

REPORT TO: DUNDEE CITY LICENSING BOARD
REPORT ON: BOTTLE MARKING SCHEME
REPORT BY: DUNCAN PROJECT CO-ORDINATOR
REPORT NO 216 - 2011

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The Licensing Forum requested that the Board consider supporting a bottle marking scheme in Dundee to assist current measures in place to tackle antisocial behaviour in relation to youths consuming alcohol. The Duncan scheme, Tayside Police and Community Safety Wardens ran a 3-month mini pilot scheme to enable a report to be submitted to the Board.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that the Board remits to the Clerk to initiate a consultation under Section 6 of the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005 on the inclusion of a supplementary statement to the Board's Statement of Licensing Policy in the terms outlined at Paragraph 5.4 below.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 The Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005 provides that the administration of the licensing system is to be funded by the income from application fees, so there should be no financial implications.

4.0 MAIN TEXT

4.1 Menzieshill and Stobswell areas were identified to trial this mini pilot with the majority of off-licences willing to participate. Officers and wardens checked that bottles were being marked within off-licences on an adhoc basis. On one occasion it was found that a store's bottles were not marked, but once staff were spoken to, bottles were marked on all future visits.

4.2 In Menzieshill, a bottle of cider was found and traced back to a store. Enquiries revealed that an agent bought it on behalf of the youth. At Lochee Park a few weeks ago, (well documented in the local press) there was a large group of youths, and officers and wardens recovered over 40 litres of alcohol. None of the bottles were marked. This gave the impression that drink is being purchased in other areas as the youths were from all over Dundee and surrounding areas.

4.3 It is agreed by the practitioners that this scheme will not all together stop agents buying alcohol unless a positive ID is found and thereafter an agent cautioned and charged. It would also be an indicator of what shops are likely to sell to youths, as the numbers of shops not participating would be relatively small. This in turn would make better use of police and warden resources.

4.4 The main finding with this mini pilot, which is no surprise, is that off licences do take strict measures in tackling the sale of alcohol to youths. The most serious problem is agents buying on behalf of the youths, although through the bottle marking scheme it is hoped that staff would be more aware of this issue and that it would therefore be tackled and reduced.

5.0 CURRENT MEASURES

- 5.1 The bottle marking scheme would add to existing measures to combat underage drinking. Tayside Police have been running Operation Dry Up on a weekly basis for several years now. This is where all alcohol found on youths is immediately removed and disposed of. Officers see the bottle marking scheme being used as an additional tool as part of Dry Up, not as a replacement. They strongly feel it augments the whole package of measures currently used to combat underage drinking.
- 5.2 Another area that is recommended to combat underage drinking is test purchasing which has not been undertaken for some time.
- 5.3 The stores who have participated in the pilot are keen for the scheme to continue and feel they are serious about tackling the supply of alcohol to juveniles.
- 5.4 In considering the above findings, and having run a successful mini-pilot scheme, it is considered that a pilot scheme should be run throughout the whole of the Dundee area with an agreed timescale for review. Working in conjunction with Operation Dry Up and test purchasing, it is thought this is one of the best ways to tackle the city-wide problem of antisocial behaviour in relation to youths consuming alcohol. Only through the scheme being introduced city-wide would there be a true reflection. Police officers have intimated that there are off licences that are willing to come on board at the earliest opportunity. The Board has previously indicated in its Statement of Licensing Policy 2010-2013 that it would consult on a supplement to that document before the formal introduction of a scheme. To that end, it is recommended that the Clerk carry out the required consultation under Section 6 of the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005 and report back to the Board in due course.

6.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 This Report has been screened for any policy implications in respect of Sustainability, Strategic Environmental Assessment, Anti-Poverty, Equality Impact Assessment and Risk Management. No major issues have been identified.

7.0 CONSULTATIONS

- 7.1 The Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Support Services), Director of Finance and the Chief Constable have been consulted in the preparation of this Report.

8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 8.1 None.

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Date : 14 March 2011