

Committee :	Date	Classification	Report No.	Agenda Item No.
<b>Licensing Committee</b>	<b>9<sup>th</sup> December 2014</b>	<b>Unclassified</b>		

Report of <b>Consumer and Business Regulations</b>  Originating Officer: <b>David Tolley – Head of Consumer and Business Regulations</b>	Title  <b>Licensing Act 2003 – Community Alcohol Partnership</b>  <b>Wards affected: Bethnal Green and St Peters Wards</b>
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## **1 SUMMARY**

- 1.1 At the Licensing Committee on the 15<sup>th</sup> July 2014, it was requested that an update was provided on the progress of the Community Alcohol Partnership initiative.

## **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 To note the activity that has been undertaken by the Community Alcohol Partnership.
- 2.2 To make recommendations on the further development of the Partnership.

## **3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 A Community Alcohol Partnership (CAP) was formed in April 2014, with the objective to develop a culture where both adults and young people drink responsibly and to educate retailers within the Bethnal Green and St Peters wards on their responsibilities not sell alcohol to anyone under the age of 18.
- 3.2 Anti-social behaviour (ASB) was identified as being a problem within the CAP area, having the second highest ASB and ambulance calls for alcohol related incidents in Tower Hamlets. There were 41 off-licences in the Wards and specific problems had been identified with underage drinking, street drinking and a general lack of retailer awareness around underage sales.
- 3.3 The multiple effects of underage and irresponsible alcohol consumption in the community meant that the CAP would need to engage with several partners. Activity under the CAP is intended to complement the existing work of retailers

and enforcement agencies, without increasing resources in the long term. The partnership approach recognises that enforcement can only partly achieve the shift in culture required. It was identified that there is a need for all relevant organisations and agencies to work together, alongside the local community.

- 3.4 CAP consists of a number of agencies: Community Alcohol Partnerships Community Interest Company, Retail of Alcohol Standards Group - retailers Tesco & Sainsbury, Public Health, Trading Standards, Police Licensing, Community Safety, DAAT, Youth Service, Youth Offending Team, Communications Team, Bart's Health, Street Pastors, Life Line, Tower Hamlets Homes, Tower Hamlets Community Housing and Gateway Housing
- 3.5 The Community Alcohol Partnership (CAP) has a number of objectives to tackle underage drinking,
  - a. Reduce incidents of alcohol sales to young people under the age of 18
  - b. Reduce youth-related anti-social behaviour associated with alcohol consumption
  - c. Improve the health of young people so they are aware of the consequences and risks associated with drinking alcohol
  - d. Reduce incidents of Street Drinking
  - e. Develop a responsible retailing ethos and effective partnership approach in the CAP area which embraces Challenge 25 and acceptance of proof of age standard scheme (PASS)
  - f. Improve public perception on alcohol related issues
- 3.6 A survey of 820 young people revealed 12.3% of young people have tried an alcoholic beverage. 74% of these young people were only 13 years old or younger at the time of their first alcoholic drink. 33% claimed to be obtaining their alcohol drink from their parents and 18% from off-licences. There were a small percentage of students who did drink before attending school and/ or during school time and/ or straight after school.
- 3.7 Activity within the CAP
  - a. Licensing Officers visited off-licences and encouraged businesses to sign up to the 'Reducing the Strength Scheme'. A scheme where retailers are encouraged to voluntarily sign up to the scheme to remove all super strength beers, cider and lagers that are above 6.5% or more ABV from their shelves to reduce street drinking.
  - b. Trading Standard Officers visited off-licences and encouraged businesses to sign up to a 'Responsible Retailers Scheme' focusing on underage sales, proxy sales and promoting Challenge 25. A programme that provides education and training to make retailers aware of their responsibilities in avoiding illegal sales and support them in upholding the law.

- c. Underage test purchases were conducted by Trading Standard Officers and the Metropolitan Police.
  - d. Sainsbury's provided training to off-licences around underage sales.
  - e. The Healthy Lives Team provided drug and alcohol education programme in secondary schools in the CAP area.
  - f. A Youth Employment Project was created to support young people to complete a qualification of employability and obtain work experience from Sainsbury's.
  - g. Deployment of the Rapid Response Team in two identified hotspot areas within the CAP.
  - h. Tower Hamlets Enforcement Officers patrolling hotspot areas.
  - i. Joint enforcement and advisory visits with Police, Trading Standard, Licensing and Housing Association staff targeting high risk ASB housing estates and off-licences.
  - j. Trading Standards instigated a panel to engage with traders who have failed test purchase. The idea to warn and educate traders on their retail responsibilities.
- 3.8 The CAP methodology is based on a number of elements namely; education, enforcement, diversionary activities and public perception.

### **Education**

- 3.9 Education is a key element to raising awareness about the law relating to young people and alcohol, the impact of underage alcohol consumption on health and society. CAP focuses on educating retailers/licensees, young people and adults.
- a. All 5 secondary schools in the CAP area have started engaging with the Healthy Lives Team. Drug education is currently taking place at Oakland's, Morpeth, Swanlea Secondary Schools. Alcohol education is intended to be arranged in the New Year.
  - b. 6 licenced premises were trained by Sainsbury's 'high standards' training team on underage sale and challenge 25.
  - c. 4 alcohol awareness sessions have been organised for November run at the Youth Centres
  - d. 500 Drinkaware booklets 'Parenting Campaign' were distributed to housing associations, secondary schools and youth and drug services. This campaign raises awareness to parents about alcohol and their children.

