

Report to the *Cleaner, Greener, Safer*

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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Reducing the Strength



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Introduction

To seek approval from Members to work with Staffordshire Police and various off-licensed premises (including Supermarkets) to consider implementing the Reducing the Strength Campaign outlined below and the recommendations outlined in this report.

Background

In September 2012, Suffolk Police, Ipswich Borough Council, Suffolk County Council and NHS Suffolk launched the 'Reducing the Strength' Campaign aimed at stopping the sale of cheap, super strength alcohol 6.5% ABV and over from off-licensed premises in Ipswich. As of December 2013 68% of all licensed premises in Ipswich are 'super strength free'.

The aims of the campaign are:

- To encourage licensees of premises with an off-license to voluntarily remove all cheap, super strength lager and following this, persuade licensees to voluntarily change the terms of their license to include this condition
- To use the campaign to highlight the dangers of alcohol in general but particularly the dangers of super strength alcohol.

Why was the initiative necessary?

- In 2009 dedicated work began to try and tackle problems surrounding street drinking in Ipswich

- In the previous 18 months four individuals linked to the street drinking community were murdered, and other issues affecting the local community were identified
- In June 2011 a working group was created, and 'start afresh' was launched
- This is when it was identified that a long-term operational strategy was necessary, with the primary aim being to significantly reduce the negative impact on communities of anti-social street drinking and rough sleeping in Ipswich.

Current situation in Newcastle under Lyme

Newcastle Town Centre and surrounding areas experiences issues with Dependent Street Drinkers some of which present significant challenges not only on the streets of Newcastle but also within their own communities and neighbourhoods. The problem is not a new one rather a problem which has been escalating over a number of years.

To tackle this issue a Dependent Drinkers/Social inclusion has been set up aiming to engage street drinkers into appropriate treatment services and use enforcement action as and when required.

Additional strategies include:-

- Section 30 Dispersal Order and Section 27 – utilising powers to remove people who are causing anti-social behaviour from the town
- Use of Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABC's) and Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBO's)
- Street Sweep – where ADS and Newcastle Police engage with Street Drinkers every Thursday afternoon
- Anti-Social Behaviour Case Conference – a multi-agency case conference which deals with perpetrators of ASB

Progress so far

- Partnership Delivery Group (PDG) agreed for the Borough Council to work with Staffordshire Police on the campaign
- Group has decided to follow the Ipswich model
- 3 progression meetings already taken place with partners from Police, Trading Standards as well as internal partners from NBC
- One year on conference in Ipswich attended by Inspector Barlow and myself
- 90% of off-licensed premises agreed in principle to remove cheap, super-strength alcohol from their shelves
- Morrisons and Lidl have refused. Sainsbury's have referred us back to the Newcastle Branch Manager

- Public Health have backed the campaign and discussions are taking place regarding fast track routes into treatment services
- Newcastle Borough Council have pledged money to support the facilitation of the campaign

Questions to be Addressed

- *What areas of the Borough should the campaign target?*
- *How best to engage the reluctant Supermarkets?*
- *In what other ways can Public Health support the campaign?*
- *How can members support and add value to the campaign?*

Outcomes

- *Any thoughts, recommendations or input from Members as to where we can take the campaign in the medium to long term*

Supporting Information

See Reducing the Strength report 'One Year On' attached

Invited Partners/Stakeholders/Residents

PC Paul Capewell (Joint coordinator) or Inspector Mark Barlow

Constraints

Finances, Time

Conclusions

The Reducing the Strength Campaign seeks to work with off-licensed premises to remove cheap, super-strength alcohol from their shelves to tackle alcohol fuelled anti-social behaviour and associated health harms amongst dependent drinkers and young people.

This report seeks the support and valuable input from Members

Relevant Portfolio Holder(s)

Councillor Anthony Kearon – Stronger, Safer Communities

Local Ward Member (if applicable)

Councillor John Williams

Councillor Julie Cooper

Councillor Colin Eastwood

Background Materials

See attached

Appendices

N/A