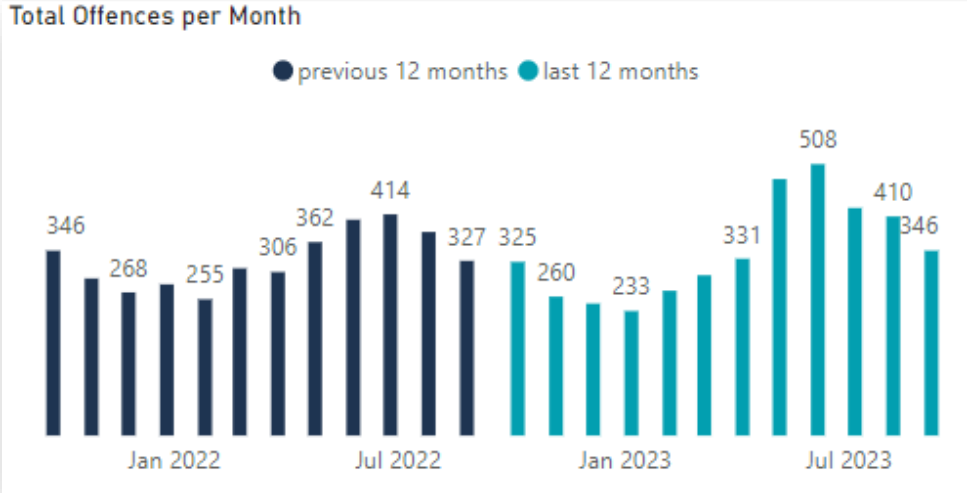
**Proposed Measure:** Any person who, without reasonable excuse, fails to surrender any such substance in their possession, and if requested, leave the area and not return for 48 hours when asked to do so by a Constable, Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) or Council Officer, commits an offence and may be liable to prosecution or may be issued a Penalty Notices for Disorder or arrested, either under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 or issued an Fixed Penalty Notice for failure to comply with a PSPO (local authority FPN).

- Consumption of drugs and psychoactive substances has been highlighted as an issue by Councillors and residents. The MPS have also reported a large number of substance-related incidents and local police officers have provided statements which support a PSPO to tackle this issue.
- The PSPO would allow a designated officer to ask for the person in question to surrender any such substance in their possession and leave the area if whilst consuming/using a substance the behaviour was deemed anti-social. Any behaviour deemed a criminal offence, without the display of anti-social behaviour would not fall under PSPO legislation i.e. Possession of Illegal substances, would fall to the Police to manage.

NB - following advice from support agencies it has been agreed that substances would only be confiscated in extreme circumstances.

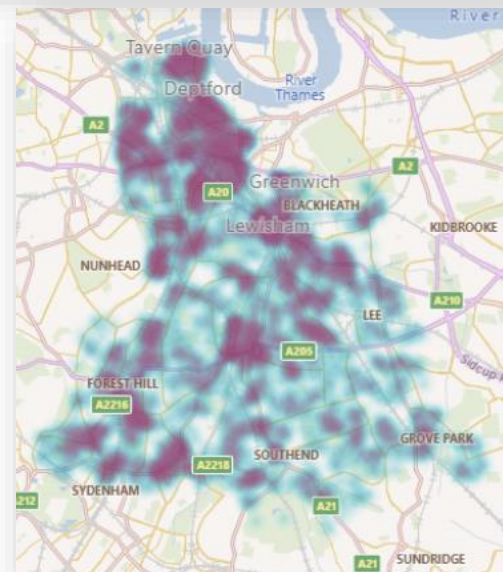
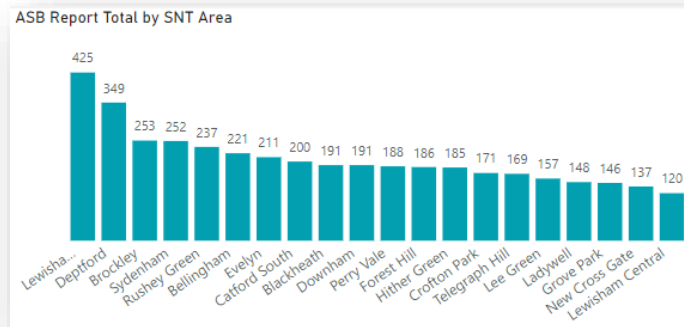
# Police ASB Data: Rowdy & Inconsiderate Behaviour

- There were **4,137** calls to the police classified as Rowdy and Inconsiderate behaviour during the **12 months to September 2023**. This was slightly higher to the previous 12 months: 3953, a **4.7% increase**.
- The police report their ASB data by Safer Neighbourhood Team area. Most of these align with ward boundaries; the exception is the Lewisham Town Centre boundary which extends from Lewisham town centre south to Catford (outline shown on the right below with Lewisham Central, Ladywell and Rushey Green wards).



