Introduction

Following approval from the General Purposes Committee the draft byelaw for Good Rule & Government went out to public consultation on 13 May 2010 until 5 August 2010 allowing twelve weeks.

All NBC Councillors were sent a copy of the byelaw and questionnaire and the general public were encouraged to participate in the consultation by:-

- Press releases including notice in Herald and Post 13 May 2010.
- Display in One Stop Shop for the duration of the consultation with copies of the byelaw and questionnaire available.
- On the consultation pages of the website (link from the home page for the first 8 weeks).
- Awareness raising at all NBC led public meetings during the consultation period.
- email to local groups and forums
- Posted on Youth Forum’s Facebook page
- Stand on Market Square during Communities Information Day on 14 July 2010.

Public Consultation Stage

150 completed questionnaires were received from residents, local businesses, Residents Associations and visitors to the town. A summary of the responses received appears below. Most of the respondents who were in agreement with the byelaws did not leave comments.

1. **Prohibit skateboarding in the following locations:-**

   - Abington Street  56.7% in favour
   - Fish Street  60% in favour
   - Market Square  57.3% in favour
   - All Saints area  56.7%
   - Outside the front of the Guildhall  58%
     (including entrance ramp to car park)

Comments

- Everyone I know who skateboards is very careful not to cause annoyance or danger to those near by and will usually step to one side to let any pedestrians pass.
- I think that the rulings on skateboarding are un-needed and over the top. The rest seem a good idea.
- I am 34 and use skateboarding as a sport, transport and fitness. I would like to see a skatepark built for the old and young generation which would then solve the problem of antisocial skating
• I do not believe that skateboarding should be restricted anywhere unless there is a provision of a proper skate park to provide a venue
• These areas are not always that crowded. There should be more awareness raised among skaters when/where it is appropriate to skate or not. There could be a time bound ban for example on Abington St and Fish St between 10am and 4pm Saturday when the streets are the busiest
• Skateboarding should not be banned until a skatepark(s) is provided. We should encourage young people to exercise and be healthy. Skateboarding is better for youngsters than hanging around outside causing trouble.
• there must be better places than that to skateboard, but perhaps it would be OK out of busy times.
• If you would build us somewhere to go we would not go to any of these places
• Because they are all the skate spots in Northampton centre and getting to skateparks outside Northampton costs money. Skateboarding stops us from getting into other trouble like drugs etc. so why ban something we both enjoy and take seriously. Also definitely if we had a skatepark in the centre of Northampton then it would not be a problem for both of us but where as the problem stands it seems like the council are using the money on other things which would be less important. That is why I have stated these questions as 'no' because it is a hobby teenagers and even men enjoy. It will also affect the market of skateboarding and BMX products.
• As the young people who skateboard in these areas have no other alternative facilities to use. When there is adequate facilities for them ask me again.
• Because we don't do no harm give us a skatepark and we won't ride or skate in town SIMPLE!
• Where else can kids go? It is not fair to ban their fun. It does not irritate the general public.
• I am a skateboarder and not an idiot, skateboarding on Abington St and Fish St is not a good idea it is far too busy. The skateboarders in the town who have a real passion for the sport will not skate in these places. The market square should be taken in moderation such as the Northampton game of skate - people stopped to watch us skate. To me it is obvious that NBC would rather provide the town with ugly, tacky water features, statues that look worse than modern art than to provide a skatepark for the town.
• If Abington Street is not very busy such activities might not cause any problems - should use some discretion.
• The town centre should be for the enjoyment of all people, including skateboarders, while some places pose hazards for pedestrians the area around All Saints is large, open and not used generally by shoppers.
• All Saints is a separate area within which skateboarding will cause no nuisance or obstruction to ordinary people's passage along pathways.

