

COMMUNITY AND SAFER CITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

14 SEPTEMBER 2010

ALCOHOL, VIOLENCE AND THE NIGHT TIME ECONOMY POLICY REVIEW 2010/11 SCENE SETTING REPORT

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES: SP3: SAFE CITY

CORPORATE PRIORITIES: CIO1: Delivering Customer Focussed Services, C102: Being 'One Council', C103: Efficient and Effective Council, C104: Improving partnership working to deliver 'One City'

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide an overview to the Scrutiny Committee on current partnership responses to alcohol related violence in the City Centre, as part of their policy review.

2. Background

- 2.1 At its meeting on 8 June 2010, the Scrutiny Committee agreed to pursue a review of alcohol, violence and the night time economy, and at its meeting on 6 July 2010, it agreed a terms of reference for the study, together with a schedule of meetings. It was agreed that the September meeting would be used to set the scene in relation to current responses to alcohol related violence in the City Centre.
- 2.2 This report contributes principally to the following areas within the terms of reference for the study:
 - (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 the role that partner organisations play in prevention activities in relation to violent crime in the City Centre, with particular focus on situational and social crime prevention.

3. Definition and context

- 3.1 The Home Office defines violent crime as robbery, sexual offences, and a group of Violence against the Person offences ranging from assault without injury, through wounding, to homicide.
- 3.2 The National Crime Strategy highlights that alcohol is a key driver in nearly half of all violent crime and is a 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.

- 3.3 Sunderland City Centre has a vibrant night time economy, with 191 licensed premises consisting of a mix of restaurants, takeaways, pubs and nightclubs. The main nights that have been identified as being problematic for crime and disorder linked to problem premises are Fridays, Saturdays and Mondays.
- 3.4 Violent Crime in Sunderland is reducing, figures for the period 1st April – 15th August 2010 show a reduction of 6.2% compared with the same period for 2009. There has, however, been an increase in relation to most serious violence. Figures show that there were 69 crimes last year compared to 100 for the same period this year. Sunderland is ranked in the top 15% local authorities for harmful drinking and is within the top 5% of highest ranked Local Authorities areas for alcohol specific under 18-year-old hospital admissions.

4. Policy Background

- 4.1 In 2008, the Safer Sunderland Partnership (SSP) produced an annually renewable 15 year strategy called the Safer Sunderland Strategy 2008-2023. It gives a longer term focus to the SSP's activity whilst still including short and medium terms priorities and step changes that need to take place. This is supported by a detailed delivery plan.
- 4.2 The SSP has responsibility for ensuring the Safer Sunderland Strategy is implemented and for reviewing and evaluating progress to ensure that it is achieving what it set out to do.
- 4.3 The overall outcome of the Safer Sunderland Strategy is about everyone being and feeling safe and secure. The strategy has an ambitious aim that:
- “by 2023, Sunderland will be a city where people feel, and are, safe and secure where they can enjoy life without the concerns of being a victim of crime or being harmed”.*
- 4.4 The Safer Sunderland Partnership (SSP) brings together the public, private, community and voluntary sectors to deliver the Safer Sunderland Strategy. There are 6 ‘responsible authorities’ on the SSP and they have the legal duty to work in partnership to tackle crime, disorder and substance misuse and to implement a strategic assessment and partnership plan.

The 6 responsible authorities are:

1. Sunderland City Council
2. Northumbria Police
3. Northumbria Police Authority
4. Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service / Authority
5. Sunderland Teaching Primary Care Trust
6. National Probation Service Northumbria

4.5 Tackling alcohol misuse, including alcohol-related crime and disorder and tackling violent crime are two of the Safer Sunderland Partnership's (SSP) key strategic priorities for 2010/11. There are two themed delivery groups which are relevant to this review:

(a) The Alcohol Delivery Group (ADG) is a thematic delivery group of the Safer Sunderland Partnership. It is responsible for overseeing the implementation of alcohol misuse related outcomes from the Safer Sunderland Strategy and the national alcohol strategy, Safe, Sensible, Social in order to reduce alcohol misuse and the harm it causes including alcohol related crime and disorder.

(b) The Violent Crime Delivery Group is responsible for the preparation and delivery of the Violent Crime Delivery Plan. The work encompasses (i) public space violent crime and (ii) private space violent crime (domestic violence). The group is also supported by the Sunderland Domestic Violence Partnership.

