

LONDON BOROUGH OF RICHMOND UPON THAMES**CABINET**

DATE: 14 APRIL 2008

REPORT OF: CABINET MEMBER FOR
COMMUNITIES

LEAD OFFICER: HEAD OF STRATEGY AND POLICY

SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO THE REPORT OF THE ALCOHOL TASK
GROUP

WARDS: ALL

KEY DECISION?: NO

For general release**1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 This report sets out the initial response of the Executive to the report of the Alcohol Task Group.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.2. The Government published its National Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy in June 2007 called Safe, Sensible, Sociable. The long term goal of this strategy is to minimise the health harms, violence and anti social behaviour associated with alcohol whilst ensuring that people are able to enjoy alcohol safely and responsibly.
- 1.3. Shortly after the publication of the Strategy it was agreed by the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee to establish the Alcohol Task Group to examine the negative and positive impacts of alcohol consumption within the borough, what was being done to address this issue already and what else could be done to minimise the negative impacts of alcohol consumption. In examining the issue the Task Group focused on issues associated with:
- Education / public information
 - Health
 - Crime
 - Recreation
 - Licensing
 - The night time economy and the economy in general

- 1.4. This report gives the Executive's initial response to the report published by the Alcohol Task Group and outlines the next steps with regard to the recommendations in the report. The Cabinet is asked to note the report and the next steps outlined below.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the Cabinet agree the next steps outlined in the report at paragraphs 3.6 and 3.7.**
- 2.2 That the Cabinet Member for Communities report back to the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting in May.**

3. DETAIL

- 3.1. The Cabinet welcomes the report of the task group on what is a key issue both nationally and locally. However, the breadth of the recommendations made in the report (attached at Appendix A) make it difficult for the Executive Board to respond in full within the timescale given. The Executive Board therefore proposes that a more detailed report go to a later Cabinet meeting following consultation internally and with key partners.
- 3.2. Of the areas covered by the Task Group the Cabinet wish to highlight three key themes arising from the report that the council need to consider as priorities. These are:
 - The clear link between alcohol and anti social behaviour;
 - The impact of alcohol on the health of the borough's residents
 - The need to improve education for young people, adults and local licensees.
- 3.3. It is these issues that are key and which have been highlighted within the Community Plan. There are clear commitments within the Plan to reduce the levels of binge drinking and increase the awareness of the impacts that excessive drinking can have on health. As highlighted in the Task Group's report there has been some progress towards addressing these issues but we realise that there is still considerable work to do in order to reduce the most negative impacts of alcohol consumption in the borough. The development of an alcohol harm reduction strategy is a first step and should provide the council with a clear strategy to implement and monitor.
- 3.4. We also agree with the report that there is a lack of local evidence around the impact of alcohol on our communities, in particular the direct health consequences in the borough from alcohol consumption, and this is something that we must work with the PCT and others to address. We will ensure that this issue is raised in the appropriate partnerships to discuss what information can be collected. This information could be used to develop a local indicator to measure the number of under 18 year olds admitted to hospital A & E departments as a result of alcohol consumption. The new National Indicator on alcohol related hospital admissions will also start to give

us information on people admitted to wards for long term health issues related to alcohol consumption.

- 3.5 However, any response to the issue of alcohol consumption has to be appropriate. The council and its partners must ensure that any policies impact on those who are at risk and not the vast majority of the population who enjoy alcohol responsibly.

Next steps

- 3.6. The Cabinet will seek to ensure that these particular strands continue to be taken forward by the council and by other local agencies and organisations highlighted in the report.
- 3.7. The Executive Board has taken the following steps to ensure that a full response can be provided to the Task Groups report:
- The Task Group's report has been sent to each department asking them to respond to specific recommendations within the report.
 - A report will be made to the next Local Strategic Partnership for discussion and a way forward in addressing the concerns raised in the report agreed.
 - The appropriate Partnership group of the LSP will be identified and tasked to take this work forward.
 - A report commenting on all the recommendations will be presented to Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee in May 2008.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 The Executive Board will consult all departments and partners on the recommendations highlighted in the Task Group's report.

5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no financial implications.

6. POLICY IMPLICATIONS/CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 There are no policy implications at this stage.

7. RISK ASSESSMENT

The Board recognise that there are risks in not addressing the issues raised in the report and therefore proposes to outline what is being done in more detail at the next Cabinet meeting.

8. EQUALITY IMPACT/CONSIDERATIONS

There are no equalities implications arising from this report.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications from this report: however Legal Services will be consulted on the implications of the Task Group's report.

10. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

There are no environmental impacts from this report.

11. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

Alcohol Task Group Final Report. February 2008.
The Richmond upon Thames Community Plan 2007-2017

12. CONTACTS

Sir David Williams, Cabinet Member for Communities, email:
cllr.dwilliams@richmond.gov.uk

Mark Behrendt. Policy Officer. 020 8891 7806 m.behrendt@richmond.gov.uk

Christian Scade. Senior Scrutiny Officer. 020 8891 7158
christian.scade@richmond.gov.uk