

# WIRRAL COUNCIL

## LICENSING HEALTH AND SAFETY AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

21 MARCH 2011

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>CONSULTATION – MINIMUM PRICE FOR ALCOHOL</b>
<b>WARD AFFECTED:</b>	<b>ALL WARDS</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>DIRECTOR OF LAW, HR AND ASSET MANAGEMENT</b>
<b>KEY DECISION?</b>	<b>NO</b>

### 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to report back to Members on the results of the consultation on a minimum price for alcohol.

### 2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Members are requested to consider the results of the consultation and make any recommendations that are considered appropriate to Cabinet.

### 3.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The Liverpool City Region Cabinet is seeking the views of its constituent authorities in respect of proposals to seek a local by-law to enforce a minimum price for alcohol.

### 4.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 On 13 September 2010, Members of the Licensing Health and Safety and General Purposes Committee agreed that the Council seek views on the introduction of minimum pricing for alcohol from members of the public, partner agencies, those organisations that support individuals with alcohol addiction and community and voluntary groups.
- 4.2 The Mersey City Region Safer, Healthier Communities Board and the Cheshire and Warrington Health and Wellbeing Commission are working with partners across the Northwest region to implement a minimum pricing strategy for alcohol. This is part of an overarching strategy to reduce alcohol related harm (including crime and anti-social behaviour), to contribute to improving health and to reduce health inequalities across the region.
- 4.3 The Alcohol Scrutiny Report (Wirral, December 2010) that reviewed access to alcohol by young people in Wirral supported (recommendation 10) the principle of minimum unit pricing for alcohol and requested the Council to engage positively in the process to introduce a regional minimum price for alcohol in the Merseyside Region.

4.4 In January 2011, the Home Office announced plans to set a minimum price for alcohol in England and Wales. The intention is to place a ban on sales of alcohol below the rate of duty plus VAT. The measure works out at 38p for a can of weak lager and £10.71 for a litre of vodka.

## 5.0 THE CONSULTATION

5.1 The consultation was carried out by making a questionnaire available on the council's website and via copies available at the network of One-Stop Shops. A total of 1028 responses were received from these sources. The consultation period began in September 2010 and closed on 18 February 2011.

5.2 Invitations to participate were sent to 46 partner agencies and those organisations that support individuals with alcohol addiction and community and voluntary groups. A full list of these consultees is attached at appendix 1. The responses received from such organisations (11) can be found at appendix 2.

5.3 Appendix 3 contains the contributions (33) from local residents, residents associations and similar bodies.

5.4 The coverage of the proposed minimum pricing for alcohol consultation by the Wirral Globe prompted several comments. These responses can be seen in appendix 4.

5.5 Below is a summary of the responses for each question made via online questionnaire and the Council One Stop Shops.

5.6 **Questions 1 – 3** - are personal details of the individual who completed the questionnaire.

5.7 **Question 4** – Which of Wirral's neighbourhoods do you live in?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Bebington or Clatterbridge	9.1%	91
Bidston, St James or Claughton	4.5%	45
Birkenhead, Tranmere or Rock Ferry	24.7%	247
Bromborough or Eastham	6.1%	61
Heswall, Pensby or Thingwall	5.1%	51
Hoylake, Meols, West Kirby or Thurstaston	7.0%	70
Leasowe, Moreton or Saughall Massie	8.0%	80
Liscard or Seacombe	7.4%	74
New Brighton or Wallasey	8.1%	81
Prenton or Oxtan	8.6%	86
Woodchurch, Greasby, Frankby, Irby or Upton	6.7%	67
I am visiting Wirral	0.6%	6
I work in Wirral but don't live here	2.1%	21
Other (please specify)	1.9%	19
	<b>answered question</b>	<b>999</b>
	<b>skipped question</b>	<b>29</b>

5.8 **Question 5** – What is your relationship to Wirral Council?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Resident	86.2%	846
Member of staff	23.2%	228
Licensed premises	0.3%	3
Off-license premises	0.2%	2
Partner agency/organisation	0.9%	9
Voluntary/community organisation	2.3%	23
Other (please state)	1.7%	17
<i>answered question</i>		<b>982</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>46</b>

5.9 **Question 6** – If you are answering on behalf of a business or organisation please tell us its name

Birkenhead YMCA  
 Bargain Booze Ltd.  
 Horse & Jockey  
 CAS

5.10 **Question 7** – To what extent do you agree with the following statement?

A minimum unit price should be introduced for alcohol sold in licensed premises in Merseyside and Halton.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Agree strongly	18.1%	178
Agree	21.0%	206
No strong opinion	16.2%	159
Disagree	19.8%	194
Disagree strongly	24.9%	244
<i>answered question</i>		<b>981</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>47</b>

5.11 **Question 8** – To what extent do you agree with the following statement?

A minimum unit price should be introduced for alcohol sold in off licences in Merseyside and Halton.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Agree strongly	23.9%	234
Agree	20.3%	199
No strong opinion	13.7%	134
Disagree	18.4%	180
Disagree strongly	23.7%	232
<i>answered question</i>		<b>979</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>49</b>

5.12 **Question 9** – What do you think are the main issues arising from alcohol in your neighbourhood?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
No issues	28.6%	275
Anti-social behaviour	53.0%	509
Young people drinking outside	47.7%	458
Violence	31.8%	306
Noise disturbance	42.7%	410
Criminal damage	34.1%	328
Other (please specify)		116
<i>answered question</i>		<b>961</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>67</b>

The following are free text responses which have been summarised for Members convenience.