Conclusions

Just over 50% of the respondents agree with the proposed areas. A large proportion of those who disagree do so because there is no dedicated resource within the town centre. It is not just a case of young people being against and older people for, it is fairly evenly distributed across the age ranges. Various arguments are put forward to defend each area with a small proportion being
against any kind of restrictions and threat to take up various types of anti social behaviour instead.

2. To prohibit dangerous or nuisance skateboarding on footpaths and roads

![Pie chart showing 70.7% agree and 29% disagree]

**Comments**
- It is about time - I think people should be able to walk about these places safely.
- Skateboarding that is dangerous and done in such a manner as to cause injury should be addressed, however providing dedicated resources to enable to sport to continue in a safe environment should be a priority if these byelaws are to be enforced. Removing the ability to practice skateboarding through introducing the byelaws will not dissuade the participants from practicing, it will simply move it to other areas. Allowing certain areas of the town to be used for this sport during designated times would be preferable if the resources are not available for a dedicated centre. This should be done in conjunction with the young people that currently use the areas in this way to establish the best way forward.
- because there are more than just the people who want to do these things, you have to think of the wider community.
- At the present time due to there being no skatepark or proper facility to use, I feel it is unfair that a harmless hobby will now be prohibited on the streets of Northampton.
- I do not believe that skateboarding is a nuisance to pedestrians.

**Conclusions**

Most agree with this byelaw. Those who don’t are, in the main, those who disagree with any kind of restrictions. Cycling on pavements, which is outside the scope of the byelaw, comes up as a priority with a high proportion of the general public.
3. Fairground attractions causing obstruction to traffic 76.7%

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Fair ground Attractions</th>
<th>Agree 77%</th>
<th>Disagree 23%</th>
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Some concerns were raised that this would prevent any fairs coming to Northampton. This is not the case. For organised events, for example where another power is used to close the road, byelaws would not come into effect.

4. Dangerous games near highways or to the annoyance of local residents 86.7%

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dangerous Games</th>
<th>Agree 87%</th>
<th>Disagree 13%</th>
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Some people feel that this will prevent children from having any exercise. However, it is proposed that this bylaw will only be enforced for persistent offenders (i.e., kicking a ball against someone else’s house and refusing to stop when asked).

5. Touting 87.3%

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Touting</th>
<th>Agree 87%</th>
<th>Disagree 13%</th>
</tr>
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Comments

- I hope you will consider including charity collectors in the proposed byelaw. They are a far greater public annoyance than any trades people.
- Touts should be made to respect the word no but not be barred from promoting whatever their agenda.

On the whole this byelaw has been well received, most people having been approached by touters in Abington Street who will not take no for an answer.

6. Urinating 87.3%

Comments

- Urinating is especially important - Holy Sepulchre Church walls, including near entrance door are often abused in this way.
- Adequate toilet facilities need to be provided.
- The town needs more clean safe and free toilets. Abington Park toilets are dark and dirty.
- If the council has not provided enough or even any suitable public toilets then some amount of public urination is unavoidable.
- There are circumstances, with a dwindling quality and quantity of freely available public toilets, it may be required, specifically in the case of small children in the process of potty training that when they need to go they need to go quickly and cannot hold on and may need to use a potty in a public location or in an emergency may need to use a bush or secluded spot for privacy. It would be sensible to have an age limit such as up to school age or under 5 in order to allow the natural process of potty training to happen without prosecution.
- The Council is gradually closing all toilets so eventually there will be nowhere to go.
- The lack of provision of toilet facilities in the town will mean that people, especially children, will be unable to use proper facilities at times.

Concern has been raised that parents of small children may be criminalised if they should have an 'accident' especially with closure of most of the public toilets. However, the main offenders are those who leave licensed premises on Friday and Saturday nights without using the perfectly adequate facilities.
7. Interference with road warning equipment 94.7%

Interference with Road Warning Equipment

- Agree: 95%
- Disagree: 5%

8. Interference with life saving equipment 96%

Interference with Life Saving Equipment

- Agree: 96%
- Disagree: 4%