

WIRRAL COUNCIL

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

8 MARCH 2011

SUBJECT:	THE IMPACT OF ALCOHOL UPON COMMUNITY SAFETY
WARD/S AFFECTED:	ALL
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF LAW, HR & ASSET MANAGEMENT
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	CLLR. CHRIS BLAKELEY
KEY DECISION? <i>(Defined in paragraph 13.3 of Article 13 'Decision Making' in the Council's Constitution.)</i>	NO

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1. The Police Justice Act 2006 extended the remit of Council's scrutiny functions. Regulations state that a Committee shall meet to review or scrutinise the decisions made, or other action taken, in connection with the discharge by the responsible authorities of their crime and disorder functions.

1.2. In 2010 Members of the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee scrutinised a report detailing the impact that alcohol was having upon Community Safety on Wirral.

1.3. In furtherance of the statutory duty contained within the Police and Justice Act this report will scrutinise the same area as the 2010 report. It will provide Members with a review of changes which have taken place during the last year and the impact they have had upon the impact of alcohol upon crime and anti social behaviour on Wirral.

1.4. Members should please note that due to changes in data collection systems it is not possible to compare all changes from the original report but, wherever possible, this will be done.

1.5. Tackling alcohol harm has been identified as a priority for improvement in the Council's Corporate Plan 2010 – 2011.

1.6. This report will detail for members the crime and anti social behaviour impact that alcohol is having upon;

- Victims
- Offenders
- Locations within Wirral.

Also, what new initiatives have been introduced to minimise the impact of inappropriate alcohol use on crime and anti social behaviour since the last report.

The report will conclude with recommendations for Members to consider.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

2.1. Members are asked to consider the contents of this report.

2.2. Members are asked to support the recommendations of the Scrutiny Review Programme Board contained within its scrutiny review of Access to alcohol by young people on Wirral.

2.3. Members are asked to recommend that the Community Safety Partnership consider establishing a performance indicator which explicitly focuses upon reducing the impact of the link between Alcohol and Violence.

2.4. The performance indicators which Members ask the Community Safety Partnership to establish should;

- Seek reductions in levels of alcohol related violence perpetrated by young people.
- Levels will be measured regardless of the young person's youth offending system disposal.
- Seek reductions in levels of alcohol related violence perpetrated by adults, (aged 18 years and above).
- Levels will be measured regardless of the adults criminal justice system disposal
- Percentage reductions should be based upon 2009/2010 baselines.

3.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

3.1. A Scrutiny Programme Board in December 2010, published their findings regarding the "Access to alcohol by young people in Wirral". The report contained 11 recommendations:-

- Wirrals Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy should remain a Council priority.
- Budgeting for alcohol harm reduction should be over a longer time frame.
- Performance management, which includes the development of new performance indicators and the development of a single data sharing agreement.
- Education of young people should include years 5 and 6 at primary school.
- Lobbying the Home Office for changes to legislation.
- Engagement in the regional work to fix a minimum price for alcohol.
- Seek the introduction of a Cumulative Impact Policy.
- Financial support for Trading Standards to continue their work regarding underage sales.
- Continuance of the alcohol related hospital admissions work.
- Developing a tripartite partnership with Magistrates.
- Continuance of the strong multi agency working.

- 3.2. These recommendations promote a wide range of issues necessary to support ongoing enforcement and prevention work in the area of alcohol harm minimisation.
- 3.3. Members will note throughout the Background and Key Issues section of this report that alcohol has had a greater impact upon levels of violence committed on Wirral than reported for the last year.
- 3.4. Previously proxy indicators have been used to monitor the impact of alcohol upon violent crime and the interventions used to minimise that impact.
- 3.5. National Indicators have now been withdrawn and Government require Members to establish performance indicators relevant to local need.
- 3.6. Data sets are now available to directly monitor the impact of alcohol upon violent crime.
- 3.7. This combination of factors provide Members with an opportunity not previously open to them, and such performance measures are relevant to Wirral's need.