- e. Targeting young people who have anti-social behaviour issues and are not in school or education, so far 4 young people completed a certificate for Level 1 for Employability by City and Guides through the Youth Employment Project.

### **Enforcement**

- 3.10 An essential part of CAP is enforcement of the laws relating to young people and alcohol including purchasing of alcohol by under 18s, sales to under 18s, and drinking by under 18s in public places. Our work has involved the following:
- a. Through a joint working exercise, a particular off-licence located close to a secondary school was visited after intelligence of underage sales was obtained. As a result, counterfeit alcohol was found and seized on the premises and several conditions were breached on the licence. A prosecution is currently underway. Young residents from the estates causing Anti-social Behaviour (ASB) were also visited by the police and housing association staff and warned further issues could lead to eviction.
  - b. A particular hotspot was identified of high ASB- underage sales, sales to street drinkers and drug dealings. Through a joint working exercise with Police and Licensing, the particular licensee was called in for a formal warning. Conditions on his license were changed to ensure they enforced Challenge 25 and no sales to street drinkers were permitted. THEOS were deployed in the area for 5 weeks to deter further ASB issues.
  - c. With an increase to promotional and advisory visits to licensed premises, there has been a decrease compared to last year on test purchases. 20% failed tested purchased to 15% failed test purchases recently.
  - d. Based on failed test purchase as first offences, the Trading Standard Review Panel for age restricted products was created to discuss with licensees the incident and how to avoid future reoccurrence of the offence. 10 premises were reviewed this summer and all signed up to comply with Responsible Retailers Scheme.
  - e. After a review panel, 1 premises failed to prevent a sale of an age restricted product a second time and a currently a prosecution is in progress.
  - f. THEOS were tasked to reduce ASB such as street drinking around Frank Dobson Square which was classified as one of the main hotspot areas. Injunctions were obtained against the repeat offenders, through these injunctions and regular patrols. ASB has reduced in this area.

- g. Two Tower Hamlets Enforcement Officers have been deployed to enforce and advise young people found loitering around all the hotspot areas twice a week.
- h. Premises were reminded not to sell alcohol to someone who is already drunk.
- i. Through routine enforcement visits to problematic premises and there are 5 cases considered for prosecution, 12 premises still under investigation and 8 formal written warning was served.

### **Diversionsary Activities**

- 3.11 CAP focuses on creating a range of activities for young people to engage in that do not involve alcohol. Activities that young people can enjoy have fun and learn to deter them away from drinking alcohol. CAP has been involved in the following activities namely:
  - a. Summer Nights Light project was launched summer 2014 to reduce anti-social behaviour by creating diversionary activities for young people. This also helped unite the community and building positive relationships with local services. Positive feedback provided by local residents, being it was a unique event operating in the evenings to create a diversionary activity to reduce ASB issues.
  - b. Four young people with ASB issues successfully completed a certificate in Employability and 2 weeks of work experience at Sainsbury supermarket in Whitechapel.
  - c. The Rapid Response Team deployed 2 mobile units to Collingwood and Ravenscroft estate, supporting 50 young people of mix backgrounds with youth on youth conflict. Out of the 50, 48% of young people have been involved in one or more social education workshops regarding drugs and alcohol, cooking, crime and ASB workshops to divert them away from ASB issues on and around the estate.

### **Public Perception**

- 3.12 Public perception is a key element in making a CAP area successful and the above work has demonstrated to local residents that enforcement and engagement activities have taken place in the CAP area.

## **4. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER**

- 4.1 There are no specific financial implications emanating from this report which provides an update on the Community Alcohol Partnership initiative.

## **5 LEGAL COMMENTS**

5.1 This is a non-statutory scheme. The Council is required to:

- (1) Exercise their function with due regard to the need to reduce crime and disorder in its area (section 17 Crime and Disorder Act 1998);
- (2) Promote and improve the health of people in their area, provide advice and tackle health inequalities (section 12 Health & Social Care Act 2012).

## **6. ONE TOWER HAMLETS CONSIDERATIONS**

6.1 No adverse impacts have been identified

## **7. SUSTAINABLE ACTION FOR A GREENER ENVIRONMENT**

7.1 There are no adverse impacts identified.

## **8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 The Council will be at risk of legal challenge if its decision making process on amending licence conditions in relation to 'reducing the strength scheme' is not transparent and evidentially based.

## **9. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 One of the key licensing objectives is to prevent licensed premises from being a source of crime and disorder. The CAP supports and assists with crime and disorder reduction by controlling those who manage premises open to members of the public and imposing conditions on relevant premises licences.

## **10. EFFICIENCY STATEMENT**

10.1 There are no efficiency elements to this report.

## **11. APPENDICES**

None

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**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 1972 Section 100D (as amended)**  
**LIST OF "BACKGROUND PAPERS" USED IN THE DRAFTING OF THIS REPORT**

None