

**CABINET**

Date: 11 April 2017

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**ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION IN NORTHUMBERLAND TASK AND FINISH GROUP**

Report of the Chairman of the Task and Finish Group: Councillor Kath Nisbet

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**Purpose of Report**

To present the findings of the Alcohol Consumption Working Group to Cabinet for its consideration, following consideration by the Care and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

**Recommendations**

It is recommended that Cabinet agree the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group:

- 1 Provide leadership in the drive to encourage responsible drinking by deploying creative and multidisciplinary advertising techniques that enable the public to discern for themselves the truths about alcohol and to make informed decisions about its consumption;
- 2 Embed routine and systematic alcohol screening and brief interventions across health and social care services and also recognise and explore the role that other services, eg criminal justice, can play in delivering alcohol screening and brief interventions;
- 3 Note the conclusion of Public Health England that price controls such as a combination of sales tax and minimum unit pricing can be effective (following progress of the related draft Scottish legislation);
- 4 Recognise published support for pricing policies which address high strength, low cost alcohol, specifically white ciders that are more likely to be consumed by the vulnerable such as children and young people and dependent drinkers, for whom the local authority has a duty of care;
- 5 Recognise the impact of the reduction in drink drive limits in Scotland, also that England has the second highest drink drive limit in Europe;
- 6 Continue to invest in good quality community substance misuse services for those requiring specialist support;
- 7 Call for a more robust system to regulate alcohol advertising to replace the alcohol industry self regulated scheme currently in place; and

8 Further work:

- issues concerning children and young people specifically
- consider using PHE Alcohol Learning Resources: CLear Self-Assessment Tool

<https://www.alcohollearningcentre.org.uk/Topics/Browse/CLear/>

to review leadership and governance and other issues related to Northumberland's strategic approach to alcohol harm reduction.

## Key Issues

The Care and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee had first requested that further consideration be given to how to tackle issues with alcohol consumption during their discussion of the 'Commissioning of Public Health Services' report that was presented at their meeting on 27 September 2016.

The Care and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee then established this Task and Finish Group in November 2016 to review issues associated with alcohol consumption in Northumberland and to consider how measures aimed at increasing responsible drinking and improve community well-being in the County can best be introduced.

The Task and Finish Group's terms of reference were to:

- 1) Review previous NCC scrutiny work on addressing alcohol issues for any potentially valuable input; and
- 2) Receive information from officers on:
  - (a) What the issues are
  - (b) Current means of addressing issues
  - (c) What changes are proposed.

The Group met twice, in January and February 2017 and consisted of four members: Kath Nisbet (Chairman), Anne Dale, Isabel Hunter and Alyson Wallace. The lead officers for the Working Group were Christine Kelly and Liz Robinson, and supported by Paul Allen, Scrutiny Officer.

A copy of the notes of the two meetings are attached which provide further detail about the presentations considered and discussions of the Task and Finish Group.

The proposals formulated were firstly considered by the Care and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 28 March 2017 for onward referral. Members appreciated how much work had gone into this project and thanks were expressed to the four members of the Task and Finish Group for their participation. It was agreed that it had been a very interesting subject. The Care and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee supported the recommendations being presented to Cabinet for approval.

## BACKGROUND PAPERS

Copies available from Democratic Services on request (details specified in Task and Finish Group meetings of 17 January and 16 February 2017).