# Police ASB Data: Rowdy & Inconsiderate Behaviour

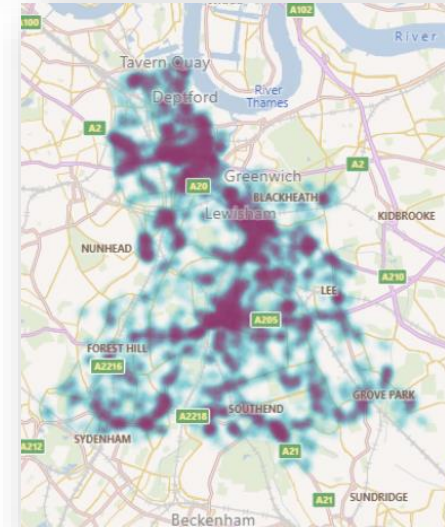
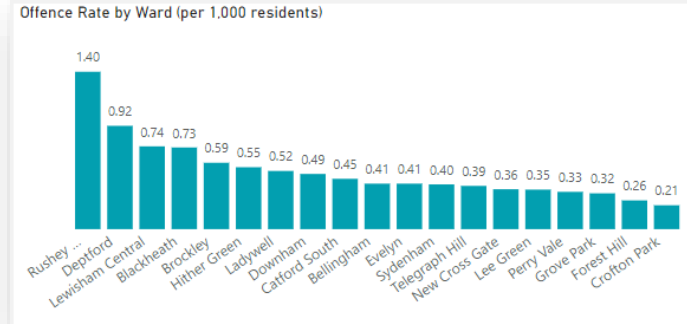
- By SNT area over the last 12 months, **Lewisham Town Centre** had the highest number of ASB reports (425), followed by **Deptford, Brockley, Sydenham, Rushey Green excl. Catford centre, and Bellingham**. (SNT area not available for the previous 12 months.)
- The heat map below shows the density of incidents for the 2 years to September 2023. Hotspots outside the wards above include areas in **Evelyn, Blackheath** (particularly with the border of Lewisham Central), and **New Cross Gate, Forest Hill, Lee Green and Grove Park**.
- Importantly, every ward within the borough has reports of this type of ASB, and **there are hotspots located away from the known problem areas** (e.g. Forest Hill, Grove Park).





# Police: Drug-related offences

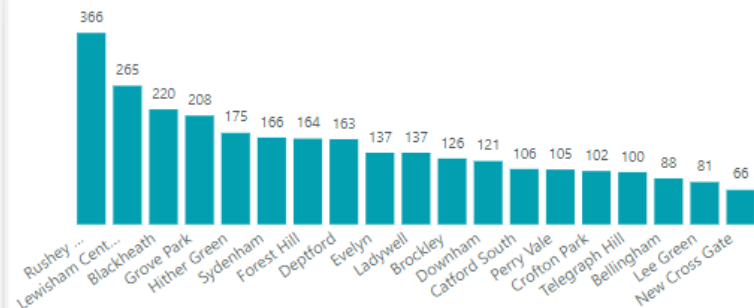
- There have been **1,383** drug-related offences in the 2 years to September 2023.
  - 433 drug trafficking offences over the last 12-months; 349 in the previous 12-months.
  - 950 drug possession offences over the last 12-months; 1,221 in the previous 12-months.
- The map shows the location of all these offences. **Rushey Green, Deptford, Lewisham Central, Blackheath and Brockley** are the wards with the 5 highest rates. Again, looking at the hotspot map we can see that there are concentrations outside these wards, including but not limited to **Sydenham** high street and parts of **New Cross Gate**.



