

Partnership & Crime Reduction

Licensing Report



'Promoting Safer Socialising'



**Kent
Police**

October 2007-September 2008

Licensing Report to Licensing and Safety Committee **For Year October 2007- September 2008**

Police licensing is based within the Partnerships and Crime Reduction unit at Medway Police Station. Licensing staff members are Inspector David Coleman and Sergeant Mark Carron. Nigel Arnold (Police Licensing Officer) and Mr John Lewis (PSE Licensing Officer).

Licensed Premises

There are currently 827 licensed premises and 1718 personal licence holders.

Overview

During 2007/2008 the general conduct of licensed premises in Medway has been good, but some premises have not conducted themselves to a satisfactory standard the turnover of licensee's at certain premises has also escalated. It has come to our notice that more premises are now being leased to holding companies that place expendable licensees in to their premises. This process is challenged when a variation of a premises licence is submitted and the licensing panel will make a decision based upon their findings.

Crime related to the nighttime economy for the period April to August 2008 in the Medway area has reduced by 18.6% compared to the same period in 2007. (Figures from CDRP Aug 2008).

Administration of Licensed Premises

Medway has a large volume of licensed premises that regularly cause no concern to police but when a problematic premises is identified this venue will receive either a visit from the ward Neighbourhood Police Office, Tactical Team or Police Licensing team. If enforcement is required a partnership

approach is always undertaken and specific police operations are run to address the problem. There are regular venues that repeatedly come to police attention and form part of a top 10 'Problem Premises list' and resources are tasked to reduce crime and disorder. This is accomplished by attending the premises on the nights that the Licensing Enforcement Operations, Op Albatross and Op Admiralty (see below) are run.

In addition taskings for attention to be paid to problem premises can be raised for patrols via the Tasking and Coordination unit. In addition to the above the Licensees of Premises that have become a significant problem are invited in and an action plan is agreed, which is intended to resolve the issue. The problem premises tend to change as the enforcement activity takes effect. The targeting of premises is an intelligence led process that falls into line with the Kent & Medway Alcohol Enforcement Policy.

Anti Social Behaviour

A high percentage of all calls to Police in respect of Anti Social Behaviour relate to behaviour in and around Licensed Premises, and the Night Time Economy. Over the last year there have been a number of dedicated Operations to continue to reduce and build upon the improvements and reductions around crime and disorder seen to date. With Violence highly related to the Night Time Economy, police run seasonal operations that come under the banner of Safer Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter, additional resources are allocated to carry out Licensed Premises Visits, high visibility foot patrolling of the High Street areas on Friday and Saturday nights.

The incidents of Anti Social Behaviour are reviewed on a daily basis, and if a location/premises appears to becoming problematic, then this is allocated as a focus area and a tasking is raised for the Neighbourhood Policing Unit and Core Section

Patrols to police the area to remedy the situation by robust enforcement of the law.

The perception of anti social behaviour in Medway by residents, i.e. residents who consider the Anti Social Behaviour to be a very big problem in their area has fallen in the year to June 2008 by 5% to 18%, when compared to the year to June 2007. (CDRP Aug 2008 figures).

The perception of drunk/rowdy behaviour in Medway by residents, i.e. residents who consider drunk/rowdy behaviour to be a very big problem in the area has fallen in the year to June 2008 by 6% from 34% to 28%. (CDRP Aug 2008 figures).

Problem Premises

Licensee's of premises that are identified as being problematic result in the designated premises supervisor being invited into the police Station to receive a 3 month warning, discussion takes place re the problems and if necessary police partners are in attendance to. On completion an action plan is implemented which set outs how they are going tackle and address the problems at their premises.

Test Purchasing Operations

Police licensing assist Medway council with test purchasing operations, this demonstrates excellent partnership working and vital evidence gathering for all. Police issue fixed penalty notices when offences have been detected.

Enforcement Operations

Op Albatross

The aim of Albatross is to tackle drug dealers/users, public houses and late night venues are visited by uniform and non-

uniformed officers, the aim of this operation is to disrupt drug supply and drug use and to raise the public awareness of drugs and gain intelligence of drug supply and use. These Operations occur once a month. Examples of the effectiveness of this ongoing Operation is that due to various offences 3 Licensed Premises were temporarily closed, and one permanently closed. Those closed temporarily were allowed to re-open once steps had been taken to resolve the issues, which in some cases resulted in the replacement of Licensees.

