

Appendix A –

**HERTFORDSHIRE CONSTABULARY SUPPORT FOR THE RENEWAL OF
PUBLIC SPACE PROTECTION ORDER
ALBERT ROAD SOUTH
ACCESS RESTRICTIONS
AUGUST 2023**



BACKGROUND

For the last 9 years, Watford Night Time Economy (NTE) has benefitted from a Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) under the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014. This is in respect of allowing the police to restrict vehicular access to Albert Road South during the hours of 9pm and 4.40am on Friday, Saturday and Monday evenings.

In December 2014, an application for the PSPO was made as Albert Road South suffered from late night congestion, crowd and traffic management issues all relating to the NTE. This was owing to Watford's vibrant NTE where there was an array of bars, clubs and restaurants. The rationale for the Order was to prevent members of the public from driving into and parking up in Sainsbury's car park, Albert Road South, on the evenings and times identified. These private vehicles attracted revellers to congregate and loiter in the Sainsbury's car park after the bars, clubs and restaurants had closed to continue socialising (See photos in Appendix B). This in turn created difficulty in transforming the town back to its normal state, slowing dispersal and giving rise to ASB, crime and disorder. The presence of these persons and vehicles also created issues in terms of safety and congestion as the main thoroughfare for vehicles was outside the NTE's largest

nightclub where large groups would be leaving the premises in an intoxicated state. As such, a PSPO was granted and has been in place since December 2014. The Order has given police officers the power to prevent non-commercial traffic from entering Albert Road South between the relevant hours.

Hertfordshire Constabulary have policed and enforced this Order by deploying a police officer with a marked police vehicle at the junction of Albert Road South with Beechen Grove. Officers have typically stopped and spoken to the driver of each vehicle approaching the junction regarding their purpose for entering. Generally speaking, only those vehicles entering for commercial purposes have been allowed to enter (business deliveries, licensed taxis and private hire vehicles with a pre-booking). All other vehicles have been directed to alternative drop-off and pick-up points.

CURRENT SITUATION

The current PSPO is due to expire. Watford Town Centre continues to have a vibrant NTE that attracts visitors from surrounding towns and London Boroughs. The order still provides an important NTE management tool and prevents vehicle related ASB and after hours gathering in the town centre as well as illegal plying for hire.

The powers granted under the current PSPO have allowed the police to successfully prevent the congregation of groups and vehicles in the Sainsbury's car park as well as along Albert Road South. This in turn has enabled the police to quickly disperse people leaving the bars, clubs and restaurants away from the area, without any resulting public order impact or challenge.

The current Order is believed to have contributed to a reduction in violent crime and disorder following the closing of licensed premises in the immediate area and prevents those looking to sexually exploit persons under the influence of alcohol by proffering lifts home from directly outside the night club and bar .

PROPOSAL

The proposal is for the continuation of the current PSPO, with one amendment. Namely, the days of the week to which it applies. The Order will continue to be implemented in the same manner, i.e:

- The road closure will be implemented at the junction of Albert Road South and Beechen Grove.
- The drivers of vehicles attempting to enter Albert Road South will be spoken to, in order to establish the purpose of their visit.

- Access will still be granted to those entering for a commercial/business or residential purpose, excluding those seeking to ply for hire unless they are a licensed Hackney carriage.
- Drivers attempting to enter Albert Road South for a non-commercial/business purpose will be diverted elsewhere.

ENFORCEMENT

The Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act provides police officers with a power to enforce a PSPO by means of fixed penalty or written charge and requisition to Court. Whilst this power would be available to police officers under the proposed PSPO, it is not envisaged that police will need to utilise this power on a regular basis. To date, police have sought cooperation from members of the public attempting to enter Albert Road South as an alternative and this approach has worked without resistance. In the event that the closure is implemented by a Traffic Management company, police on-duty in the town centre (OP CHANSON) will respond to reports of the PSPO being breached and take positive action where necessary.

CHANGE OF DAYS WHEN THE ORDER APPLIES

In recent years, the popularity of the night-time economy on Monday evenings has reduced, alongside the demand Monday evenings place on police resources. Consequently, the road closure has not been implemented on a Monday evening for some time. Where a bank holiday falls on a Monday however, the night-time economy on the preceding Sunday night / into Monday morning however can create as much demand, if not more, as a Friday or Saturday evening. It is therefore requested that the option to implement the closure on Monday's is withdrawn from the PSPO and replaced with the option to implement it on Sunday evenings between the hours of 9pm and 4:40am.

