

Appendix 2

Scrutiny & Performance Committee

4 October 2018

Support to People Vulnerable Through Substance Abuse

For Recommendation

Briefholders

Cllr Mike Byatt – Community Safety
Cllr Jon Orrell – Social Inclusion

Senior Leadership Team Contact:

S Hill, Strategic Director

Report Author:

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Statutory Authority

Anti-Social Behaviour Crime & Policing Act 2014
Licensing Act 2003
Homeless Act 2002
Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

Purpose of Report

1. Cllr P McCartney has submitted a scrutiny request (Appendix 1) to examine the council's role in supporting people with drug and alcohol issues. This report provides an overview of the council's role and that of other agencies to assist your committee with its review.

Recommendations

2. That your committee consider whether it wishes to make recommendation(s) as appropriate to Management Committee in relation to services provided by the council.
3. That your committee pass observations as appropriate to agencies about the services which they provide.

Reason for Decision

4. To ensure that the council makes best use of the resources available to it to support those who are vulnerable through substance abuse and dependency.

Background and Reason Decision Needed

5. Members have been concerned about the consequences of street drinkers and drug users in the town centre, along the Rodwell Trail and at The Marsh recreation ground. The consequences include crime; anti-social behaviour and discarded drug paraphernalia which effects the look and feel of the town. Weymouth is little different in this respect to any other urban area and seaside resort town however, it is appropriate to review how effective services are in dealing with the underlying causes of substance abuse and the effects on residents; businesses and visitors.
6. All communities are affected by drug and alcohol abuse and addiction. However, coastal towns appear to experience higher rates of problems and addiction. This could be due to a number of factors including the availability of cheaper housing stock; concentration of treatment facilities and 'end of the railway line' issues. The rate of drug use in the Borough is 11.9 in every 1000 people compared to the Dorset County Council area of 5.6. For comparison, the rate in Bournemouth is 15.2. Alcohol abuse and dependency is much wider in our society but for the purpose of this report, the focus is limited to problematic street drinking and there is a small core of individuals who gather along The Esplanade.
7. Some of the associated impacts of drugs and/or alcohol abuse include;
 - poor mental and physical health leading to higher strain on primary health and treatment services
 - increased crime especially violent crime and shoplifting
 - people visibly under the influence of drink and/or drugs and associated ASB
 - finds of drug paraphernalia especially in areas of secluded greenspace
 - squalid housing conditions due to chaotic lifestyles
 - a feeling of being less safe amongst local communities.

There are a range of service providers helping those with drug and alcohol issues in the Borough.

Public Health Dorset

8. Public Health Dorset (PHD) commissions services for people with substance abuse disorders across Dorset. Services are provided in accordance with national guidance from the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), Public Health England (PHE) and the Advisory Council for the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD). Treatment involves people receiving prescribed medication if they require it to help with any physical dependence on substances, along with talking therapies and wider support to better understand and address any underlying issues that might be stopping them staying well. This support includes life skills such as self-care, cooking, and readiness for employment. Psychosocial support

is provided through group work or 1:1 support depending on the needs and availability of each service user. Support is also provided for family and carers.

9. For those still using alcohol or other drugs, harm reduction advice is offered, which may include the provision of needle exchange to reduce the transmission of blood borne viruses such as HIV and Hepatitis, along with other infections and health harms. A range of local pharmacies as well as specialist treatment services offer needle exchange services, which give people who inject drugs the opportunity to dispose of used equipment as well as to receive new, sterile supplies.

Newly designed services are in operation in Dorset from November 2017, and will be in place until October 2020, with the option to extend them for two further years. The contract was awarded to EDP and services operate under the name of Reach.

10. Dorset has a high-performing treatment system when compared to national and regional averages, with service users completing their course of treatment successfully at rates above the national average. The latest data available suggest that 9% of opiate users, 42% of non-opiate users, and 45% of alcohol users engaged in local services completed their treatment successfully in a 12-month period and did not return to services in the 6 months following. However, this does not mean that they did not relapse rather that they did not return to the service.
11. PHD secured £620,000 from the Department of Health to provide an integrated treatment facility to be based in Weymouth. It proved very difficult to identify a suitable property within the budget available and unfortunately, the funding had to be returned. Opportunities to re-bid are being watched for.

