REPORT TO:	Cabinet Member – Environmental Cabinet Member – Communities Licensing & Regulatory Committee
DATE:	23rd September 2009 7th October 2009 26th October 2009
SUBJECT:	**SAFE & SECURE TOWN CENTRE AT NIGHT AUDIT - SOUTHPORT**
WARDS AFFECTED:	All
REPORT OF:	W T Milburn Environmental Protection Director
CONTACT OFFICER:	Andrew Naisbitt Trading Standards Section Manager 0151 934 4014 David Fenney Community Safety Manager 0151 934 4466
EXEMPT/ CONFIDENTIAL:	No

PURPOSE/SUMMARY:

To inform the Cabinet Member – Environmental and Cabinet Member – Communities of the "Safe and Secure Town Centre at Night Audit of Southport", a strategic intervention to assess the issues involved in alcohol-related violence and disorder in town centres at night.

REASON WHY DECISION REQUIRED:

To advise the Cabinet Member – Environmental and Cabinet Member – Communities of the audit findings and to request support from the Public Health Partnership for further town centre audits.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

The Cabinet Member – Environmental and the Cabinet Member - Communities

a) Note the contents of this report;

b) Endorses the findings of the audit report; and

c) Recommends the Public Health Partnership Alcohol Strategy Group and Alcohol-Related Crime Sub-Group consider the recommendations in the audit report.

KEY DECISION:	No
FORWARD PLAN:	N/A
IMPLEMENTATION DATE:	Immediately following the expiry of the "call-in" period for this meeting.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS:

Not to carry out Safe and Secure Town Centre Audits

IMPLICATIONS:

Budget/Policy Framework:

The Safe and Secure Town Centre at Night Audit was a joint initiative commissioned by the Public Health Partnership Alcohol Related Crime Sub Group, Trading Standards Service and the Police and part funded by the Safer Stronger Communities Fund.

It is recommended that a cost / benefit analysis of the report's recommendations should be carried out before any commitments agreed.

Financial:

CAPITAL EXPENDITURE	**2006/ 2007 £**	**2007/ 2008 £**	**2008/ 2009 £**	**2009/ 2010 £**
Gross Increase in Capital Expenditure	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Funded by:				
Sefton Capital Resources				
Specific Capital Resources				
REVENUE IMPLICATIONS				
Gross Increase in Revenue Expenditure	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Funded by:				
Funded from External Resources				
Does the External Funding have an expiry date? Y/N		When?		
How will the service be funded post expiry?				

Legal: N/A

Risk Assessment: N/A

Asset Management: N/A

CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN/VIEWS

Public Health Partnership Alcohol Related Crime Sub Group

CORPORATE OBJECTIVE MONITORING:

Corporate Objective		Positive Impact	Neutral Impact	Negative Impact
1	Creating a Learning Community	√		
2	Creating Safe Communities	√		
3	Jobs and Prosperity	√		
4	Improving Health and Well-Being	√		
5	Environmental Sustainability		√	
6	Creating Inclusive Communities	√		
7	Improving the Quality of Council Services and Strengthening local Democracy	√		
8	Children and Young People	√		

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS RELIED UPON IN THE PREPARATION OF THIS REPORT

Safe and Secure Town Centres at Night Toolkit – (Bretrust)

Background

1. The Cabinet Members will be aware that The Sefton Safer & Stronger Communities Partnership (SSCP) has been assigned the responsibility for the delivery of National Indicator 21 – "Dealing with local concerns about ASB and Crime by the Local Council and Police"

2. The Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) will assess performance and prospects for delivery on the priority indicators. The CAA is a new framework through which the major public service inspectorates will together make independent assessments of how well people are being served by their local public services. Its focus is primarily on the prospects for better outcomes locally rather than the internal workings of individual organizations.

3. In research commissioned in 2007 by SSCP focus Group work was conducted to develop an understanding of the perceptions of Sefton residents on issues of crime, disorder, fear of crime and aspects of community cohesion. Respondents within 6 focus groups were asked which anti-social behaviours were the biggest problem in their area; *groups of teenagers hanging about on street corners* was most mentioned as a "very big" or "fairly big" problem with over half the respondents stating this, followed by *underage drinking and parents not taking responsibility for the behaviour of their children*.

4. A key factor in satisfying NI21 is having baseline data which can inform intelligence led interventions and serve as a benchmark for assessing progress.

Safe and Secure Town Centre at Night Toolkit

5. The toolkit is intended to provide stakeholders in the night-time economy with a structure for measuring the issues involved in alcohol-related violence and disorder in town centres at night, identifying priorities and taking action to deal with them. The toolkit was funded by the BRE Trust and its free use is approved. It is based on extensive research by the BRE Trust, including Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design, case studies, interviews with key stakeholders and literature reviews.

6. The toolkit provides a benefit to managers of the night-time economy by supplying a framework for evaluating policies and procedures. Through implementation of the suggestions included in the toolkit it should also provide benefit to users of the night-time economy by allowing them to have a safer night out.