# London Ambulance Service: Alcohol-related

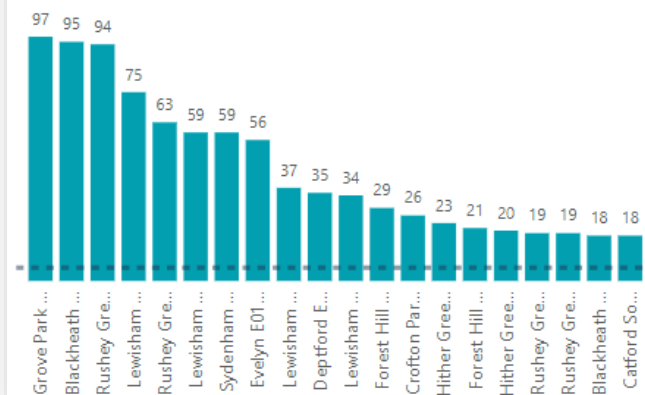
- There were **2,896** alcohol-related call-outs over the 2-year period to September 2023: 1384 in the first 12-month period, 1512 in the second 12-month period, an **increase of 9.25%**.
- The wards with the highest number were **Rushey Green, Lewisham Central, Blackheath, Grove Park and Hither Green**.
- When wards are broken down into smaller areas (referred to as Output Areas), hot-spots can be identified. The OA's with the highest number of dispatches are shown to the right. These are contained within **Grove Park, Blackheath, Rushey Green, Lewisham Central, Sydenham, Evelyn, Deptford, Forest Hill, Crofton Park, Hither Green and Catford South wards**. **The main hotspots occur in more than half of Lewisham's wards.**

LAS Alcohol Related Dispatches, total number



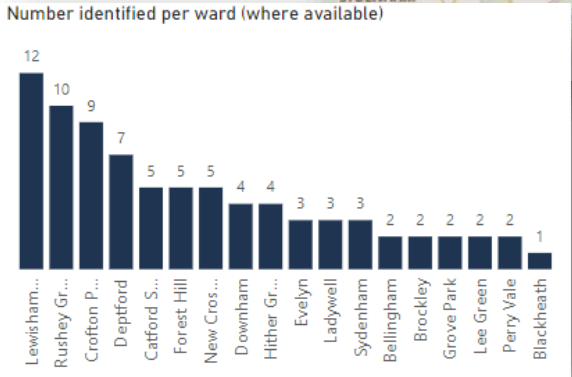
Total number per Output Area (highest 20/549 areas shown)

Average total per output area shown by dotted line



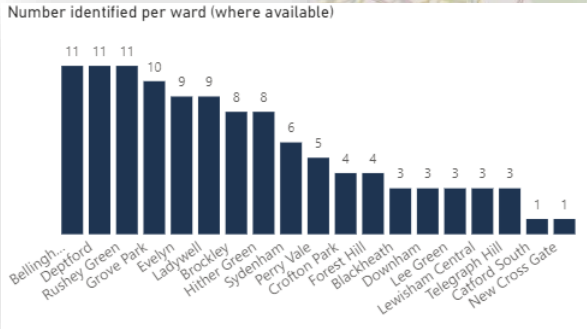
# Council Reports: Alcohol-related ASB

- ASB incidents are received by the council through multiple avenues. There are three key sources presented here: the iCasework portal, Cleaner Lewisham and the Community Safety ASB team records.
- In total, 92 council records of alcohol-related ASB in a public space were identified over the 2 years to September 2023. 53 in the first 12-month period and 39 in the second 12-month period. Most of this decrease is due to a reduction in reports via Cleaner Lewisham.
- The wards with the most complaints were **Lewisham Central**, **Rushey Green**, **Crofton Park** and **Deptford**.
- Hot spots also seen in **Sydenham** and **Evelyn** wards with complaints identified across 18 wards.



# Council Reports: Drug-related ASB

- ASB incidents are received by the council through multiple avenues. There are three key sources presented here: the iCasework portal, Cleaner Lewisham and the Community Safety ASB team records.
- In total, 123 council records of drug-related ASB in a public space were identified over the 2 years to September 2023. 44 in the first 12-month period and 79 in the second 12-month period. Most of this 80% increase is due to an increase in reports via Cleaner Lewisham.
- The wards with the most amount of complaints identified are **Bellingham, Deptford, Rushey Green and Grove Park**.
- However, **hotspots occur across the borough within other wards**, for example in Sydenham.
- Reports occurred across all 19 wards.



