

# BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

## REPORT TO LICENSING COMMITTEE

30<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 2012

### REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE LEGAL AND REGULATORY SERVICES

#### LICENSING ACT 2003

#### UPDATE ON PARTNERSHIP WORKING BY THE RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITIES

#### 1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide an update for the Committee on partnership working through the Responsible Authorities Forum.

#### 2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Objectives/Other Corporate Priorities

This work links to the Corporate Improvement Objectives of:-

- Building safe and inclusive communities
- Creating vibrant and thriving towns, and
- Continuing to promote Bridgend as a place to visit

#### 3. Background

- 3.1 The Licensing Committee is already aware of the work of the Responsible Authorities Forum in co-ordinating a partnership approach to monitoring licensed premises in the County Borough.

- 3.2 Responsible Authorities must be fully notified of all licence applications and are entitled to make representations to the licensing authority in relation to the grant, variation or review of licences. As well as making representations to the Licensing Authority, the Responsible Authorities provide guidance in their areas of expertise on promoting the licensing objectives and some have enforcement powers under the Act as well as other legislation relevant to licensed premises.

- 3.3 Since the coming into force of the Licensing Act in 2005, the seven public bodies have comprised the seven Responsible Authorities:-

- The Police
- The Fire Service
- The local authority Trading Standards Service
- The local authority Environmental Health Service (noise and other nuisance)
- The local authority Environmental Health Service (health and safety)
- The Planning Authority
- The local authority Social Care Service with responsibility for protecting children from harm

- 3.4 The Forum has met monthly since January 2009 enabling the various Responsible Authorities to work most effectively and best target resources through the exchange of information and development of best practice.
- 3.5 This Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act has since created two additional Responsible Authorities from April 2012, namely the local health board and the Licensing Authority itself.
- 3.5 This report provides Members with an update on partnership working by the Responsible Authorities.

#### **4. Current situation / proposal**

- 4.1 One of the successes of the Forum has been the fact that through the timely exchange of information, 'problem' premises have been identified as giving cause for concern to more than one agency. These can then be monitored on an ongoing basis with a view to swift and appropriate action, including licence review, being taken.
- 4.2 As a result of identifying common problem premises, it has been possible for one or more Responsible Authorities to support a review application lead by another. To date some 11 premises have had their licences reviewed, resulting in amendment to licence conditions, suspension and even revocation.
- 4.3 Specifically in relation to the town centre Night Time Economy, work under the banner of 'Operation Raven' continues. This initiative, led by South Wales Police has led to a significant reduction in assaults with Home Office figures with Home Office figures predicting savings of over one million pounds to the public, and a further £100,000 in policing costs. This area of work has developed over recent months with the result that the Authority's Licensing Enforcement Officers now attend weekly briefings with South Wales Police.
- 4.4 The success of partnership working in this context was highlighted at the end of last year when the South Wales Police in Partnership Award of 2011 recognised the Authority's Public Protection Department for its work alongside the Safer Bridgend Community Safety Partnership
- 4.2 Members will be aware also of the creation of the CounterAct scheme for licensed premises being developed through the work of the Responsible Authorities Forum. The scheme is run jointly by Bridgend County Borough Council, South Wales Police, South Wales Fire & Rescue Service and the local trade. It aims to benefit all by:
- Supporting the reputable trade and recognising good practice;
  - Working with premises encountering problems, to raise standards across the licensed trade; and
  - More broadly, making Bridgend County Borough a safe and vibrant area in which alcohol-related crime is minimised and where a safe and sensible approach to alcohol is promoted.

- 4.9 CounterAct is the first initiative of its kind to take a holistic approach and involve the work of all the relevant enforcement agencies. It launched in December 2011, initially within the 'on-licensed' sector of pubs, clubs and restaurants, and will be rolled out to the other elements of the licensed trade in due course, i.e., the retail sector and late night takeaway establishments.
- 4.10 To support the CounterAct scheme, multiagency visits are being conducted at licensed premises (Police, Public Protection and the Fire Service). To date these have taken place at on licensed premises in the town centre with encouraging results.
- 4.11 The other main area of partnership working to report is in relation to underage sales of alcohol. Following advice and education, this area of activity seeks to identify not just retailers and public houses selling alcohol to children, but also private individuals prepared to purchase alcohol on behalf of youngsters, through so called proxy purchasing.

## **5. Effect upon Policy Framework& Procedure Rules**

- 5.1 None

## **6. Equality Impact Assessment**

- 6.1 There are no negative equality implications.

## **7. Financial Implications.**

- 7.1 There are no financial implications

## **8. Recommendation.**

- 8.1 The Committee is asked to note the above report.

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## **Background documents**

None