

## Extract from the minutes of the Communities Scrutiny Committee on 5 September 2012

### **Drug Driven Crime and Alcohol Strategy Update**

A report of the Director of Public Health was submitted to the Committee which provided an overview of the renewed implementation of services to reduce drug misuse and drug driven offending across Manchester along with an update on the implementation of the Manchester Alcohol Strategy. The Programme Lead (Criminal Justice) introduced the report. He explained that three new services had been established, the Intake Service, Clinical Service and Recovery Services. The Council also supported development work in Manchester Prison to counter drug use in the establishment.

The Committee welcomed [REDACTED] who was responsible for overseeing the IDTS (Integrated Drug Treatment System) and Recovery through the Gate Team at HMP Manchester, to the meeting. She explained that the approach at Manchester prison was to decrease the supply of drugs and decrease demand through treatment and rehabilitation. HMP Manchester had a drug recovery wing for those who are not using methadone or who are coming to the end of using it. Following release the team continues support, for example by attending appointments. She said that the results from the first year were very positive and it was key to develop good links with other services to ensure good long term results.

The Programme Lead (Alcohol) introduced the section of the report on the Manchester Alcohol Strategy. She outlined the aims and contents of the strategy, including information about partnership activity aimed at reducing alcohol related crime, disorder and antisocial behaviour. The report also noted that a commitment to introducing minimum unit pricing in England has now been made in the National Alcohol Strategy.

[REDACTED] provided the perspective from [REDACTED] Alcohol Strategy. He said the aim of the police in Manchester was tackling alcohol related crime, which had changed significantly in the last ten years since the change in licensing laws and the recession. Their aim was to work with Manchester City Council to target licensed premises where there are problems. [REDACTED] said that the city centre was very different from the rest of the city. The level of violence in the city centre had maintained within an overall drop, offences were increasing earlier and decreasing later. He said the demand on the police was increasing in a time when GMP was facing budget reductions.

A member asked whether HMP Manchester had figures for how effective the drug programme was after release. [REDACTED] said this was the most difficult figure to establish as people have no obligation to continue contact. HMP Manchester was only able to be certain for reoffenders who returned to the prison. She also said that HMP Manchester was launching the new programme in October and there would be an event that members of the Committee would be welcome to attend. The Committee thanked her and asked for details to be circulated.

He told the Committee that the Health Scrutiny Committee was aware of the new drug treatment services that were being implemented and fully supported the introduction of the three linked but separate strands. The Health Committee had, though, expressed concern over how the new national health commissioning arrangements may affect this, particularly in terms of accountability.

The Committee discussed GMP's approach and the licensing issues involved in alcohol related crime in the city. [REDACTED] told the Committee that GMP worked with different services, including Manchester Council, across the city, using the intelligence available to target areas with more problems. A member asked how effective the range of tools available to GMP were in tackling alcohol related crime and disorder. [REDACTED] explained GMP was able to manage the problems, but not solve them. He said that the licensing laws are weighed in the favour of the applicants, so the onus is on the police to prove that premises should be closed or not granted a license in the first place, not on the applicants. He said that in some cases the closure of a single establishment can have a significant positive impact on an area. He stressed that GMP wanted Manchester to have a vibrant and successful night time economy.

The Committee discussed the potential for the introduction of a minimum price for alcohol. The Executive Member for Adult Services said this would help in the problem of alcohol related crime and the Greater Manchester Health Commission has played an important role in raising the profile of this issue. He said that those selling alcohol, including supermarkets and shops, said they were in favour of responsible drinking, but resisted attempts to change the pricing. [REDACTED] told the Committee that this situation was in fact getting worse because premises were struggling in the recession and reducing prices even further in order to compete and attract customers. The Government is planning to carry out a consultation on setting a minimum price for a unit of alcohol. The Committee agreed that the Chair would write in support of minimum alcohol pricing as part of any local response submitted to the consultation.

A member noted that approximately £750 thousand was due to be transferred from the Council to the Police and Crime Commissioner. The member asked whether the Council was lobbying to ensure that services currently funded by this were maintained. The Programme Lead (Criminal Justice) said the Council would ensure there was a clear business case for continuing the services, but that it was likely the Police and Crime Commissioner would want to make some changes. The Committee agreed that the Chair would write to the Police and Crime Commissioner, once elected, to recommend that these services are continued at least to begin with. The Committee also agreed that this letter should be circulated to the members prior to being sent.

## Decision

1. To request that [REDACTED] provide details of the event taking place to launch the new drug recovery programme at HMP Manchester in October for members of the Committee.

2. To ask the Chair of the Committee to write to the Police and Crime Commissioner to recommend that community drug services affected by the transfer of funds from Manchester Council are maintained, at least to begin with.
3. To ask the Chair of the Committee to write in support of the local response to the national consultation on setting a minimum price for a unit of alcohol when this is implemented.