

REPORT TO: Safer Policy & Performance Board
DATE: 11th June 2013
REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Communities
PORTFOLIO: Community Safety
SUBJECT: Night Time Economy Scrutiny Topic Group Update
WARD(S) Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To present an interim report on the Night Time Economy Scrutiny Topic Group. The Topic Group is due to present its final report to the next Safer PPB meeting.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That:

i) Members of the Board note the contents of the report.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 The Safer PPB Night Time Economy Scrutiny Topic Group had its first meeting in November 2012. The Topic Group, which is chaired by Cllr Norman Plumpton-Walsh, has met four times to date (November, January, March and April.)

3.2 At their first meeting in November, the Topic Group agreed a Brief for the Scrutiny review, which set out key outputs and outcomes, as listed below:-

- A better understanding of the issues relating to the night time economy in Halton, what works well and what could be improved?
- Examine the effectiveness of the current services that support the night time economy, how they work together and whether they deliver timely and effective action to address the needs of businesses and visitors to our night time economy.
- An understanding of the role of partner agencies in providing a safe, well managed night time economy in Halton.
- Consider local and national best practise in relation to the management of the night time economy.
- Explore accreditation for the management of the night time economy in Halton, through the Purple Flag Scheme. This scheme provides recognition that town centres are well managed and acts as an indicator for a safe night out, in the way that

Green Flag accreditation do for recognising quality parks and Blue Flags for safe and clean beaches. (It should be noted that due to the costs involved and the need to widen the focus of the topic group considerably to address the Purple Flag criteria, it was agreed not to recommend Purple Flag accreditation for Halton at this time. However it was recognised that as Purple Flag represents best practise, there are lessons we could learn from auditing our night time economy against the Purple Flag criteria, which will help inform the review.)

3.3 The Night Time Economy Scrutiny Topic Group has covered a number of topic areas including:-

- Transport
- Crime and anti-social behaviour
- Policing
- Licensing and enforcement
- Alcohol
- Under age sales
- Planning
- Street cleansing

3.4 In addition members of the Topic Group have visited the CCTV room at Runcorn Town Hall and heard from Rev Jeremy Duff on the Street Pastor Service operating in Widnes Town Centre. The Topic Group have also heard from Warrington Borough Council, who gained Purple Flag accreditation for Stockton Heath. The criteria used for the Purple Flag Scheme is considered to be best practise in management of the night time economy. The Topic Group are also using the Purple Flag criteria to audit the night time economy in Halton.

3.5 The Topic Group have heard a number of differing perspectives of our night time economy, ranging from bar managers at the Halton Stadium, to police officers, the manager of street cleansing services and the Vicar at St Paul's in Victoria Square, Widnes. These differing speakers have also highlighted some excellent best practise in the borough and it is this work that we should build upon to further improve our town centres and the experiences of visitors to our night time economy.

3.6 The Night Time Economy Scrutiny Topic Group has planned a further two meetings to consider their final report and recommendations. A final report will be presented to the Safer PPB at their next meeting.

4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 The policy implications of the Night Time Economy Scrutiny Topic Group that relate to the council's priorities are set out below in

section 6.

5.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 At this stage there are no direct financial implications and these will be identified when the topic group presents its recommendations.

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

6.1 **Children & Young People in Halton**

The work of the Safer Policy and Performance Board Topic Group has looked at under age alcohol sales, anti-social behaviour and promoting positive behaviour of young people. It is essential that we give the advice to young people so they can make informed choices and drink responsibly and safely whilst out in the night time economy.

6.2 **Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton**

The night time economy provides valuable jobs and supports businesses within our town centres. It is essential that staff working in the night time economy have the right skills and training to provide well run bars and clubs and most importantly a safe environment for residents and visitors to the borough.

6.3 **A Healthy Halton**

Alcohol presents a significant risk to health and is an important factor in some types of crime, such as assault, anti- social behaviour and domestic abuse. An important element in the night time economy is to encourage people to drink sensibly and safely and respond to incidents in a timely and appropriate way.

6.4 **A Safer Halton**

Alcohol is an important factor in some types of crime, such as assault, anti- social behaviour and domestic abuse. It is therefore essential that we promote sensible and safe drinking and work with businesses to promote best practise and respond appropriately to incidents that arise.

6.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal**

A poorly managed night time economy won't just impact on night time visitors but on shoppers and residents who live in the area and who visit the town centres the following morning. An area with graffiti, litter signs of vandalism etc will put visitors off visiting the area at all. It is therefore essential that we create a safe and attractive environment that people want to visit both in the evening and during the day.

7.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 There are no direct risks resulting from the work of the Night Time Economy Scrutiny Topic Group. However the borough benefits from its night time economy which supports a number of businesses and jobs, so it is essential that the borough continues to be safe, well managed and well served by transport both during the evening and into the early hours. A poorly managed town centre could result in increased crime, anti-social behaviour and become a place where residents don't want to visit.

8.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 None identified.

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

There are no background papers under the meaning of the Act.