

MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL

REPORT FOR INFORMATION

COMMITTEE: Social Strategy Overview and Scrutiny
DATE: 8th March 2006
SUBJECT: Alcohol Misuse Enforcement Campaign (AMEC) Report
REPORT OF: Deputy Chief Executive (Performance)

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To provide Members with a report on the outcomes arising from the recent multi-agency Alcohol Misuse Enforcement Campaign (AMEC).

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members note the report.

FINANCIAL CONSEQUENCES FOR THE REVENUE BUDGET

None at present

FINANCIAL CONSEQUENCES FOR THE CAPITAL BUDGET

None at present

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BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Report to SSOSC 16 November 2005

WARDS AFFECTED

All

IMPLICATIONS FOR KEY COUNCIL POLICIES

Anti Poverty	Equal Opportunities	Environment	Employment
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Alcohol Misuse Enforcement Campaign (AMEC) ran from 14 November to 24 December 2005 across the city. This was the third campaign in Manchester, a series of national campaigns which have been central to the Government's wider strategy to reduce the harm caused through the misuse of alcohol. This campaign coincided with the coming into force of the Licensing Act 2003, which took place on the 24th November 2005.

2. Objectives of the campaign

- 2.1 The purpose of the AMEC was to reduce alcohol related crime and disorder, particularly violent crime, through early interventions, raising the standard of management of licensed premises and reducing underage drinking. The campaign targeted anti social behaviour related to alcohol such as vomiting, urinating in streets and people being verbally and physically abusive.
- 2.2 The campaign brought together partners from Greater Manchester Police (GMP), Trading Standards, Environmental Health, Crime and Disorder Team, Drug and Alcohol Strategy Team, Street Management and Parking Services, Fire Service and the City Centre Management Company. A steering group was established to plan, co-ordinate and manage the activity.

3. Activity undertaken

3.1 Early interventions

GMP conducted high profile police patrols throughout the campaign, across all three divisions, particularly in hotspot areas such as the City Centre, Gorton, the Wilmslow Road corridor, Levenshulme, and Didsbury. Emphasis was placed on early intervention of low-level disorder, in particular through issuing fixed penalty notices. Alcohol was also confiscated from those drinking outdoors.

Street management services and GMP conducted joint parking initiatives on weekends during the campaign. Joint patrols of parking attendants and GMP officers focused activity on known hotspots including Peter Street – where 358 parking notices were served - Whitworth Street West and Dantzig Street in the city centre and Wilmslow Road on the Metropolitan and South policing divisions. Removal trucks were deployed to remove illegally parked or nuisance vehicles (untaxed and abandoned) and to ensure the free flow of traffic. This was particularly critical when licensed premises were closing on Peter Street and the large number of parked vehicles prohibited rapid clearance and dispersal of those leaving the area.

A communications campaign was in force throughout the AMEC. This was kick-started with a national launch and billboard posters that were developed by the Home Office. These posters featured reminders about the £80 penalty notices that would be served for drunk and disorderly behaviour. These posters were followed by similar notices in licensed premises.

Manchester ran a strong media campaign with a number of success stories appearing in the Manchester Evening News and local newspapers. The Manchester Evening News also ran an editorial in support of the campaign. The publicity gained through this campaign was positive and emphasised that disorderly conduct would not be tolerated.

3.2 Raising the standard of management of licensed premises

A range of multi agency visits to licensed premises took place throughout the campaign. Action taken with regard to licensing issues is also the subject of a report to this committee and provides further figures of action taken since the implementation of the Licensing Act, and beyond the scope of the campaign period outlined here.

Environmental Health conducted 647 visits to licensed premises during the campaign, including pubs, nightclubs, off licences and takeaways, to ensure that these premises were being managed responsibly and complying with their license conditions.

70 joint visits were made by Environmental Health and the Police. The proactive approach taken during visits to licensed premises was viewed as positive and meant that problems were addressed immediately with enforcement action being taken as appropriate. Informal feedback from residents who had made complaints about licensed premises indicated that they were pleased with the approach taken.

GMP visited 577 premises, arrested 492 people and issued 147 fixed penalty notices of £80 during the campaign. The majority of fixed penalty notices issued were for Public Order Act offences such as low level disorder, urinating in the street, harassment and threatening behaviour. Additional provision was made in custody suites at weekends to deal with the increased volume of arrests.

3.3 Reducing underage drinking

Trading Standards conducted 61 test purchases (50 in off licenses and 11 in public houses) during nine operations. The total number of sales to minors was 22. Prior to the official visits taking place, officers from GMP City Safe team visited every licensed venue in the city to deliver information on how to challenge under age drinkers and to provide details of a proof of age scheme.

The final AMEC evaluation showed a large reduction in the number of premises at which underage alcohol test purchases were achieved from 70%

in week one to 10% in week five. Fixed penalty notices of £80 were issued to staff in bars and off licenses when alcohol was served to minors.

Following on from this, during 2006-08 an alcohol awareness programme funded by the Department of Health (Communities for Health Grant) will be delivered in 'hotspot' areas of Manchester where under age drinking by young people in public places is prevalent. As well as providing innovative tailored programmes that respond to the specific needs of young people, it will support young people to engage with other services.

The project will provide opportunities for young people to participate in peer design workshops to explore issues related to alcohol use and to produce a range of materials which will contain clear health and safety messages.

The material will be aimed at peers, parents and members of the wider community and will include information about safe drinking levels, risky behaviours, the consequences of adults purchasing alcohol for young people in off licenses, and positive activities as an alternative to alcohol. Manchester DAST have also recommended that the project works with Manchester Trading Standards to involve young people in the design of information to be circulated to off licenses and licensed premises about the AMEC Campaign from a young person's perspective

4. Impact on levels of violent crime

During the campaign, the number of total assaults was reduced by 8.7%. Serious assaults were significantly reduced – with a reduction of 55% fewer serious assaults than in the same period the previous year.

Reported incidents at licensed premises also decreased during the campaign through use of co-ordinated repeat visits to problematic licensed premises.

5. Conclusion

The campaign is notable not only in terms of the volume of activity conducted – with the large volume of visits, arrests and fixed penalty notices – but also in the clear message it sent out to those living, working and visiting Manchester that alcohol related disorder will not be tolerated.

The AMEC campaign in Manchester has been recognized by the Home Office as a success – not just in terms of the reductions in violent crime but the well co-ordinated and cohesive approach taken to partnership working. This has been echoed by the partners involved in the campaign.

The Home Office have subsequently organised a further campaign that commenced in January and will run through to the 31st March. Work will also continue as outlined to inform and educate young people.