

# Summary of HBC Consultation on Measures to Reduce Pigeon Numbers in Waterlooville Precinct Area

## Introduction

This is a summary of Havant Borough Council's consultation on measures to reduce pigeon numbers in and around Waterlooville Precinct. Local businesses, residents, visitors and other stakeholders were consulted, from 25<sup>th</sup> September – 31<sup>st</sup> October 2017.

## Background

Local businesses reported a problem with pigeons in the area of Waterlooville Precinct. In response, Havant Borough Council (HBC) created signs advising people not to feed the pigeons and issued a corresponding press release. However, the pigeons remain a problem:

- Pigeons are roosting on balconies facing onto the pedestrian precinct. This prevents residents from using their balconies or opening their French windows.
- Pigeons are roosting above café premises and defaecating on tables and chairs intended for customers' use.
- Pigeon waste, feathers and faeces are being blown and walked into shops in the precinct.

Moreover:

- Pigeon droppings are acidic and cause damage to buildings and machinery, and also to lawns and shrubberies.
- Nest material, droppings and feathers can clog drains and air vents.
- Pigeons carry many diseases, some of which can be transmitted to humans if droppings contaminate food stores, bakeries or canteens. They also carry a mite which causes skin disease, and feather dust can cause allergic alveolitis or 'pigeon fancier's lung'.
- Feral pigeon flocks can harbour Newcastle disease which can be passed to domestic poultry if their feed is contaminated by droppings.

Both the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) and the Pigeon Control Advisory Service (PiCAS) advise reducing available food is key to successfully reducing pigeon numbers. Accordingly, Havant Borough Council is considering further measures to limit the food available to pigeons in the Waterlooville Precinct area:

- Producing leaflets and posters highlighting problems caused by feeding pigeons
- Providing advice on how to feed smaller birds without attracting pigeons
- Introducing a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) making it a criminal offence to feed pigeons in designated areas

## Consultation Objectives

The objectives of the consultation were to:

- Assess the perceived problem with pigeons in this area.
- Understand the extent to which pigeons are having a detrimental effect on the quality of life of different groups locally.
- Give all interested parties the relevant information.
- Engage with relevant stakeholders including residents, business owners, the general public and other relevant bodies and ensure that their views are considered.
- Allow these key groups a say in the possible introduction of measures, including a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO), in Waterlooville Precinct.

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- Seek views on other measures that the Council could take to combat the issues raised.

### Methodology

The HBC Neighbourhood Quality Team agreed the methodology, using which the following groups and bodies were identified as stakeholders and therefore consulted:

- Waterlooville Precinct area businesses
- Waterlooville Precinct area residents
- Waterlooville Precinct area visitors
- Ward councillors
- The chief officer of police and Waterlooville Precinct local policing body
- Liberty (human rights organisation)
- The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)
- The Pigeon Control Advisory Service (PiCAS)

HBC also shared the consultation at a 'Partnership Action Group' meeting, made up of around 30 different partner organisations within Havant, and at the strategic 'Locality Board' again made up of some key organisations HBC work with in Hampshire. HBC encouraged completion of the online survey.

38 businesses completed the business questionnaire and 43 respondents completed the residents/visitors questionnaire. No other, separate, responses were received.

### Key Messages from Consultation with All Groups

- i. There is overall support for all measures proposed.
- ii. Resident/visitor support is about the same for leaflets and posters highlighting the problems caused by feeding pigeons and for a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) making it an offence to feed pigeons in designated areas.
- iii. Business support is strongest for a PSPO and even so is still overall slightly stronger than resident/visitor support for leaflets and posters as above.
- iv. Support is not as strong from businesses or residents/visitors for providing advice on feeding smaller birds without attracting pigeons. This may be because of concern that problems would be reproduced with the smaller birds. Consideration should therefore perhaps be given to not implementing this as the first option.
- v. All measures have those who strongly agree and those who strongly disagree.
- vi. As there are polarised opinions, posters saying 'Do not feed the pigeons' have proven ineffectual and some specific information as to when the birds are fed is given in the survey responses, consideration should be given to actively trying to speak with those people who habitually feed the pigeons, if this has not already happened.
- vii. Reducing food litter would reduce the food available to the pigeons.
- viii. Consideration may be given to trying to reduce the number of injured birds and the likely causes of injury – particularly if it is littered glass, as suggested.
- ix. Some respondents indicated that if feeding the pigeons is made an offence, then it needs to be enforced with fines.