7. The toolkit stresses the need for joined-up thinking on a wide range of policies in the management of town centres at night involving a diverse range of representatives with responsibility for lighting, CCTV, planning, health, transport, licensing of premises, street vendors and taxis, police, street maintenance, licensing trade, youth workers etc.

Safe and Secure Town Centre Audit of Southport 2009

8. The audit was carried out between April and June 2009 by Sefton Council's Trading Standards Service. The toolkit was applied with careful consideration of the suggestions. The audit reflected the context and the unique characteristics of Southport and the scoring method was used to inform the reports conclusions. *The audit also had to accept a number of claims on face value due to the sensitive nature of information in question, (see paragraph 10(*) below) and the conclusions may be*

reconsidered if additional evidence is forthcoming. The Safe and Secure Town Centre Audit Report of Southport 2009 as appended to this report as ANNEX 1.

9. The findings of the audit will provide stakeholders in the Southport Night Time Economy with a structure for dealing with any remaining issues connected with alcohol related violence and disorder. It will also help to prioritise such issues and take action to deal with them.

10. The toolkit is broken down into 13 categories with three levels of importance:

- Essential (E), That immediate action is required
- Important (I), That they should be considered as soon as possible
- Desirable (D), Are a bonus if already implemented.

Each action is listed to determine whether they have been:-

- Already implemented, with evidence to support that implementation (*)
- Considered and intending to implement
- Considered but not applicable
- Not considered

Summary of Findings

11. Category 1 - Partnership Working

Sefton Council's Crime Reduction and Community Safety Strategy ensures joined up partnership working through the Safer And Stronger Communities Partnership (SSCP) and the Community Safety Area Partnerships (CSAP), which include the Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy Group and Alcohol And Crime sub group. There is also a dedicated Southport Problem Solving Group and the Southport Evening Economy Group. A Southport Evening Economy Strategy was produced in May 2004. Media and Marketing help to promote the work involved in reducing crime in the area.

All actions in this category have already been implemented and evidenced

12. Category 2 - Data and Information Sharing

Sefton Council's Analysis and Intelligence Management Team (AIM) researches and co-ordinates information on hotspots with CSAP to prioritise and act on issues. Data is recorded on crime and anti-social behaviour issues and fed back to the relevant partners to act.

Recommendations

- Implement a data sharing agreement between the PCT and local authority with anonymous information on data from A&E departments and the Ambulance Service. This information should be analysed, prioritised, actioned and followed up with evaluation. **(E)**
- This should be done by way of standardised forms that guarantee anonymity for staff in A&E to complete for all victims of violent crime. These would provide valuable information on location, times, weapons used, injuries sustained and involvement of alcohol. **(I)**

- Data should be provided in 'real time' to allow for policing/partnership strategies to adapt to changes in night- time economy. **(I)**
- A footfall count would assist in the provision of a more meaningful crime data. Currently police intelligence is used to establish numbers of patrons on particular days to assist with police operations. **(D)**

13. Category 3 - Licensed Premises

a) Proactive and well run premises are encouraged through Best Bar None. The police have a comprehensive licensing database to monitor licensees and licensed premises. The Force system records violent crime linked to specified licensed premises and access is only allowed to specified personnel for evidential purposes.

b) Top ten premises with problems are identified and interventions implemented by police, fire and rescue and local authority. Best Bar None is used as a standard of operation for managers of licensed premises where regular checks on the standards are carried out.

c) Regular Pubwatch meetings allow licensees to air their concerns. There is a night net radio/paging system for pubs and clubs in close proximity to allow for a rapid response from the police to problems. However it is not yet linked to public CCTV system.

d) Police and Local Authority Licensing Officers make routine regular contact with licensee representatives in hot spot areas. Police make overt video recordings and take photos to use as evidence for prosecutions, reviews and prosecutions of licensed premises these also act as a deterrent. Police have instigated effective drugs management policies including the use of sniffer dogs when funding has been available. One premise tried using polycarbonate drinking vessels but this was not cost effective. This is still being considered.

e) Door staff wear high visibility clothing/armbands and display SIA licenses. A log of door staff is maintained and the log is accessible to LA and Police, this is part of the licence condition.

Recommendations

- The Night Net Radio/paging system for all pubs and clubs in close proximity should be linked to Sefton Security. **(E)**
- Happy Hours and drinks promotions and 'vertical drinking' premises could be discouraged, and staggered closing times are recommended by BRE. **(I)**
- A "banned from one banned from all" scheme could be implemented. **(I)**

14. Category 4 - Policing Strategies

a) 5 out of the 6 essential categories have been implemented and evidenced. The Police Corvus Briefing document is available to all partners in the agreement, including Community Safety, see para 8(*) above.

b) There are currently no records kept of where an individual arrested for an alcohol related offence had their last drink as this has been considered to be unreliable.

c) Passive drugs dogs have been used in the past for drugs detection when funding available. Knife arches have been purchased for use at problem locations and Hand Held Metal Detectors have been supplied to premises to use by door staff.