5. Partnership Activity

5.1 There is infrastructure to tackle alcohol and violent crime, and numerous interventions are in place provided either in partnership or by individual services including the following:

5.2 *Sunderland City Council: Safer Communities Team*

5.2.1 The Team consists of both Council and Teaching Primary Care Trust (TPCT) employed staff as well as occasional secondments from partners. The team is part of the Office of the Chief Executive at Sunderland City Council. The core functions of the team are to:

- a) Co-ordinate and support the Safer Sunderland Partnership (SSP) in the development and delivery of the Safer Sunderland Strategy 2008-2023.
- b) Ensure the Council meets its statutory and key delivery responsibilities in relation to Safer Communities, particularly in relation to Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.
- c) Deal with day-to-day enquiries and concerns regarding safer communities issues.
- d) Maximise the use of external and mainstream resources and commission services to support targeted action on identified crime, anti-social behaviour and substance misuse priorities. The Safer Communities Team co-ordinate Safer Sunderland Partnership action to address crime, disorder, reducing re-offending and substance misuse issues.
- e) The team has is headed by the Safer Communities Manager and includes the posts of Drug and Alcohol Strategy Manager and Safer Communities Officer - Violent Crime Reduction.

5.3 ***Sunderland City Council: Licensing Section and Trading Standards Section***

- 5.3.1 The Licensing Section administers and enforces the Licensing Act. One of the objectives of the Act is the prevention of crime and disorder.
- 5.3.2 The Licensing Section intervenes with licensees where breaches of legislation and licensing conditions are identified e.g. failure to provide CCTV coverage or the exceeding of opening hours.
- 5.3.3 The Trading Standards Section has the responsibility for enforcing the law prohibiting the sale of alcohol to persons under 18. The Trading Standards Section seeks to educate off licensees and their staff about avoiding such sales and, where appropriate, sends child volunteers into premises to attempt test purchases. Illegal sales can lead to prosecutions and reviews of offenders' licences.

5.4 ***Northumbria Police***

- 5.4.1 The key objective in the Northumbria Police Strategy for 2008-2011 is 'to build trust and confidence in the community and reduce crime and disorder'.
- 5.4.2 In a bid to make the City even safer Sunderland Area Command has committed resources to police the City Centre. Key operations to tackle alcohol and violent crime include:

- a) Operation Barracuda

Throughout February and March 2010, a hard hitting police operation focussed on license holders in the city. As well as carrying out additional visits to licensed premises, extra officers were on patrol to stamp down on crime and disorder linked to the night time economy.

The operation resulted in 121 licensed premises visited within Sunderland Area Command, predominantly within the City Centre, Coalfields and Washington areas. Operation Barracuda also involved agencies such as the Border Agency, Trading Standards, and Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service.

The Operation was hailed a success and now runs over intermittently over weekends.

- b) Operation Calculate

Inspections carried out under Operation Barracuda identified premises where under 18's were found within the premises consuming alcohol.

As a result of Operation Barracuda, evidence was gathered with regard to under 18's on licensed premises. An operation was instigated using young persons to undertake test purchases of alcohol. The test purchasing resulted in prosecutions.

All premises identified as selling to the Test Purchase Operatives have attended Gillbridge Police Station to be given guidance and advice on how to make sure it doesn't happen again. Premises concerned were given a formal warning.

5.5 ***Sunderland Teaching Primary Care Trust***

5.5.1 In 2008 Sunderland Teaching Primary Care Trust, as one of the core components on NHS South of Tyne and Wear, invested over £5 million of recurring monies to tackle alcohol related health harms across Sunderland, Gateshead and South Tyneside. As a result £2.6 million is invested annually into services in Sunderland to tackle alcohol health harm, this includes;

- a) A comprehensive alcohol team in Sunderland Royal Hospital, including additional nursing capacity in the Gastroenterology Department, staff to assess individuals who present to the Emergency Department with alcohol related issues and work with individuals in the hospital and in the community and a young people's worker to target those aged 18 and under.
- b) Additional community and in-patient detoxification places
- c) One to one support for hazardous, harmful and dependent drinkers
- d) Nursing capacity for Alcohol Treatment Requirements, an order imposed by the courts
- e) Alcohol Arrest Referral Scheme
- f) Peer support and additional infrastructure for carer services to support families affected by alcohol misuse

5.6 Details of the interventions and powers that are currently used to tackle the issue of alcohol related violent crime are included in **Appendix A**.

6. ***Performance Indicators***

6.1 The Safer Sunderland Partnership have a comprehensive performance framework to monitor performance against a range of national and local indicators relating to alcohol and violence. A copy of this framework can be made available to the Scrutiny Committee upon request. The three most prominent performance measures are currently:

- a) NI 39 - Alcohol Related Hospital Admission Rates (this NI is managed by the Healthy Partnership but a report is also given to the Alcohol Delivery Group)
- b) NI 20 - Assault with injury crime, which is monitored by the Violent Crime Delivery Group and
- c) Most Serious Violent Crime, also managed by this group.

7. **Recommendations**

7.1 Members are recommended to accept this report and to consider which of the current activities being carried out in the city they wish to take evidence on as part of the review.

8. Background Papers

- Safer Sunderland Strategy 2008-2025
- The Home Office: Reducing the risk of violent crime 2008

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Interventions and Powers used for tackling alcohol related violence

Drinking Banning Orders

Drinking Banning Orders (DBOs) were introduced within the Violent Crime Reduction Act, 2006.

