

30th JANUARY 2012

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

INFLUENCING PRACTICE, POLICY AND STRATEGY

SOS BUS

1. Why has it come to Committee?

- 1.1. This report offers Members the opportunity to be consulted on plans and strategies relevant to the area. It also provides information and updates which will encourage Members to feed into proposals for service or policy change and facilitates the referral of outcomes of issues previously identified.

2. Background Information

- 2.1 The Local Alcohol Profiles for England (LAPE) demonstrate that Sunderland performs worse or significantly worse in a large number of measures which relate to alcohol. This includes the following;
- § Sunderland has had a 39% increase in male admissions for alcohol related hospital admissions
 - § For alcohol specific under 18 year old hospital admissions Sunderland is in the top 5% worst nationally
 - § Within the top 4% worst nationally for binge drinking, and;
 - § Within the top 15% nationally for harmful drinking
- 2.2 These figures cause the Safer Sunderland Partnership (SSP) and individual partners within it significant concern, particularly Sunderland Teaching Primary Care Trust (TPCT), Northumbria Police and Sunderland City Council, as well as North East Ambulance Service (NEAS) and City Hospitals Sunderland (CHS) who often have to deal with individuals who have consumed too much alcohol.
- 2.3 Local research shows the majority of incidents for these key services are linked to the night time economy and cause significant pressure on services, particularly on a Friday and Saturday evening, for example;
- § The peak time for NEAS picking up individuals is between 7pm and 2 am.
 - § For those individuals who are picked up from a street location the vast majority of them are picked up from the St Michael's ward 208 (pick-ups) and 118 from Millfield's, followed by St Peter's with 103. This indicates that the majority of pick-ups are associated with the City Centre and have an alcohol link.
 - § From the 86,084 attendances at CHS Emergency Department (ED) in 2009, 6,361 attendances presented for alcohol related conditions.
 - § 3,289 presented over the weekend (Friday, Saturday and Sunday) making up 52.4% of all of the presentations.
- 2.4 In order to reduce the burden on services and to reduce the level of alcohol related hospital admissions, the TPCT are developing a range of interventions

which includes the introduction of an SOS Bus / Place of Safety. The Bus would be based in the City Centre on a Friday and Saturday evening and would be staffed by St John's Ambulance and / or NEAS, Northumbria Police, Sunderland Street Pastors and other services as necessary to provide first aid and pastoral care to individuals who are vulnerable and / or under the influence of alcohol. This would reduce the necessity for ambulance call outs, reduce the time police officers would have to remain with drunken individuals, provide a safe place for Sunderland Street Pastors to operate from and reduce the burden on the Accident and Emergency Department at Sunderland Royal Hospital.

3. Progress Update

- 3.1 Tackling alcohol misuse and alcohol related crime and disorder has been identified as a priority for the SSP for 2012/13 and the SSP Board has recommended initiatives to reduce alcohol misuse are progressed.
- 3.2 Stagecoach has donated a bus to this scheme free of charge and Northumbria Police Authority, TPCT and the SSP have agreed the capital funding necessary to refurbish the bus. Revenue funding for the scheme has been sourced from the TPCT until the end of March 2013.
- 3.3 Work is ongoing with partners regarding the coordination of this scheme and there is a commitment from key stakeholders including Northumbria Police and Sunderland Street Pastors to have a dedicated resource available for the scheme.
- 3.4 Support has been sought from the City Centre Management Board on the implementation of the scheme.

4. Next steps

- 4.1 The bus will be refurbished to include a pastoral care and a medical area and is hoped to be operational by the end of March 2012.
- 4.2 Coordination of the scheme is to be finalised and contracts agreed via Sunderland TPCT.
- 4.3 Balance, the North East Regional Alcohol Office, is to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the scheme.
- 4.4 Final consultation on the scheme is to be undertaken.
- 4.5 It is hoped this scheme will be operational by the end of March / beginning of April 2012 and in addition to the normal weekend cover will be able to respond to increased demand on city centre resources over the Easter period, Bank Holiday Weekends and times of high volume in the city centre such as the concerts in June and Sunderland Air Show.

5 Recommendation(s)

- 5.1 Committee is requested to:

- i) Note the content of this report
- ii) Offer feedback on the proposal
- iii) Offer any suggestions on who the lead officers could and should consult with

Contact Officer: Leanne Davis, Associate Policy Lead for Community Safety
561 7959
Leanne.davis@sundland.gov.uk
Email:

Background papers

Websites that may be of interest include;

<http://www.sosbus.co.uk/>

<http://www.westsuffolksosbus.org/>

<http://www.strathclyde.police.uk/index.asp?locID=1591&docID=9059>