

Public Spaces Protection Order Consultation
Noise from Buskers, Street Entertainers & Street Speakers in the
City Centre

This consultation gives people a chance to make their views known over measures to tackle noise nuisance from Buskers, Street Entertainers and Street Speakers in the city centre of Birmingham.

Over the last year Birmingham City Council and West Midlands Police have received an increasing number of complaints from local residents, shoppers, other visitors and businesses about the activities of some individuals and groups, including the use of amplified projected speech by Street Speakers and amplified performances by Buskers and Street Entertainers in the city centre.

In regard to Busking and Street Entertainment, singing or music being played well and at a reasonable and considerate level does enhance city centre life and everyone wants a vibrant city centre. In certain cases, however, the volume of a performance or the number of performers is such that it causes a problem to nearby residents, visitors or businesses.

With regard to Street Speakers it is lawful in principle to preach religious and political beliefs on the streets of Birmingham and to hand out written material. The European Convention of Human Rights and the Human Rights Act 1998 grants an absolute right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. The rights to manifest religious beliefs and to freedom of expression, however, are qualified. This means that they are rights that require a balance to be struck between the rights of the individual and the needs of the wider community or state interest.

The Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 came into force on the 20th October 2014. This allows the City Council to make a Public Spaces Protection Order to tackle a wide range of anti-social behaviour problems linked to noise, alcohol and nuisance dogs, where it appears to the City Council that these activities may be having a detrimental effect to the quality of life of those in the locality.

This consultation welcomes views or comments on the possible introduction of a Public Spaces Protection Order to control excessive noise from Buskers, Street Entertainers and Street Speakers in the City Centre by prohibiting;

1. The use of amplification in the restricted area by Buskers, Street Entertainers and Street Speakers

2. Noise from Buskers, Street Entertainers and Street Speakers that is so loud that it has, or is likely to have a detrimental effect on the quality of life of people in the vicinity of the restricted area.

Thank you for your time, please email your views or comments to Simon Cooper, Environmental Health Officer (simon.cooper@birmingham.gov.uk) or send them by post to Simon Cooper Environmental Health, Regulation & Enforcement, PO Box 16977, Birmingham, B2 2AE to arrive by no later than 22nd June 2015.