

# WIRRAL COUNCIL

## SCRUTINY PROGRAMME BOARD

28<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2012

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>RESPONSE TO THE SCRUTINY PROGRAMME BOARD REPORT CONCERNING ALCOHOL AVAILABILITY TO YOUNG PEOPLE</b>
<b>WARD/S AFFECTED:</b>	<b>ALL</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH</b>
<b>KEY DECISION?</b>	<b>NO</b>

### 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The meeting of the Wirral MBC Cabinet held on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2011 reached, under Minute 357, a resolution (Resolution F) concerning the co-ordinated response to the report concerning alcohol availability for young people produced by the Scrutiny Programme Board, thus:

Cabinet requests that the Director of Public Health be the lead officer for co-ordinating the response of the Council and other Agencies to this report.

- 1.2 The recommendations made by the Scrutiny Programme Board concerning the report "Access to Alcohol by Young People in Wirral" produced in December 2010 are set out below and the response to each recommendation is appended in their turn.

### 2.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee notes the report.

### 3.0 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 This report has been requested by the Committee to demonstrate the degree of progress made regarding each recommendation offered by the Scrutiny Programme Board.

### 4.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 The Scrutiny Programme Board undertook a Scrutiny Review into the access to alcohol by young people in Wirral during 2010. The report was presented to the Board by Councillor Dave Mitchell (the Chair of the Members Panel) in December 2010
- 4.2 The Scrutiny Programme Board approved a report containing 11 recommendations and agreed that it should be referred to Cabinet. The recommendations are set out below and the response achieved so far is described immediately after each recommendation.

### **A. Wirral Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy as a Council priority**

It was, at the time of the submission of the report, recognised that 'Tackling alcohol harm' was a Priority for Improvement in the Council's Corporate Plan for 2010/11 and a Corporate Aim for 2008-2013. Given the statistical evidence of alcohol harm in Wirral, the Cabinet is encouraged to ensure that alcohol misuse remains a priority among the Council's objectives for the foreseeable future. Financial support for the service should follow its recognition as a priority service.

#### **Response**

This recommendation was referred into the Corporate Plan of the Council and was discussed and approved by the Cabinet at its meeting on the 17th of March 2011

### **B. Funding**

In the past, the alcohol harm reduction services have been provided from a variety of short-term funding streams. This does not promote long-term stability in service provision. In the future, Cabinet is urged to promote long-term planning for the delivery of services by encouraging budgeting for the services over a longer time-frame.

#### **Response**

The Alcohol Scrutiny Review produced by the Scrutiny Programme Board has been referred to the LSP Executive with a request that they give attention to this specific recommendation.

Both Wirral MBC and NHS Wirral provide financial support for a comprehensive alcohol prevention, treatment and care service. Further details concerning the range and type of services offered and the level of investment made can be gathered from the reports submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in November 2010 and March 2011 by the Director of Public Health. NHS Wirral will continue to provide financial support for these services for as long as the funding is available. It is still necessary to stress that long-term planning to tackle alcohol dependency and alcohol related harm will depend upon longer term funding. In addition, it is important to point out that this alcohol specific funding is supported by direct grant funding made to the Wirral Drug and Alcohol Action Team (DAAT). This specific funding enables the delivery of the drug prevention, treatment and recovery programme. The recovery services this grant supports are also available for people who are recovering from alcohol dependence.

### **C. Performance Management**

Cabinet is urged to support the implementation of a series of performance indicators which will measure the outcomes of the Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy, including the preventative aspects of the work and the impact on young people. Further development of suitable data-sharing arrangements among the partners, using a single set of data wherever possible, would be beneficial.

## **Response**

The Alcohol Scrutiny Review produced by the Scrutiny Programme Board has been referred to the LSP Executive with a request that they give attention to this specific recommendation.

NHS Wirral has service agreements (in the form of NHS contracts or NHS Service Level Agreements) with a number of service providers (approximately ten providers are subject to this contractual procedure) in the statutory and non-statutory sectors. Each agreement contains a number of performance management indicators which are monitored on a quarterly or, in some cases, monthly basis. This enables NHSWirral to know whether and how the service specific outcomes are being achieved. These indicators are available to be circulated if required.

