

Public Space Protection Order- Lincoln City

Background

Lincoln city has had a public space protection order (PSPO) in place in the city centre since the 1st April 2015. Local authorities have the ability to designate areas as public protection orders if:

(a) activities carried on in a public place within the authority's area have had a detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the locality, or

(b) it is likely that activities will be carried on in a public place within that area and that they will have such an effect.

and

(a) is, or is likely to be, of a persistent or continuing nature,

(b) is, or is likely to be, such as to make the activities unreasonable, and

(c) Justifies the restrictions imposed by the notice.

A PSPO identifies the public place where activities are restricted and the specific activities which are prohibited or what action is to be taken with those involved in the prohibited activity, or both. As part of the order the authority can specify particular circumstances, persons or times that the order applies. The order cannot have effect for a period greater than three years unless it has been extended. This is done prior to the expiry if on reasonable grounds that doing so is necessary to prevent—

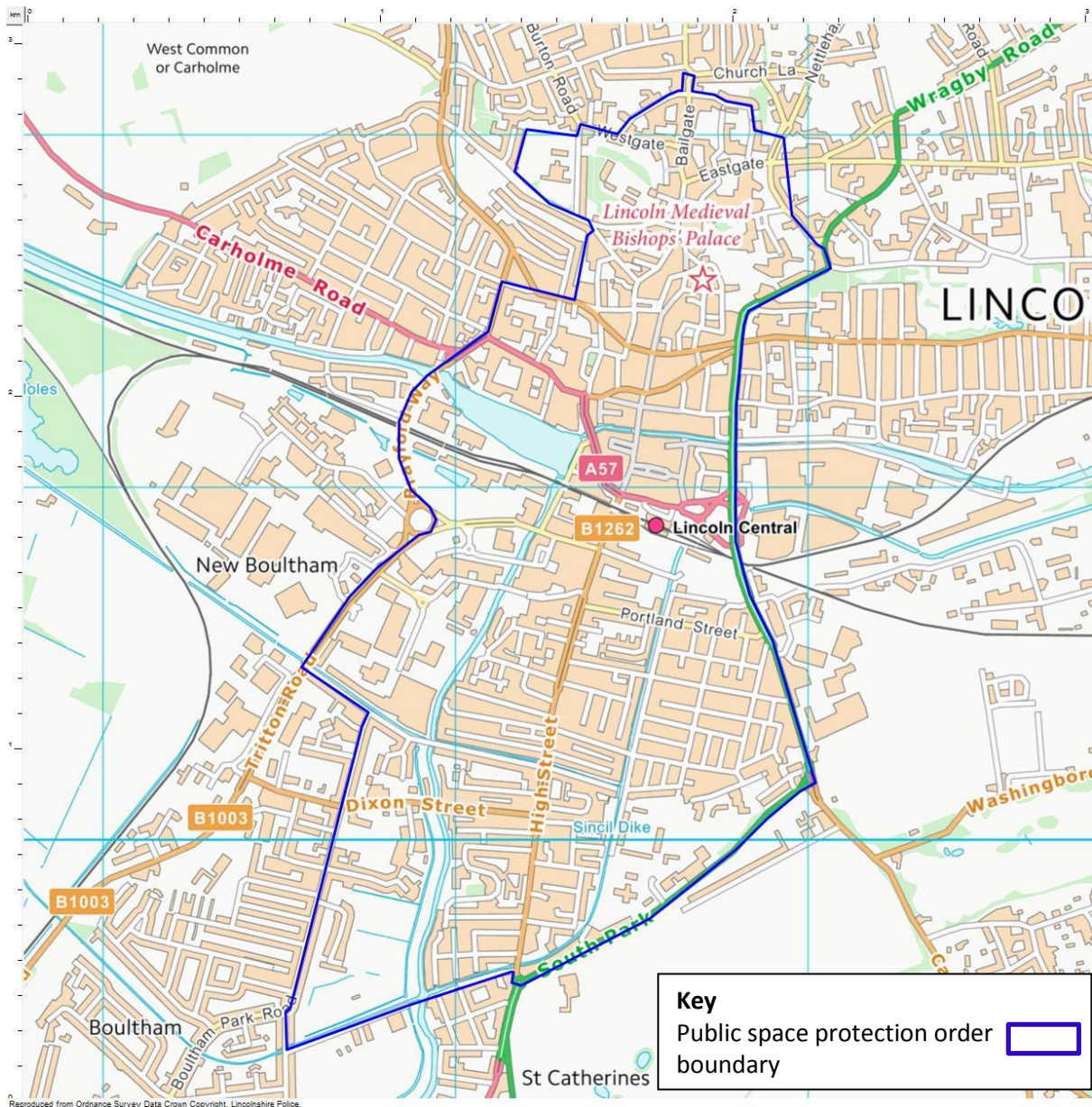
(a) occurrence or recurrence after that time of the activities identified in the order, or

