

Select Committee on Community Safety and Community Services –

Joint Report of the Director of Adult Community & Housing Services and Director of Urban Environment.

Social Responsibility Scheme

Purpose of Report

1. (1) To provide the background to and summary of the Social Responsibility Scheme (SRS) pilot scheme and roll out.
(2) To inform the Select Committee of the benefits of the Social Responsibility Scheme (SRS) as part of a package of measures to reduce underage drinking, reduce antisocial behaviour, increase reassurance and community safety and improve health and outcomes for young people.

Back ground

2. The SRS was developed in response to community concerns about anti social behaviour and criminal damage where, as a result of community involvement and joint working, underage drinking was discovered as an associated factor. The SRS is part of a wider approach to tackling these issues locally and influencing the necessary service changes to address this multilayered issue.
3. The SRS was developed in the context of the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy and, through the community renewal approach, has identified and enabled a response to a gap in implementation of the community safety strategy, the children and young people's plan and health & wellbeing strategy and associated statutory responsibilities. It is about joining up the way those agencies and communities plan and deliver locally and about making sure that the lessons learned are a transferred to other policy and strategy makers. The SRS and the local joining up to address alcohol are now clearly identified in the NGLAA (new generation local area agreement) task group delivery planning and performance management framework.
4. Previous attempts by the Area Community Renewal Officers to deal with the community issues associated with off licences and other approaches to reduce the numbers of young people drinking alcohol i.e. programme of diversionary activities and interventions with the youth service and Police were only partially successful. Off licences and the problems of underage sales proved a difficult issue for Trading Standards to deal with and elected members reported increasing frustrations with the licensing system. The partial success meant repeated agency activity to address the same issues and a narrower partnership approach i.e. each agency attempting to deal with their own strand of the problem in isolation meant missing the benefits of shared intelligence and the impact of joint resources required to make inroads into the issue.
5. **Scheme details**
The SRS is a a multi-agency initiative led by Trading Standards and Community

Renewal in partnership with West Midlands Police and local businesses and is part of a package of measures designed to tackle underage drinking and its associated community issues. The partnership approach is a key factor and a multi-agency project team was established with the following partners:

DACHS Community Renewal Service,
West Midlands Police Neighbourhood Sergeants and Licensing Officer
DUE Trading Standards and Licensing

6. The SRS is based on a code of good conduct, introduced among off licences in areas where the problem of binge drinking amongst young people is considered by the community and elected members to be leading to crime and anti-social behaviour. These perspectives are cross referenced with community safety data. There is also the detrimental impact on a young person's health and well being to consider.

Signing up to the scheme demonstrates that a retailer is acting responsibly in the interests of young people and the wider community and potentially could be used to support any licence application in terms of meeting the licensing objectives i.e. the prevention of crime and disorder, public safety, prevention of public nuisance and the protection of children from harm.

7. The project includes interviewing Off Licencees and signing them up to a protocol to work with partners to combat underage sales of alcohol. In return it offers a number of support mechanisms to local traders including interventions to help create safer environments for residents around trade locations e.g. better street lighting, tree/bush, walls and fencing removal and CCTV installation.

Retailers are encouraged to use the 'Challenge 25' Proof of Age Scheme, which is when a person appears to be under the age of 25 they must be asked to provide a valid proof of identification and proof that they are 18 years old or above. Acceptable valid proof is Passport, Driving Licence and Proof of Age Standards Scheme (PASS) card for example a Citizen Card.

Information

8. Pilot Scheme and Evaluation

Castle & Priory was chosen as the pilot neighbourhood because it was identified as one of the two antisocial behaviour hotspots in the borough (the other at the time, being Lye); it had strong community involvement through its area regeneration board and members of the community because of their involvement were part of the local intelligence provision around breaches of the protocol.