4.0. BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

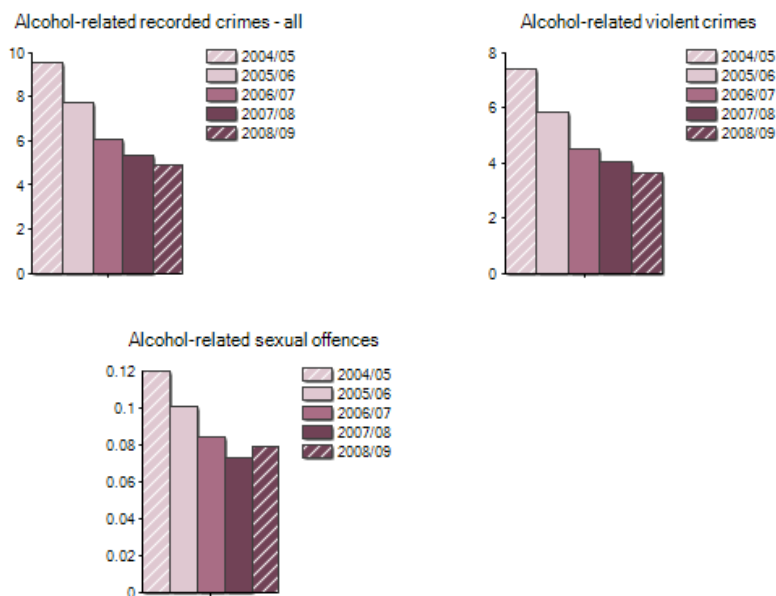
Background

The impact of alcohol upon reported crime and anti social behaviour.

Crime impact

- 4.1. During the period September 2009 - August 2010 the level of crime on Wirral fell by 10% compared to the same period the previous year.
- 4.2. Between September 2009 - August 2010 there were a total of 15,532 criminal offences recorded on Wirral, 2,045 of which the Police Officer reporting stated were alcohol related. This represents 13% of reported crime.
- 4.3 This is an increase in the number of alcohol related crimes of 4% over the last 12 months.
- 4.4. This contrasts with the trend of the previous five years during which, year on year, reductions in alcohol related crimes have been achieved.
- 4.5. The latest data, produced by the North West Public Health Observatory (NWPHO) published September 2010, shows that there are only 6 of 23 indicators, the level of which, does not place Wirral in the bottom decile when measuring and comparing the harm caused by alcohol.
- 4.6. Despite the prevalence of alcohol-related health issues, alcohol related crime in Wirral places the Borough in the top quartile in England for 'all crime' violent crime and sexual crime.

- 4.7. Taken from the same NWPHO report, which is compiled using Police data, one can see that for the five years ending 2008 – 2009, with the exception of alcohol related sexual offences, the levels of alcohol influenced crime have been reduced on Wirral year on year.