# Council Reports: Quotes

*“The area surrounding the BP garage at the intersection of Bromley road and Winlaton road is strewn with huge amounts of litter (mainly alcohol related) and there is a bench that people congregate to drink on at the intersection. The bushes behind it [are] filled to the brim with beer cans etc. Litter is strewn around the bench and up on the entrance to Winlaton Road. Walking past the bench today I noticed someone appears to have smeared glue or some other substance all over the bench, presumably as a deterrent.” Bellingham Ward*

*“Street drinkers have been using the area behind the 3 shop as a public toilet. It stinks of urine. Please can you power hose / clean.”*

*“ASB issues at Leegate shopping centre. Groups of school pupils and street drinkers congregating on stairwell, affecting residents and traders.” Lee Green Ward*

*“Alleged nuisances caused by street drinkers playing music and littering around a bench located [in Lee Green]. Complainant has requested the bench be removed.” Lee Green Ward*

*“I live close to Charlottenburg park where I take my pet dog for a short walk at different times during the day. I love seeing how versatile the park is throughout the day; however, I am very uncomfortable walking there in the evening because there are a lot of benches that fall in complete darkness... These spaces when it's dark are used for antisocial behaviour such as alcohol and drugs. Surely the space was not designed to be used in this way.” Deptford Ward*

# Council Reports: Quotes

*“These are serious situations and likely to be repeated this coming weekend unless a more proactive approach is taken. This well-loved community park is being taken over by selfish groups of people who are treating the space as their own. Some of the behaviour has been atrocious, drug taking lighting fires and BBQs despite the notices and the tinder-dry conditions, openly urinating, erecting sound systems, staying in the park until the early hours, noise and leaving piles of rubbish in the park and surrounding roads. It's not fair on other park users and residents. I am worried about the real fire risk, and of altercations as many residents have had enough . A proactive approach from Park management and the authorities is required urgently and certainly before this coming weekend. Peaceful Park users and residents are being discriminated against.” Evelyn Ward*

*“Large quantity of laughing gas cannisters, rubbish, bottles, drug paraphernalia, burnt out bike etc. This is a main thoroughfare for school children crossing the railway tracks.”  
Downham Ward*

*“Street drinkers and drug addicts vandalising the public benches.”  
Evelyn Ward*

*“There was a large gathering today in the park, where loud music was played and people were drinking and smoking drugs at the end of my garden. They're still playing music now and it's 9pm. They have left a lot of rubbish on the ground and have thrown rubbish into my garden.” Location not provided*

*“There is an increasing amount of anti social behaviour happening in the park. Last night, Friday 15/07 we had drunk people in the park until the early hours +- 03:00. tonight there are people with a huge sound system which is stopping us from having our windows and balcony doors open as it's extremely loud. we went over to ask them to turn it down, to no avail. they were also smoking loads of weed. As residents neighbouring the park it's extremely distressing knowing no one is patrolling the park and that there is no one we can all.” Location not provided.*

# Case Studies

# Drinking in a New Cross Gate park

## **The complaint:**

In September 2022, the council received complaints from three separate members of the public about a man regularly playing loud music in a Eckington Gardens from a portable speaker and drinking alcohol with a group of people, often late in the evenings after the park was closed.

## **Action taken:**

Park keepers challenged the man's behaviour which was breaking the bye-laws of the park listed on a noticeboard but were ignored. A council officer also approached him about his behaviour, but he was dismissive and advised he could do what he wanted. The matter was escalated by residents to a ward councillor, who also contacted the council, and the Police. A warning letter was sent to the perpetrator and a CPW issued after the Police were able to speak to him and obtain his address. The Police advised they would take the matter up after a CPN was subsequently issued but the process has been very long and drawn out.

## **With a PSPO:**

The bye-laws in the park were an insufficient deterrent as the Park Keepers do not have the powers to act when people breach them. A PSPO could mean that other council officers could challenge people in an open space drinking and causing ASB without a need for the CPN.



# ASB in Brockley

## The Complaint:

Residents in Brockley complained about anti-social behaviour and noise nuisance caused by people intermittently congregating on the street during the day until late evenings, drinking alcohol, smoking cannabis, playing loud music, talking loudly, swearing, harassing, and intimidating the neighbouring residents. This is affecting the quality of life of the community.

## Action taken:

A joint meeting took place with the police to discuss ongoing issues relating to the alcohol drinking and cannabis use on the street outside the residents' properties and to agree an action plan. This involved the Police and council officers patrolling the area (as far as resources allow) and a multi-agency meeting to take place regularly.

The hostel for young people with alcohol and drug issues, located near the concerned area, has been also affected by the ASB. The management of the hostel have been invited and joined the multi-agency meetings. The users of the hostel have been informed of our actions and information and contact details of the police and our service have been provided to them to report any issues; complaints can be made anonymously.

A meeting with the complainants to get more details about their concerns, encouraged them to log the incidents and report it to the police and our service. Safer Communities officers contacted the local properties and businesses to inform of the complaints and encourage them to report any ASB and nuisance issue.