A similar problem with criminal damage and vandalism associated with young people under the influence of alcohol had also been identified with the young people at Upper Gornal in the adjacent neighbourhood. Discussion and Community Renewal Team analysis of the situation led to the recognition that the young people involved were transient between both neighbourhoods and their "community boundary" was different to the recognised ward/locality boundary and so a joint neighbourhoods approach was proposed.

9. The Area Community Renewal Officers identified through community and elected member engagement the issues of underage drinking and as a result worked together with the neighbourhood policing team to implement a number of stops of young people carrying alcohol in the Castle and Priory neighbourhood. In the region of 600 stops were carried out and 80% of the young people were found to

be carrying alcohol and were under age. The alcohol was confiscated and subsequently the police received a considerable number of calls from parents complaining that the alcohol had been removed from their children, indicating the problem was more culturally entrenched within the family rather than purely a “youth” alcohol issue.

10. It was agreed to pilot a “social responsibility” scheme with Off Licences in the Castle & Priory and adjoining Gornal neighbourhood, and a bid was put forward to the Safe and Sound’s Joint Activities Group.

11. Process

- (1). Analysis of data and local intelligence held by West Midlands Police and Community Renewal Service was carried out to identify the “problematic” areas and issues relating to individual premises.

- (2). All licensees in the identified neighbourhoods were invited to attend a structured interview at Dudley Police Station outlining the scheme and covering the purpose and best practises, including support measures.

- (3). West Midlands Police Community Partnerships officer carried out crime reduction assessments at each of the off licences and with the licensee and other partners agreed a plan of improvements, some of which were the sole responsibility of the premises owner whilst others formed part of the funded interventions.

- (4). Each off license was visited by Trading Standards Officers, Police and Community Renewal Officers and awarded a certificate to display in the retail premises which openly demonstrated their sign up to the scheme and their commitment to not selling to those underage or to people they believe to be procuring alcohol on behalf of those underage. The signed protocol is attached to the Off Licence file and held by licensing.

- (5). The police agreed to increase patrols within the vicinity of the off licence premises to give support and increase confidence for the retailers who experience difficulties with youths congregating around their shops and to provide a visual presence for the local community.

- (6). Retailers were offered “Servewise” training through the Drugs and Alcohol Action team with the benefits of

- Reduced risk of staff selling alcohol to underage persons
- Protecting licence by teaching staff their legal rights and responsibilities
- Preventing incidence by heightening employee awareness and confidence
- Realistic strategies for how to refuse service without giving offence with staff more confident and better able to deal with individuals or groups that may cause problems including underage persons

- (7). Follow up visits to the premises by the operational team occurred in February 2008, with all off licenses still participating. A subsequent visit was made in May 2008, on the day schools broke-up for half term. This visit included the distribution of literature from the Health Promotion Advisor and information on half term activities being run by the Youth Service.

The operational team was reviewed in April 2008 to continue the joint approach and Trading Standards are continuing to visit the premises to ensure that all necessary documentation is kept by the retailer e.g. Refusals register and information posters.

12. Outputs from initial pilot

14 Off Licences signed up the protocol

14 Off Licences signed up the Off Licence Watch

14 crime reduction inspections carried out of the Off Licence premises by the Police Community Partnerships Officer.

CCTV camera upgrades and installation recommended by the Police Community Partnerships Officer were funded by Joint Activities Group (JAG)

Outcomes

- Reduced complaints from residents concerning youths congregating around off licence premises
- Working relationships established with all the licensees in the Castle & Priory and Gornal neighbourhoods.
- Licensees have been invited to become part of the Community Safety Partnerships/Police Panels.
- Improvements in business for the retailer as in some cases communities involved boycott premises who sold alcohol to young people.
- Security assessments of the premises carried out by West Midlands Police.
- Move from a reactive to proactive approach for trading standards and licensing
- Increased intelligence for local policing teams
- Proactive approach to dealing with youth alcohol consumption and antisocial behaviour including community support for the scheme

13. Added value and variation in approach

The broad background relating to alcohol use and misuse are also relevant to other service areas and partnerships for example:

Joint working with DCP and the West Midlands Regional Improvement Efficiency Partnership is using systems thinking to tackle some of the cross-cutting issues of alcohol misuse prevention/intervention.

