

# **COMMUNITY AND SAFER CITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

## **ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR REVIEW – POLYCARBONATE GLASSES**

### **LINK TO WORK PROGRAMME:POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND REVIEW**

**REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

**7 JULY 2009**

#### **1.0 Purpose**

- 1.1 The Safer Sunderland Partnership has included within its strategic priorities for 09/10 reducing alcohol misuse and the harm it causes, including alcohol related crime. As part of its delivery plan it has put in place a number of interventions to address this, one of which has been the introduction of a polycarbonate glasses pilot scheme. The pilot initiative began in Sunderland city centre from September 2008 and was introduced to ensure a safer city centre by reducing the chance of injuries by glass.

This initiative was part funded by the Safer Sunderland Partnership and has now concluded.

This purpose of this report is to:

- (a) Provide feedback and analysis from the pilot initiative for discussion
- (b) Seek support to expand this initiative throughout the City

#### **2.0 Background**

- 2.1 City Centre Management provided the lead for this 5 month pilot city centre initiative, in partnership with the Safer Sunderland Partnership, Northumbria Police and the City Council's licensing section. The pilot involved the purchase of nearly 20,000 super-strength plastic safety glasses which would be tested in five city centre venues

The polycarbonate drinking vessels provide the modern equivalent to glasses. They are made from the same sort of plastic used in crash helmets and can take the weight of a small car without breaking and show only a slightly squashed appearance. This greatly reduces the chance of injuries caused by accidents with glass. In busy bars and clubs, glasses can and do get knocked over or chipped so this virtually unbreakable and shatter-proof plastic means the chances of accidental injuries are greatly reduced.

The new drink ware also help to keep drinks cool and are 100 per cent recyclable.

Although drunken disputes involving glass were rare in the city centre the Police were keen to support this pilot initiative because it helps to keep the city safe and prevents serious injury when the small number of disputes result in violence.

It was hoped that the bars and clubs would also make longer term savings by switching to the polycarbonate glasses as it was anticipated that the number of breakages would reduce because the glasses last up to four times longer.

2.2 Five premises took part in the pilot: These premises were:

- The Point's Union Bar,
- The Glass Spider,
- Liquid
- Passion and
- Blu Bamboo

The premises were approached to be part of the pilot scheme as they were some of the largest bars and clubs in the city centre and tended to have the latest operating hours

2.3 The initiative cost in the region of £12k including analysis on the outcomes and the costs were shared on a 50 – 50 basis between the individual premises and the Safer Sunderland Partnership.

### **3.0 Pilot Feedback and Analysis**

3.1 With the conclusion of the pilot phase of this initiative some research and analysis has been undertaken to determine the success or otherwise of the scheme and its benefits. This research and statistical analysis has been undertaken with consumers, the licensees and the Police.

3.2 A questionnaire survey was carried out at the end of January with consumers and indications are that the project has gone very well. Over 186 people were interviewed at a range of locations concentrating in and around the 5 pilot premises but also including non participating premises. There has been overwhelming support for the scheme from the public. Some of the key findings are that:

- Over half of the people interviewed (103 people) said they were already aware of the scheme in Sunderland. Of these, 85% said the scheme made them feel safer.
- 85% of those who hadn't heard of the scheme thought it was a good idea (with only 2 people thinking it was a bad idea)
- 86% (160 people) said it wouldn't bother them to drink out of a polycarbonate glass and around the same number said there would not be any circumstance where they would refuse a polycarbonate glass.

3.3 The public have said they like the scheme because there are less risks of standing on broken glass and less risk of people being glassed. The majority think the scheme is a great idea that will make drinking much safer.

3.4 Feedback from the licensees also indicates that the scheme has worked really well with at least one of the licensees quoting "I think it's a fantastic idea and crime and disorder has totally dropped for the company, such schemes as these make you realise the power of plastic. Take away the problem and a solution will occur the cure."

3.5 Included within the main findings were:

- All of the participating premises determined staff and customers felt safer with the use of polycarbonate glasses
- All of the participating premises noticed a significant reduction in breakages and related injuries – saving a minimum of £300 per month per venue and at least one venue reduced breakages by 100% by implementing a fully polycarbonate drink ware policy

- All of the participating premises reported that that they were unaware of any customers refusing to use polycarbonate glasses
- All of the participating premises reported noticing differences in the pubs where the pilot scheme was running – these differences included spillages and glass on the floor was virtually absent, and incidents and injuries were reduced
- 3 of the 5 participating premises are looking to expand their range of polycarbonate glasses
- All of the participating premises will continue to use the polycarbonate glasses in their premises and would recommend polycarbonate glasses to another licensee.