PHD produces the pan-Dorset Alcohol and Drugs Strategy which can be viewed by following this link given later in this report.

Primary care services

12. GP practices; Weymouth Community Hospital and Dorchester County Hospital provide primary clinical services to those affected by drug and alcohol abuse and dependency. Mental health services are accessible by referral and a mental health outreach for vulnerable people is currently funded consisting of two trained nursing practitioners. South West Ambulance Service Trust provide paramedic response to incidents.

Previously, the NHS were more involved in helping people with addictions. Residential detoxification was available at three mental health units in West Dorset and there were support facilities at Weymouth Hospital.

Police & Council – Community Safety

13. Dorset Police and the councils Community Safety team work closely together to tackle issues such as ASB which can be linked drug and

alcohol abuse. In conjunction with the Police a range of approaches are used;

- **Anti-Social Behaviour Contracts (ABC's)**
Voluntary scheme for first time or low level offenders of ASB. Instead of taking formal action offenders can agree to sign up to an Anti-Social Behaviour Contract which will have conditions about how they must behaviour going forwards. Failure to comply with the conditions of the ABC can result in formal proceedings being instigated.
- **Criminal Behaviour Orders (CBO's)**
Can be placed on any individual following a conviction. A CBO will place restrictions or positive requirements on a person, for example, not allowed to enter Weymouth town centre. 30 CBO's have been issued to the most prolific offenders.
- **Public Space Protection Order (PSPO)**
There is a recently made ASB Order with two relevant elements;
 - Power to seize alcohol from persons consuming in an anti-social manner
 - Power to issue fixed penalty notices for begging

Both provisions are available within defined areas

- **Community Safety Accreditation Scheme (CSAS)**
following an application process, the Chief Constable has approved a CSAS for the town centre and Rodwell Trail. Partners are funding 4 patrol officers to operate in the area exercising some Police and Council powers. They will provide high visibility patrolling, tasked with tackling issues of ASB from street drinking and drug use. They will also provide support and assistance to those in need.
- **Provision of public space CCTV surveillance in the town centre.**
Operators work with Dorset Police and others to identify and obtain support for vulnerable people.

14. The Police respond to 999 and 101 telephone calls and to on-line reporting of crime and ASB associated with drug use and alcohol abuse. Response is proportional to a threat, risk and harm assessment and the resources available. The Police also respond to 'concern for welfare' reports which can be linked to drug and alcohol use.

Council – Housing

15. Housing support people with drug and alcohol dependencies by helping them to secure appropriate housing provision (recognising the stress on housing supply). Often, people with dependencies live a very chaotic lifestyle and maintaining tenure is problematic. Also, supported housing schemes provided by Registered Providers (Housing Associations) have reduced along with the funding over recent years. A homelessness outreach service is provided, currently through Julian

House, to tackle rough sleeping and support vulnerable people into housing. The service supports the operation of the Bus Shelter project.

Council – Environmental Health/Dorset Waste Partnership

16. Services arrange for the removal of drug paraphernalia including sharps from public land. Sharps drop boxes have been installed in some public convenience sites to reduce the risk of needle stick injuries. This is an initiative which will be reviewed to determine the future approach as some public toilets in the town centre have become a focus for drug related activity. There have been some significant 'drug dens' found along the Rodwell Trail, containing large amounts of drug detritus. Cleaning these areas up is costly and the Rodwell Trail is discussed separately.

The Lantern

17. The Lantern looks to support people with diverse learning disabilities to achieve their full potential. Some of the client group may also have substance abuse issues. The Lantern also offers assistance both financial and practical support to enable rough sleeper's access to sustainable accommodation. A range of agencies operate surgeries from the facility including Shelter; Citizens Advice Bureau; Department of Work & Pensions; healthcare professionals and the Reach drug and alcohol service. Two nurse practitioners do outreach clinics for the homeless, one specialising in physical health and the other in mental health. The Lantern are using their expanded property to establish a treatment room for this work.