Under the auspices of Dudley Community Partnership (DCP), the Health and Well-Being Partnership (H&WBP) is responsible for working together for the wellbeing of communities which includes the impact of alcohol misuse upon communities. The H&WBP also oversees health and care services for people including those who need professional assistance because of their alcohol use and in July, hosted the Health Inequalities National Support Team (HINST) review of Dudley's approach to addressing health inequalities which included working together to address alcohol misuse and deprivation.

The Strategic Housing & Environment Partnership (SHEP) is responsible for working together to address the quality of the environment for communities including graffiti, green spaces, street scene, littering and environmental damage. The Children's Trust is responsible for the overall wellbeing of children and young people under *Every Child Matters*, this includes the impact of alcohol on young people and their families.

The Economic Development & Reneneration Partnership (EDRP) is responsible for worklessness and skills as well as regeneration and alcohol misuse is identified as a barrier to work, skills and learning.

The Safe and Sound Board are responsible for working together to address the community reassurance, crime and community safety and are developing a multi-agency alcohol strategy in line with the national alcohol strategy – 'Safe, Sensible and Social'.

14. In terms of the local SRS pilot, Community Safety funding to enable additional measures was made available to Castle & Priory only, because the area was identified as a criminal damage hot spot. This was also matched by other agencies being focussed on to the problem through the strong local community partnership work of the area board and neighbourhood services group.

The measures included:

- The piloting of additional detached youth service sessions at the weekend (Friday and Saturday night), a youth and family mentor based at the community centre – both monitored through the neighbourhood partnership (the castle & priory area board) ;
- A neighbourhood and family alcohol support worker from Aquarius was commissioned to support local agencies in dealing with the wider chronic misuse of alcohol and the approach to vulnerable people and to begin to investigate and unearth some of the deep seated cultural issues associated with alcohol in the neighbourhood. Initial evaluation identifies self esteem and other social issues as deep seated causes and points to better joining up of agency responses, information sharing and coordination of action. The results of this programme will be the subject of a separate joint report from Aquarius and Community Renewal.
- The local community also funded a series of play sessions aimed at the 8 - 13s to impact upon the lead into the age group where underage drinking is prevalent and also to reduce the damage caused by younger children in the neighbourhood.

15. What is apparent on evaluation was that the added value of the wider partnership approach reduced antisocial behaviour in the Castle & Priory neighbourhood by 50% by the end of 2008.

This has since crept up with the loss of funding for the additional mentoring and the neighbourhood and family alcohol support and the additional play activities struggle for continued funds. Despite that, involvement with the neighbourhood partnership (castle & priory area board) and Neighbourhood Services Group has led to the extended school at Castle High making available increasing extra curricular activities ranging from Wolves in the Community, Horse riding, Dance, Karate, music etc. and a variety of activities are now underway at the local community centres including Sycamore Green and Wrens Nest. The activities are well supported by community volunteers and the local policing team one of whom has now been nominated to receive a national award.

In Upper Gornal, the development of the Fair-play football project and the skate park, in conjunction with local residents and young people, resulted in the engagement with over 40 young people into positive activities. Unfortunately loss of support from residents following issues of vandalism and damage by a minority of young people has led to the closure of the skatepark and funding has ended for Fairplay. The re-escalation of antisocial behaviour has led to the area being identified as a current borough hotspot. To address this as well as the implementation of Stay Safe, local residents and agencies are working to build up activities at the Quarry Centre as identified in the Area Committee Community Renewal Plan for North Dudley.

Extension of the Scheme and Roll Out

16. The SRS provided agencies with an opportunity to focus on service issues in

relation to the way in which off- licences were addressed in the most challenging neighbourhoods in terms of broader community issues and for partners to experienced a collective focus to address a range of issues of concern.