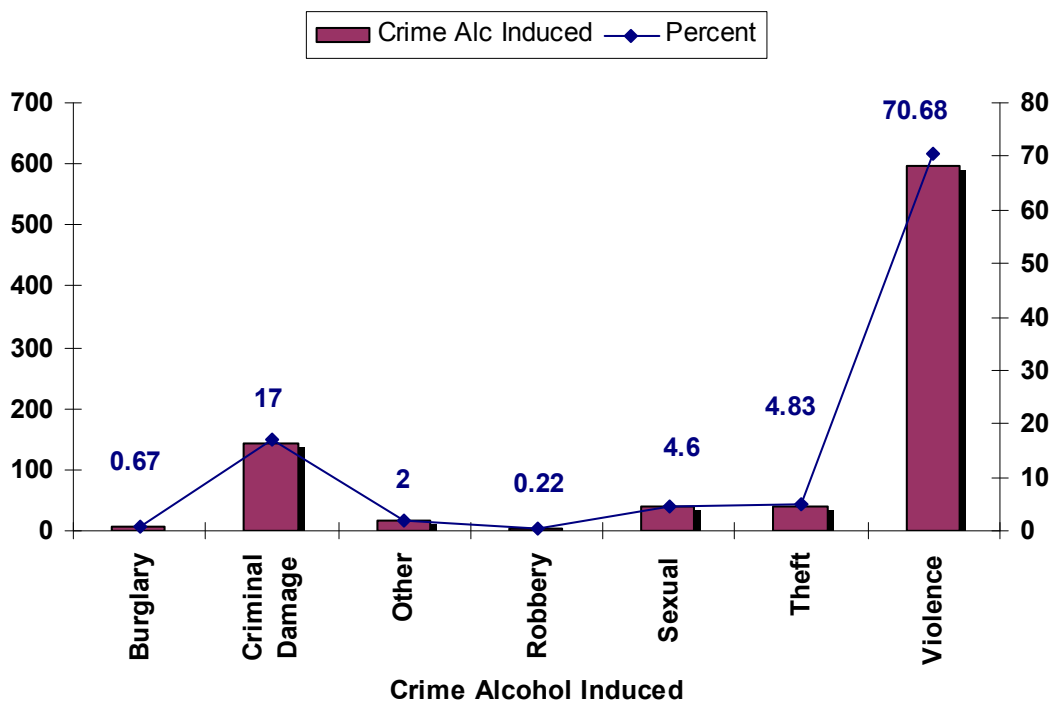
Anti Social Behaviour (ASB)

- 4.8. During the period September 2009 - August 2010 the level of anti social behaviour fell by 7.5%, compared to the same period the previous year.
- 4.9. The number of alcohol related asb incidents was 3,109 which represent 23% of all anti-social behaviour incidents reported on Wirral.
- 4.10. Further analysis shows that the percentage level of both youth and adult anti-social behaviour incidents which are alcohol influenced has remained unchanged.
- 4.11. The number of youth related asb incidents was 5,781 which is 42% of all asb incidents. Analysis shows that 20% of youths causing anti-social behaviour were under the influence of alcohol.
- 4.12. The number of anti social behaviour incidents committed by adults (over 18 years of age) is 7,891 which represent 58% of all anti social behaviour incidents. 25% of adults causing anti-social behaviour were under the influence of alcohol.

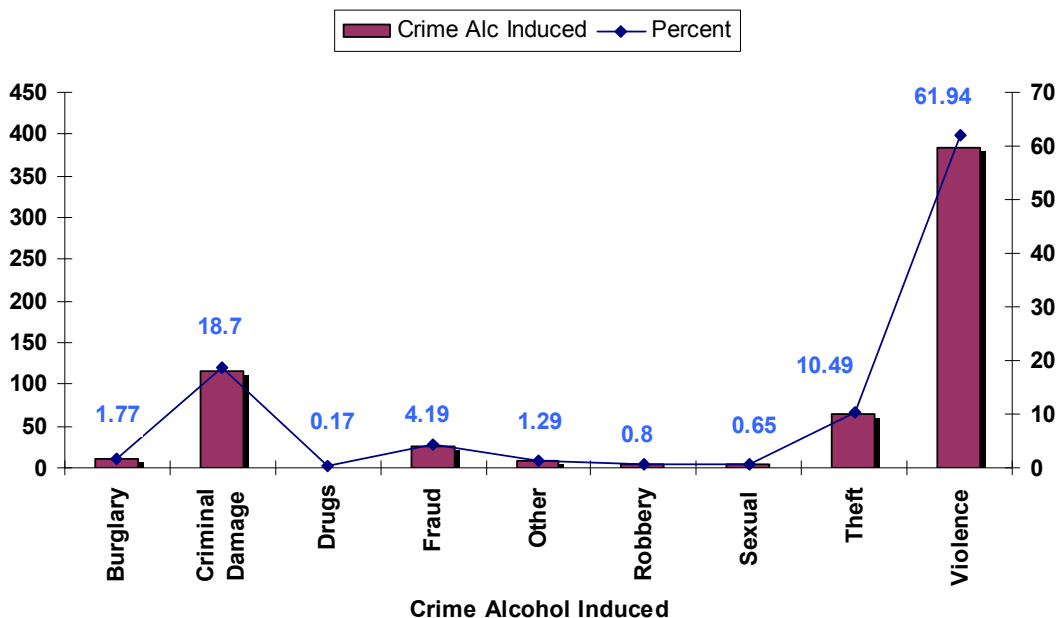
Victim impact of alcohol fuelled crime and anti social behaviour.

