



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Councillor Chris Sadler
Leader of the Council
Elmbridge Borough Council
Civic Centre, Esher
KT10 9SD.

13 March 2023

Dear Councillor Sadler,

Re: Public Spaces Protection Order

I am writing in response to Elmbridge Borough Council's (EBC) consultation on a new Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) for local green spaces. I write in my capacity as Member of Parliament for Esher and Walton constituency.

I have been campaigning for a permanent solution to the removal of illegal moorings from Elmbridge since 2016.

In February 2023, I launched a constituency-wide survey to seek the views of Molesey and Walton-on-Thames residents on the creation of a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) in Elmbridge to tackle illegal moorings. Through 09 February – 09 March 2023, 854 constituents responded to my survey.

The results of this survey are as follows:

- 98% of residents (839) support action to remove the illegal moorings.
- 77% of residents (659) feel that the boats have detrimentally impacted their quality of life.
- 61% of residents (522) raised concerns about antisocial behaviour associated with the boats.
- 92% of residents (789) raised concerns about the disposal of refuse and sewage from the boats.
- 51% of residents (437) believe that the boats pose a significant fire risk.
- 87% of residents (741) are worried about environmental damage caused by the boats.
- 93% of residents (790) consider the boats to be an eyesore.

I will be publishing a full breakdown of the responses in due course.

There is a clear strength of feeling amongst Elmbridge residents that the illegal moorings have detrimentally impacted their quality of life. The majority of respondents noted concerns about antisocial behaviour, pollution and waste, associated with the moorings.

Over 400 residents wrote about further issues outside the scope of the survey. Several constituents reported that they no longer walk along the towpath as a result of the moorings.

Some reported that they find the presence of the boats to be “intimidating”; others spoke of

“land grabbing” by boat dwellers, who fence off public land for their own, private purposes. Proving that antisocial behaviour has had a “detrimental effect on quality of life” [\[1\]](#) is one of the key tests in assessing whether a PSPO is the right course of action, according to EBC’s own enforcement guidelines.

The Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 requires a local authority to be satisfied that the activities it seeks to target with a PSPO are detrimental to the local community’s quality of life, and that this impact justifies restrictions being put in place. The behaviour must also be ongoing and unreasonable.[\[2\]](#)

I believe that the overall account provided by my constituents goes some way to meeting these tests.

The appropriate enforcement action must now be undertaken by EBC to permanently remove the boats from council-owned land. It will be the lead responsibility of EBC to enforce the PSPO.

Following this, I would be grateful if you could please include the views of the 854 Elmbridge residents who responded to my survey in your decision making.

I will be writing back to my constituents to inform them of the action you decide to take. I look forward to hearing from you in due course.

Yours sincerely,



Dominic Raab MP

[\[1\]](#) EBC PSPO enforcement policy, 13 February 2018. Archived.

[\[2\]](#) Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, Part 4, Chapter 2: Public spaces protection orders. [Link](#).