
Briefing Note – Update on the Community Alcohol Partnership (LC4484)

Produced for:	Licensing Committee
Requested by:	Councillor Phil Barnett
Portfolio Member:	Councillor Lee Dillon
Service Lead:	Sean Murphy
Date Prepared:	27 th December 2023
Briefing Author:	Jessica Ryall-Spoor – Lead Officer – Public Health and Community Safety Sean Murphy – Service Lead

1 Purpose of the Briefing

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with an update regarding the Community Alcohol Partnership (CAP) which launched across West Berkshire on 7th July 2023.

2 Background

- 2.1 The issue of young people and alcohol and in particular, the controls around access have been around since the first legislation was introduced. Up until the 1990s the enforcement of legislation relating to under-age sales had always been seen as the domain of the police and up until the introduction of the Licensing Act 2003 licensing had always been the domain of the Licensing Justices. Now both are firmly established as statutory local authority functions. This is in large part about how we deliver our statutory functions in the surety that good law has context.
- 2.2 Society's relationship with alcohol is an enduring debating point. It is the same with young people. Over the years trends have changed but the risks and implications of access and misuse of alcohol for young people and the wider community endure. That complexity has been recognised for many years by the Public Protection Service who recognise that enforcement alone will not tackle the risk.
- 2.3 The CAP is a Community Interest Company (CiC) that brings together and supports local partnerships of councils, police, retailers, schools, health providers and community groups to reduce alcohol harm among children, improving their health and wellbeing and enhancing their communities. More can be found on the CAP initiative here: <https://www.communityalcoholpartnerships.co.uk/> . The key aims are as follows:

- The provision of positive activities for young people by working closely with local providers.
- To educate and inform three target groups: retailers/licensees, children and young people, and adults.
- To encourage responsible retail strategies by '*promoting high standards among alcohol retailers especially those designed to prevent underage drinking. The Retail of Alcohol Standards Group (RASG) pioneered the Challenge 25 scheme, a retailing strategy that encourages anyone who is over 18 but looks under 25 to carry acceptable ID if they wish to buy alcohol.*'

2.4 Within West Berkshire, the CAP initially launched in Thatcham in 2018, a further CAP was established in Theale, Tilehurst and Calcot in 2019 before launching West Berkshire wide on 7th July 2023.

2.5 The scheme is funded in part from the ringfenced public health grant.

3 Extension to West Berkshire

3.1 Since launching the CAP as a West Berkshire wide initiative in July 2023, the following activities have been undertaken:

- Worked with the Building Communities Together (BCT) Team Manager to align CAP with the BCT and Mini Maps meeting to increase awareness of CAP across partner agencies and the funding opportunities available for diversionary projects for children.
- Multi agency workstream to consider the application of CAP funding alongside Safer Streets Funding for diversionary activities for children living in Greenham.
- Work with Berkshire Youth CEO to discuss CAP and how we can work together on CAP funded projects.
- Distribution of CAP parent's guide leaflet through all secondary schools across West Berkshire along with the Youth Offending Team to provide to parents of pupils and service users.
- Provision of a list of all breweries across West Berkshire to enable CAP CiC to approach them to request additional funding for the West Berkshire CAP.
- Working with Newbury College regarding establishing a 'college CAP', this will include five projects across the remainder of the academic year and the development of 'Young Health Champions' within the college.
- Contact with all schools within West Berkshire advising of the alcohol presentations that can be undertaken to students by the team. We have schools booked in for presentations in the new year.

- Partnership working with colleagues in respect of setting up a Challenge 25 test purchasing operation.
- Seeking volunteers for the Challenge 25 test purchasing operation.
- Responsible Retailer training has been available to retailers on a monthly basis.

4 Wider Connections

- 4.1 The clear aim of the CAP is to protect the health and wellbeing of the individual and the community. It builds on the platform long since instigated by the Public Protection Service that the harms that can be caused by alcohol to young people and the community can only be tackled by taking an holistic partnership approach. To do this we need to work with not just retailers but schools, young people and key internal and external delivery partners including the police.
- 4.2 There are also clear links to many other areas of the work of the Council and the public protection service. These include Public Health and Building Communities Team and internally to Licensing, Trading Standards and the Environmental Protection Team. The work also aligns with key priority areas around safer streets, safeguarding and the reduction in violence against women and young girls.

5 Next Steps

- 5.1 In the new year it is anticipated that a Challenge 25 test purchasing operation will take place across West Berkshire. If retailers fail, follow up work such as encouraging attendance on the Responsible Retailer training will be undertaken and advice given. Furthermore, the failed test purchasing will provide intelligence for future under age enforcement programmes.
- 5.2 The first of the five Newbury college projects will take place on 17th January 2024. This will be held in the 'marketplace' within the college and involve presentations, information points and workshops.
- 5.3 It is anticipated that funding from the CAP will be sought for small diversionary projects for groups of children or specific areas identified through the Mini Maps meeting or from Berkshire Youth. For example, we are already planning a project for Pangbourne Meadows for summer when it is known that children attend, misuse alcohol and render themselves vulnerable near the river.
- 5.4 During early spring a CAP survey will be going out to residents, children, and licensees. The results of the survey will help shape the CAP moving forward.
- 5.6 A meeting was held with the CAP Southeast Regional Manager on 13th December, moving forward he is keen on West Berkshire CAP working with Newbury college on a virtual reality training package for retailer training, involving an underage sale scenario and a package for schools to use with pupils regarding for example peer pressure scenarios.

6 Conclusion

- 6.1 Over the years we have seen significant increases in compliance rates in test purchasing exercises involving young people. But we know this is only one indicator and one part of the complex matrix which involves raising awareness of risk and informed decision making by both young people and retailer. The CAP brings together many of the strands of work that we have developed over the years into an organised and recognisable brand.
- 6.2 Trends also change over time. Our own trend data from annual surveys shows that tobacco consumption by young people is in significant decline. There are many attributable reasons for this including tax and duty policy, reduced availability as a result of very high levels of compliance by retailers and above all education. The risks have been set out clearly and young people have made informed choices.
- 6.3 More recently the issue of vaping and young people has come to the fore. New controls are planned along with new funding for local authorities. Like vaping the message around alcohol is significantly more nuanced than compared to tobacco. Alcohol is part of modern life. But it also presents clearly identifiable risks to individuals and communities. Opinions and behaviours are often said to develop in those younger formative years. The aim of the CAP and the work of the Public Protection Service is to allow space young people to make informed decisions that may affect the rest of their lives.

7 Appendices

- 7.1 None