- 4.13. The type of alcohol influenced victimisation, analysed by the gender of the victim, is contained in the following two tables:-

Female Victim by Crime Type (alcohol related)



Male Victim by Crime Type (alcohol related)



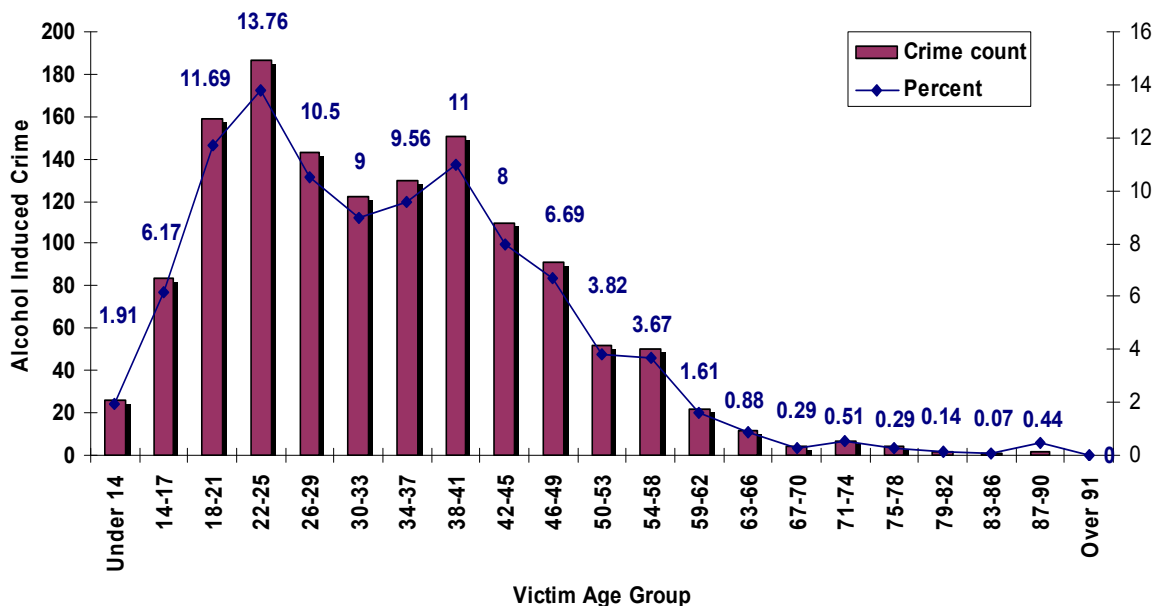
4.14. The gender breakdown for victims of alcohol influenced crime shows that 42% of males were victims of alcohol influenced crime, whereas females on Wirral experienced 58% of alcohol influenced crime.

4.15. As can be clearly seen from the tables above, the primary category of crime for which both male and female are victims is acts of violence. This repeats

the findings of the 2010 report on the influence of alcohol upon community safety.

- 4.16. There has, over the last 12 months, been a change in the age profile of victims of alcohol influenced crime. The highest number of victims is now found in the slightly older 22-25 years cohort, compared to the 18-21 cohort in the previous report. This change in cohort also illustrates an 11.95% fall in the number of 18-21 year old victims compared to the previous report.

Victim Age Groups for Alcohol Influenced Crime



- 4.17. Analysis has also been undertaken using data from the Accident and Emergency Department at Arrowe Park Hospital. For each month between April 2009 and March 2010 more than half of all injuries sustained due to assaults in Wirral were sufficiently serious to require Accident and Emergency Department treatment, and almost half of these assaults were alcohol related. This average of 47.9% is however lower than the previous 12 months average.

