

**REPORT TO:** Safer Halton PPB

**DATE:** 18<sup>th</sup> September 2007

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director – Health and Community

**SUBJECT:** Safe, Sensible, Social; Updated National Alcohol Strategy 2007

**WARDS:** Borough wide

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

**1.1 To advise the Safer Halton Policy and Performance Board of the updated national alcohol strategy.**

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That**

(1) Safer Halton PPB notes and comments on the report

## **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

Safe, Sensible & Social, launched jointly by the Home office and Department of Health, outlines the next steps in the delivering of the national alcohol strategy. At the centre of the strategy is the desire to reduce the health harms, violence and anti-social behaviour associated with alcohol while ensuring that people are able to enjoy alcohol safely and responsibly.

In respect of community safety the new strategy will ensure that the laws and licensing powers introduced to tackle alcohol-fuelled crime and disorder, protect young people and tackle irresponsibly managed premises are being used widely and effectively.

In terms of public health, it will sharpen the focus on the minority of drinkers who cause or experience the most harm to themselves, their communities and their families. These are:

- 18-24 year old binge drinkers, a minority of whom are responsible for the majority of alcohol-related crime and disorder.
- Young people under 18 who drink alcohol, &
- Harmful, adult drinkers who do not necessarily realise their drinking patterns are damaging their physical and mental health and may be causing substantial harm to others.

Key actions in the strategy include,

- Sharpened criminal justice for drunken behaviour.  
Points of intervention will be introduced following arrest, through conditional caution and through disposal. Offenders will be given the facts about unsafe drinking and its link to criminal behavior. They will be offered advice, support and treatment where appropriate. Ways to make individuals pay for these interventions will be explored.
- A review of NHS alcohol spending.  
A root-and-branch stock take of the burden of alcohol-related harm on NHS resources will be carried out to inform smarter spending decisions, driving local investment in prevention and treatment while delivering better health and saving the NHS money.
- More help for people who want to drink less  
Developing and promoting sources of help for people who want to drink less, including telephone helplines, interactive websites and support groups.
- Toughened enforcement of underage sales.  
Local authorities and the police using their powers to prosecute and if necessary close premises that persistently sell alcohol to children.
- Trusted guidance for parents and young people.  
To help young people and their parents make informed decisions about drinking, the Government will provide authoritative, accessible guidance about what is and what is not safe and sensible in the light of the latest available evidence from the UK and abroad.
- Public Information campaigns to promote a new sensible drinking culture  
A new generation of publicity campaigns will mark a shift in the ambition and impact of public information about alcohol.
- Public consultation on alcohol pricing and promotion.  
An independent review of the evidence, followed by a consultation beginning next year, will enable the government to explore the relationship between promotional activity and harmful consumption, particularly among young people.
- Compulsory local alcohol strategies.  
By April 2008, all CDRPs will be required by law to have a strategy in their area to tackle crime, disorder and substance misuse, including alcohol related misuse and disorder

#### **4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The strategy's objectives, described in the paper as outcomes, are;

- Increase the proportion of those drinking sensibly
- Reduce the number of those drinking above 50 units Men) & 35 units (women) per week, or drinking more than twice the recommended guidance on a regular basis; and
- Reduce the number of under-18s who drink and the amount of alcohol they consume.

There are no specifics for how much these reductions should be and by when. There is also a lack of specific commitment to see more problem drinkers enter treatment, or narrow the gap between demand for and provision of structured treatment.

- 4.1 The provision of a commissioning framework will provide commissioners with intelligence with which to plan for a range of local interventions. However, the strategy does not provide targets for commissioners to reach or ring-fenced funds to invest in alcohol services.
- 4.2 Revised Alcohol Treatment Referral guidelines will be issued and the learning from pilot alcohol arrest referral schemes will be disseminated. There is no suggestion that current CARAT provision will be extended to prisoners with alcohol problems.  
There is a government commitment to awareness raising campaigns on harmful drinking and the dangers of drinking whilst pregnant. There is no indication as to when this will take place or how much resource is to be committed to these campaigns.
- 4.3 The strategy admits that resources for those harmful drinkers that want to reduce their consumption are poorly developed. The strategy outlines the development of a range of self help tools but is vague in its support for the development of a comprehensive tiered approach to alcohol treatment as outlined in its national service framework, Models of care for Alcohol Misusers.  
The strategy identifies under 18 year olds as a target group. However, substance misuse funding for young people has been reduced this year.

## **5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

N/a

## **6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

### **6.1 Children and Young People in Halton**

### **6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton**

### **6.3 A Healthy Halton**

### **6.4 A Safer Halton**

### **6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal**

N/A

**7.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

N/A

**8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

N/A

***(NB ONLY INCLUDE 9.0, 10.0 AND 11.0 BELOW IF THE REPORT RELATES TO A KEY DECISION INCLUDED ON THE FORWARD PLAN)***

**9.0 REASON(S) FOR DECISION**

**10.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

**11.0 IMPLEMENTATION DATE**

**12.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

**Document**

**Place of Inspection**

**Contact Officer**

***(NB IF THE REPORT NEEDS TO BE CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE, IN THE ABSENCE OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC, THE FOLLOWING PARAGRAPH ALSO NEEDS TO BE COMPLETED – CONTACT COMMITTEE SERVICES IF YOU NEED ANY ADVICE)***