

## LICENSING AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 26<sup>th</sup> July, 2005 at 6.00 pm  
in Committee Room 3, The Council House, Dudley

### PRESENT:-

Councillor Ryder (Chairman)  
Councillors Mrs Ameson, Blood, Mrs Coulter, Ms Craigie, Donegan, Mrs  
Dunn, Finch Hart, Tomkinson, Woodall and Wright.

### Officers

Assistant Director (Legal and Democratic Services)  
Food and Occupational Safety Manager (Directorate of the Urban  
Environment)  
Mrs J Holland (Directorate of Law and Property).

Also in attendance: Inspector Chris Berrow and Sergeant Kerr Ross  
(West Midlands Police)

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### MINUTES

#### RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 26th  
May 2005, be approved as a correct record and signed.

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### CHANGE IN ORDER OF BUSINESS

Pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 13 (c) it was

#### RESOLVED

That the remaining items of business be considered in the  
following order:

Agenda items 7 and 6.

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### POLICING ISSUES RELATING TO THE LIQUOR LICENSING LEGISLATION

Inspector Chris Berrow and Sergeant Kerr Ross gave a presentation to  
the Committee. The first part of the presentation consisted of video  
footage shot the previous weekend in Stourbridge town centre in the  
early hours of the morning showing the volume of traffic, movements of  
taxis and the behaviour of youths turning out from local public houses  
and entertainment venues in the early hours.

In presenting the video to the Committee, Sergeant Ross explained the issues appertaining to alcohol related crime and informed the Committee of initiatives the government have, or are planning to put in place, to address the problems.

Inspector Berrow presented a map of all the licensed premises in North Dudley and a graph indicating the frequency of violent incidents and their relationship to alcohol. He also explained the costs incurred in the policing of alcohol related crime and expressed concern regarding the associated manpower difficulties in policing the issue.

Inspector Berrow also expressed concern with regard to the impact that the proposed extended licensing hours would have on the police infrastructure and the ability to cope with the extra workload. As a way of countering the issue Inspector Berrow suggested that partnership working would be an effective way forward in order to tackle alcohol related crime, particularly in view of the legislation regarding extended licensing hours, and that a corporate approach needed to be adopted.

Inspector Berrow stated that Police Licensing Officers were embedded into the Community Safety Unit and that the forthcoming period of change needed to be managed carefully, with the assistance of the appropriate partners.

Sergeant Ross explained that a crowd control initiative was forthcoming and a campaign was planned for the August Bank Holiday weekend.

Inspector Berrow concluded that alcohol related crime needed to be the responsibility of not only the police but also of partners, to effectively handle the challenges the future presents.

In response to a question from the Chairman as to whether evidence gathered by the police in respect of problematic public houses could be shared with partners, the Assistant Director, Legal and Democratic Services stated that, although some cases had already been heard under the new legislation, no police objections had been received; some of the larger public houses were due to be heard in the near future and, if objections were not received from the police, the opening hours applied for would be more likely to be granted.

Councillor Mrs Dunn questioned whether the police were checking their command and control systems in order to identify the public houses that posed problems.

In response to a question from Councillor Donegan regarding a press article stating that a further one hundred and sixty police officers would be recruited, Inspector Berrow stated that as far as he was aware there were no plans to significantly increase the number of police officers.

In response to questions from the Chairman and Councillor Mrs Coulter as to whether Licensing Officers would be working directly with the police, Inspector Berrow reiterated that the Licensing Officer would be working in conjunction with the Community Safety Unit.

Councillor Tomkinson questioned whether a "Pub Watch" would be formed with regard to problem public houses and certain problem areas.

In response, Sergeant Kerr explained that a number of projects would be instigated across the Borough and the continuity of policing would become an aim of the project.

Councillor Tomkinson called for a concerted effort to be made by the police within town centres in order to control alcohol related crime and anti social behaviour.

In response to complaints from members of the Committee, Inspector Berrow agreed to pass on the police out of hours number to Committee Members via Democratic Services.

The Assistant Director, Legal and Democratic Services suggested that, following the transitional period, he would arrange a review meeting with key Licensing Officers and to discuss arrangements with regard to Christmas. He stated that a lot of the applications from the larger public houses had not yet been heard and questioned what the police strategy was, particularly with regard to Stourbridge town centre, and the impact of town centre dispersal on the public houses on the periphery.

Inspector Berrow and Sergeant Ross stated that they would recommend a review be held as to whether there was any police evidence to support the placing of an objection to applications.

Following the presentation given, it was

RESOLVED

That Inspector Berrow and Sergeant Kerr be thanked for attending the meeting and responding to the Committee's questions regarding their presentation.

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted on the Health and Safety Service Plan 2005-06 and on progress to secure improvements in the health and safety enforcement service following the inter-authority audit of the service in 2004.

In presenting the report, Ms D Nellany, Food and Occupational Safety Manager, Directorate of the Urban Environment, stated that the target of 225 inspections had been exceeded and was more than double the number planned. This was achieved by employing agency staff to reduce the backlog.

With regard to the work programme, Ms Nellany stated that the projects for the current year reflected the need to improve safety within steel stockholders' premises, and it was hoped builders' merchants, and catering with a view to child employment. It was also hoped that the area of body piercing could also be addressed.

Following a short discussion that included aspects in relation to the body piercing of children under the age of 12 years, the use of Botox and the qualifications required by staff who administer such injections, it was

#### RESOLVED

That the Health and Safety Service Plan 2005/2006 of the Directorate of the Urban Environment be endorsed, the progress made with the Inter-Authority Audit Action Plan Improvements noted and that the health and safety team be commended for their efforts and performance during a difficult year for the team, due to vacancies and an increase in the number of cases being progressed for further enforcement.

The meeting ended at 7.35 pm.

CHAIRMAN