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total
All Injuries Involving Alcohol	333	280	282	247	308	201	240	227	291	280	199	235	3123
Assault Attendances	221	211	218	146	222	153	159	162	155	142	119	127	2035
Alcohol-related Assault Attendances	118	90	91	67	112	56	63	76	86	79	66	71	975
Percentage of Assault Attendances which are Alcohol related	53.4	42.7	41.7	45.9	50.5	36.6	39.6	46.9	55.5	55.6	55.5	55.9	47.9

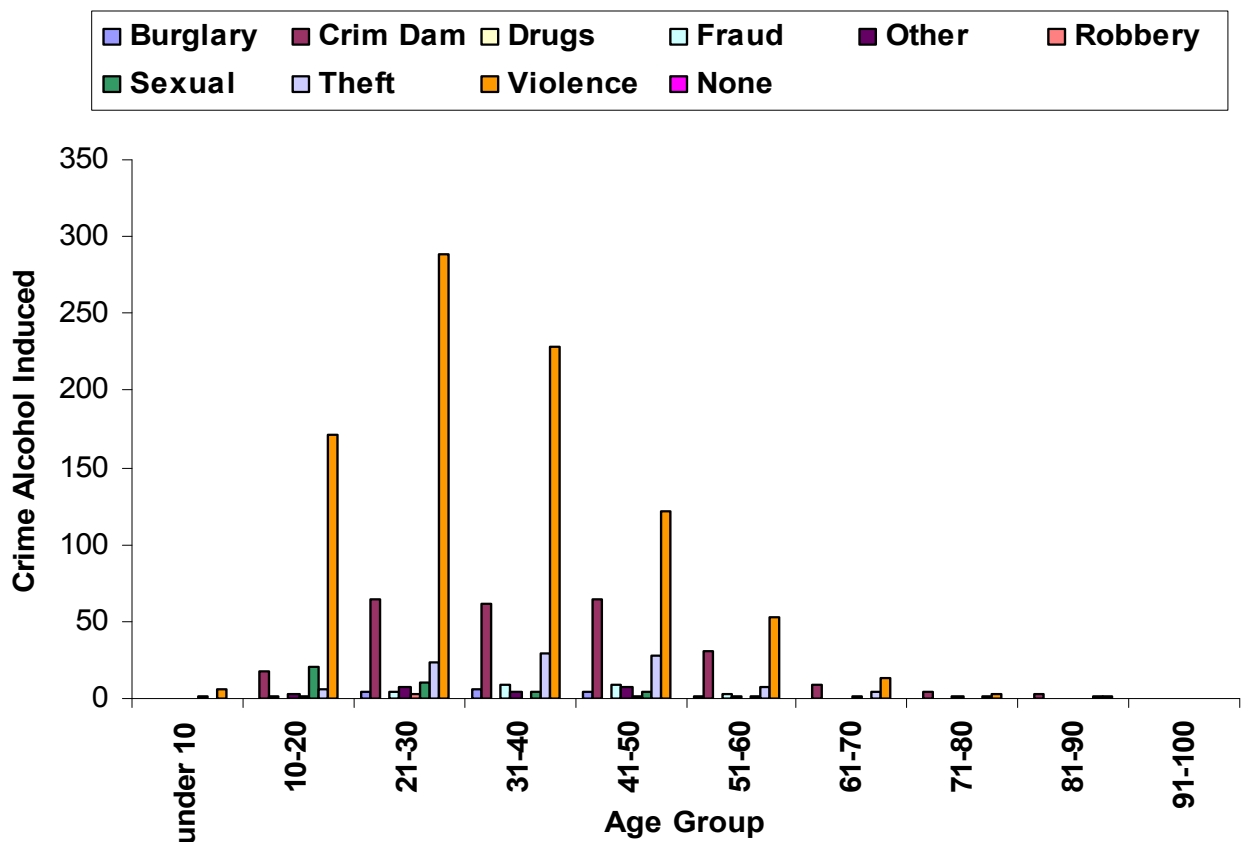
Perpetrators of alcohol fuelled crime and anti social behaviour.