Recommendations

- A record to identify premises that may be serving alcohol irresponsibly to be fed into the licensing database. **(E)**
- The use of S27 of the Violent Crime Reduction Act 2006 to give individuals who represent a risk of disorder to leave the locality and not return within a fixed time period. **(I)**
- Consideration should be given to dispersal strategies, a mobile police cell bus in high demand areas if necessary. **(D)**

15. Category 5 - Capable Guardians and Street Welfare

Street Marshals (PCSOs) and Street Pastors are present in the town centre during peak times in addition to police. The Street Pastors have only been funded on a temporary basis and will need reviewing.

Recommendations

- Consideration should be given to reduce the domination of youths in the night – time economy by encouraging shops, cafés and cultural attractions to stay open later. **(I)**
- A policy on external and internal ATMs to reduce opportunities for robbery. **(I)**
- Meet and Greet patrols and town centre Help Points would be desirable. **(D)**
- Consideration could be given to a mobile A & E / SOS bus during seasonal peaks should the amount of injuries sustained in the town centre increase. **(D)**

16. Category 6 - CCTV

26 CCTV cameras placed around Southport cover the main areas of the night-time economy, however some of the clubs have closed and the stars also indicate licensed hotels. The cameras can be zoomed in to problem areas if necessary. Cameras on Lord Street can be obstructed by trees in summer.

Recommendations

- Talking CCTV cameras and flat screens on walls to act as a deterrent are desirable options. **(D)**
- Undertake a separate detailed survey of CCTV provision.

17. Category 7 - Lighting

Southport has a particularly decorative lighting system which meets all the criteria apart from the lights on Lord Street becoming restricted by foliage in summer, but as this is a Conservation Area there is no easy answer.

18. Category 8 - Underage Drinking

There is evidence of targeting under-age drinking by way of test purchase operations at licensed and off-license premises by police and trading standards. Challenge 21/25 is in operation together with Knock Back, Buy Booze They Lose and other such initiatives working with the trade to reduce under-age drinking. Refusal logs are maintained by licensed premises and staff training is provided.

Recommendations

Under- age non-alcohol drinks nights could be considered as a desirable option. **(D)**

19. Category 9 - Transport

a) Transport in and out of Southport does not appear to be a problem, 2 Taxi Marshals are employed from midnight to 4am on Friday and Saturday nights and on special occasions. This has improved the situation so that more drivers will work late.

b) 5 criteria in this category have not been considered:

- Taxi firm offices have a radio-link to CCTV Control Room;
- no fast food outlets are located near taxi ranks;
- taxi - watch scheme;
- matrix messaging re car parks in use;
- non cash payment schemes for taxis.

Recommendations

Consider outstanding criteria. **(I)**

20. Category 10 - Offenders And Victims

All issues in this category have either been implemented by press and publicity, posters, MARAC or, 'considered and intending to implement'.

21. Category 11 - Visual Cues In The Town Centre

There is a positive visual impression of the town centre with minimal levels of graffiti and active management of removal of litter.

Recommendations

- Secure glass and bottle banks should be provided and emptied on a regular basis keeping the streets clear. **(E)**
- Refuse collectors could also be deployed at peak times to remove rubbish and litter that may be used as weapons. **(I)**
- Remove recessed doorways where possible and improve frontages of premises. **(D)**

22. Category 12 - Fast Food Outlets

Fast food outlets are monitored door supervisors are used where appropriate. CCTV systems are used to monitor incidents and a robust approach is adopted when renewing licences. A training course was provided by Environmental Health Commercial Section for staff on conflict management and personal protection.

Recommendations

- Monitoring of fast food outlets by Police and partner agencies **(E)**
- Encourage the use of Door Supervisors where appropriate **(I)**
- A traffic light system could be used to identify problem outlets and implement interventions. **(D)**
- Investigate a link between Fast Food outlets and drugs and encourage them to close earlier. **(D)**

23. Category 13 - Access Routes And Space Allocation

The primary routes have CCTV coverage and adequate lighting. Alleyways are gated where appropriate and are well lit. Litter and rubbish are kept to a minimum.

Recommendations

Keep private and public spaces separated eg. Storage and service areas should be clearly identifiable and owners should be made to take responsibility. **(I)**

Conclusions

24. In order for Southport to satisfy the minimum standard for a safe and secure town centre the following actions are recommended to address the essential criteria highlighted in the report:

a) Data and Information Sharing - Implement a data sharing agreement between the PCT and local authority with anonymous information on data from A&E departments and the Ambulance Service. This information should be analysed, prioritised, actioned and followed up with evaluation.

b) Licensed Premises - The Night Net Radio/paging system for all pubs and clubs in close proximity should be linked to Sefton Security.

c) Policing Strategies - Records are kept of where individuals who are arrested for alcohol-related offences had their last drink, allowing the identification of premises that may be serving alcohol irresponsibly. Information is fed into the licensing database.

d) CCTV - The audit considered that CCTV provision met the listed criteria but recommends a separate detailed survey of CCTV provision.

e) Visual Cues in the Town Centre - Secure glass and bottle banks should be provided and emptied on a regular basis keeping the streets clear. Their use should be actively promoted, particularly in high-risk disorder areas.

f) Fast Food Outlets – Monitoring of fast food outlets by Police and partner agencies.