

# **COMMUNITY AND SAFER CITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

6 JULY 2010

## **ALCOHOL, VIOLENCE AND THE NIGHT TIME ECONOMY POLICY REVIEW 2010/11: DRAFT SCOPING REPORT**

### **REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

#### **STRATEGIC PRIORITIES: SP3: SAFE CITY**

#### **CORPORATE PRIORITIES: C101: Delivering Customer Focused Services, C102: Being 'One Council', C103: Efficient and Effective Council, C104: Improving partnership working to deliver 'One City'**

### **1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to put forward proposals and seek agreement from Members in relation to the forthcoming policy review into Alcohol, Violence and the Night Time Economy.

### **2. Background**

- 2.1 The Annual Scrutiny Conference was held at the Marriott Hotel on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2010. During the Scrutiny Café sessions a number of viable policy reviews were formulated for discussion by members of the Committee. At the meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2010, following discussions regarding the Work Programme, the Committee agreed to focus on Alcohol and Violent Crime.
- 2.2 Members agreed that the study should focus on a number of key themes including; alcohol and violent crime, licensing policy and enforcement.
- 2.3 On the 8 June 2010, the Committee also agreed to establish a Task and Finish Group to look at the issue of licensing policy and enforcement. The findings of the Task and Finish Group will feed into the main policy review.
- 2.4 The National Crime Strategy highlights that alcohol is a key driver in nearly half of all violent crime and is a key cross-cutting issue. The National Alcohol Strategy states that up to 70% of A&E admissions at peak times are alcohol related, 47% of violence victims described the assailant as being drunk and alcohol is a factor in 30% of city centre arrests. In Sunderland, the majority of violent crime is committed in and around pubs on a weekend evening and is backed up by local A&E data on assaults.
- 2.5 The Safer Sunderland Partnership (SSP) is constituted by a range of responsible authorities including Sunderland City Council, Teaching

Primary Care Trust, Northumbria Police, Northumbria Probation Service, Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service and the Police Authority. It has a responsibility to tackle crime, fear of crime, substance misuse and to reduce Reoffending. The SSP has prioritised reducing alcohol misuse and the harm it causes, including alcohol related crime and tackling violent crime as two of its priorities for 2010/11. In order to deliver against these priorities comprehensive delivery plans have been developed for alcohol and violent crime and within the Safer Sunderland Partnership infrastructure, there is an Alcohol Delivery Group and Violent Crime Delivery Group who ensure the implementation of these delivery plans.

### **3. The Scrutiny Review Process**

3.1 Scrutiny reviews will carry out a number of stages in undertaking and completing a review. The stages broadly are:

**Stage 1 Scope**                      The initial stage of the review identifies the background, issues, potential outcomes and timetable for the review.

**Stage 2 Investigate**              The Committee gathers evidence using a variety of tools and techniques and arranges visits where appropriate.

**Stage 3 Analyse**                    The key trends and issues are highlighted from the evidence gathered by the Committee.

**Stage 4 Clarify**                    The Committee discusses and identifies the principal messages of the review from the work undertaken.

**Stage 5 Recommend**              The Committee formulates and agrees realistic recommendations.

**Stage 6 Report**                    Draft and final reports are prepared based on the evidence, findings and recommendations.

**Stage 7 Monitor**                    The Committee monitors recommendations on a regularly agreed basis.

### **4. Overall Aim of the Scrutiny Policy Review**

4.1 To examine issues relating to the prevention of violent crime as part of the City Centre's Night Time Economy.

### **5. Proposed Terms of Reference for the Scrutiny Policy Review**

5.1 The draft Terms of Reference for the policy review are proposed:-

- (a) To gain an understanding of the key issues in relation to violent crime in the City Centre and the relationship between alcohol and violence;
- (b) To examine performance against National and Local Indicators in relation to violent crime;
- (c) To examine the role partner organisations play in prevention activities in relation to violent crime in the City Centre, with particular focus on situational and social crime prevention;
- (d) To explore approaches to early intervention through consideration of educational work and the work undertaken in hotspot areas within the City Centre to prevent problems escalating;
- (e) To investigate the city's approach to enforcement action with particular focus on the enforcement of the city's Licensing Policy which can help reduce alcohol related violence;
- (f) To review support, resettlement and rehabilitation of victims and offenders by considering how victims are supported to live safely and how offender's substance misuse is addressed with the aim to reduce the chance of re-offending;
- (g) To consider best practice from other local authorities in relation to preventing violent crime in the City Centre; and
- (h) To consider the impact of violent crime on the City Centres Night Time Economy.