The Wirral Community Safety Partnership (CSP) manages a data sharing protocol which incorporates all statutory partners in Wirral. Additionally, the Community Safety Partnership is in the process of developing revised performance indicators for the services it commissions. In this regard, the impact of the alcohol programme is monitored via the analysis of CSP data – most particularly the data describing rates of anti-social behaviour, violence and domestic violence.

## **D. Education of young people**

Council is requested to recognise the importance and continued priority of education for young people regarding the dangers of alcohol misuse. Education is recognised as a cornerstone of the Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy. The support of all agencies, including schools, health authorities (PCTs), the Police, Fire & Rescue Service and the voluntary sector, as well as Wirral Council, is fundamental to the delivery of this service. There is concern that appropriate alcohol awareness education should be available to young people in Years 5 and 6 at primary school. Research shows children aged ten and eleven are the most vulnerable age group regarding alcohol.

## **Response**

The Alcohol Scrutiny Review produced by the Scrutiny Programme Board has been referred to the LSP Executive with a request that they give attention to this specific recommendation.

The Healthy Settings Team and the Health Promotion Specialist Service are hosted by the Wirral Community NHS Trust and commissioned by NHS Wirral Primary Care Trust. These services dedicate a proportion of their resource to reviewing and revising School policy and guidance concerning substance misuse for both Primary and Secondary Schools and will offer training and curriculum development to all Wirral Schools. NHS Wirral is also in negotiation with the Healthy Settings Team to consider dedicating a proportion of their resource to support the delivery of alcohol education services to settings outside school, including children's centres and further education colleges. NHS Wirral is also examining the possibility of re-establishing a support service which would work directly with schools to guide and advise them of the most effective way of managing the issues they may face arising from 'substance misuse incidents' occurring on their premises

The Young Peoples Commissioning Group, the DAAT, NHS Wirral and Wirral MBC help to oversee and support the delivery of young peoples substance misuse services via the Police service, the Children's A&E service, the Children and Young Peoples Department, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and Connexions.

#### **E. Legislative framework**

Wirral Council Cabinet is encouraged to lobby the Home Office for changes in the law aimed at reducing the supply of alcohol to young people by:

- Limiting the promotion of the sale of alcohol, for example, through 'happy hours'
- Restricting the use of alcohol as a 'loss leader' by supermarkets and other retail outlets
- Reducing the promotion of alcohol through advertising
- Reducing the scale of proxy sales by imposing greater fines on those purchasing alcohol on behalf of under-age drinkers

#### **Response**

The Alcohol Scrutiny Review produced by the Scrutiny Programme Board has been referred to the Licensing, Health and Safety and General Purposes Committee (LH&S&GP) requesting that they give attention to this specific recommendation.

#### **F. Minimum unit pricing for alcohol**

The Review Panel supports the principle of minimum unit pricing for alcohol. Council is requested to engage positively in the process to introduce a regional minimum price for alcohol in the Merseyside region.

#### **Response**

The Licensing, Health and Safety and General Purposes Committee considered this issue at its meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2011.

The Director of Law, HR and Asset Management reported back to Members on the results of the consultation on a minimum price for alcohol. He reported that the results of the consultation were by no means clear and that opinions had been broadly balanced. The Director further reported that since the decision had been taken for the consultation to take place, the Coalition Government had announced proposals for a price at which alcohol could be sold.

Mr Abraham, Legal Advisor to the Committee, advised that the introduction of a local by-law would be subject to approval by the Secretary of State. Further to discussions regarding the results of the consultation, it was moved that –

“It be recommended to the Leader of the Council that Members do not support the proposals to seek a local by-law to enforce a minimum price for alcohol.”

\*It is a possibility that the issue of minimum unit pricing for alcohol may be considered by the Government in the near future

### **G. Cumulative Impact Policy**

Council should actively seek to introduce a Cumulative Impact Policy, as has been introduced by Local Authorities such as Liverpool and Brighton, in order to tackle the increase in outlets in specific hotspot areas.

#### **Response**

The Alcohol Scrutiny Review produced by the Scrutiny Programme Board has been referred to the Licensing, Health and Safety and General Purposes Committee requesting that they give attention to this specific recommendation.