Op Admiralty

Operation Admiralty is joint agency imitative working with partner agencies to identify and prosecute offenders. The operation consists of Police licensing Officer Medway council enforcement Officers, Environmental Health, works & Pension, Immigration and Waste Management. These Operations occur every 3 months on average, with additional Operations at peak times.

In 2008 whilst both Albatross and Admiralty were in operation Police visited 90 premises.

Op Tango

This Operation ran on various nights during the period 8th October 2007 to 5th November 2007, the nights it operated were every Friday and Saturday night and additionally on Thursday 25th October, Sunday 4th November and Monday 5th November. The Operation dealt with the seizure of alcohol from underage persons, and the aims were to reduce the fear of crime, reduce Anti Social Behaviour, and increase Public confidence. The East area of Medway (Rainham and Gillingham) was targeted and 6 Officers were allocated to carry out foot patrol on the above dates to confiscate alcohol from minors.

Responsible Alcohol Sale Campaign

This campaign ran between, Monday 19th November 2007 and Friday 30th November 2007, and was to monitor various Licensed Premises (Public Houses) for breaches of the Licensing Act such as Selling to Underage Persons, Selling Alcohol to Drunk Persons. By liaising with partners various licensed premises were identified and plain clothes Officers were deployed to monitor activities and report back to the Police Licensing Officer. 16 premises were identified and were visited at various times during their opening hours. The results were sent to the Home Office. A total of 63 visits were carried out during the Operation, and only 1 follow up visit was required to deal with a breach of the Licensing Act, by way of advice to the Designated Premises Supervisor.

TENS (Temporary Event Notices)

In 2007/08 Police processed approximately 180 Temporary Event Notices.

Impact of Longer Licensing Hours

The extension of licensing hours, operated by a large number of licensed premises throughout the Medway Towns since the introduction of the new act, has tended to stretch Police resources. There used to be a peak time for calls relating to Anti Social Behaviour/Alcohol Related Violence at closing time between 2300hrs and 0200hrs, mainly at the weekends, this allowed Police to plan to have greater resources available during these times. However, with the longer varied hours there is no set peak time for call demand and therefore with the limited resources available attendance performance can be affected. The seasonal operations have also had to be altered to reflect the

longer opening hours and are now run between 2000hrs and 0400hrs in general.

In the current economic climate, we have had a number of applications to vary licences to allow earlier opening times, we recently had one where a public house wanted to open at 0600hrs each week day in an attempt to attract early morning trade. Had this been granted this would have had an adverse effect on Police resources as it would likely attract customers who would have left nightclubs only 2 hrs previously, thus increasing the potential for disorder/alcohol related violence etc.

Smoking Laws

The new Smoking Laws have now been in force for some time and problems are now beginning to become apparent. A number of licensed premises have had to vary their licences regarding the times that outside areas can be used for smoking. One particular premises has no available land or area for smoking and has been allowing smokers to stand on the footpath which has in turn caused the footpath to be blocked and a potential hazard to road users, both pedestrian and vehicular. There is also an issue with noise caused by those smoking outside licensed premises in residential areas.

Gambling Act

The parts of the new Gambling Act that have been implemented have not as yet had any noticeable impact on policing within the Medway area. However, Medway Police worked with the Gambling Act Enforcement Officer for Medway Council, by carrying out an operation to attend every takeaway in the Medway area to ensure that the Fruit Machines (prohibited in takeaways under the act) had either been removed or were physically switched off pending removal and the proprietors advised.

Medway Police will continue to work in conjunction with partner agencies regarding any enforcement issues as and when they arise.

Threats

The current downturn in the economy may have a consequential effect on both the night time economy as well as local licensed premises.

Certain parts of Kent, notably Maidstone, have already seen some premises engage in ridiculously low cost drink promotions (e.g. all you can drink for £10), which has resulted in irresponsible and dangerous levels of alcohol consumption. In addition the number of instances of 'pre-fuelling' (i.e. drinking at home before going out) may rise as people try to offset the cost of an evening of high drink prices, which again may result in higher levels of drunkenness.

It may also be possible that some licensees, in view of profit falls, may be tempted to ignore their responsibilities around the prevention of under-age drinking or other criminal activities, for example drug dealing.

All of these issues are recognised and will be actively monitored by the police and those premises that are identified as falling in standards will be subject of early intervention and remedial action.

