

LICENSING AND HOW IT CONTRIBUTES TO SAFEGUARDING

Legal & Democratic Services Advisory Committee - 19 March 2019

Report of Chief Officer Environmental & Operational Services

Status: For Information

Key Decision: No

Executive Summary: This report provides Members with information on how licensing can impact on the safeguarding of residents

This report supports the Key Aim of Protecting our residents by making sure that all of our policies, partnerships and teams are working together to safeguard people and communities.

Portfolio Holder Cllr. Anna Firth

Contact Officer Sharon Bamborough Ext. 7325

Recommendation to Advisory Committee: That the report be noted.

Introduction and Background

- 1 This Council works with key partners including Kent Public Health Team, GP Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs), local health and social care providers and the voluntary sector to meet the Community Safety priorities within the Council Plan to protect our residents by making sure that all of our policies, partnerships and teams are working together to safeguard people and communities.
- 2 This Council's services, public assets and local partnerships have a unique and multi-dimensional role in improving safeguarding outcomes
- 3 Some of the key functions delivered by this Council that can play a significant role in safeguarding including Housing, Planning, Licensing, Environmental Health, Community Safety and Economic Development.

How Licensing fits with Safeguarding

- 4 There are several areas in which the role of licensing has a part to play in contributing towards the safeguarding. These include:

- The link between abuse of alcohol and safeguarding issues (*alcohol related illness, alcohol fuelled behaviour e.g. domestic violence or on street violence*)
- The availability of alcohol (the number of off-licences and hours of operation)
- alcohol related crime and disorder and violence
- red flag issues (taxis used for grooming/trafficking and drug dealing customers, who are often young and vulnerable persons)
- Addiction - not just alcohol, but gambling - ensuring solid procedures and policies are in place to assist customers who may suffer. The recent correspondence from GambleAware will be referred to in presentation.

What impact can Licensing have on these issues?

- 5 Whilst it can be easy to identify particular problems with a known premises and take action against to review the licence, it is harder to evidence a more widespread link between general areas (such as town centres) and the increase / presence of alcohol related safeguarding issues. It will rely on good intelligence gathering including statistics from Police and ambulance service callouts if available.
- 6 The Licensing Partnership has promoted the Metropolitan Police initiative, WAVE, this year, in conjunction with Kent Police, across the four authorities. (WAVE is the Welfare and Vulnerability Engagement) - which is an initiative to remind / train the industry and officers about what more they should do to intervene and how this can have a real impact on health outcomes.
- 7 As part of the Knowledge test all potential new taxi drivers must pass in order to become licensed, Safeguarding is a compulsory module which must be successful answered. The safeguarding module covers recognising the signs that a vulnerable person (especially a child) may be being trafficked or may be under duress to carry out drug dealing away from their home (there has been much in the press about the issue of 'crossing county lines'). We work closely with the police on individual cases brought to our attention and always take swift action.
- 8 Licensing has a part to play in ensuring Gambling Harms are have greater awareness attached to them. We recently received some correspondence from GambleAware (attached) and we will use this to investigate what more we can do to work across the Council and with partner organisations such as this one to reduce the effects on gamblers and their families (who can often be the unseen victims, experiencing financial hardship and even homelessness).
- 9 Members will be updated at the meeting with a presentation on this.

Key Implications

Financial

There are no financial implications for the Council associated to this report.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

There are no legal implications for the Council associated to this report.

Equality Assessment

No decision is required as part of this paper and therefore no perceived impact on end users.

Conclusions

For Members to note the work of this Council's Licensing function to contribute to the safeguarding of local residents and visitors to our area.

Appendices

Appendix A

Background Papers:

None

Richard Wilson

Chief Officer Environmental & Operational Services