(b) an increase in the frequency or seriousness of those activities after that time.

The order can also be varied if necessary in terms of the activities it prohibits or the area it covers.

The local authority is about to undertake the review to ascertain if the current public space protection order requires extending or amending prior to its expiry after the statutory three years. The current PSPO states that persons within the area will not: ingest, inhale, inject, smoke or otherwise use intoxicating substances. An intoxicating substance is one which has the capacity to stimulate or depress the central nervous system. It includes alcohol and drugs known as legal highs. Persons within this area who breach the order shall surrender the intoxicating substances in their possession to an authorised person.

The current PSPO designated area is shown in map one.



Map 1: Lincoln city's Public Space Protection Order designated area.

Analysis has been requested on behalf of the local authority to aid the assessment of the current PSPO and assist in the determination of whether the order requires extension and/or amendment.

Methodology

The analysis is based on the policing areas known as NC13, NC14, NC15 and NC16 which all include part of the PSPO area. These areas will be used for the extraction of data using the Business Objects software from the Force's crime and incident recording systems for the period 1st April 2014 to the 31st December 2017. The data has then been filtered using the Northgate XD mapping software to extract those incidents and offences which occurred inside the designated area as shown in map 1.

Incidents and crimes were extracted based on the following criteria:

1. The incident was closed as street drinking.
2. The incident was closed as begging/vagrancy.
3. All incidents which include the term 'legal high' in the initial information provided by the caller or in the incident log
4. The incident included begging or homeless in the information provided by the caller or within the incident log
5. The incident included legal high or psychoactive in the incident log.

Due to time constraints and the volume of incidents individual incidents were not read or assessed individually. However Excel functions were used to identify incidents of begging which included 'bottle', 'drinking' 'drugs' or 'mamba'.

Results and Observations

The number of incidents in the NC13, NC14, NC15 and NC16 beat areas has decreased from 14,397 incidents in 2014/2015 to 13,605 incidents in 2016/17. During this period street drinking has fluctuated but an overall decrease from 52 incidents to 34 occurred in 2016/17 and 23 incidents in the first nine months of 2017/2018. A similar decrease has also been recorded for street drinking in the PSPO area falling from 46 to 27 incidents. In contrast the number of begging and vagrancy incidents decreased overall from 2014/2015 to 2016/2017 but in the last nine months has dramatically increased recording over 50% more incidents in the last nine months than in the whole of 2016/17. This is mirrored in the PSPO are as well as the city centre.