Bus Shelter & Street Pastors

18. The Bus Shelter charity provides accommodation and support for rough sleepers with a link to the local area some of whom will have substance abuse issues. The charity has access into (for example) healthcare; education and skills and employment services. It aims to get rough sleepers into permanent accommodation with a sustainable change in lifestyle.

The Weymouth Street Pastor service provides care and assistance for those who are vulnerable, often through alcohol consumption. They work closely with other agencies and are a highly valued asset to the night-time economy.

Working Together

19. There is significant collaboration between agencies to address the problems caused by substance abuse. At street level, the Police and council Community Safety officers liaise to agree the most appropriate approach to address individual ASB and also work with the homelessness outreach service, Julian House. A monthly multi-agency tactical meeting takes place, the Weymouth & Portland Police Co-ordination Group where issues are discussed and actions agreed. At a more strategic level, the Borough Council's Management Committee receives an update about community safety in Melcombe Regis at

each of its meetings and the councils Briefholder for Community Safety meets monthly with the Police Inspector as well as ad-hoc meetings on a regular basis. The Dorset Community Safety Partnership and Melcombe Regis Board have some oversight of policing and community safety and the Dorset Health and Wellbeing Board has oversight of commissioned health provision including drug and alcohol services.

20. The Melcombe Regis Board work to improve the life chances of people in central Weymouth as health indicators are relatively poor. An underlying dynamic in recent years has been that national agencies in drug & alcohol and probation services have rehoused individuals in the area primarily due to the availability of cheaper housing stock. The improvement of housing, particularly in the rented sector, is a key priority for the Board.
21. The Briefholder for Community Safety has met with Dorset's Police & Crime Commissioner, most recently with representatives from a social media group who amongst other matters were concerned about the effects of street drinking and drug taking on the local community. A number of actions were agreed by the parties and a further meeting is to be scheduled. The issue of street drinking in particular is very visible and does attract social media and press attention. However, it is perpetrated by a relatively small number of people, usually with alcohol dependency issues. It is important for agencies to communicate effectively about what they do to help people with substance abuse issues and to control associated crime and ASB.

Future Developments

22. To improve multi-agency working and community safety, a project is being scoped to establish a town centre hub, possibly in an empty retail unit, providing a visible base for staff involved in policing; community safety and streetscene. There may also be a public reception point delivered on a surgery basis. Agencies might include;

Dorset Police
Community Safety Accreditation Scheme Patrol Officers
Weymouth BID
Town Centre Manager
Borough Council (Town Council/Dorset Council)
Street Pastors – safe place for vulnerable people

A facility such as this may help provide a quicker response to issues involving people who are vulnerable and/or are a cause of ASB as a result of substance abuse.

23. There are community safety concerns from drug related issues along the town section of the Rodwell Trail. Locations have been discovered within the embankment areas that have/are being used for drug injecting and significant amounts of drug paraphernalia and waste have accumulated. As these areas are found, clear-ups are taking place and work on the vegetation to prevent access is done. There have also been a small number of public place violence incidents, also

drug related, that have received wide publicity. A community safety assessment of this section of the trail is being undertaken and recommendations will be brought forward. There has been a call from some sectors for artificial lighting and CCTV and these will be included in the assessment.

24. The CCTV monitoring station is being relocated and up-graded with funding from Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner; Dorset Police; Dorset County Council and the Borough Council. Phase 2 of this project may involve improved CCTV coverage in key areas including the railway station. This will improve the control of crime and ASB linked to drink and drug abuse.

Harm minimisation approaches are already being used such as needle exchange schemes and the provision of sharps boxes in public facilities. Nationally, other approaches are under discussion such as providing safe treatment areas to help get drug injecting out of public facilities and off the streets into clean, safe spaces with treatment options. Some early discussion is taking place in Dorset.

25. On 1 April 2019, the local government map in Dorset will change with the creation of two new unitary councils and two new town councils. Services currently delivered by WPBC will instead be delivered by Dorset Council and Weymouth Town Council. It is most likely that community safety services will be delivered by Dorset Council, the current resource to the Borough being 0.5 full time equivalent (FTE) Community Safety Officer and 1 FTE ASB caseworker plus management support. Your committee may wish to comment on the limited amount of resource available in Community Safety and how this will operate from next April together with the Community Safety Accreditation Scheme.