## **4.0 Impact**

- 4.1 Northumbria Police report that with the removal of “glasses” from the five pilot venues they have seen the removal of “glassings” in the same venue. This supports their overarching objective with a success rate of 100%.

They also add that taking into account the period August to March 2008-2009 against the same period 2007-2008 the police have seen a 70% reduction in people being assaulted with glasses in the City Centre.

From a policing perspective the fact that the glass products have been replaced with polycarbonate alternatives means the opportunity to commit such an offence has been reduced. The pilot has therefore been a complete success and the Police would firmly encourage the extension to include other (indeed all) of the pubs and clubs within the City.

- 4.2 The pilot scheme has attracted a great deal of media interest and coverage. The PR value of this scheme has not been fully evaluated to date as it is still ongoing. However, it is estimated that it is currently valued in excess of £25k (non paid for media coverage) and new media and trade related releases on the conclusion of the scheme are being planned.

## **5.0 Update**

- 5.1 The City Centre Manager approached the Alcohol Delivery Group, the lead theme group on progress on the alcohol related objectives within the Safer Sunderland Strategy, requesting further funding for an extension to the polycarbonate scheme to all licensed premises. The group received a paper to this effect in April which included the following issues for consideration;

*In addition to the five pilot premises there is a further fifty plus pub, club or bar premises in the city centre. In order to extend the polycarbonate glass scheme to these city centre licensed premises a guesstimated cost of £80,000 would be needed of which 50% would be match funded by the individual premises. Hence a cost of £40,000 would need to be found to extend the current scheme to all city centre premises.*

*There is currently no legal or licensing requirement for licensed premises to use polycarbonate glasses so there is no indication at this stage of the number of premises who would wish to become part of an extended scheme. However, the pilot scheme within the city centre has been discussed at Pubwatch meetings so an initial awareness is in existence.*

- 5.2 The Alcohol Delivery Group were asked to note the findings from the survey and to consider how to progress in terms of priority and resources. The group agreed that extending the polycarbonate scheme would be beneficial for residents, visitors and

staff within Sunderland's licensed premises. However the group could not agree to support the £40,000 from Safer Sunderland Partnership funding routes. It was agreed that these costs should be met individually by the licensed premises themselves through their traditional business means. It was also thought that the use of polycarbonate glasses should not become a licensing condition at the present time and that an alternative approach would be to include this within the Best Bar None essential criteria for the 09/10 awards.

5.3 At last year's Best Bar None scheme four of the five licensed premises involved in the polycarbonate glasses achieved the standards required for Best Bar None status with Passion being named as the overall winner of the Best Bar None Awards 2009.

## **6.0 Recommendations**

6.1 The Community and Safer City Scrutiny Committee are asked to:

- a) Receive this report and the findings from the pilot initiative, and add their support to it
- b) Scrutiny to consider and make any formal recommendations regarding how the Safer Sunderland Partnership may progress this scheme in relation to future developments of this scheme.

## **ANNEX 1: SAFER SUNDERLAND OUTCOMES AND STRATEGIC PRIORITIES**

### **Safer Sunderland Strategy Outcomes 2008-2023**

- Being and feeling safe and secure (the ultimate outcome)
- Being free from harm
- Creating a safe environment
- Being free from crime, disorder and substance misuse
- Creating active citizens
- Creating a supportive family environment
- Creating cohesive communities
- Embedding a problem solving approach
- Creating an effective partnership

### **Safer Sunderland Strategy Strategic Priorities 2009-10**

The strategic priorities for 2009-10 are:

1. Reduce re-offending
2. Tackle violent crime (including domestic violence, serious sexual violence and sexual exploitation)
3. Reduce alcohol misuse and the harm it causes, including alcohol related crime
4. Reduce drug misuse and the harm it causes, including drug related crime
5. Reduce the problems in those communities experiencing disproportionate levels of crime, especially the city centre, Hendon, Millfield and St. Michael's
6. Tackle anti-social behaviour
7. Tackle perceptions of anti-social behaviour and improve feelings of safety should be a cross cutting priority for all delivery groups to consider across all of their work.
8. Meet the hallmarks of effective partnerships and embed problem solving throughout the SSP to ensure the SSP is the most effective it can be in delivering better outcomes for residents.