CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S TRUST BOARD	**Agenda Item 24** Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject:		**Response to the report of the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee Report: Reducing Alcohol Related Harm to Children and Young People**
Date of Meeting:		**7 September 2009**
Report of:		**Director of Children's Services**
Contact Officer:	**Name:**	**Steve Barton** **Tel: 29-6105**
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Key Decision:	**No**	Forward Plan No. N/A
Wards Affected:	**All**	

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

1.1 In September 2008, in response to the Annual Report of the Director of Public Health 'Brighten Up: Growing Up in Brighton and Hove', the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee (CYPOSC) established an ad-hoc panel to:

"Examine the costs of, social and economic outcomes of, and reasons for the higher than average, and worsening, levels of alcohol related harm suffered by children and young people in Brighton and Hove."

1.2 This response sets out to address the recommendations of this report and to propose further action in respect to the Children and Young People's Trust (CYPT) response to the issue of young people and alcohol.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

2.1 That the Children & Young People's Trust Board:

(a) Note the recommendations of the report from CYPOSC and acknowledge the work of that committee.

(b) Request a further report from the CYPT, to set out proposals for a Youth Alcohol Action Plan as part of the Brighton & Hove Alcohol Strategy.

(c) Agree that further work, in respect of the recommendations from the CYPOSC which fall beyond the remit of the CYPT, is taken forward through the Local Area Agreement.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

3.1 Ad-Hoc Scrutiny Panels consist of cross party groups who carry out short, sharply focused pieces of work. The purpose of the panel was to:
"Specifically, but not exclusively, examine the impact of the Licensing Act 2003 on the availability to, and consumption of, alcohol by those aged under 18 in the city and, seeking evidence from, amongst others, Sussex Police, premises license holders, the council's own public safety officers and our partners in the NHS, will determine what steps the council could take to reduce levels of alcohol-related harm to children in the city.

Further, the Panel will examine reasons why the problems of alcohol-related harm appear to be worst in the east of the city." (CYPOSC, June 2009)

3.2 The panel subsequently held a series of evidence gathering meetings and drew together the report Reducing Alcohol Related Harm to Children and Young People (Appendix 1).

3.3 Brighton & Hove NHS (Primary Care Trust) leads on the development and delivery of the Brighton and Hove Alcohol Strategy 2008/11, which has identified seven priority areas. The CYPT is part of the multi agency strategy group and will attend the next meeting with an update on activity and proposals for the development of a Youth Alcohol Action Plan.

3.3.1 **RECOMMENDATION 1:**
The Panel welcomes and commends the increased emphasis of Licensing enforcement on off-sales (and on public place drinking), as it shows a commitment to identifying and tackling current problems rather than simply adhering to traditional modes of enforcement. The Panel hopes that this will provide a platform for the further development of Licensing enforcement, both in terms of closer partnership working, and in terms of a continuing concentration on the actual rather than the popularly perceived problems of underage drinking.

Licensing and trading standard services are working closely with the CYPT to address issues of underage sales across all licensed premises and are continuing enforcement around underage sales and proxy purchasing.

3.3.2 **RECOMMENDATION 2:**
City partners (co-ordinated by Trading Standards Officers) should draw up a Best Practice Guide on avoiding selling alcohol to U18s with a view to the guide being disseminated to independent retailers.

Trading Standards Officers have agreed to deliver training to licensed premises and to develop education leaflets and awareness tools with Health Promotions Advisors.

3.3.3 **RECOMMENDATION 3:**
Encourage (particularly via the Brighton & Hove Licensing Committee) all off-sales to adopt the 'Challenge 25' scheme.

The CYPT understands that this is happening.

3.3.4 **RECOMMENDATION 4:**
Licensing Committee to request assurances that new and re-assessed licensees will not discount sales below cost, engage in irresponsible multiple discounting or sell products strongly associated with hazardous drinking practices.

This may not be enforceable by the Licensing Committee under current legislation.

