

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET

24TH JANUARY 2013

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| SUBJECT: | WIRRAL COUNCIL RESPONSE TO THE CONSULTATION ON THE NATIONAL ALCOHOL STRATEGY |
| WARD/S AFFECTED: | ALL |
| REPORT OF: | DIRECTOR OF POLICY, PERFORMANCE & PUBLIC HEALTH |
| RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER: | COUNCILLOR. CHRIS JONES ADULT SOCIAL CARE & PUBLIC HEALTH |
| KEY DECISION? | NO |

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Cabinet of the consultation on the national alcohol strategy; work that has taken place locally to inform a response to the consultation and to ask Cabinet to agree the response from Wirral Borough Council.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

2.1 Increasing consumption of alcohol is acknowledged as an emerging and significant problem nationally and locally. In March 2012 The Government published a National Alcohol Strategy¹ which set out proposals to tackle 'binge drinking', cut alcohol fuelled violence and disorder and reduce the number of people drinking to damaging levels.

In the strategy the Government sets out how it intends to:

- Change behaviour so people think it is not acceptable to drink in ways that cause themselves or others harm
- Reduce alcohol-fuelled violent crime
- Reduce the number of adults drinking above NHS guidelines
- Reduce the number of people 'binge drinking'
- Reduce the number of alcohol related deaths
- Sustain reduction in both the numbers of 11-15 years olds drinking and the amounts they consume

The Government committed to consult on a number of areas in the Strategy including the level at which a **minimum unit price** for alcohol should be set, the introduction of a **ban on multi-buy promotions** in the off-trade, and the introduction of a new **health-related objective for alcohol licensing linked specifically to cumulative impact**. The Strategy also set out that the Government's commitment to consult on whether the **mandatory licensing conditions** sufficiently target problems such as irresponsible promotions in pubs and clubs, and whether they should be applied to all sectors, where relevant. The Strategy also outlined the Government's commitment to remove unnecessary regulation and to exploring how it can make the day-to-day process of licensing as easy as possible for responsible businesses. In doing so, views on a number of **proposals to cut red tape** in the licensing system will be sought.

¹ <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/alcohol-drugs/alcohol/alcohol-strategy?view=Binary>

On the 28th November 2012 the Government launched a ten week consultation on the national alcohol strategy; the consultation closes on the 6th February 2013. The consultation is asking for views on the following five policy areas:

- A minimum unit price for alcohol
- A ban on multi-buy promotions in the off trade
- Reviewing the mandatory licensing conditions
- Health as a licensing objective for cumulative impact policies
- Freeing up responsible businesses

Work has taken place at a regional and local level to develop a response to the consultation, the response is detailed in appendix 1.

The impact of excess alcohol consumption is of local concern as reported in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment. Action to tackle alcohol misuse has been prioritised by the shadow health and wellbeing board and the local alcohol strategy has recently been updated.

3.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 3.1 The detrimental impact of alcohol misuse on the health and wellbeing of Wirral residents has been acknowledged by the shadow Health and Wellbeing Board. The risk of taking no action to tackle the significant harm experienced by local people is not supported.

4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 Not applicable

5.0 CONSULTATION

- 5.1 Work has taken place with the North West collaborative Drinkwise² and local partners to develop a response to the consultation. The work undertaken by Drinkwise brought together comments from partners across the North West, particularly Police services, Trading Standards North West and representatives from North West Councils and the NHS in the North West.

The consultation was debated at the Health and Wellbeing overview and scrutiny committee on the 14th January. The committee unanimously supported the following responses to the questions posed in the consultation on the national alcohol strategy

- A ban on multi-buy promotions on the off trade
- Review of the mandatory licensing conditions
- Health to be included as a licensing objective for cumulative impact policies
- the minimum unit price for alcohol be set at 50p and not 45p as suggested

² www.drinkwisenorthwest.org Drink Wise North West was formed to help minimise the harm caused by alcohol. Working for the NHS and Local Authorities in the North West, they help raise awareness of alcohol harm and ways to reduce the negative impacts of alcohol. They also help the NHS and Local Authorities to provide alcohol related support and services.

The committee requested that further debate be held in relation to the questions posed on freeing up responsible businesses.

