Report to: Cabinet Member for Environment & Community Safety

Date: 19th January 2009


Subject: Operation Drink Safe

1.0 Purpose of the report

1.1 To inform the Cabinet Member for Environment & Community Safety of the evaluation of Operation Drink Safe.

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 That the Cabinet Member for Environment and Community Safety notes the evaluation findings and the reductions achieved in violent crime.

3.0 Background

3.1 Reducing the problem of violence is a flagship issue within Portsmouth’s Local Area Agreement 2008/9.


3.3 Analysis of violent crime by Hampshire Constabulary in 2007 found that the Guildhall entertainment area (GEA) contributed significantly to crime rates. The analysis identified that 21% of all incidents of public order, common assault and actual bodily harm took place in the city centre, with 10% taking place in just 3 streets – Guildhall Walk, Guildhall Square and Commercial Road.

3.4 At the time of launch of Operation Drink Safe, Guildhall Walk was the single most violent location in Hampshire, with 340 incidents of public order and assault being directly linked to pubs and clubs in the city centre in 1 year.

3.5 In April 2007 Time & Envy nightclub relocated from Southsea seafront to the Liquid & Envy club on Stanhope Street, adding an extra 2,000 capacity venue to the GEA.

4.0 Operation Drink Safe

4.1 Operation Drink Safe was launched on the 27th July 2007 to run for one year initially, this was later extended. Operation Drink Safe is still running.

4.2 The activities included within Drink Safe included increased high visibility policing of the Guildhall entertainment area (GEA). This led to the development of an
early intervention team aimed at tackling offenders early on for lower level public order offences, before they went on to commit violent offences.

4.3 Operation Drink Safe developed a comprehensive communications strategy, communicating with customers in the GEA that violent behaviour is unacceptable. ‘The News’ also supported the operation, adopting it as a campaign.

4.4 Also included within Drink Safe was a positive engagement with the licensed premises in the GEA. Premises supported the communications campaign by displaying Drink Safe posters, leaflets and in the case of one venue projecting the images around the dance floor. Door staff adopted high visibility jackets and improved their communication with police and other agencies. The police also implemented the Licensed Premises Management System, logging incidents associated with licensed premises and ‘traffic lighting’ their performance.

4.5 Portsmouth City Council invested funds in improved lighting in and around the Guildhall Square and continued funding for Taxi Marshalls and the night bus security (the night bus ended in October 2008 as the bus company felt it was not financially viable).

4.6 The Hampshire Constabulary, in conjunction with the Portsmouth Business Crime Reduction Partnership, oversaw the use of Exclusion orders and Banning orders, banning persons from licensed premises.

4.7 At the same time Operation Drink Safe commenced, the Street Pastors scheme launched, providing support to people in need of assistance in the GEA, usually due to intoxication.

5.0 Evaluation

5.1 During the first initial 12 months of Operation Drink Safe, 15 exclusion orders were put in place, with a further 17 pending. There were a further 79 bans put in place by the Portsmouth Business Crime Reduction Partnership. 250 fixed penalty notices (£50-80 fines) were issued.

5.2 Operation Drink Safe led to reductions in the following crimes in the GEA:

- Assault – down 17% (from 385 in 2006/7 to 318)
- Criminal damage – down 27% (from 74 to 54)
- Drugs – down 22% (from 75 to 58)

5.3 Public Order offences did increase 9% from 242 to 265, this was due to the increased policing presence and their early intervention to prevent incidents escalating into more serious violent offences.

5.4 There was some limited evidence of displacement to the Albert Road area, which saw an increase in violent crime during this time period from 88 assaults to 108, some of this displacement will also be attributable to the closure of the nightclubs on Southsea Seafront.
6.0 Conclusion

6.1 Operation Drink Safe was implemented to tackle the rising trend of violent crime within the Guildhall entertainment area (GEA). The rising trend has been reversed and significant reductions seen.

6.2 Operation Drink Safe was a good example of partnership working, with Hampshire Constabulary, Portsmouth City Council, NHS, the voluntary sector and Licensed premises working together.

6.3 Operation Drink Safe has been expanded to other entertainment areas of the city, such as the Albert Road area, to help reduce violent crime.

6.4 Despite Operation Drink Safe the GEA remains the area of the city with the highest number of violent crimes. This is likely to continue due to the number of high volume licensed premises within the locality. Further actions are being taken to reduce violent crime further, such as the pilot pedestrianisation of Guildhall Walk, which anecdotally appears to have had a positive impact on the environment at night.

7.0 City Solicitor’s Comments

7.1 The City Solicitor is satisfied that it is within the Council’s powers to approve the recommendations as set out.

8.0 Equality

8.1 This report has undergone an effective Equality Impact Assessment

Signing Off The Report

Signed………………………………………..…  Date …………………………………..
Rachael Dalby, Head of Community Safety

Approval to The Recommendation(s)

The recommendation(s)s set out above were approved / approved as amended / deferred / rejected* by the Cabinet Member for Environment & Community Safety.

Signed …………………………………….  Date …………………………………
Councillor Jason Fazackerley, Cabinet Member for Environment & Community Safety
Access to Information
The following documents disclose facts or matters which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Operation Drink Safe Results Analysis – Hampshire Constabulary</td>
<td>Community Safety Team</td>
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