5.13 **Question 9 continued** – Other issues arising from alcohol in your neighbourhood. (Free text)

Easy Access	14
Alcohol sold to drunks	2
Vandalism	6
Education	4
Safeguarding Issues for children	1
Opening Hours too Long	1
Health Issues	28
Pollution / Litter	6
Intimidation	5
Domestic violence	1

5.14 **Question 10** – If you support minimum alcohol pricing how do you think it will benefit your community? (Free text)

Reduce anti-social behaviour	93
Reduce health problems	15
Reduce people buying alcohol / less drinking	61
Reduce underage buying alcohol	72
Release more Police / NHS Resources	14

5.15 **Question 11** – If you are opposed to minimum pricing of alcohol, what alternative would you like to see to tackle alcohol related problems? (Free text)

More/Better Policing/Enforcement	77
Tougher penalties	69

Tougher penalties for sellers	4
Better education	85
Restrict availability	21
Revoke Licences	8
Restrict opening hours	26
More alcohol free zones	5
Cheaper soft drinks in licensed premises	3
Pubs offer hot drinks	3
Raise age to from 18 to 21 years	17
Provide facilities for young persons	16

5.16 **Question 12** – Do you have any other comments you would like to add? (Free text)

This question received over five hundred comments from which some themes emerged.

- i. Many respondents were concerned that the introduction of a minimum price would increase the price of alcohol to the detriment of the poorer in the community.
- ii. Some considered that the measure would penalise the majority for the transgressions of the few.
- iii. Others felt that the measure would not work and would lead to negative impacts such as, illegal alcohol being sold, purchases outside the by-law area.
- iv. Several contributors see the introduction of a minimum price as another stealth tax whilst others felt it would increase the profits of the retailers.
- v. Of concern to some was that the minimum price would have an adverse effect on the leisure industry and on the town centres especially Birkenhead.
- vi. A question was raised about the legality of a minimum price for alcohol was raised. It was argued by some contributors that such a measure would be contrary to European Union anti-competition legislation.

Please see appendix 5 for the text of the responses to this question.

5.17 **Question 13** – Office use only

5.18 **Question 14** – Are you?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Male	48.9%	457
Female	51.1%	477

<i>answered question</i>	<b>934</b>
<i>skipped question</i>	<b>94</b>

5.19 **Question 15** – What was your age on your last birthday?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Under 16	0.0%	0
16-24	8.3%	80
25-44	39.9%	384
45-64	41.5%	400
65+	9.3%	90
Prefer not to say	0.9%	9
<i>answered question</i>		<b>963</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>65</b>

5.20 **Question 16** – Do you consider yourself to be a disabled person?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	9.6%	91
No	86.7%	819
Prefer not to say	3.7%	35
<i>answered question</i>		<b>945</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>83</b>

5.21 **Question 17** – Please tell us to which of the following ethnic groups you belong?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
White English	89.3%	851
White Other British	3.6%	34
White Irish	0.9%	9
Any other White background (please state below)	0.8%	8
Mixed White & Black Caribbean	0.4%	4
Mixed White & Black African	0.4%	4
Mixed White & Asian	0.3%	3
Any other Mixed background (please state below)	0.1%	1
Asian or Asian British (Indian)	0.1%	1
Asian or Asian British (Pakistani)	0.0%	0
Asian or Asian British (Bangladeshi)	0.2%	2
Asian or Asian British (Chinese)	0.1%	1
Any other Asian background (please state below)	0.1%	1
Black or Black British (Caribbean)	0.1%	1
Black or Black British (African)	0.0%	0
Any other Black background (please state below)	0.0%	0
Arab	0.1%	1
Gypsy/Romany/Irish Traveller	0.0%	0
Any other Ethnic Group (please state below)	0.2%	2
Prefer not to say	3.1%	30
Other (please specify)		13

## **6.0 RELEVANT RISKS**

6.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

## **7.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

7.1 The report seeks Member consideration of the results of the consultation.

## **8.0 CONSULTATION**

8.1 This report contains the results of a borough wide consultation.

## **9.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS**

9.1 The consultation encompassed a range of organisations including the community and voluntary sector.

## **10.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS**

10.1 The consultation was carried out within existing budgets.

## **11.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 The by-law would need to take account of European Union anti-competition legislation.

## **12.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

12.1 There are no specific implications arising from this report.

12.2 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)  
Is an EIA required? No

## **13.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS**

13.1 There are no specific implications arising from this report.

## **14.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

14.1 The implementation of a minimum price for alcohol is intended to reduce the availability of the “cheap” alcohol which is a contributor to anti-social behaviour

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## **APPENDICES**

- Appendix 1: List of organisational consultees

- Appendix 2: Copies of responses from consultees in Appendix 1
- Appendix 3: Copies of responses from local residents and residents associations
- Appendix 4: comments received as the result of press coverage.
- Appendix 5: Free text comment in response to question 12 of the questionnaire.

**REFERENCE MATERIAL**

- Nil

**SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)**

- A report was presented to the Members of the Licensing Health and Safety and General, Purposes Committee on 13 September 2010

<b>Council Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>