3.3.5 **RECOMMENDATION 5:**
CYPT should consider its substance misuse services in terms of a potential re-deployment of resources from drugs to alcohol-related projects in instances where drug issues may have been advanced to the detriment of similarly serious alcohol-related problems. CYPT should also consider whether there is value in lobbying NHS Brighton & Hove and central Government to review their resource allocation in regard to alcohol-related services for children and young people.

ru-ok?, Brighton & Hove's specialist substance misuse service for under-19s, is currently funded via the Local Area Agreement to address both drug and alcohol related issues, with the CDRP (Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership) providing funding for a specialist Alcohol Worker post. However, all workers within the service will engage with young people who have alcohol related issues as a matter of course. During 2008-09, 38% of young people working with ru-ok? identified alcohol as their primary problematic substance and 34% identified alcohol as their secondary problematic substance.

As part of the local alcohol strategy, and in line with national policy, Brighton and Hove NHS has recently commissioned an Alcohol Brief Intervention service, which will offer early preventative advice, information and support to people aged 16 and over. CRI, the adult substance misuse service provider, has this tender and is working closely with the ru-ok? service to establish how the work with under-18s will take place.

There has also recently been an increase in capacity in the Health Promotions team, with an additional worker employed to focus primarily upon alcohol. This has led to an increase in the level of Health Promotions work around alcohol that is targeted at young people.

Recommendation 2.2 of this response proposes a way forward to address this issue.

3.3.6 **RECOMMENDATION 6:**
CIA (Cumulative Impact Area) boundaries to be re-examined with a view to extending them to other areas of the city which might benefit from CIA powers (e.g. extension around Preston Park and up to Elm Grove).

In order to extend the CIA the Licensing authority must take steps to identify concern about crime and disorder or public nuisance, consider whether there is good evidence that crime and disorder or nuisance are happening and are caused by the customers of licensed premises, or that the risk of cumulative impact is imminent. It must then identify the boundaries of the area where

problems are occurring, consult with specified parties, and subject to the outcome of the consultation include and publish details of special policy in licensing policy statement. This work is reviewed by the licensing committee; the Statement of Licensing Policy is set by full Council.

3.3.7 **RECOMMENDATION 7:**
When engaged with young drinkers, police officers need to ensure that they are not over-confrontational and that the rationale for their actions is widely understood. This may best be achieved by engaging with young people in contexts other than those of front-line policing (particularly by visiting schools).

The ru-ok? service is currently working with schools and the police liaison office for the West Area to develop alcohol education, in partnership with the Healthy Schools Team. The IYSS (Integrated Youth Support Service) and police meet regularly to develop joint working in relation to the Youth Crime Action Plan and delivery of services. This recommendation may need to go forward to this group, through the IYSS Area Manager who is linked into the Youth Crime Action Plan.

3.3.8 **RECOMMENDATION 8**
Alcohol education should address the long term physical impact of U18 alcohol use, not just safety/legal issues.

The Healthy Schools Team are continuing to support schools to address the health impact of alcohol as part of PSHE (Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education) and work is being undertaken with General Practitioners and Accident & Emergency departments to support their staff in addressing the health impact of alcohol with young people.

3.3.9 **RECOMMENDATION 9:**
Develop and deliver an information pack on alcohol targeted at parents and carers, and facilitate the involvement of parents/carers in creating and maintaining this material.

In the national Alcohol Action Plan, the Government stated that it will produce an advice and guidance leaflet for parents and carers. The CYPT is currently awaiting this leaflet to distribute locally. As part of a successful bid to address youth disorder, the CYPT will be working with city-wide partners this summer to develop a leaflet for parents, carers and those who buy alcohol for young people about the dangers and consequences of underage alcohol consumption and proxy purchasing.

3.3.10 **RECOMMENDATION 10:**
Survey teenagers for their views and seek to develop alternative activities for young people to engage with as alternatives to illegal drinking in public places.