- 4.18. The primary category of crime committed whilst under the adverse impact of alcohol continues to be violence but, compared to the previous year, the

proportion of violence offences influenced by alcohol has risen by 10%. Now alcohol influences 39% of all violence offences reported on Wirral.

4.19. The second largest category of alcohol influenced crimes reported are sexual offences, the level of which has risen compared to the previous year by 14%. Now almost one quarter of all sexual offences are deemed to have been influenced by alcohol.

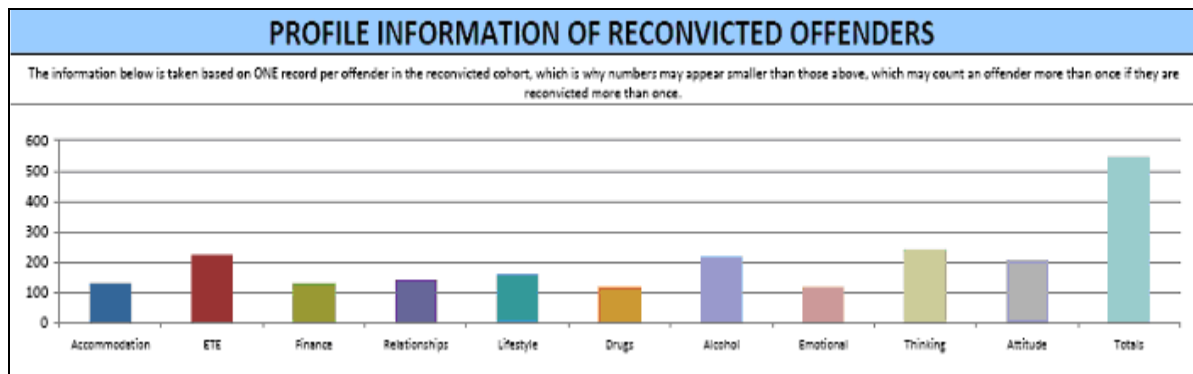
4.20. Analysis shows that alcohol influences a number of different crime types, and influences the criminal behaviour across a wide age range of offenders. However, across the four age cohorts (spanning ages 10 – 50 years) the highest number of alcohol influenced crimes in each case occurs within the violent crime category as illustrated in the graph below.



4.21. The above analysis illustrates a change from the previous report amongst the 10-20,21-30 and 41-50 age cohorts. Previously amongst this group of offenders violence featured, but was not numerically the most prevalent offence.

Repeat Criminal Offending.

4.22. Alcohol has been identified as one of the top three criminogenic (crime influencing) factors in people repeatedly offending on Wirral. This information is obtained by Merseyside Probation Trust when interviewing people convicted of crime on Wirral.



- 4.23. A report which focuses on all of the assessments carried out by Probation staff on the Wirral in 2010, showed that almost 1200 offenders scored 4 or above in the alcohol section of the Offender Assessment System (OASys). This means that the level at which they were drinking would equate to them being assessed as a Harmful or Dependent drinker
- 4.24. Information collected as part of the domestic violence MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference) work shows that in cases where there is a high risk that the victim will suffer further abuse. Most of the perpetrators fall within the 26-40 age range, they are male and 33% have problems with alcohol. (The domestic violence MARAC is a multi agency meeting at which the personal safety plans for victims who have a high risk of repeated domestic abuse are discussed, agreed and implemented.)
- 4.25. Alcohol fuelled anti-social behaviour accounts for a high percentage of the total number of reported incidents. In the case of young people this amounts to 88% of incidents, and amongst adults, accounts for 77% of reported incidents.
- 4.26. In respect of youths and adults alcohol fuelled rowdy and inconsiderate behaviour is the most prevalent form of anti social behaviour.