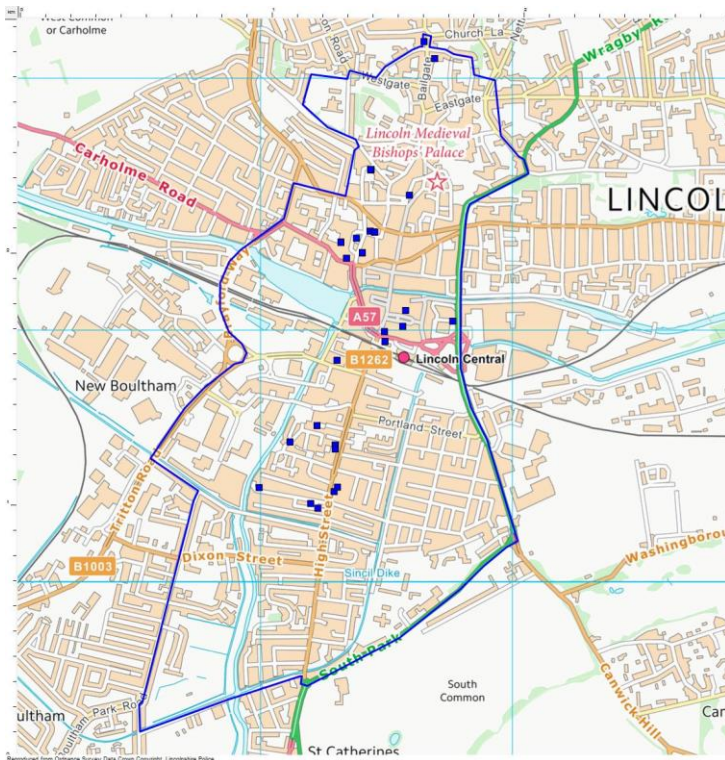
There is anecdotally thought to be a high level of street drinking and illegal high usage amongst those reported or seen on the street and a search of incidents containing any of the following: 'bottle', 'drinking' 'drugs' or 'mamba' in the source supplied information identified that this was the case. This is also shown in table one.

Incidents from 01/04/2014 to 31/12/2017	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017	Grand Total
ASB- begging and vagrancy (PSPO)	206	211	165	390	972
ASB- begging and vagrancy (PSPO) drink/drugs	22	21	11	26	80
Percentage of ASB begging and vagrancy drink/drugs	10.7	10.0	6.7	6.7	8.2
ASB- street drinking (PSPO)	46	54	27	21	148

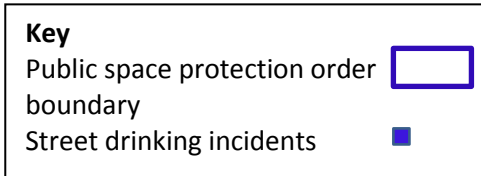
Table one: The number of incidents of ASB begging and vagrancy and street drinking in Lincoln city centre.

The table highlights the overall reduction from 2014/15 to 2016/17 however there was a rise in incidents of street drinking in the first year of the PSPO. It is unclear whether this increase is due to the greater awareness of persons that this is unacceptable and reporting incidents, whether a more proactive approach was undertaken or whether this was part of an ongoing increasing trend. Conversely the reductions seen in the second year of the order cannot be adequately evaluated as to

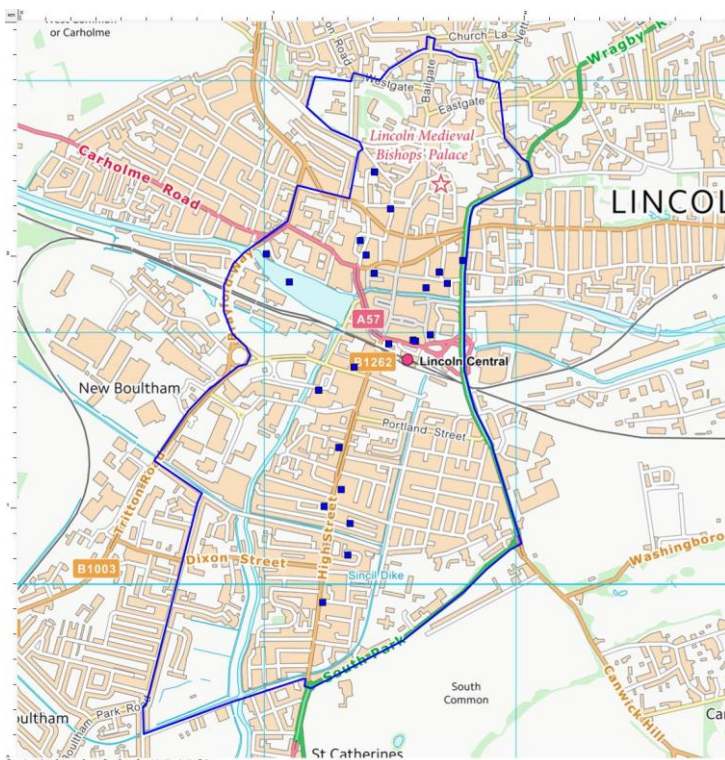
the cause which could be due to offenders being aware that their alcohol will be seized and move on when sighting police officers; the enthusiasm for enforcing the order has wavered; lack of officers to enforce the order or an actual decrease has occurred.



