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Communities

To: Corporate Policy Overview Committee, 26th March 2009

Subject: An Alcohol Strategy for Kent

Classification: Unrestricted

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**Summary:** The Alcohol Strategy for Kent sets out the way forward for agencies across Kent to work in partnership to prevent the harm caused by alcohol misuse. It aims to provide a structure for the development of treatment programmes, a preventative strategy for adults and young people and a community approach to issues such as policing, licensing and trading standards. It sets in context the current resource allocation and the improvements necessary to ensure that the County of Kent has in place an effective and responsive system.

**Recommendations:**

- This strategy is presented as a framework for consultation and Members are asked to note the contents of this report and comment on the content and direction of the strategy
- Members are asked to support the progress of the strategy to broader consultation with partners and communities.

**FOR INFORMATION & CONSULTATION**

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**1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The National Treatment Agency was established in 1988 and the principal focus of its work has been tackling drug misuse. In 2007 the Government published "Safe, Sensible, Social" to address alcohol misuse, an update of the 2004 National Harm Reduction Strategy. This is supplemented by a series of other strategies including those within the Public Health realm and, significantly, the Licensing Act of 2003. All the strategies bring alcohol misuse into much sharper focus, and identify a requirement for the public sector to work in partnership with the alcohol industry, at both production and retail levels.
- 1.2 In 2007 Kent County Council convened a Select Committee to review the health aspects of alcohol misuse. This focussed upon treatment provision, preventative services and in particular the impact of patterns of alcohol consumption by young people. The Committee received evidence from a wide body, including treatment providers, the health service, young people and the police. The review concluded with a report detailing some 28 recommendations and this report provided a very useful foundation for the development of an alcohol strategy for Kent. A report back to the Select Committee will be undertaken in the forthcoming months.

## **2. An Alcohol Strategy for Kent**

- 2.1 The Strategy has been developed using the framework recommended by the National Treatment Agency and has been supported by Alcohol Concern, agencies from across Kent County Council, Police and Health Services. It reflects the national evidence base of the harm caused by alcohol to health, employment/industry and criminal justice and makes local comparators from which to build and develop service responses.
- 2.2 The Strategy sets out Kent's position in respect of treatment for young people and adults and the activity being undertaken to address the community safety concerns and the mechanisms for managing the impact of alcohol misuse within the public realm.
- 2.3 In 2008, an increasing focus on what is referred to as Hidden Harm<sup>1</sup> has emerged. This has been brought into significant attention following the tragic death of Baby P, and issues of safeguarding practice. The Alcohol Strategy will incorporate work which addresses issues relating to families, linking in with the Hidden Harm Strategy.
- 2.4 The strategy identifies the priorities for action which include:
  - a. Communication: how to convey important public health messages without alienating the general public, ensuring that key professionals have an understanding of alcohol misuse, it's symptoms and outcomes, and seeking to have an informed employer group that can support and manage workplace issues
  - b. Treatment: improving the current level of treatment provision across a range of needs from prevention, early diagnosis to acute care
  - c. Community Safety: working with the Police and other Criminal Justice agencies to develop responses that minimise the impact of alcohol misuse and that, for example within the prison system, education programmes are developed alongside treatment
  - d. Licensing: working within a partnership arrangement to ensure the intentions of the Licensing Act 2003 are achieved and fulfilling the 2010 Strategy to work with off-licenses and other trade organisations
  - e. Children & Young People: working with education, schools and colleges to provide evidence based programmes about alcohol and where necessary providing the appropriate level of treatment interventions
  - f. Hidden Harm: as outlined above

## **3. Financial Implications**

- 3.1 The Strategy highlights the need for a coherent and rigorous analysis of expenditure relating to alcohol. Kent has used national data to achieve an estimate of the impact of alcohol misuse across the county and we are currently commissioning the Public Health Resource Unit (PHRU) to give a more in depth assessment of investment against outcomes.

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<sup>1</sup> The effect that parental alcohol and drug misuse has on their children – Item B4 on this agenda looks at this in detail.

- 3.2 The key funding providers will remain Health and Social Care in particular for those people where alcohol misuse has reached a chronic state. The Police and other emergency services make a considerable investment when responding to disorder, road accidents and injury and fires within the home, all of which will continue to arise unless the messages contained within this strategy are achieved.
- 3.3 Through the KDAAT partnership some £1,772k is currently invested in treatment, KCC £121k, PCT £1,622, and Probation £29k. Supporting People funding supports a wide range of client needs, including problems associated with alcohol misuse. Within the annual funding of £542k, £95k is specifically allocated for the provision of a floating alcohol support service.
- 3.4 Investment in 2009/10 will increase by a further £390k, with much of this coming from Health, Supporting People, and Probation to support improved and targeted community alcohol service provision.

#### **4. Consultation**

- 4.1 The consultation period will last for approximately 12 weeks, and will include the following bodies:
- KDAAT
  - Kent Criminal Justice Board
  - Safer Stronger Communities Group
  - Children's Trust Board
  - Provider services
  - PCTs
  - Kent Youth Council
  - Borough and districts (including Licensing)
  - CDRPs
  - MPs
  - Service users
  - Carers
  - Kent Police Authority

The draft strategy will be presented to CFE, CMY and CED Policy Overview Committees in the March/April cycle, and the ASS Policy Overview Committee in July.

#### **5. Conclusions**

- 5.1 The Alcohol Strategy for Kent is a partnership strategy that aims to address alcohol misuse, provide improved information, advice and guidance and combat the negative outcomes within our communities when the consumption of alcohol leads to disorder or other injury. It is a strategy that will be progressed as new information comes forward, treatment services improve and our response via policing or other emergency services are developed. The Strategy is a significant Partnership agreement that will lead to enhanced service provision and a better understanding of the impact of

alcohol misuse in our communities and how best to promote safe, sensible and social drinking.

**6. Recommendations:**

- 6.1 This strategy is presented as a framework for consultation and Members are asked to note the contents of this report and comment on the content and direction of the strategy
- 6.2 Members are asked to support the progress of the strategy to broader consultation with partners and communities.

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