Locational analysis

- 4.27. Whilst the influence of alcohol spreads across all parts of Wirral the Wards with the highest incidence of alcohol related crime continue to be Birkenhead/Tranmere and the Bidston St James wards.
- 4.28. The rates per 1,000 population of alcohol related crime has increased in Birkenhead and Tranmere wards from 24 incidents per 1,000 population in 2008 – 2009 to 30.5 incidents per 1,000 population in 2009 – 2010.
- 4.29. The rate of alcohol related violent crime has increased in the Birkenhead and Tranmere ward from 14 per 1,000 to 17 per 1,000 population in 2009 – 2010.

What changes have taken place to minimise the impact of inappropriate alcohol use on crime and anti social behaviour since the last report.

- 4.30 Tackling alcohol harm has been identified as a priority for improvement in the Councils Corporate Plan 2010 – 2011.

- 4.31. A substance misuse worker is now working with the Family Safety Unit within the Joint Community Safety Team to provide interventions to victims of abuse who have substance misuse issues (which includes alcohol) problems to overcome.
- 4.32. The work of the Trading Standards Department to reduce the level of underage sales of alcohol continued. In 2009 over 180 off licence staff received training and 46 advisory visits were carried out.
- 4.33. During the period subject of this report the focus was on enforcement activity. In total 89 alcohol test purchases attempts were made at off licences and 12 sales were made, with a further two attempted sales at on licensed premises, both of which refused to sell alcohol.
- 4.34. Following identification of these breaches an investigation is carried out by Trading Standards to determine if the procedures adopted by the off licence are reasonable to satisfy the statutory defence available to the business i.e. that they had reasonable precautions in place to prevent the offence. Following those investigations one off licence was prosecuted and fined £270 with £475 costs awarded to the local authority, two off licences accepted cautions and nine warning letters were sent to the remaining premises. Further breaches may result in prosecution and/or licence review.
- 4.35. A programme of treatment has been developed by the DAAT which develops the powers that Police have to test some offenders on their arrest for their use of illegal drugs. This programme engages a group of offenders including those involved in non trigger offences (predominantly violence) within treatment services in order to reduce their offending behaviour.
- 4.36. *Powder Cocaine & Problematic Drug Users: A comparative study of the characteristics of DIP clients in Merseyside (Apr 09 – Mar 10)* produced by the DIP Monitoring & Research Team, Centre for Public Health, JMU highlights the link between cocaine/alcohol use and violent offending. Over a third (36.1%, n=122) of all powder cocaine related offences involved violent offences
- 4.37. Offenders who during this process test positive for Cocaine are also frequently found to have been using alcohol excessively. This provides an opportunity for Drug and Alcohol treatment providers to work together to provide effective interventions.
- 4.38. For the period April 09 – March 2010, 276 individuals attended scheduled appointments within this service and of those 267 (97%) received Alcohol interventions
- 4.39. New Tier 3 Structured Treatment options that are specifically tailored to address the need of this group of offenders have been developed and recently approved by the National Treatment Agency.
- 4.40. Two “Confiscation Cops” events using external grant funding have been held during which uniformed Police Officers are deployed into areas where

analysis shows there to be issues of young people illegally consuming alcohol and the officers use their powers to confiscate the alcohol from them.

- 4.41 A first draft of Wirrals second Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy has been written and circulated for further comments from partners within the DAAT network. Although the New Government was committed to producing a new National Alcohol Strategy within 100 days of coming into power (mid Aug 2010) the document has still not been released therefore direction from a national level is proving difficult. However the latest drug strategy has been published (Dec 2010) and it makes some reference to alcohol but not a great deal to base a local strategy.
- 4.42. As an interim measure three action plans relating to treatment, crime and communities and youth within the existing Alcohol harm reduction Strategy have been developed and approved and performance management systems have been completed and are being implemented and delivered under the strategic management of the strategy leads at DAAT quarterly meetings.
- 4.43. Specifically of relevance to this report regular meetings take place to drive the crime and communities action plan which covers five main themes; Domestic violence, alcohol related youth crime and anti-social behaviour, alcohol related offending, night time economy and licensing and communities particularly treatment access for Registered Social Landlords, street drinkers and the homeless.
- 4.44. As an alternative to being dealt with by Fixed Penalty Notice or other Criminal Justice interventions Wirral have developed an Alcohol Awareness Intervention.
- 4.45. Arch Initiatives are the delivery agent for this intervention and alcohol offenders are required to attend a classroom session that aims to look at alcohol use, its effects, harm and associated behaviours. This group is operated during Wednesday evening for approximately 2 hours.
- 4.46. National Indicator 39 to reduce the rate of hospital admissions per 100,000 of the population for alcohol related harm for all ages has a target rate of 2827 per 100,000. Wirral has currently achieved a rate of 2343 per 100,000.
- As a subset of the indicator the site of hospital admissions (non-elective) per 100,000 for alcohol related harm under 18 is also monitored with a target of 124 per 1000. Wirral has currently achieved a rate of 115 per 1000.
- 4.47. As the result of service improvements that have been made and of NHS investment in relation to the Adults Alcohol Programme. This has been increased over the last three years and is committed to increase over the next three years. Some of the projects, where DAAT has played a supporting role, include:
- Distribution of information and awareness materials, including the WHAT?
 - Screening programme to target 55,000 people over five years (10,835 in 2009/10)