Map two: Map showing the locations of all street drinking incidents from 1st April 2014 to 31st March 2015.

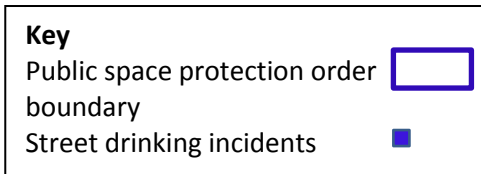


Map two shows that street drinking prior to the implementation of the designated PSPO area had four focal points: Bailgate, High Street/Cornhill, East of the Lower High Street and the Beaumont Fee area.





Map three: Map showing the locations of all street drinking incidents from 1st April 2016 to 31st March 2017.

Map three shows that the spread of street drinking incidents has a greater geographical spread two years after the implementation of the PSPO with offences remaining focused along the lower High Street and across the city centre.



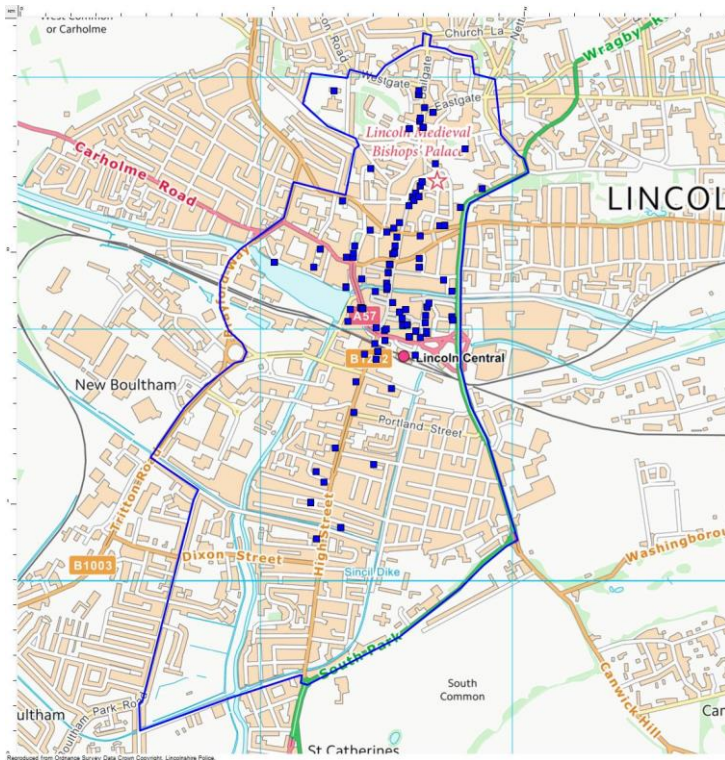


Map four: Map showing the locations of all street drinking incidents from 1st April 2017 to 31st December 2017.



Key	
Public space protection order boundary	
Street drinking incidents	

The location of street drinking offences in the last nine months has continued around the lower High Street and the central area bounded by the A57, West Parade and Broadgate. The overall spread of these offences considered alongside those since the implementation of the order suggests that the designated area could be reduced and extend only as far as Boultham Road and bounded on the east and west by the two drains.