17. In January 2009 the protocol was revised and adapted and was rolled out to Coseley, and Woodsetton as part of the North Dudley Community Renewal Plan and Trading Standards approach, with a further 15 Off Licences in North Dudley signing up to the scheme and receiving Serve Wise training . This was also followed up by a surveillance operation on proxy sales. The PCT Health Promotion Advisor in Alcohol contributed to the project with literature and advice for the off licences to promote safe drinking limits.
18. In April 2009 the scheme was implemented with the 2 alcohol retailers in Wallheath, following severe vandalism and criminal damage to the community centre. Servewise funding had by this time ceased.
19. The focus of attention was on the families of the young people found drinking, with a scheme to escort them home via police and “invite” the parents to the police station where, to ensure the protection of children from harm and the prevention of public nuisance, crime and disorder, parents were encouraged to agree to the following measures:
 - Prevent their son / daughter from consuming alcohol in any unsupervised environment.
 - Be aware of the whereabouts of their son / daughter at all times
 - Access any services deemed appropriate that will help address any problem associated with alcohol.
 - With their son / daughter, attend a series of 3 alcohol prevention workshops delivered by the Primary Care Trust.
20. So far reports indicate that incidence of underage drinking is reduced and criminal damage to the Community Centre is reduced although vandalism in the area of the Community Centre remains a problem and is requiring a broader multiagency approach to resolve it -again illustrating that the SRS forms part of a partnership approach.
21. In June 2009, the SRS was rolled out to Kingswinford, Hawbush, Brockmoor, Pensnett and Wordsley, extending the scheme to a further 20 Off Licenses and alcohol retailers. This was followed up by a Police and Trading Standards operations to enforce against those Off Licenses not complying with the protocol and also to challenge and return home young people found to be under age and under the influence. Results of the operation are currently confidential pending possible legal action.
22. In September 2009 Russell’s Hall/ St James signed up 19 Off Licenses to the scheme. Time scales are so far, too short to be evaluated but the SRS will build on the multiagency approach to families, children and antisocial behaviour developed by the Area Community Renewal Officer at Gammage Street, details of which were reported to the last committee.

23. **Lessons learnt**

The SRS, so far, has demonstrated that a joint approach with all relevant agencies has improved partnership working and is required to unpick some of the local complexities of the issues of underage alcohol consumption.

Multiagency working, has led to shared intelligence, unity of purpose and thus

reduction in duplication and conflict between services, improved accountability and added value, improvements in community safety, learning & skills and the environment, which would not have been delivered in a single agency mode. The increased intelligence provided to local policing teams and support given to local off licences is also highly valued and has the added value of unearthing other criminal activities.

24. It is acknowledged that the SRS is one part of tackling this problem and other initiatives must be continued e.g. diversionary activities for young people, education, enforcement measures and work with parents who are supplying their children with alcohol.
25. Support of the local community was critical to the success of the scheme as local people reported any transgressions for the follow up visit, they “owned” the scheme and were empowered by their involvement and results. A clear message has been sent out to all off licensees in the identified neighbourhoods that the problems associated with underage drinking and those who contribute to it by supplying young people with alcohol will not be tolerated by the communities or services in the area.
26. Young people do not acknowledge the same community boundaries as the adults, thus approaches must be flexible. If young people cannot purchase alcohol in one area they will try others and therefore it is important that any good practice is rolled out to the rest of the borough and surrounding local authorities.
27. The SRS process built on techniques developed in other neighbourhoods to address antisocial behaviour through partnership working, namely the Sledmere approach. It realised efficiencies for the agencies involved by reducing the number of abortive or conflicting interventions, the amount of paperwork and administration and also facilitated the sharing of expertise and resources to increase impact.
28. The scheme is a national first and has attracted significant number of enquiries from outside the borough.

29. **Way Forward**

Partners have identified through data, engagement with elected members and communities, additional neighbourhoods for the SRS rollout.

