



Report of the Pubwatch Coordinator (Community Safety)

Report to the Licensing Committee

Date: 14/09/2010

Subject: Leeds Pubwatch

Electoral Wards Affected:

All

Ward Members consulted
(referred to in report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Executive Summary

This report provides information for Members on the Leeds Pubwatch scheme and how it contributes to the prevention of crime and disorder which is one of the objectives under the Licensing Act 2003.

The key aim of Pubwatch is to achieve a safe, secure and responsibly led social drinking environment in licensed premises which assists in reducing alcohol-related crime.

Leeds Pubwatch provides a forum for Safer Leeds Partnership, stakeholders and other agencies to positively interact with premises that are regulated under the Licensing Act 2003. This contributes to Safer Leeds Partnership (Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership) in achieving strategic aims, objectives and to meet Key Performance Indicators.

The Pubwatch takes the form of a group setting allowing 1:1 interactions with agencies including West Yorkshire Police, Entertainment Licensing and Environmental Health to discuss issues that are causing concern for the businesses across our communities such as key public safety messages and legislative changes.

1.0 Purpose Of This Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Licensing Committee and raise awareness of the crime reduction initiative known as Pubwatch.

2.0 Background Information

2.1 Pubwatch is the licensed trade's equivalent of the crime reduction initiative called Neighbourhood Watch. Pubwatch schemes are voluntary and have been in existence throughout the UK for over 30 years and range in size from over 200 premises in cities to small rural schemes with as few as 5 premises involved.

2.2 The basic principle involved in a Pubwatch is that the licensees of the premises involved collectively agree on a number of policies of action against those individuals who cause or threaten damage, disorder, violence, use or deal in drugs in their premises. Normally, this action consists of agreeing to refuse to serve individuals that cause, or are known to have previously caused problems. Having agreed these policies they publicise them and adhere to them. Publicity alone can have a very significant effect on these types of problems but refusing admission and service to those that cause trouble has also proved to have a significant impact on anti-social behaviour. In some areas this has been as high as 80% whilst the average is about 50% (statistics from National Pubwatch).

2.3 To work most effectively, any Pubwatch must work closely with the police, local authorities and other agencies and effective co-operation can produce the circulation of information and photographs of perpetrators of anti-social behaviour within our communities.

2.4 Over the past 18 months there have been several legal challenges nationally by individuals who have been banned from licensed premises through Pubwatch Schemes. The National Pubwatch has produced an extensive guidance manual for schemes to adhere to and avoid such legal action. The Leeds Pubwatch Coordinator acts as a point of reference and critical friend with regards to legislative issues.

3.0 Main Issues

3.1 Pubwatch Schemes can have a positive effect on both premises and our local communities and they allow licensees to:

- identify the local troublemakers and exclude them from licensed premises
- utilise due diligence in upholding the objectives of the Licensing Act 2003
- reduce the risk of assaults on licensees, staff & customers
- develop a positive relationship with Police & other agencies
- be made aware of the latest legislation and other key issues that can effect the smooth running of their business
- improving the public perception of an area where trade can prosper

3.2 Leeds Pubwatch Coordinator working within Community Safety provides guidance, advice & support to approximately 20 schemes that are currently active within Leeds from Yeadon to Garforth, and Morley to Wetherby. Each scheme varies in membership of licensed premises from between 5 premises in areas like Bramley to 100 premises in the City Centre.

- 3.3 The guidance, advice & support offered can be anything from signposting individual licensees to local authority internal departments such as Entertainment Licensing, Planning & Environmental Health as well as sourcing legal advice, expertise and best practice guidance from other Local Authorities and agencies UK wide.
- 3.4 EXAMPLE 1: a licensee in Whinmoor was recently being plagued to the rear of her premises by Anti- Social Behaviour which included gangs of youths drinking, causing damage by Graffiti, vandalism and litter. The licensee brought her concerns to the forum where the Pubwatch Coordinator was able to signpost her to contacts within West Yorkshire Police. Details of specific dates and times were taken in order that effective regular patrols could be made to deter the anti social behaviour. The Pubwatch Coordinator was able to use partnership working with the Probation Service – Community Payback Scheme to clear the land and for the Licensee to pay for the clearance to improve the environment for the local community.
- 3.5 EXAMPLE 2: Earlier in the year a group of Bramley licensees attention was drawn to several cars that were acting suspiciously both in their carparks and at nearby shops. Over a period of time the licensees recorded the registration plates, dates, time and descriptions of passengers. Largely due to the evidence provided by the Pubwatch members several successful warrants were executed in the area and substantial sums of money and drugs were recovered with resulting prosecutions.
- 3.6 Since the Leeds Pubwatch Coordinator has been in post we have had guest speakers, workshops and demonstrations from;
- West Yorkshire Police
 - Counter Terrorism Unit,
 - Licensing Section - Test Purchasing Operations
 - Passsive Drugs Dog Unit
 - Leeds City Council
 - Health and Environmental Action Team,
 - Health & Safety
 - Home Office
 - Security Industry Authority
 - Ford & Warren Solicitors
 - Watson Burton Solicitors
 - ToppStoppa

4.0 Conclusion

- 4.1 Pubwatch provides an effective link between licensed premises and the reduction of crime and anti-social behaviour across the city. The Leeds Pubwatch Coordinator is able to identify key areas of concern and channel resources across partnership agencies to resolve key aspects of crime & anti-social behaviour connected with licensed premises.

5.0 Recommendations

- 5.1 To note and approve the contents of this report

6.0 Background Papers

- 6.1 National Pubwatch Guidance