Under the current restructure of the CYPT, an audit of youth provision across the city is being undertaken which young people and youth advisors will feed into.

3.3.11 **RECOMMENDATION 11:**

The council should request changes to statute relating to the powers of local Licensing Committees (as detailed in point 16.3 above) in line with the powers granted by the Sustainable Communities Act (2007).

The Home Office is currently proposing amendments to licensing provisions to include discretionary local conditions that can be applied by licensing authorities to groups of two or more licensed premises experiencing particular problems. These could include bans on discounted alcohol, security measures, risk reviews and operation of 'Challenge 21'. This work would be delegated to licensing committee or sub-committee.

4. CONSULTATION

4.1 The findings and recommendations of the CYPOSC report are based on extensive consultation.

4.2 Councillors Juliet McCaffery and Ann Norman agreed to sit on the CYPOSC Panel alongside Councillor Duncan. Councillor Norman was subsequently appointed as Chairman of the Panel. Panel members held a scoping meeting, where they were advised by the Director of Public Health and by officers from the council's Environment Directorate and from the CYPT.

4.3 The Panel subsequently held a series of evidence-gathering meetings in public. Witnesses included police officers, Trading Standards officers, officers representing the Council's Licensing team, CYPT officers, public health professionals from NHS Brighton & Hove, a consultant paediatrician, head teachers, and representatives of the major supermarket and off-licence chains. The Panel also invited a number of independent alcohol retailers to give evidence; however, none agreed to appear before the Panel.

4.4 Panel members also met on two occasions with members of the Brighton & Hove Youth Council in order to elicit young people's views on alcohol.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

5.1 The CYPOSC report identifies a number of new initiatives and responsibilities for the Council and highlights a potential increase in activity over the next few years. While the resources in the budget are sufficient to cover the current workload in 2009/10, no additional funding has been identified to cover any future rise in activity. In addition, due to likely cuts in the CDRP funding next year, the budget may be reduced by £40k. Also, the Oasis project (a local charity which supports female substance misusers) has previously provided c£20k to part-fund a post providing additional support for young women, but this may now no longer be possible. The potential reduction of c£60k of available funding in this area may seriously hamper the ability of Brighton & Hove City Council to successfully implement the recommendations proposed by the CYPOSC.

Finance Officer Consulted: David Ellis *Date: 04/08/09*

Legal Implications:

5.2 There are no direct legal implications arising from the report. The body of the report refers to relevant licensing legislation. Where children are abusing alcohol they could be regarded as children in need under the Children Act 1989, and so be entitled to a range of services to assist them in addressing this. Programmes to address underage drinking of the sort identified in the report will assist the Trust in meeting its obligation to promote the well being of young people under the Children Act 2004.

Lawyer Consulted: Natasha Watson *Date: 24/08/09*

Equalities Implications:

5.3 An Equalities Impact Assessment for Substance Misuse services in the CYPT is scheduled to be complete.

Sustainability Implications:

5.4 There are no immediate sustainability implications.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

5.5 Current partnership work around alcohol also addresses issues around crime and disorder relating to alcohol and young people. If the potential cuts in specialist service funding take place in 2010/11, this partnership work, and the focus on youth crime and disorder, will be reduced.

Risk & Opportunity Management Implications:

5.6 These will be dealt with in the proposed Youth Alcohol Action Plan.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

5.7 These will be dealt with in the proposed Youth Alcohol Action Plan.

6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):

6.1 Consideration will be given to the added value of the Youth Alcohol Strategy and Action plan proposed in recommendation 2.1(b) of this report.

7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 To establish the relationship between the CYPT Board and the CYPOSC as part of service improvement and quality assurance, and consequently improve outcomes for children and young people.

7.2 To take forward the issues raised by the CYPOSC report.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. CYPOSC Report: Reducing Alcohol Related Harm to Children and Young People

Documents in Members' Rooms

None

Background Documents

None