

**Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO): Personal Watercraft (PWC)
Behaviour in Coastal Waters, Estuaries and Rivers
Colchester City Council**

1. Introduction

Colchester City Council (“the Authority”), being satisfied on reasonable grounds that activities carried out in the coastal waters, estuaries and rivers within the designated area have had, or are likely to have, a detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the locality, and that such activities are persistent, unreasonable, or likely to continue, hereby makes the following Public Spaces Protection Order under section 59 of the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

This Order applies to public coastal waters, estuaries, rivers, launching sites and associated foreshore areas within the boundary identified in Schedule 1.

The Order regulates dangerous, reckless and anti-social use of Personal Watercraft (PWC) while allowing lawful and responsible recreational use of public waters.

2. Definitions

For the purposes of this Order:

“Personal Watercraft (PWC)” means a mechanically propelled waterborne craft designed to be operated by a person or persons sitting, standing or kneeling on the craft rather than within it, and commonly known as a jet ski.

This Order does not apply to sailing vessels; rowing boats, kayaks or canoes; windsurfing or kitesurfing equipment; inflatable dinghies or yacht tenders used solely to access a moored vessel; or vessels used for emergencies, rescue, training or enforcement purposes.

“Designated Area” means the coastal waters, estuaries and rivers identified in Schedule 1.

“Authorised Officer” means a police officer, police community support officer, or any person authorised in writing by the Council for the purposes of enforcing this Order, including officers of partner agencies formally authorised by the Council.

3. Prohibited Activities

3.1 Speeding and Wake

A person must not operate a Personal Watercraft at a speed exceeding 4 knots over the ground within 300 metres of the shoreline, unless otherwise indicated by signage or buoyage.

For the purposes of this Order, “shoreline” means the waterline at the relevant state of tide.

A person must not operate a Personal Watercraft in a manner that creates excessive wash, endangers other water users, or causes avoidable disturbance to wildlife or residents.

3.2 Reckless or Anti-Social Operation

A person must not operate a Personal Watercraft in a manner that endangers others, involves racing, circling, wake-jumping or aggressive manoeuvres close to swimmers, moorings or vessels, deliberately sprays or harasses persons or wildlife, operates within restricted bathing zones, or continues behaviour which an Authorised Officer has reasonably instructed must cease.

3.3 Illegal or Obstructive Mooring

A person must not moor or secure a Personal Watercraft to navigation markers, buoys, or structures in a manner that causes obstruction, danger to navigation, or interferes with their intended purpose. This does not apply to temporary or reasonable mooring undertaken for safety, emergency, or operational purposes, including assistance to other vessels

3.4 Littering and Environmental Damage

A person must not deposit litter, discharge fuel or pollutants, or cause avoidable disturbance to protected habitats, breeding sites or wildlife zones.

4. Requirements (Positive Obligations)

Any person operating a Personal Watercraft within the Designated Area must comply with navigational signage, speed markers and instructions issued by an Authorised Officer, Harbour Authority or Police.

A person operating a Personal Watercraft must provide their name and address when reasonably required by an Authorised Officer and must produce evidence of valid insurance where such a requirement applies under this Order.

5. Exemptions

This Order does not apply to emergency services, or to Bonafide rescue, safety, or training activities undertaken by recognised organisations, including sailing clubs, where such activities are conducted in a safe and reasonable manner. Pre-approved event permits apply only to organised commercial or large-scale events where required by the Authority.

6. Offences and Penalties

A person who breaches this Order commits an offence and may be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 3 on the standard scale or may be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Authorised Officers may direct individuals to cease prohibited activity, leave the area, or provide details reasonably required for enforcement purposes.

7. Duration of the Order

This Order shall come into effect on 17th July 2026 and shall remain in force for a period of three years unless reviewed, varied or discharged in accordance with statutory requirements.

Signed: Andrew Tyrrell



by Authority of Colchester City Council under section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972

Schedule 1 – Designated Area Map



Written boundary description

The Designated Area includes all public coastal, tidal, estuarine and river waters within Colchester City Council's administrative area that are open to public use and capable of use by Personal Watercraft. This includes the River Colne, Colne Estuary, approaches to Wivenhoe, Rowhedge, Fingringhoe, Brightlingsea and Mersea Island, Brightlingsea Creek, Pyefleet Channel, Roman River, Salary Brook, Bourne Brook, connected creeks and watercourses shown on the Schedule 1 map, and adjoining waters, foreshore, intertidal areas, slipways, launching sites, recovery points and access areas within 300 metres of the shoreline.

Signed: Andrew Tyrrell

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