A local workshop for partners was held on Tuesday 15th January to ensure a Wirral focus to our response. The following additional factors were identified at the workshop and we will include them in our response:

Minimum Unit Pricing

- Need to better educate children and young people on the dangers and consequences of alcohol
- Non alcoholic drinks should not cost more than an alcoholic drink

Mandatory Conditions

- Further clarity is needed on the definition of irresponsible drinks promotions
- Request for at least 25% of any marketing campaign to be given over to information of the harms of alcohol misuse
- Introduction of mandatory training on alcohol misuse in all on and off licenses paid for through the trade

Health Cumulative Impact

- The impact on the health status of a local community should be an objective in its own right

Freeing up responsibility Business

- Should be more regulations on the hours alcohol is available
- Concern re: increasing availability and access making it easier to get licence
- Need consideration on individual basis premises

General Comments

We would like to see the introduction of national targeted drink aware campaigns
We would like to see the introduction of regulation on marketing / advertising
We need a consistent message on guidelines for alcohol consumption

We have used input from the above to develop the response in appendix 1. Responses need to be returned to the Home Office by the 6th February via alcohol.consultation@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

6.1 Voluntary and community groups attended the workshop held on the 15th January and their views are captured in this report.

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

7.1 Dependent on the policy decisions made by the Government following the consultation there will be resource implications for the Council with regard to enforcement activity for Trading Standards and Licensing.

8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Dependent on the policy decisions made by the Government following the consultation their maybe legal implications for the Council with regard to enforcement activity for Trading Standards and Licensing.

9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Has the potential impact of your proposal(s) been reviewed with regard to equality?

No because this is a response to a consultation not the implementation of policy.

10.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Not applicable

11.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

11.1 Not applicable.

12.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

12.1 The Leader and Cabinet are requested to approve the response to the consultation on the national alcohol strategy as reported in appendix 1.

13.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

13.1 The detrimental impact of alcohol misuse on the health and wellbeing of Wirral residents has been acknowledged by the shadow Health and Wellbeing Board. The national strategy will support local work to tackle the harm from alcohol misuse experienced by local people. Legislation with regard to minimum unit price and multi buy purchases needs to be enacted on a national scale.

REPORT AUTHOR:

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Wirral Council response to the consultation on the national alcohol strategy
Appendix 2: References

REFERENCE MATERIAL

See Appendix 2

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

| Council Meeting | Date |
|------------------------|-------------|
| | |

Equality Impact Assessment Toolkit (from May 2012)

Section 1: Your details

EIA lead Officer:

Email address:

Head of Section:

Chief Officer:

Department:

Date:

Section 2: What Council proposal is being assessed?

Section 2b: Will this EIA be submitted to a Cabinet or Overview & Scrutiny Committee?

Yes / No

If 'yes' please state which meeting and what date

.....

Please add hyperlink to where your EIA is/will be published on the Council's website (see your Departmental Equality Group Chair for appropriate hyperlink)

.....

Section 3: Does the proposal have the potential to affect..... (please tick relevant boxes)

- Services**
- The workforce**
- Communities**
- Other** (please state eg: Partners, Private Sector, Voluntary & Community Sector)

If you have ticked one or more of above, please go to section 4.

- None** (please stop here and email this form to your Chief Officer who needs to email it to equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk for publishing)

Section 4: Does the proposal have the potential to maintain or enhance the way the Council (please tick relevant boxes)

- Eliminates unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advances equality of opportunity
- Fosters good relations between groups of people

If you have ticked one or more of above, please go to section 5.

- No** (please stop here and email this form to your Chief Officer who needs to email it to equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk for publishing)

Section 5:

Could the proposal have a positive or negative impact on any of the protected groups (race, gender, disability, gender reassignment, age, pregnancy and maternity, religion and belief, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership)?

You may also want to consider socio-economic status of individuals.

Please list in the table below and include actions required to mitigate any potential negative impact.

| Which group(s) of people could be affected | Potential positive or negative impact | Action required to mitigate any potential negative impact | Lead person | Timescale | Resource implications |
|---|--|--|--------------------|------------------|------------------------------|
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Section 5a: **Where and how will the above actions be monitored?**

Section 5b: **If you think there is no negative impact, what is your reasoning behind this?**

Section 6: **What research / data / information have you used in support of this process?**

Section 7: **Are you intending to carry out any consultation with regard to this Council proposal?**

Yes / No – (please delete as appropriate)

If ‘yes’ please continue to section 8.

If ‘no’ please state your reason(s) why:

(please stop here and email this form to your Chief Officer who needs to email it to equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk for publishing)

Section 8: How will consultation take place and by when?

Before you complete your consultation, please email your preliminary EIA to equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk via your Chief Officer in order for the Council to ensure it is meeting it's legal requirements. The EIA will be published with a note saying we are awaiting outcomes from a consultation exercise.

Once you have completed your consultation, please review your actions in section 5. Then email this form to your Chief Officer who needs to email it to equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk for re-publishing.

Section 9: Have you remembered to:

- a) **Add appropriate departmental hyperlink to where your EIA is/will be published (section 2b)**
- b) **Include any potential positive impacts as well as negative impacts? (section 5)**
- c) **Send this EIA to equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk via your Chief Officer?**
- d) **Review section 5 once consultation has taken place and sent your completed EIA to equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk via your Chief Officer for re-publishing?**