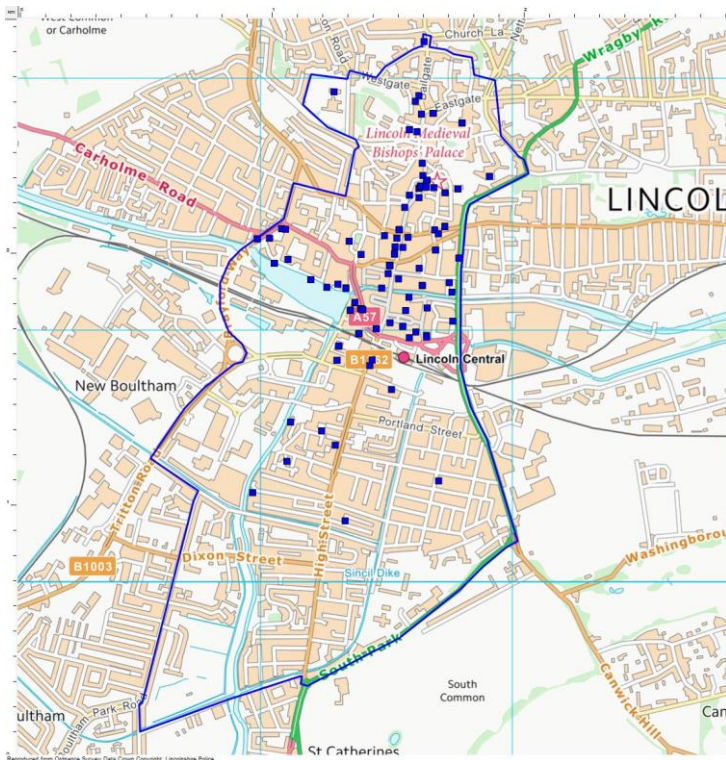
Begging and vagrancy has a similar underlying geographical distribution and this is shown in maps five to seven.



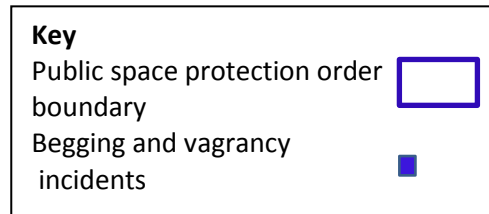
Map five: Map showing the locations of all begging and vagrancy incidents from 1st April 2014 to 31st March 2015 (206 incidents).

Key	
Public space protection order boundary	
Begging and vagrancy incidents	

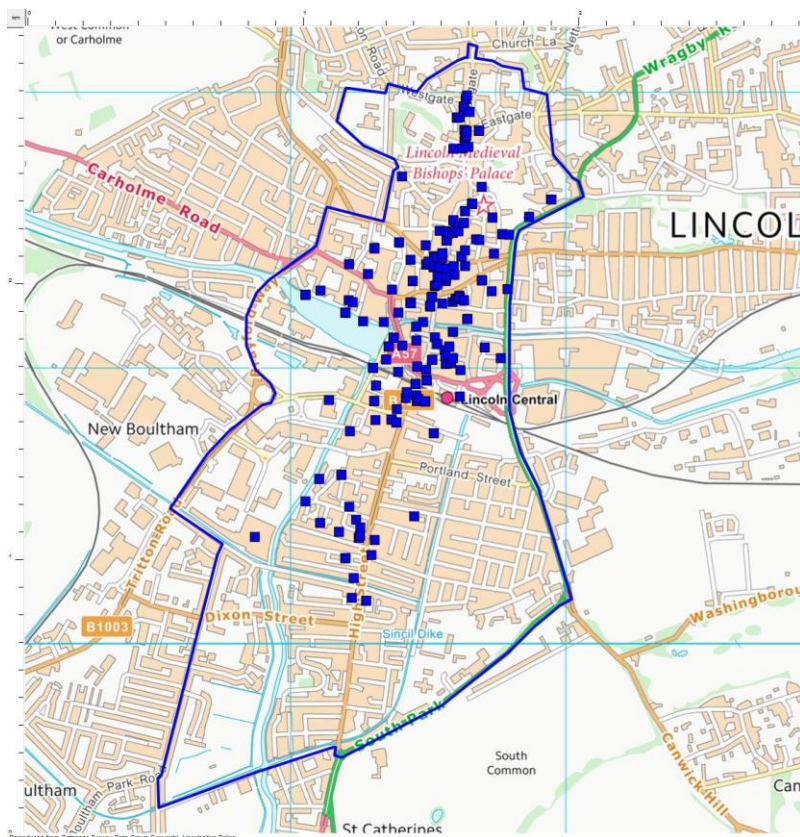
The incidents shown in map five are more widespread across the PSPO and are particularly concentrated on the Bailgate and in the city centre High Street area. Arterial routes from the city centre are also featuring.