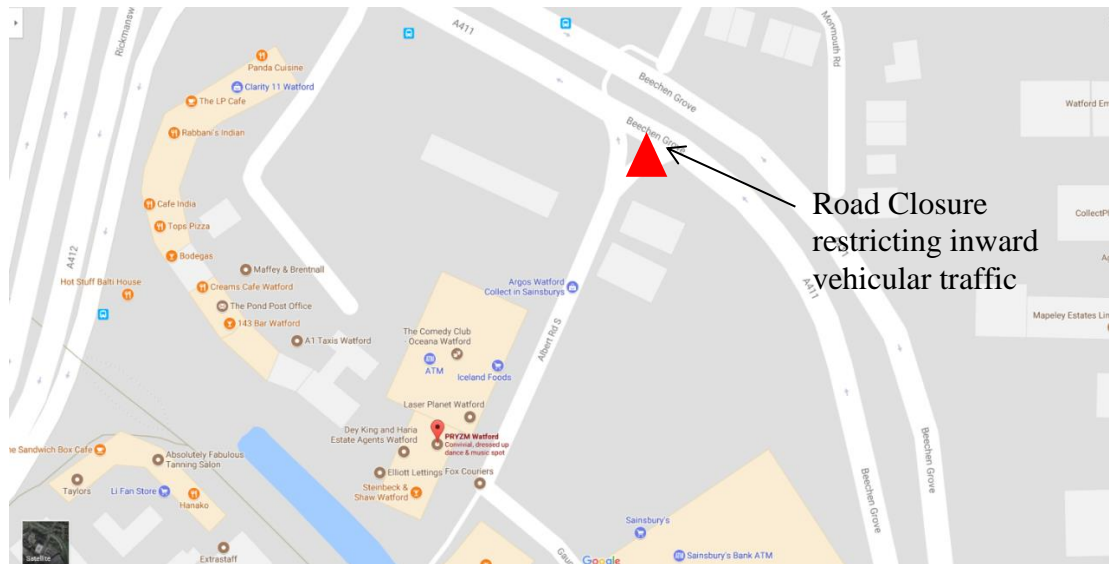
Chief inspector 1710 A. Wiseman

August 2023

a wise man ...

APPENDIX B – Map of the operation area of the PSPO and Photos

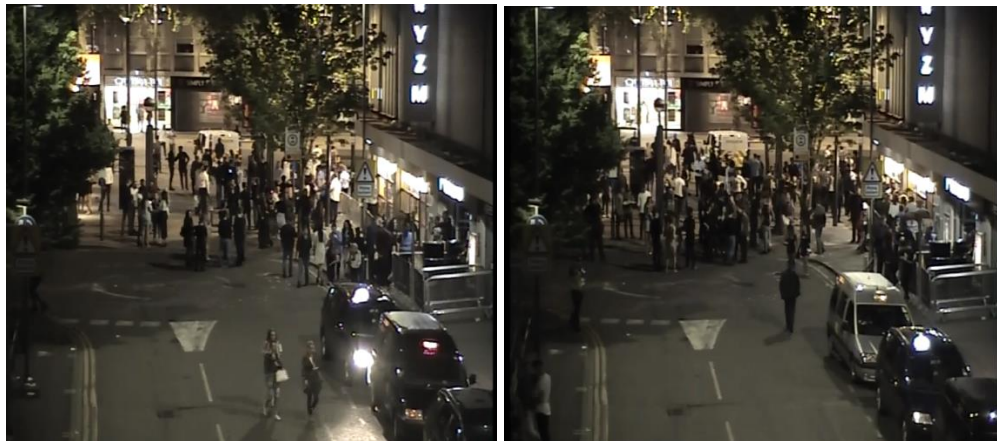
The map below show the location of the road closure on Albert Road South:



Photos

The following photographs give an indication of crowd behaviour outside Pryzm Nightclub on Albert Road South.

The photographs demonstrate the need to restrict vehicular access for safety reasons. Photographs provided by Watford Borough Council CCTV from June 2017 this risk though not current in this volume of person entering the area, it is considered by police to be a likely outcome if the order does not remain in place on a return to a more business as usual Night time economy.



APPENDIX C - Area of the safe zone to which the PSPO links to manage night time economy