### **H. Trading Standards**

The work of Trading Standards is considered an important element in combating the sale of alcohol to young people. An additional £40,000 was included in the 2010/11 budget of the Council to enable Trading Standards to continue tackling under-age sales of alcohol using a number of methods, including test purchasing, which had led to a reduction in sales to under-age young people. Cabinet is urged to retain that financial support.

#### **Response**

This recommendation has been acted upon and is reflected in the Budget set by the Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council for the year 2011-12.

### **I. Alcohol-related hospital admissions**

All agencies, including Wirral DAAT, are encouraged to ensure that the excellent advice services currently available to support young people who are subject to alcohol-related hospital admissions are continued and, if necessary, expanded.

#### **Response**

The Alcohol Scrutiny Review produced by the Scrutiny Programme Board has been referred to the LSP Executive with a request that they give attention to this specific recommendation at a future meeting. The date at which consideration will be given is yet to be determined.

The recommendations offered by the Scrutiny Programme Board have been shared with the Young Peoples Commissioning Group. Additionally, the funding provided by NHS Wirral to support the provision of a young people's alcohol A&E liaison service (provided at the Wirral University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust by RESPONSE) is in place until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013.

The rate of Alcohol related hospital admissions for people aged less than 18 years will be the primary performance indicator for the NHS funded young people's alcohol service

### **J. Relationship with Magistrates**

The Council is encouraged to further develop a tripartite relationship with magistrates and the Police in order to cultivate a mutual understanding of issues relating to the application of licensing laws in the courts.

## **Response**

The Alcohol Scrutiny Review produced by the Scrutiny Programme Board has been referred to the Licensing, Health and Safety and General Purposes Committee requesting that they give attention to this specific recommendation.

This recommendation will also be pursued via the Joint Commissioning Group of the Wirral Drug and Alcohol Action Team (DAAT).

## **K. Multi-agency working**

Wirral Council Cabinet is invited to congratulate all of the agencies and staff involved in the delivery of the Wirral Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy. Although much progress remains to be made in tackling the problem of alcohol misuse in Wirral, the impressive partnership working already in place provides a firm foundation for future progress. The Outreach Workers are among the key front-line staff who engage directly with young people and are responsible for the delivery of the Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy. In the current difficult financial circumstances for public services, the protection of the front-line staff should be recognised as a priority in the onward delivery of the strategy. The approach of strong multi-agency working should continue to be supported in the future.

## **Response**

The Alcohol Scrutiny Review produced by the Scrutiny Programme Board has been referred to the LSP Executive with a request that they give attention to this specific recommendation at a future meeting. The date at which consideration will be given to this matter is yet to be determined.

The Wirral Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy will be revised later in 2012 and will incorporate the outcome of all necessary and appropriate consultations.

## **5.0 RELEVANT RISKS**

5.1 There are no specific risks arising from this report

## **6.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

6.1 The report is for information only

## **7.0 CONSULTATION**

7.1 There are no local implications regarding public consultation arising from this report.

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

8.1 There are no implications for voluntary, community or faith groups arising from this report. However, it is important to point out that the delivery of the Wirral Alcohol Programme is dependent upon the contractual relationship NHS Wirral and Wirral MBC have with a number of Wirral based voluntary, third sector and independent service providers.

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

9.1 The total budget allocation for the Adult and Young Peoples Alcohol Programme in 2012-13 is approximately £3 million. The investment set aside by the Primary Care Trust to maintain the alcohol programme forms part of the planned expenditure up to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013.

## **10.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 There are no relevant legal implications arising from this report

## **11.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 The Wirral Primary Care Trust complies with all relevant Equality and Diversity legislation.

## **12.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS**

12.1 There are no carbon usage or relevant environmental implications arising from this report

## **13.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

13.1 Any reduction in hazardous drinking by residents of any age may be associated with a reduction in alcohol related harm and anti-social behaviour

13.2 There are no implications for planning or approval

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## **APPENDICES**

None

## **REFERENCE MATERIAL**

“Scrutiny Review – Access to alcohol by young people in Wirral” produced by the Scrutiny Programme Board, December 2010

## **SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)**

<b>Council Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Scrutiny Programme Board</b>	<b>5 January 2011</b>
	<b>3 June 2010</b>
	<b>14 January 2010</b>