

TRAFFORD COUNCIL

LICENSING COMMITTEE – 25TH AUGUST 2016

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF REGULATORY SERVICES

**GREATER MANCHESTER ALCOHOL STRATEGY AND THE DEVOLUTION
AGENDA**

PURPOSE

To update the Licensing Committee on the current position in respect of the Greater Manchester Alcohol Strategy and the Devolution agenda.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Report to be noted

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 This report is to give an update to the Licensing Committee on the current position in respect of the Greater Manchester Alcohol Strategy and the Devolution agenda.

2. DEVOLUTION

- 2.1 Devolution is the transfer of certain powers and responsibilities from national government to a particular region. In 2014 local authorities in Greater Manchester (GM) signed a landmark devolution agreement with the government. The agreement gives the region additional powers, and greater accountability through a new elected mayor.

- 2.2 Following the devolution agreement, discussions began into the potential links between the GM Alcohol Strategy and the wider devolution agenda. Discussions initially focused on three main thematic areas:

- Justice and Health Commissioning;
- Alcohol licensing, enforcement and compliance; and
- Alcohol pricing and promotion.

- 2.3 The discussions took into account the work which had been undertaken by local authorities as part the Local Alcohol Action Area (LAAA) and the GM Alcohol Strategy 2014 – 2017.

3. LOCAL ALCOHOL ACTION AREA(LAAA)

- 3.3 In 2014 Greater Manchester bid for, and was awarded, LAAA status. This is a Home office led scheme where additional resources are made available to selected authorities with the purpose of tackling the harmful effects of irresponsible drinking; particularly alcohol related crime and disorder, and health harms.

4. THE GM ALCOHOL STRATEGY 2014 – 2017

- 4.1 The overarching purpose of the strategy is to reduce demand on public services and address complex dependency issues through early intervention and prevention. In order to do this it seeks to deliver three interlinked outcomes (reflective of the LAAA):

- To reduce alcohol-related crime, antisocial behaviour and domestic abuse;
- To reduce alcohol-related health harms; and
- To establish diverse, vibrant and safe night-time economies

- 4.2 The Implementation Plan for the Strategy identified 11 priorities.

4.3 Priority 1: Promoting the effective and consistent use of licensing/regulatory tools and powers to reduce demand; including through enforcement-based activities and wider voluntary agreements with the alcohol trade.

4.4 The Greater Manchester Licensing Manager's Group was tasked with identifying ways of delivering Priority 1 and began working on 4 key tasks:

GM enforcement and compliance policy;

Model licence conditions

Public Health Toolkit

Means of lobbying for a 5th licensing objective (health)

4.5 Recently, following on from the work the GM Licensing Managers had already undertaken for the GM Strategy, the group was tasked with looking at opportunities for additional licensing powers as part of the devolution agreement.

5. **THE 5 KEY 'ASKS'**

5.1 The GM Licensing Managers made 11 suggestions, of which 5 were identified as key 'asks':

1. A single GM Licensing Policy

2. The power for GM to define its own licensing objectives (Public Health Bodies are very keen on introducing a 'health' objective)

3. The power for GM to add to the list of responsible authorities (Some examples proposed: HMRC; the Transport Police; Business Rates. The Border Agency was also proposed but it will soon become a responsible authority following changes to national regulations)

4. Devolved power to set its own mandatory licence conditions (For example: a requirement to adhere to the Challenge 25 scheme)

5. A GM "Enforcement & Compliance Concordat"

5.2 A legal opinion was sought on all five 'asks' and are considered straightforward to introduce.

6. **THE 6 ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS**

- Extension of the power to suspend licences
- Powers to review personal alcohol licences (this power will be introduced in October following changes to national legislation)
- Cross-border powers to enter and inspect licensed premises

- Powers to determine mandatory licensing hours locally
- Extension to current powers to adopt Cumulative Impact Policies
- Fixed Penalties for selected breaches of licence conditions

7. HOUSE OF LORDS SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE LICENSING ACT

- 7.1 Interestingly, on the 25th May 2016 the House of Lords appointed the members of an ad hoc committee to consider the Licensing Act 2003. The committee is investigating the effectiveness of the Act and has asked for comments by the end of the 2nd September 2016.
- 7.2 The GM Licensing Manager's Group will be replying to the call for evidence with the above suggestions and additional comments.

8. GM ALCOHOL DEVOLUTION AGENDA

- 8.1 On the 21st June 2016 Councillor Mike Whetton, Chairman of the Licensing Committee, together with Joanne Boyle, Licensing Team Leader, were invited to a meeting where officers and councillors were updated on the above proposals.
- 8.2 On the 27th July 2016 Councillor Whetton attended a meeting for Chairs of Licensing committees to discuss follow on actions.
- 8.3 It is anticipated that these meetings will continue as devolution progresses.
- 8.4 It should be noted that although there is a proposal for a common GM licensing policy it does not follow that this will ultimately lead to a GM Licensing Authority.