The suggested programme so far is

- Halesowen town centre and outlying areas (October/November)
- Netherton (Halesowen Road) (Nov/ Dec)
- Lye and outlying areas of Stourbridge (Jan/ Feb)

Approaches will vary locally according to circumstances, although the core offer will remain. Further evaluation among partners, elected members and communities will continue to enable good practise and learning to be shared and incorporated.

Finance

30. The Community Renewal plans identify work which is being undertaken through mainstream or other budget source and gaps in provision or need. The Community Renewal Service seeks to maximise the benefit derived by local communities by focusing day to day activities in a different way into a defined area to achieve shared intelligence, common purpose, reduction in duplication and added value.
31. The SRS was financed from within existing agency resources and relied on the alignment of the activity of a variety of agencies and partners onto a specific neighbourhood issue. Community Renewal, the Community resources were already directed at local partnership working. Police and Trading Standards and Licensing resources were already directed at enforcement, managing off licenses and criminal activity. The PCT already had dedicated community development officers with portfolio for alcohol and young people and a remit for addressing health inequality. Additional resources were levered in through Safe & Sound to pay for environmental and security upgrades and the detached youth service. Since the pilot the youth service and Connexions have also aligned their activity.

Law

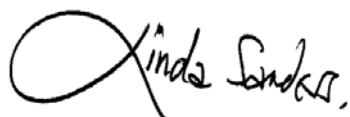
32. The Local Government Act 2000 places a duty on local authorities to establish a local strategic partnership to address collaborative working and develop a community strategy and local neighbourhood renewal strategy. Community Renewal is part of that approach.
Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000 (as amended by the Local Government in Public Health Act 2007) enables the Council to do anything which is likely to achieve the promotion or improvement of the economic, social and environmental well being of the area.
The 1998 Crime & Disorder Act places an obligation on local authorities and the police to exercise its functions with due regard to do all it reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder in its area.
The Licensing Act 2003, section 13 permits the responsible authority (defined as the Local Weights and Measures Authority) to make representations concerning variations or new licence applications and to call for a review based on any of the licensing objectives (the prevention of crime and disorder, public safety, the protection of children from harm and the prevention of public nuisance).
The Licensing Act 2003, section 146 and 147 places a duty of enforcement on the local weights and measures authority, against any person (or a club) that commits the offence of selling alcohol to an individual aged under 18 and against any person who knowingly allows the sale of alcohol to an individual aged under 18.

Equality Impact

33. One of the objectives of community renewal is to promote social inclusion and social cohesion and equality of access and opportunity.
Information is collected through each community renewal intervention or consultation to monitor various groups and people involved. Where inclusion is an issue Area Community Renewal Officers engage with various communities of interest groups locally, to design appropriate responses to different circumstances. Children and young people are included in the term "community " are actively involved and consulted in designing the response to local issues.

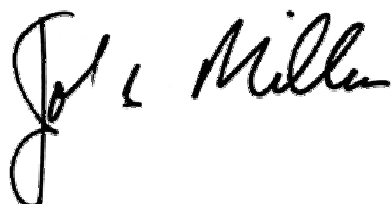
Recommendations

- 34.
- That members note the work of the participating agencies.
 - That members note the benefits of the partnership approach and the coordinating and project management role undertaken by the Area Community Renewal officers in enabling agencies to meet their objectives and the needs of local communities and neighbourhoods
 - That members note the positive impact of the community renewal strategy on community safety, health and wellbeing, children and young people and the environment and on strengthening agency processes and informing associated strategies.
 - That the select committee notes the roll out of the SRS and recommends to the cabinet members for the environment and culture and adult and community services that it is rolled out in line with the suggested programme with finer detail to be determined through the Area Committee Community Renewal working groups locally.



Linda Sanders

Director of Adult Community and Housing Services



John Millar

Director of Urban Environment

Contact Officers: Susan.mcgavin@dudley.gov.uk
Mike.chambers @dudley.gov.uk