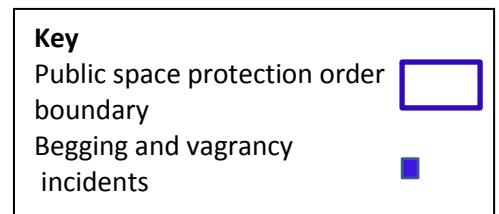
Map six: Map showing the locations of all begging and vagrancy incidents from 1st April 2016 to 31st March 2017 (165 incidents)



Map six shows the distribution of incidents in the second year following the introduction of the PSPO. The geographical spread is very similar to that in map four prior to the area being designated a PSPO area.



Map seven: Map showing the locations of all begging and vagrancy incidents from 1st April 2017 to 31st December 2017 (390 incidents)



Map six shows the last nine months of begging and vagrancy incidents including where the caller has indicated that those involved are using drink or drugs. There is very little change in the distribution of the incidents from the previous year but the number of incidents is more than double the twelve months April 2016 to March 2017.

If begging and vagrancy incidents were considered in the revised PSPO due to the link between drinking and drug use of those involved the designated area required would be consistent with street drinking and would also not be affected by reducing the area as described above for street drinking.

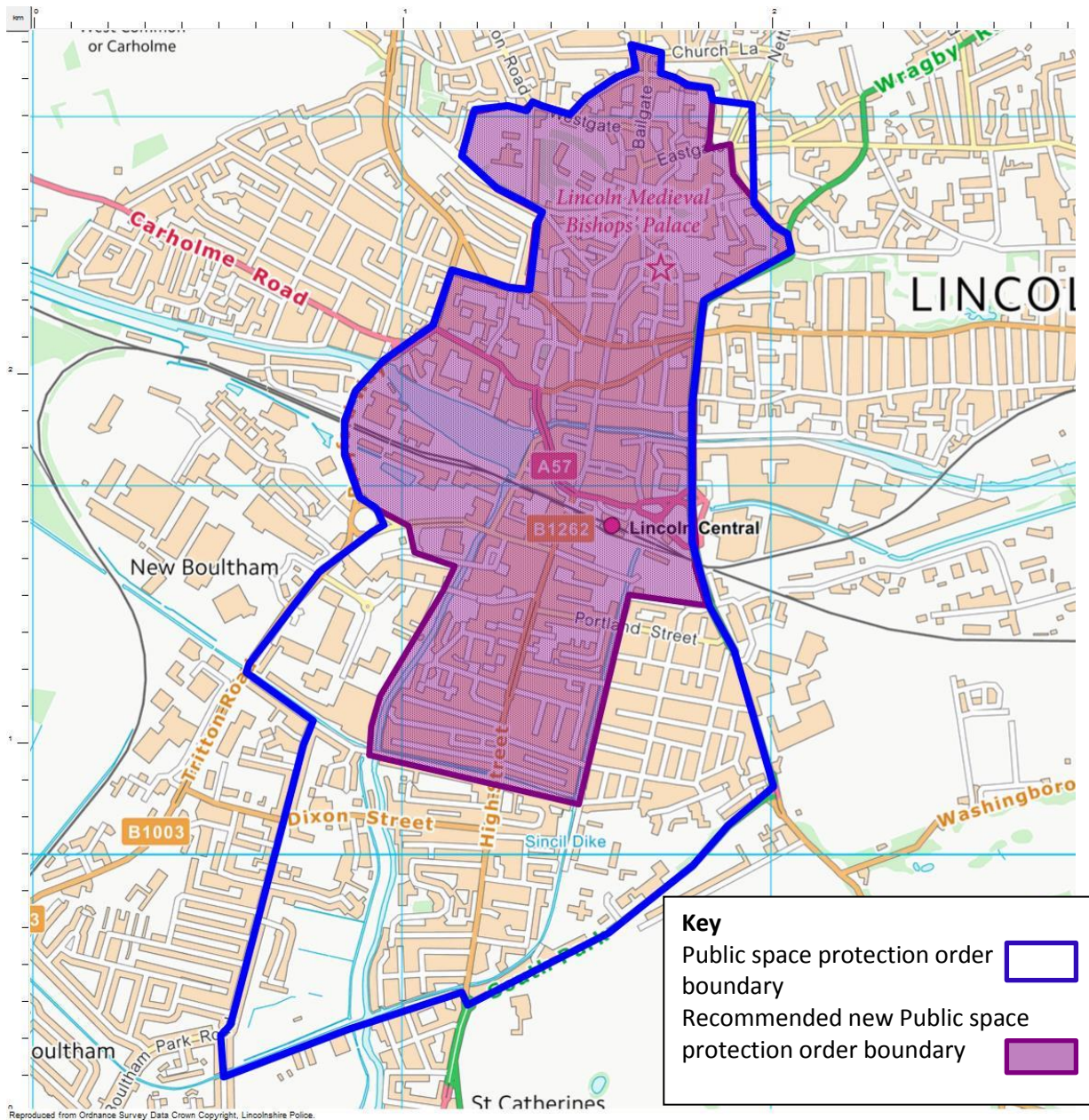
Incidents extracted for the period 1st April 2014 to 31st December 2017 which include the term 'legal high' in the initial information provided by the caller or in the incident log for the beat areas NC/13, NC/14, NC/15 and NC/16 record a reduction from 29 in 2014/15 to 11 in 2016/17. Unfortunately there will be an increase this year as there were already 13 recorded incidents as at 31st December 2017. These incidents include use of the substance and dealing on the street to stating persons are using it within a property. Incidents are classified as begging, concern for safety, drugs and suspicious circumstances among others. A query of the data to identify those incidents which contain the key words "Legal High" or "Psychoactive" in the log entry of all incidents in NC13/NC14/NC15 and NC16 was completed. It identified that of 1077 incidents meeting these criteria there were 22 with the classification of ASB- begging and vagrancy which is not apparent from the source supplied information. There are a further 204 incidents recorded as suspicious circumstances which were identified using this criteria.

