

## ALCOHOL RELATED PROBLEMS - HAYES TOWN

<b>Committee</b>	Licensing Committee
<b>Officer Contact</b>	Ian Meens, Residents Services
<b>Papers with report</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Joint Letter to Hayes Alcohol Licence Traders.</li><li>- Letter from the Police about street drinking</li></ul>
<b>Ward(s) affected</b>	Botwell and Townfield

### HEADLINE

An update report to the Committee on 'Reducing the Strength' and street drinking.

### RECOMMENDATION

**That the Committee note the information.**

### SUPPORTING INFORMATION

#### **Reducing the Strength, alcoholic drink marking scheme and street drinking**

Activity in and around Hayes Town Centre regarding street drinkers and other anti-social behaviours have been seen to have a link to the consumption of alcohol mainly purchased from the off-licence trade.

The Committee has requested that the Licensing Team look at the problem in company with the Police and identify any solutions possible.

The problems are clearly seen to be linked to other anti-social behaviours and officers consider it viable and useful to look at the whole street scene environment and ASB in broader terms in certain areas of the Borough.

In that regard discussions were undertaken with the Police and the ASBIT team and some recent proactive work has been undertaken.

#### **The component parts**

##### *Reducing the Strength*

This is based on the concept that street drinkers prefer to purchase and consume very strong beer and cider and thus the purpose is to make such drink difficult to obtain.

This is a difficult task and one that cannot be bulldozed into an area using legislation. The law is complicated on this issue and, as such, most schemes that are up and running in other areas are on a voluntary basis. The level of alcohol content (ABV) for a can of beer/cider and similar beverages also varies around areas where this is being undertaken. In general 6.5 ABV is becoming a standard.

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**Classification:** Public

**Licensing Committee:** 13 April 2017

### Not selling single cans

This is based on the concept that it is a popular trait of street drinkers to buy single cans.

It is identified as a way of reducing the availability of alcohol to those persons who would fund their drinking habits on a very low budget, which can often involve begging.

### Alcoholic drink marking

This is the viability of using a scheme in which retailers mark all cans of beer/cider that they sell. This would then allow the Police and other authorities to identify the retailer of the product should there be a problem with street drinking or underage purchasing.

This scheme was first muted in 2009 when the police secured a budget for £5,500 to trial this in Hillingdon. Following discussions with the Licensing Service there was a trial in Harefield. It was felt that Harefield, being relatively geographically independent, and having a low number of outlets, would be an ideal area to start the process. The scheme did not prove to be a success. It had to rely on the voluntary behaviour from retailers to mark all cans of alcohol products sold. It proved to be a serious burden on their time and not practicable or popular and was not taken up, despite Police pressure to assist with and progress the trial.

The London Borough of Bexley also tried this scheme and did claim some success at the time of the Hillingdon trial. A recent enquiry into the Bexley scheme established that they no longer apply this to retailers. They found it was largely unworkable and that retailers who choose to sell cans to underage children or to drunks would not sell the cans that were previously marked as this would give themselves away.

### **A holistic approach: Hayes Town Project**

The above three control methods, and others, are all seen as having some benefit in dealing with modern anti-social behaviour, but it should be considered that any method/s taken up by the Council are both workable and cost effective. The balance between effort and resources applied to a scheme is equal or beneficial in its outcome.

Where the law exists it should be applied. Where it doesn't we should look for a voluntary behaviour based on good working practice and joint working. Not a 'flash in the pan' but something that can be maintained with little maintenance for the long term.

To this end, the Police have begun looking at new and variation alcohol licensing applications. Where necessary they have asked for and agreed conditions on licences around the sale of drug paraphernalia and the non-sale of high ABV (6.5) beer and cider, which are also covered in two recent letters issued, attached:

- Joint Police/Local Authority letters have been delivered to 18 off licence premises in Hayes.
- Police letter has also be delivered separate to the above

Licensing Officers have accompanied ASBIT officers on three occasions thus far with more visits planned. This joint approach has focussed on many aspects of licensing. Shop front licensing, street scene, special treatments licences and licensing offences. Special

treatments alone established nine unlicensed premises, many of whom are now in the process of application.

The Police have similarly conducted visits around the sale of alcohol to drunks, the sale of drug paraphernalia, producing their own letter (attached) for trader's information. The Police have made several immigration arrests at licensed premises and are now looking at offences around the illegal employment of the same both as a criminal matter and as a licensing issue.

**Implications on related Council policies**

None at this stage

**Legal implications**

None at this stage

**Financial Implications**

None at this stage

**Background Papers / Further Reading Material**

NIL