



Community Services Scrutiny Committee

Briefing Paper

Report of: Sarah Sprung (Scrutiny / Committee Officer)

Date: Wednesday, 8th April 2009

Open

Recommendations from the Alcohol and Substance Misuse Review Panel

1. Summary

1.1 This briefing paper details the recommendations of the Alcohol and Substance Misuse Review Panel, following its scrutiny of the need for Alcohol Restriction Zones (ARZ's) in the district and the problems relating to underage drinking.

2. Background

2.1 The Alcohol and Substance Misuse Review Panel was established by the Community Services Scrutiny Committee on 6th August 2008.

2.2 The review panel consisted of the following members:

- i) Councillor J Baker (Chairman)
- ii) Councillor A Buckley
- iii) Councillor Mrs H E Dyke
- iv) Councillor Mrs S Hayward
- v) Councillor H J Martin
- vi) Councillor J Phillips
- vii) Councillor J Thomas
- viii) Councillor G C Yarranton

2.3 The terms of reference for the review panel were:

- i) To investigate the need for Alcohol Restriction Zones (ARZs) in the district.
- ii) To consult with all relevant partners on substance abuse problems.
- iii) To investigate fully the problems of under age drinking within the district.

- 2.4 This report details the panel's findings in respect of point (ii) of the terms of reference. A report detailing the findings of point (i) and (iii) was considered by the Community Services Scrutiny Committee on 4th February 2009.
- 2.5 As part of the evidence gathering process for the review, Members have considered evidence from a range of expert witnesses:
- i) Police Data Intelligence Analyst
 - ii) Worcestershire Substance Misuse Action Team
 - iii) Worcestershire County Council Healthy Schools Programme
 - iv) Wolverley High School

3. Key Issues

- 3.1 Illegal drugs were separated into three classifications, A, B and C. Drugs that fell into the A category carried the highest sentences.
- 3.2 The highest number of offences in Wyre Forest was in relation to Cannabis bush, which was a class B drug.
- 3.3 There were estimated to be five main drug dealers operating within Wyre Forest
- 3.4 It was difficult for the Police to prosecute offenders for the supply of drugs as most would claim that it was for their own use.
- 3.5 Throughout the country each area has a Drug Action Team (DAT). The DAT for Worcestershire is the Substance Misuse Action Team (SMAT).
- 3.6 Roughly 2,500 people in Worcestershire were classed as problematic drug users, meaning that they used opiants or crack cocaine.
- 3.7 At present drug information was available for the County but was not able to be broken down to give district information.
- 3.8 Locality Teams, one of which is based in Kidderminster, provided a whole spectrum of services including needle exchanges and GP partnership working.
- 3.9 Over the last five years the number of drug users accessing treatment services had increased and the level of crime associated with drug use had fallen.
- 3.10 Approximately 1,800 people were seen by SMAT for drug abuse, some of which successfully came off drugs.

- 3.11 Drug users could be classed in three categories, those who experimented, those who were mild risk takers and those who had serious risk taking behaviour.
- 3.12 Education for young people on drug and alcohol misuse was provided through the Healthy Schools Programme which formed part of the Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) lessons at local schools.
- 3.13 Members were advised that Wolverley High School had developed an excellent programme for educating students on drug and alcohol misuse, as part of their PSHE lessons. The PSHE Co-ordinator from Wolverly High School gave members an overview of the programme.
- 3.14 The Panel noted that there was no static programme in place for the delivery of drug and alcohol misuse classes and that this enabled the programme to be responsive to items in the news.
- 3.15 Pupils were encouraged to conduct research on drug and alcohol misuse and present their findings to the class.

4. Recommendations to the Community Services Scrutiny Committee

- 4.1 The ongoing work of partners be supported.
- 4.2 The competing demands on police time with regard to substance misuse be recognised. Community leaders will identify community needs in relation to dealing and drug supply and will encourage policy to deal with local issues.
- 4.3 Members Briefing Session receive a presentation from SMAT annually to keep Members informed.
- 4.4 If an issue arises from SMAT before the annual presentation, it be reported in the Members Information Bulletin.

5. Relevant Council Policies/Strategies

- 5.1 Worcestershire Substance Misuse Strategy.

6. Wards affected

- 6.1 District Wide

7. Background Papers

7.1 Minutes of the Alcohol and Substance Misuse Review Panel held on:

- i) 20th August 2008
- ii) 24th September 2008
- i) 20th October 2008
- ii) 4th November 2008
- iii) 11th December 2008
- iv) 16th December 2008
- v) 6th January 2009
- vi) 20th January 2009
- vii) 17th February 2009
- viii) 12th March 2009

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