

ADDRESSING THE PROBLEMS WITH SUPER STRENGTH ALCOHOL & STREET DRINKERS	ITEM
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Committee	Licensing Committee
Officer Contact	Stephanie Waterford, Licensing Service Manager x7232
Papers with report	Appendix 1 – Reducing the Strength Information Appendix 2 – Public Health Bid
Ward(s) affected	All

SUMMARY

To inform the Committee of current issues around the Borough with street drinkers and super strength alcohol.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee discuss the issues and direct Officers on the best course of action.

INFORMATION

At the last meeting of the Full Licensing Committee, Officers were instructed to investigate possible solutions to address issues with street drinkers and sales of super strength alcohol and report back with their findings.

Currently, there are hot spots around the Borough where street drinkers are most prevalent and can be intimidating, cause anti-social behaviour and cause a nuisance to the surrounding businesses and residents.

Officers have investigated a number of different avenues available to deal with the street drinking community and how the super strength alcohol is obtained.

Reducing the Strength

The Licensing Committee will be familiar with the 'Reducing the Strength' scheme implemented in Ipswich by the Suffolk Constabulary. The scheme restricts sales of super strength alcohol by placing a condition upon the premises licence.

Police Officers from Hillingdon visited Ipswich to find out more about the scheme and to see whether a similar model would be suitable to address the issues of street drinking in Hillingdon.

The conclusion of their visit was that the scheme would not be the best way to tackle the street drinkers and that it would involve a great deal of resources to implement. The Police have confirmed that they will not be looking to implement any similar scheme themselves, but they would support, where possible, to the Council in any similar initiative decided upon.

The Licensing Service is currently under pressure with other priorities to implement such a scheme with significantly reduced assistance from the Metropolitan Police Services.

Information relating to the 'Reducing the Strength' campaign attached at **Appendix 1**.

Public Health Bid

Earlier this year, bids were invited by the Public Health Authority to support ideas which would address public health issues around the borough.

The Licensing Service made a bid for funds earlier this year to support various methods in dealing with the sale of super strength alcohol. This was part of a joint bid with Public Health, dealing with alcohol misuse. Full Copy attached at **Appendix 2**. Outcome of bid; we are in phase 2.

Removal of Street Furniture

A request was made to remove a bench in one of the street drinking problem areas in Hayes Town. After discussions with the Highways Service, it was considered that the removal of benches and other street furniture would not be supported by the local community and it would not stop street drinkers from congregating.

Targeted Enforcement & Reviews

Having considered all options for addressing problem drinking in the Borough, the Licensing Service believes that a series of compliance inspections and monitoring of off licensed premises in the problem areas would assist in gathering the evidence needed to progress enforcement action.

The Licensing Service is aiming to work with colleagues in the Metropolitan Police Service and to increase inspections carried out in order to ascertain where the street drinkers are obtaining their super strength alcohol. This is something that could be followed up with Premises Licence Reviews and/or legal action where necessary

If a licence review is brought in respect of issues with street drinkers, the Sub-Committee could consider the imposition of a condition to restrict sales of super strength alcohol on a case by case basis.