They are civil orders that can be sought by various authorities such as the Police, Transport Police and local authorities in England and Wales.

They are a power that can be used to target those who abuse alcohol to the extent that it leads to alcohol related crime or disorder. Orders can be made against individuals aged 16 or over if they have engaged in criminal or disorderly conduct while under the influence of alcohol. Orders can last between 2 months and 2 years.

The aim is to protect the person from further conduct of that kind by prohibiting the individual from doing things prescribed in the order.

The Court can specify an approved course as part of the DBO if the individual consents. Approved courses are taken on a voluntary basis as means to addressing behaviour involving alcohol misuse.

Sunderland City Council and Northumbria Police have worked in partnership to successfully secure 2 DBOs to date.

Cardiff Model

It is recognised that many individuals will attend the Emergency Department for alcohol related violent injuries who never report attacks against them to the police. In order to close this information gap and to identify 'hot spot' areas for alcohol related violence data, Reception Staff at Sunderland Royal Hospital complete a minimum data set on every individual who presents to them with alcohol related violent crime injuries. This initiative is known as the 'Cardiff Model' based on the pilot initiative from the South Wales area.

In Sunderland this information is shared on a fortnightly basis with the Safer Communities and forms part of the intelligence used by the Police as part of their Tasking and Coordinating Group. It is hoped that with more comprehensive information it will also form part of license reviews by Trading Standards and the Licensing Committee. This work is supported by the Regional Director of Public Health Cardiff Model and Government Office North East.

Taxi Marshalling Scheme

This service helps people get home safely from the city centre after a night out. It consists of three fully licensed and trained marshals being on duty at the taxi ranks on Green Terrace and West Street on Friday and Saturday

nights. The SSP are also currently funding a pilot of this scheme on a Monday evening. The Taxi Marshalls job is to help keep the taxi queues moving, resolve any problems that might arise and ensure that all members of the public feel safe in and around the taxi ranks. The scheme is also monitored by the Council's Security and Licensing sections.

Street Pastors

The first Street Pastor scheme started in London in 2003 and there are now over 100 teams across the country. It is an inter-denominational Church response to urban problems (such as crime and anti-social behaviour) where volunteers engage with vulnerable people on the street to care and listen.

Street pastors are ordinary members of the public who help people who get into minor difficulties in the city centre at night. Essentially the scheme supports a safer city centre, but can also impact positively around issues of cohesion and homelessness.

The scheme is overseen by a national umbrella organisation called the 'Ascension Trust' who helps local churches set up new schemes, provide training and ensure consistency of standards. In order for such a scheme to be successful, the Ascension Trust requires 3 key parties to sign up to the scheme namely (a) the Churches, (b) the Police and (c) the Local Authority. In addition, they like pubs, bars and clubs to also come on board to support the scheme as the 4th group/party.

Street Pastors only deal with very minor / low key issues which are of a pastoral nature. They are not there to replace the police. Dealing with very minor issues thereby ensures the police and door staff are not taken away from their duties to deal with minor incidents.

The scheme has been very well received In Sunderland.

Pubwatch

Sunderland Pubwatch was originally set up in 1997 with the aim to improve safety for customers, staff and the local community. By linking all premises together by two-way hand portable radios this offers the premises facilities to share information and bar trouble makers from all pubs and clubs in the city centre and help with constant communications direct to the local Police.

Pubwatch members meet regularly with the Police, City Centre Management, City Council to discuss ways of improving safety and sharing of information.

Polycarbonate Glasses

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.

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.

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

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

Best Bar None Scheme

The Best Bar None scheme is a Home Office backed scheme to recognise responsible licensees who operate well run premises and who are genuinely striving to do all they can to reduce alcohol related crime and promote sensible drinking.

The scheme was introduced in Sunderland last year and is a joint partnership including the Safer Sunderland Partnership, Northumbria Police and the City Council.

The scheme is now in its second year and has been expanded this year to cover new categories including best bar restaurant and community pub. This year's winner will be announced in October 2010.

Marketing

The Safer Sunderland Partnership supports key marketing messages to promote personal safety on nights out. Recent marketing campaigns they have supported have included, **Keys, Money, Phone - Plans to get Home**

Marketing Activities include:

- Adshels in key city centre locations, main routes in to the city centre and outside university buildings
- Escalator panels at Park Lane Metro Station
- Washroom Posters in 4 popular bars (Blu Bambu, Chase, Diva, Liquid.)
- Ad van around busy locations on night times
- Digi van around busy locations on night times
- Posters in university residence and buildings
- Beer Mats in city centre bars
- Messages on community TV screens throughout Sunderland
- Bluetooth Messaging on in popular areas on busy nights
- Postcards distributed in student premises