## With a PSPO...

- It's important to note, that PSPO will be used appropriately, proportionately, and jointly with all support services/ partners, the PSPO can be a positive device that help to prevent anti-social behaviour and can provide an effective response to some of the issues residents and businesses face daily.
- The Public Spaces Protection Order will be used to stop the group of people congregating on the public space and at the same time discourage drunken anti-social behaviour in the same place by making it an offence not to hand over containers of alcohol when asked to do so.

# Drinking outside Lewisham Library

## The Complaint:

In October 2022, the council received multiple complaints from residents around Lewisham Central about rough sleepers in front of the library on Lewisham high street. These individuals were drinking alcohol, urinating to the rear of the building and using intimidating behaviour towards the public walking passed and visitors to the library, especially females.

## Action taken:

Council officers formed a task group with the local Safer Neighbourhood Team, CGL drug and treatment service, the outreach rough sleeper team and the cleansing team. The team engaged with 6 male individuals outside the library; CGL and the rough sleeper team advised they had been offered accommodation or were in settled accommodation but refused to stay and preferred to sleep outside. Three of the men had been engaged with previously and had already received a verbal warning so were issued with a CPW. These were translated using a police interpreter ensure they understood. Whilst conducting the operation, one male began to be abusive and at times showed threatening behaviour to the team. This male also received a CPW given that he was verbally warned to leave the location but proceeded to ignore this. There were 3 further occasions in 2023 with individuals sleeping and drinking alcohol outside the library, resulting in 3 CPNs being served because of further breaches of CPWs as with the earlier parks example – the process was very long and drawn out and members of the public (and local Cllrs) had to suffer for a very long period.

## With a PSPO...

Had the PSPO been in place a fixed penalty could have been issued when the operation was conducted in relation to drinking alcohol and public urination.

# ASB in Crofton Park

## **The issue:**

Crofton Park, the walkway between Brockley Rise and Duncombe Hill. A complaint was received from a female resident about a group of men drinking, drug taking, while catcalling, and saying inappropriate comments as females walk along the pathway. This was leading to the resident feeling harassed and insecure for her safety while going home from work.

## **The action:**

A joint meeting with Police, and staff from the homeless unit was arranged as it was discovered that some of the individuals involved in the anti-social behaviour, frequented the local housing unit and the necessary support needed to be put in place alongside the enforcement work.

The behaviour and how it impacts on the female residents of the borough was discussed. Police arranged to prioritise the walkway as part of their regular patrols to keep the area clear. A discussion was held with Planning Enforcement, about the design of the pathway which was adding to the concern of residents as drinkers and drug takers could hide behind the wooden hoarding that had been erected, meaning residents could not see if any groups were in the walk through until they had entered.

## **With a PSPO...**

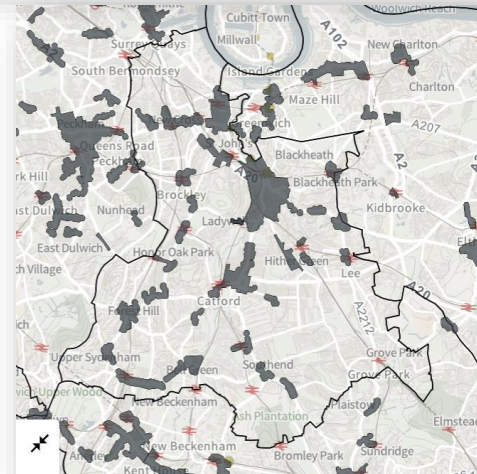
A Fixed Penalty Notice, (FPN), once the Public Space Protection Order was in place, would make addressing this behaviour more immediate and bring about a quick resolution to the anti-social behaviour.

# Summary and conclusion

# Initial data review

- The table on the right summarises the rank of each ward for each issue presented on the previous slides. It demonstrates the spatial variation across the borough
- Viewing issues by wards comes with limitations: For example, ASB occurs heavily in Lewisham Central but also in the adjoining area of Blackheath. Viewed at a ward-wide level the effect in this part of the ward may not be apparent.
- ASB can concentrate in particular areas. For example, the maps show some hotspots align well with main roads and high street areas (shown on the map to the right) which are widespread.
- Patterns in behaviour change over time depending on different influences (redesign of a space, pandemic lockdowns etc), so a flexible approach which can adapt to the current situation is critical.