- Five community based alcohol projects providing day and aftercare for high risk and dependent drinkers
- Introduction of advocacy service which has helped more than 600 people in an eight month period with housing, employment and benefit queries.
- The appointment of two engagement workers within the hospital which has reduced the Did Not Attend (DNA) rates within services and helped increase the number of people successfully completing treatment.
- A new pharmacy 'locally enhanced service' including a range of organisations and involving 55 pharmacies, has been set up to screen a minimum 2000 people, providing brief advice and support.
- 1348 people received specialist treatment for more serious alcohol problems. This work being delivered to address this target is lead by the Public Health Department, NHS Wirral.

5.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 5.1. Data collection systems within Merseyside Police and Wirral's Youth Offending Service that facilitate the identification of alcohol related influenced crime and anti-social behaviour must remain consistent to ensure that data is comparable.

6.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 6.1. In view of the ongoing partnerships and the recommendations contained within this report no other options were considered.

7.0 CONSULTATION

- 7.1. Success in reducing the negative impact of alcohol on crime and anti social behaviour will require the continued level of joint agency working within the following partnerships:-

- Community Safety Partnership
- Drugs & Alcohol Action Team
- Integrated Youth Support

8.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

- 8.1. There are no specific voluntary, community or faith group implications arising from this report.

9.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

- 9.1 Finance for the interventions to reduce the negative impact of alcohol is provided via a combination of financial contributions made by public sector organisations and external government grant funding.

- 9.2. Resources to deliver the range of work detailed within this report comes from a variety of sources. Mainstream resources are provided by the Council, (Joint Community Safety Team, Children and Young Peoples Department, Regeneration Department) Drugs and Alcohol Action Team, (DAAT) Police and Primary Care Trust.
- 9.3. External grant funding supports the work of the Joint Community Safety Team, Youth Offending Service, Police, DAAT and Children and Young Peoples Department. Specifically the, "Safe and Strong Communities Fund", "Youth Crime Action Plan", and "Pooled Treatment Budget".

10.0. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1. There are no legal implications arising from this report.

11.0. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1. Achieving a reduction in the level of alcohol influenced violence will have a positive equal opportunity impact.
- 11.2. All programmes and initiatives detailed within this report are included in the ongoing programme of equality impact assessments.

12.0. CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1. There are no carbon reduction implications arising from this report.

13.0. PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1. There are no planning implications arising from this report.
- 13.2. There is a direct impact upon the communities of Wirral arising from the inappropriate use of alcohol ranging from members of the community having their quality of life disturbed alcohol related anti social behaviour. Youth and adult crime influenced by consumption of alcohol and people becoming victims of alcohol fuelled crime.
- 13.3. There may also be a direct health and personal cost to people involved in alcohol fuelled crime and anti social behaviour when the behaviour directly involves elements of risk taking.

REPORT AUTHOR: Steve McGilvray
Community Safety Co-ordinator
Tel : (0151) 606 5485
email: stevemcgilvray@wirral.gov.uk