Unfortunately time constraints prohibit further analysis on these two searches to extract those relevant to the PSPO. It is however recommended that future analysis is planned to understand the broader issues surrounding the use of illegal highs and whether the impact is significant in its own right or should be considered as part of the begging and vagrancy issue. The perception of people living and visiting the city is negatively impacted by the number of beggars and vagrants within the city and their perceived link to street drinking and drug use. This is also confounded by the use of those who are seen about the city under the influence of illegal highs is a 'zombie' like state. Establishing an accurate picture of the impact of both these issues is problematic due to the numerous ways they can be categorised or reported to the police or other agencies. It is recommended that begging and vagrancy be included in a revised PSPO post April 2018. It is also recommended that the evaluation of any new PSPO be considered and planned during the implementation process.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The data for street drinking for the PSPO shows a reduction in recorded incidents over the three year period.

The spread of the incidents does not cover the entire geographical area of the designated area and it is recommended that this be amended as shown in map eight.



Map eight: Current PSPO area and recommended new area.

Street drinking and the taking of illegal highs is interwoven with begging and vagrancy and the public perception of both. The incidents of begging have increased dramatically over the last nine months and it is recommended that this be included in the new PSPO.

Evaluation of the success of the current PSPO is problematic and although reductions have been seen the reason for this can not be identified. It is recommended that evaluation procedures are planned and implemented as part of the new PSPO proposals.

The prevalence of illegal highs on the city centre streets is difficult to assess and it is recommended that research around the use of illegal highs, drugs and alcohol and the associated links to begging and other antisocial behaviour be analysed in depth.