Ward	Police ASB	Police Offences	LAS Alcohol	Council: Alcohol	Council: Drug
Bellingham	6	10	17	13	1
Blackheath	9	4	3	18	13
Brockley	4	5	11	14	7
Catford South	8	9	13	5	18
Crofton Park	14	19	15	3	11
Deptford	2	2	8	4	1
Downham	10	8	12	8	13
Evelyn	7	11	9	10	5
Forest Hill	12	18	7	6	11
Grove Park	18	17	4	15	4
Hither Green	13	6	5	9	7
Ladywell	17	7	10	11	5
Lee Green	16	15	18	16	13
Lewisham Central	3	3	2	1	13
New Cross Gate	19	14	19	7	18
Perry Vale	11	16	14	17	10
Rushey Green	1	1	1	2	1
Sydenham	5	12	6	12	9
Telegraph Hill	15	13	16	19	13

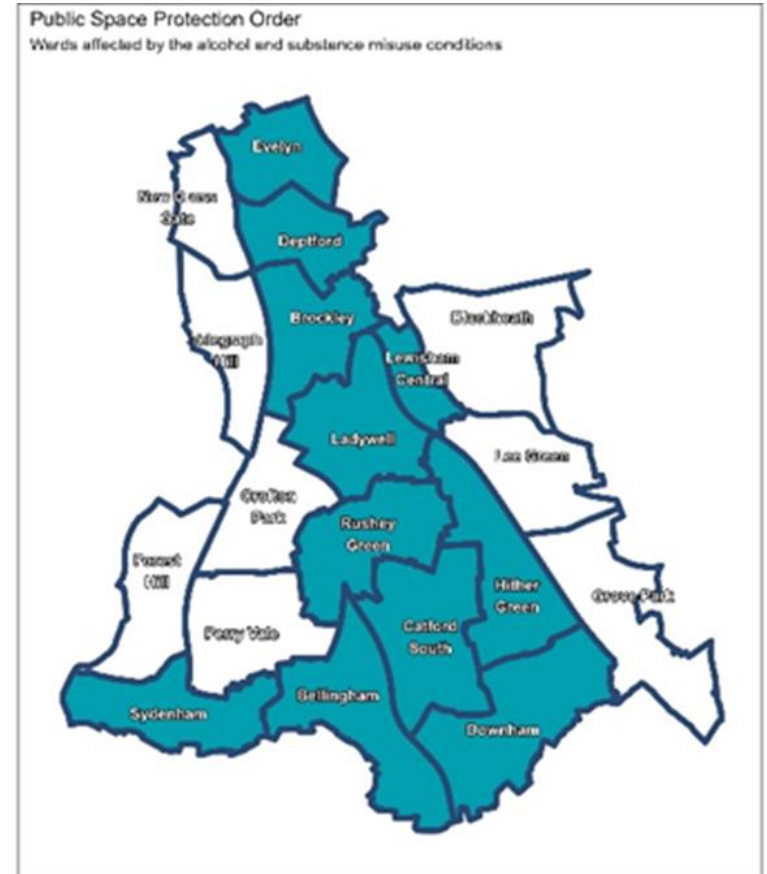


# Critical assessment and targeted approach

- Despite the 5 datasets being strong indicators of the need for the PSPO there is a reasonable argument that London Ambulance Service data is too much of a proxy for use as it will also cover alcohol related falls, wider health concerns etc so this has been removed in the final analysis.
- With LAS data removed there is a point at this there is a natural gap between the wards with persistently high levels of ASB indicated by the more direct data sources and those with relatively lower prevalence – see table and ward level map on the final slide.
- Mindful of concerns raised at Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee it is therefore considered reasonable that the drug and alcohol related restrictions be limited to these wards initially, subject to review after the first six months of operation.

# Targeted approach

Ward	Police ASB	Police Offences	Council: Alcohol	Council: Drug	Total
Rushey Green	1	1	2	1	5
Deptford	2	2	4	1	9
Lewisham Central	3	3	1	13	20
Bellingham	6	10	13	1	30
Brockley	4	5	14	7	30
Evelyn	7	11	10	5	33
Hither Green	13	6	9	7	35
Sydenham	5	12	12	9	38
Downham	10	8	8	13	39
Catford South	8	9	5	18	40
Ladywell	17	7	11	5	40
Blackheath	9	4	18	13	44
Crofton Park	14	19	3	11	47
Forest Hill	12	18	6	11	47
Grove Park	18	17	15	4	54
Perry Vale	11	16	17	10	54
New Cross Gate	19	14	7	18	58
Lee Green	16	15	16	13	60
Telegraph Hill	15	13	19	13	60





**Lewisham**