

Report to Licensing Committee

25 January 2013

Home Office Consultation on delivering the Government's policies to cut alcohol fuelled crime and anti social behaviour

1. Summary Statement

- 1.1 The Home Office issued a consultation paper in November 2012 setting out proposals for delivering the Government's policies to cut alcohol fuelled crime and anti social behaviour.
- 1.2 In the consultation document the Government expresses the view that the majority of people enjoy a drink without causing trouble but that there are a significant minority who do not.
- 1.3 The consultation therefore sets out a number of proposals which are designed to tackle issues around alcohol-related crime and disorder and anti social behaviour, including changes to the Licensing Act 2003 (referred to in this report as 'the Act').
- 1.4 The consultation seeks views on five key areas:-
 - minimum unit pricing;
 - a ban on certain 'multi-buy' promotions;
 - a review of the mandatory conditions;
 - introducing 'health' as a licensing objective;
 - cutting red tape for responsible businesses.
- 1.5 The Government maintains that its proposals are not about stopping the sensible, responsible drinking which supports public houses and clubs within the community, creates thriving town centres and provides employment and growth.
- 1.6 Instead, the measures contained in the consultation document are aimed primarily at reducing harmful drinking.
- 1.7 The consultation runs until 6 February 2013.
- 1.8 The consultation document is attached to this report as Appendix 1.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 That the Committee agrees a response to the Home Office Consultation on delivering the Government's policies to cut alcohol fuelled crime and anti social behaviour, in order to meet the Home Office deadline of 6 February 2013.

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3. Strategic Resource Implications

- 3.1 There are no direct strategic resource implications associated with the report. The effectiveness of any conditions or restrictions on the sale of alcohol will be dependant on statutory agencies and other bodies being adequately resourced to be able to monitor, collect evidence and enforce licensing legislation.

4. Legal and Statutory Implications

- 4.1 There are changes proposed to the Act and Guidance issued under Section 182 of the Act.
- 4.2 As the licensing authority, the Council has a legal duty to carry out its duties in accordance with the Act and the Guidance

5. Implications for the Scorecard Priorities

- 5.1 The Act has 4 specific licensing objectives, which are:-
- (a) preventing crime and disorder;
 - (b) public safety;
 - (c) preventing public nuisance; and
 - (d) protecting children from harm.

- 5.2 The licensing function under the Act specifically impacts on the following priorities
- i. Great Prospects – Investing in people, businesses and jobs : licensed premises provide employment in the Borough and, as such, they play an important part in contributing to the Borough’s economy.
 - ii. Great Place – the objectives of the Act help to maintain a safer environment for those who visit licensed premises or take place in licensable activities within the Borough, and for those living near to licensed premises.

6. Background Details

- 6.1 The measures contained in the Home Office consultation document are part of the Government’s overall Alcohol Strategy which it published in March 2012.
- 6.2 The Government maintain that the proposals contained in the consultation are not about stopping responsible drinking, or adding unnecessary burdens on business, but are about taking action to tackle the health and crime harms caused by excessive alcohol consumption.
- 6.3 The Government is also committed to removing or reducing unnecessary burdens on business, to support local growth, including for those businesses involved in the sale of alcohol.
- 6.4 The consultation therefore proposes a number of measures to further reduce the burden of the licensing regime by developing a more targeted, more proportionate and flexible system that can support responsible growth while maintaining its integrity to protect individuals and society from irresponsible activities.
- 6.5 The Home office consultation document itself is attached as Appendix 1 to this report.
- 6.6 The Local Government Association’s Safer and Stronger Communities Board have drafted a response to the consultation, a copy of which is attached as Appendix 2.

Source Documents

Government’s Alcohol Strategy March 2012
Home Office Consultation November 2012