

**Housing and Community
Cohesion Policy Advisory
Committee**

23rd July 2024

**Member Agenda Item Request – Dirt Bikes, Quadbikes, and
Mini-Motorbikes**

Timetable	
Meeting	Date
Housing and Community Cohesion Policy Advisory Committee	23 July 2024

Has this Member Agenda Item Request been submitted urgently?	No
Final Decision-Maker	Cabinet/Cabinet Member for Community Cohesion and Safety
Wards affected	All

Executive Summary

Addressing Nuisance Dirt bikes, Quadbikes, and Mini-Motorbikes in the Borough of Maidstone.

Purpose of Report

To request that an officer report be presented (with the member agenda item request) directly to the Cabinet.

Member Agenda Item Request – Public Space Protection Order

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The irresponsible and unlawful use of dirt bikes, quadbikes, and mini-motorbikes has become a significant concern within the Borough of Maidstone. These vehicles create excessive noise, pose safety risks to pedestrians and other road users, and cause damage to public and private property. Reports indicate an increase in incidents involving reckless driving, stunts on public roads, and inappropriate use in parks and on pavements.
- 1.2 There has been a significant increase in reports from residents in wards including (but not limited to) Parkwood & Mangravet, Boughton Monchelsea & Chart Sutton, Shepway and Senacre of the nuisance, noise, and safety risks posed by associated behaviours, which tend to be more pronounced during Spring and Summer months, but many residents indicate that it is now worse than it has ever been.
- 1.3 Unregulated use of these vehicles can lead to environmental degradation and increased maintenance costs. The noise generated by these vehicles can disturb wildlife and negatively impact local ecosystems. The financial burden of restoring affected areas falls on local authorities and taxpayers.
- 1.4 Dirt bikes and quadbikes disrupt neighbourhoods with their powerful engines, while mini motorbikes, often operated by inexperienced young riders, pose further safety hazards. These activities not only disturb the peace but also endanger lives and compromise the enjoyment of communal spaces.
- 1.5 Existing laws and enforcement measures have proven inadequate in addressing the persistent issue. Police have had some recent successes with seizures, and we commend their work, but as it stands, they are limited in what they can do.
- 1.6 PSPO's cannot be used to replicate offences that are already covered under the law – such as, in this case, the Road Traffic Act 1988 – but rather should target specific behaviours, with the caveat that the local authority is satisfied on reasonable grounds that activities carried on, or likely to be carried on, in a public place are detrimental to the local community's quality of life, and that the impact justifies restrictions being put in place in a particular area.
- 1.7 Motion: This Council resolves to take immediate and decisive action to address the problem of nuisance dirt bikes, quadbikes, and mini motorbikes within the Borough of Maidstone.

The proposed measures are as follows:

1. **On-the-Spot Fines**

- Implement a £100 on-the-spot fine for individuals found engaging in the following specific behaviours with dirt bikes, quadbikes, or mini-motorbikes:
 - Revving engines excessively and creating noise disturbances.
 - Performing stunts or dangerous manoeuvres on public roads.
 - Engaging in reckless riding in prohibited areas, thereby endangering pedestrians.
 - Racing
 - Wheel Spins
 - Burnouts
 - Recording any of the listed activities on any device
 - Congregating to spectate the listed activities.

2. **Parental Responsibility**

In cases where the individual involved is under the age of 18, the fine will be imposed on the parents or legal guardians. This measure is intended to encourage responsible supervision and prevent the misuse of these vehicles by young persons.

3. **Public Awareness Campaign**

Launch a comprehensive public awareness campaign to educate the community about the new regulations and the dangers associated with the misuse of dirt bikes, quadbikes, and mini motorbikes. This campaign will include:

- Information dissemination through local media, social media platforms, and community centres.
- Collaboration with schools to educate children and parents about safe and lawful use of these vehicles.

4. **Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) Signage**

Display PSPO warning signage prominently in hotspot areas to inform the public of the new regulations and the penalties for non-compliance. These signs will specifically target behaviours that disrupt community peace and safety.

5. **Implementation**

The Council directs the appropriate departments to begin the implementation of these measures immediately. Regular updates will be provided to the Council on the progress and effectiveness of these initiatives, with a review scheduled six months from the implementation date to assess the impact and make any necessary adjustments.

6. Conclusion

By adopting these measures, the Council aims to restore peace and safety to our community, ensuring that public spaces within the Borough of Maidstone can be enjoyed by all residents without the disruption and dangers posed by nuisance dirt bikes, quadbikes, and mini motorbikes.

- 1.8 The Housing and Community Cohesion Policy Advisory Committee is asked to discuss the proposed measures to tackle the issue of nuisance dirt bikes, quadbikes, and mini motorbikes within the Borough of Maidstone, as outlined above.

2. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 A report with options based on the discussion by the Housing and Community Cohesion Policy Advisory Committee and any other additional information from officers be taken to the Cabinet.

3. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 3.1 None.
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