

## **Licensing and Safety Committee - 5 April 2023.**

### **Walsall Night Time Economy and control of closing times for licensed premises**

#### **1.0 Purpose of the report**

- 1.1 To respond to a request from the Leader of the Council for the Licensing and Safety Committee to revisit matters regarding the control of closing times for licensed premises, previously considered on 22 February 2023, in the light of recent events within the town centre night time economy.
- 1.2 To seek the views of the committee regarding the provision of knife detection equipment and bleed kits at premises that are open in Walsall town centre's night time economy.

#### **2.0 Recommendation**

The views of the committee are requested on how they wish to proceed with regard to:

- (a) pursuing the possibility of introducing an Early Morning Restriction Order in Walsall Town Centre (Paragraphs 4.0 and 5.0 refers)
- (b) pursuing the introduction of knife detection equipment and bleed kits in Walsall town centre premises open during the night time economy. (paragraph 6.0 refers)

#### **3.0 Background**

- 3.1 On 22 February 2023, the Licensing and Safety Committee considered a report which sought views on the Walsall Night Time Economy (NTE) and control of closing times for licensed premises.

It was:

**Resolved** (unanimously):

- 1) That the Licensing and Safety Committee note that it is not possible within the current statement of licensing policy to impose a blanket closing time on premises operating in Walsall town centre, and that each application must be considered on its individual merits.
- 2) That the committee note that the statement of licensing policy can be reviewed at any time, however Home Office guidance states that licensing authorities must always consider each application and must not impose predetermined licensed opening hours.
- 3) That recommendation 2.3, to report further on the potential to introduce greater control over the closing times of licensed premises by introducing an

Early Morning alcohol Restriction Order (EMRO) in Walsall Town Centre, be not pursued at this time.

A copy of the report is attached as Appendix 1.

- 3.2 A further murder has since taken place within the night time economy in Walsall. This incident has led to further discussions around violence in the night time economy and how it could be better managed or controlled. As the circumstances have changed since the last report the Leader of the Council has requested that this matter be revisited.

#### **4.0 Recent Incidents**

- 4.1 On 28 January 2023, a man was attacked and killed in Walsall town centre. Nine teenagers have been arrested and charged with his murder. Whilst the incident happened in the town centre during the NTE hours and the investigation is ongoing, at this stage no fault is being apportioned to any licensed premises.
- 4.2 On 11 March 2023 at 05:16 hours, a man was fatally stabbed whilst inside a licensed premises in Walsall town centre. The injured person subsequently died of his wounds and arrests have been made for his murder. On 16 March 2023, West Midlands Police requested a summary review of the associated premises licence. A hearing took place at which a decision was made to suspend the premises licence as an interim measure pending a full hearing in 28 days.

#### **5.0 Control over closing times of licensed premises**

- 5.1 The legal position regarding the control over closing times has not changed since the previous report on 22 February 2023 and therefore this is attached at appendix 1.
- 5.2 As advised in the previous report, should members wish to pursue the introduction of an Early Morning Restriction Order, a further report would need to be submitted to the committee with data and evidence to determine if there are recurring problems such as high levels of alcohol-related crime and disorder in specific areas at specific times; serious public nuisance; and other instances of alcohol-related anti-social behaviour which is not directly attributable to specific premises, to determine if an early morning alcohol restriction order (EMRO) is appropriate

#### **6.0 Introduction of knife detection equipment and bleed kits**

- 6.1 There have been views expressed recently by police colleagues, charities, licence holders and others, that knife detectors such as knife arches or knife wands (hand held metal detectors) and bleed kits ought to be installed at premises that are open in Walsall's night time economy. The cost of this equipment ranges from around £4,000 for a knife arch to £40 for a knife wand. Licence holders are of course free to purchase and install these items themselves as part of their premises risk assessment and indeed some venues already have knife arches and bleed kits.

6.2 Should the committee consider that the installation, use and maintenance of these items should be added as a condition on existing premises licences, consultation with current licence holders should first be undertaken and the outcome reported to the committee.

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