

Alcohol-Related Hospital Admissions.

Response from Hampshire Constabulary.

The Government's consultation document 'rebalancing the Licensing Act' refers to the proposed introduction of late night levies as an alternative to the ability to impose levies through the current Alcohol Disorder Zone (ADZ) legislation. No local authority has yet imposed an ADZ. This was considered in Portsmouth for Guildhall Walk and rejected due to the bureaucratic and costly nature of establishing it along with the negative impact it has on the image of the area. Guildhall Walk is however a Cumulative Impact Area and fits the profile the ADZ was originally intended to deal with. Therefore the proposal of a less costly and less bureaucratic way of imposing levies on licensed premises would be something that we would support.

Such a levy would not only contribute to policing but also other services required to reduce alcohol related violence and harm within the cumulative impact area and so how the levy would be applied to premises would need careful consideration. For instance one of the additional services suggested by the consultation document is taxi marshalling, this is currently funded by the premises on a voluntary basis and therefore any levy set would need to take into account the likelihood that premises would at this point withdraw voluntary funding.

Application of such a levy should perhaps be proportionate to the impact the premises has, for instance applying the charge on the basis of each hour the premises remains open after midnight may be the most proportionate approach and also have the effect of causing some premises to rethink their opening hours. Likewise all premises that impact should be considered. Premises such as Liquid and Envy, The Trafalgar and Drift In The City whilst not located directly in Guildhall Walk have a significant impact on the area through their late opening hours.

In relation to recommendation 26, whilst the Government seek to reduce the bureaucracy around evidencing Cumulative Impact Areas there will still always be a need to provide evidence to both the Licensing Authority and Courts of premises who are in conflict with the four licensing objectives so that these premises can be dealt with under the Licensing Act. At present it is not possible for all agencies to provide details surrounding all their interaction with a particular premises or clients of that premises. An example would be A&E or Ambulance staff logging any alcohol related admissions that came from a licensed premises against the premises concerned or asking any admissions where they had their last drink and logging this. This would be vital information if the licensed premises was later taken to a review hearing.

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