## **6. Potential Areas of Enquiry and Sources of Evidence**

- 6.1 The Scrutiny Committee can invite a variety of people, key stakeholders and interested parties to provide written or oral evidence in order that a balanced and focused range of recommendations can be formulated. A list of potential witnesses, though not exhaustive, is included for Members information:
- (a) Relevant Cabinet Portfolio Holders;
  - (b) Head of Strategic Economic Development;
  - (c) Safer Communities Team Manager;
  - (d) Head of Environmental Services;
  - (e) Representatives from the Safer Communities Team, including the Drug and Alcohol Strategy Manager and Violent Crime Lead

- (f) Representatives from the Safer Sunderland Partnership, including the Chair of the Safer Sunderland Partnership Alcohol Delivery Group / Safer Sunderland Partnership Champion and Chair of the Safer Sunderland Partnership Violent Crime Delivery Group;
- (g) Key Stakeholders and partner organisations (eg. Schools, Health, Police, Fire, National Probation Service Northumbria, Pubwatch and Sunderland Victim Support);
- (h) Representatives from City Centre Management
- (i) Local residents;
- (j) Representatives of minority communities of interest;
- (k) Ward Councillors;
- (l) Local MPs;
- (m) Examples of good practice from other local authorities.

6.2 As well as gathering information and evidence by the methods outlined above the Committee may, if it feels it appropriate, co-opt an additional member to the Committee for the duration of the policy review in accordance with the provisions of the Crime and Disorder (Overview and Scrutiny) Regulations 2009 and the protocols set out in the Scrutiny Handbook.

6.3 Community engagement plays a crucial role in the scrutiny process. Consideration will be given as to how involvement can best be structured in a way that the Committee encourages those views.

6.4 In addition, diversity issues have been considered in the background research for this enquiry under the Equality Standards for Local Government. As such the views of local diversity groups will be sought throughout the inquiry where felt appropriate and time allows. Consequently, consideration has been given as to how the views of people from minority communities of interest or heritage (for example, people with disabilities, people with learning disabilities, people with mental health problems, black and minority ethnic people, and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender people), which may not be gathered through the usual community engagement routes, can be included over the course of the inquiry.

## **7. Funding from the Dedicated Overview and Scrutiny Budget**

7.1 Consideration has been given, through the background research for this scoping report of the need to use funding from the Committee's

dedicated Overview and Scrutiny budget to aid Members in their enquiry.

7.2 At this stage, it is suggested that funding may be necessary to support the following activities:

- (a) Key witnesses;
- (b) Engagement with voluntary and statutory organisations;
- (c) Delegates for expert jury, or a public event;
- (d) General publicity;
- (e) Visits (as necessary) to deliver effective scrutiny; and
- (f) Task and Finish activities.

## **8. Proposed Timetable of the Scrutiny Investigation**

8.1 The following scheduled meetings will include evidence gathering for the study:

Setting the Scene - September 2010  
Evidence Gathering - October 2010 to February 2011  
Consideration of Draft Final Report - March 2011  
Consideration of Final Report by the Scrutiny Committee - April 2011  
Consideration of Final Report by the Cabinet/Council- June 2011

8.2 Additional working group meetings are likely to be necessary to complete the evidence gathering.

## **9. Recommendations**

9.1 Members are recommended to discuss and agree the scope of the Community and Safer City Scrutiny Committee's policy review for 2010/11 as outlined in the report.

9.2 Members are also asked to decide upon the membership of the Task and Finish Group., which will focus on licensing policy and enforcement,

## **10. Background Papers**

Safer Sunderland Strategy 2008-2023  
Crime and Disorder (Overview and Scrutiny) Regulations 2009

---

Contact Officer : Claire Harrison 0191 561 1232  
[claire.harrison1@sunderland.gov.uk](mailto:claire.harrison1@sunderland.gov.uk)