Conclusion

26. A number of agencies are involved in providing support to those with substance abuse issues and dealing with the consequences of their behaviour in public places. However, as the problem of substance abuse and addiction has grown, budgets in the public sector have significantly reduced both in terms of prevention; treatment and policing. This makes it imperative that the most appropriate services are commissioned and provided and that agencies work together to maximise benefit. In conducting your review, your committee may want to consider the following questions in relation to the council and other agencies;

- Are there any gaps in current service provision?
- Are the most appropriate services being provided?
- How effectively are agencies working together?
- What suggestions are there for improving support to those with substance abuse issues and better managing the consequences?

Implications

Corporate Plan

27. Contributing to 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 by the needs of our customers.

Financial

28. Nil

Equalities

29. Addressed within the report.

Environmental

30. Addressed within the report.

Economic Development

31. Nil

Risk Management (including Health & Safety)

32. There is a reputational risk to the council if it does not exercise the powers available to it (within resources available).

Human Resources

33. Nil

Consultation and Engagement

34. Public Health Dorset
Dorset Police

Appendices

- Appendix 1 - Scrutiny request from Cllr Penny McCartney
Appendix 2 – Agency matrix

Background Papers

WPBC is a signatory to the pan-Dorset Alcohol and Drugs Strategy, which runs to 2020, this can be viewed using the following link:

<http://www.publichealthdorset.org.uk/our-partners/?wb48617274=AA2E4A23#da>

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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Date: 24 September 2018

Request by Councillor for Scrutiny Review

Area for review:

Drugs / Alcohol – Engagement with community

Reason

As a councillor I am getting reports of drug taking, drunken violent behaviour in the community. People are now witnessing drug taking in our car parks, parks, town centre, it's not a hidden problem. What is the council's policy for engagement with support within Weymouth? How effective is our engagement? What outcomes do we get?

Evidence

Recently we were in difficulty regarding a location of a home for rehab in Weymouth, our current services in Weymouth, EDP and Turning Point are they getting council support in delivering outcomes? The council are seen as totally lacking direction, effective action is lacking, across social media complaints are rising. Is our strategy working, purposeful and outcome based?

Desired Outcome

I would like this review to look at the relationship, policy with the community improve. That our community can see active work in tackling addiction, that our partnerships are effective in delivering outcomes.

Name(s):

Councillor Penny McCartney

Date:

6/2/18

AGENCY MATRIX

Agency	Provision
Council – Community Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Police to tackle ASB; gain evidence for Criminal Behaviour Orders • With Police operate CSAS patrol officers who help enforce street drinking & begging provisions of Public Space Protection Order • Coordinate rough sleeper left belongings protocol • Provide CCTV evidence to support Police action
Council - Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assertive rough sleeper outreach service through Julian House • Individual help to identify and advise rough sleepers and where possible help them into accommodation • Lead participants in the rough sleeper Core Group, which monitors rough sleepers locally and directs activity aimed at reducing numbers
Council – Parks & Open Spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean up greenspace areas being used for ASAB/crime. ‘Design out’ solutions
Dorset Police	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tackle and prevent crime and ASB. Protect and improve community safety
Public Health Dorset	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission prevention, harm reduction and treatment services
Reach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of drug & alcohol treatment and harm reduction services in Dorset
The Lantern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offers financial and practical support to enable rough sleeper’s access to sustainable accommodation • Develop new building to provide new services and increase hours

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shelter will be based in the new building with its “Housing First” workers who will be working with the most complex and hard to engage client group • New CAB and DWP drop in’s to help our most complex customers have access to Universal Credit support and back to work training • New clinical space to offer a range of health care professionals to rough sleepers and substance misuse via REACH and the Homeless Healthcare Service.
NHS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of primary care services
Dorset Waste Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear up drug and street drinking paraphernalia from specific locations and general street cleansing