

Management Committee

19 September 2017

Proposal for a Community Safety Accreditation Scheme in Weymouth Town Centre

For Decision

Portfolio Holder(s)/ Briefholder

Cllr F Drake – Community Safety

Senior Leadership Team Contact:

S Hill, Strategic Director

Report Author:

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Statutory Authority

Anti-social Behaviour, Crime & Policing Act 2014

Purpose of Report

- 1 To outline what a Community Safety Accreditation Scheme (CSAS) is and the benefits that it could bring for community safety in Weymouth town centre. To propose how such a scheme could be implemented.

Recommendations

- 2 (i) To support in principle the introduction of a Community Safety Accreditation Scheme in Weymouth town centre for an initial period of two years.

(ii) To request that your officers, in conjunction Dorset Police and other agencies, develop a costed proposal and report the financial implications back to your committee.

Reason for Decision

- 3 To demonstrate that the council is working with its partners to reduce anti-social behaviour and crime and improve community safety in Weymouth town centre.

Background and Reason Decision Needed

- 4 The Melcombe Regis Board Strategic Plan 2017-21 aims to “*Reduce the number of victims of crime and anti-social behaviour*” through a number of measures including;
- *Maintaining a focus on reducing street-drinking; rough sleeping & begging in the town centre...*, and
 - *Exploring the viability of a Community Safety Accreditation Scheme for Weymouth supported by the Dorset Police & Crime Commissioner*”

The Melcombe Regis Board considered a report on CSAS at their meeting on 24 July 2017. The Board supported the establishment of a scheme and recommended that your committee receive today’s report.

- 5 As the most densely populated area in rural Dorset and as a seaside resort town, levels of alcohol related crime and ASB are proportionally higher than elsewhere but is more comparable to Bournemouth; Poole and other resort towns.

With the reduction in funding of public services from central Government, the visibility of Dorset Police in the town centre has reduced, their priority being the disruption of dangerous drug networks through intelligence gathering and targeted action. Residents; business owners and councillors have been concerned about the reduced Police visibility and the effect of alcohol related crime and ASB on town centre life.

- 6 The council and its partners work together to improve community safety and initiatives include;
- Monthly multi-agency meetings to assess priorities and agree actions
 - Voluntary Early Morning Restriction Order for licensed premises to create a buffer between the night-time and daytime economies
 - 3GS environmental enforcement patrols focusing predominantly in the town centre dealing with litter and dog safety issues
 - Draft Public Space Protection Order currently published for consultation dealing with drinking of alcohol in public places; begging; feeding of gulls and cycling provisions
 - Protocol for the removal and disposal of unattended rough sleeper belongings
 - Membership of the Local Alcohol Action Area programme, a national good practice group

However, concern remains about the reduced visibility of Police Officers and Police Community Support Officers, particularly during the daytime.

- 7 A Community Safety Accreditation Scheme enables the Police to accredit staff employed by a local authority to use limited and targeted powers to improve community safety. CSAS is being used elsewhere and locally, Bournemouth Borough Council has been running two services in Boscombe and the town centre. The feedback from Bournemouth Borough

Council; Dorset Police and the communities is that the scheme has been successful and is well regarded. In particular, feedback from local businesses was 'overwhelmingly positive' with footfall increasing where ASB had been addressed.

- 8 A Weymouth scheme would see two uniformed officers, Community Safety Patrol Officers, employed by the council but authorised and working very closely with Dorset Police during the daytime economy. They would;
- Deal with begging/rough sleeping
 - Require surrender of alcohol in a designated area
 - Require persons under 18 to surrender alcohol and under 16's tobacco
 - Deter street drug use
 - Deter shoplifting
 - Enforce Dog Control and ASB Orders & issue Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) for littering, graffiti, dog fouling, etc.
 - Require name and address for offences committed, or for anti-social behaviour
 - Liaise closely with the BID; Town Centre Manager; ShopWatch; businesses & the CCTV service

The benefits that could be expected include;

- increased public confidence from a greater uniformed presence in the town centre
 - reduction in crime and ASB affecting the town centre community
 - a saving of Police Officer time on lower-level issues allowing them to concentrate more on crime
 - greater engagement of business and other stakeholders, and better focus of resources
 - better partnership working and exchange of information between agencies
- 9 A CSAS requires an agency to be accredited by the Home Office before the local Chief Constable can authorise Community Safety Patrol Officers. Your officers are considering the merits of submitting an application to the Home Office or exploring an offer from Bournemouth Borough Council to act as the accredited agency on our behalf. The implications of both routes will be assessed and a decision made which best reflects the councils ambitions and financial implications.
- 10 The anticipated direct costs of a scheme are £50,000 per annum. The Dorset Police & Crime Commissioner is willing to make a contribution towards this so long as other agencies do the same. Other funding partners could include the council; Dorset Police; Dorset County Council and Weymouth BID. It is appreciated that the council is currently involved in making decisions about funding allocations for projects and your committee may want to consider whether there is potential to set aside a contribution.

- 11 Performance & Scrutiny Committee will be considering the outcomes of the 3GS Environmental Enforcement project to make a recommendation to your committee about whether the project should continue past its first year anniversary. If your committee approves the development of a CSAS, this will be taken into account during the 3GS review.

It is anticipated that the full business case including financial implications could be brought back to your committee in November 2017. However, your committee may wish Policy Development Committee to have the opportunity for comment which could delay the report to December or January 2018.

Implications

Corporate Plan

CSAS will contribute to these corporate plan objectives;

- Supporting vulnerable people so that they can live healthy and independent lives
- Enhancing the quality of life of people living and working in the borough
- Providing services that are shaped and focused on the needs of our customers

Financial

A further report will be made once a costed proposal has been developed and potential funding partners secured

Equalities

People with protected characteristics are often more likely to be affected by crime and ASB. Improving community safety in the town centre will have a beneficial effect.

Environmental

Some enviro-crime will be addressed by the CSAS.

Economic Development

Less crime and ASB is conducive to business growth.

Risk Management (including Health & Safety)

The council will ensure that Community Safety Patrol Officers are suitably trained and equipped.

Human Resources

Recruitment process if not managed by Bournemouth Borough Council.

Consultation and Engagement

Melcombe Regis Board member agencies

Appendices

Nil

Background Papers

Melcombe Regis Board Strategic Plan 2017-21

Footnote

Issues relating to financial, environmental, economic and equalities implications have been considered and any information relevant to the decision is included within the report.

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