

## **AGENDA ITEM**

### **REPORT TO CRIME & DISORDER SELECT COMMITTEE**

**31 May 2018**

### **REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, ADMINISTRATION, DEMOCRATIC AND ELECTORAL SERVICES**

## **INTRODUCTION OF A LICENCED PREMISES AWARD SCHEME: SETTING THE BAR**

### **SUMMARY**

The report proposes a licensed premises award scheme for Stockton which promotes a thriving, safe, night-time economy supporting improvements in the management of licensed premises and promoting responsible drinking in Stockton.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

The Select Committee are asked to consider and comment on the proposed scheme for agreement by Cabinet.

### **DETAIL**

#### **National Schemes**

1. There are several national accreditation schemes which seek to promote a vibrant and safe night time economy.

#### ***Best Bar None***

2. This scheme supported by the Home Office is a national award scheme which recognises and rewards well managed licensed premises. It is centred on the four licensing objectives:
  - Prevention of crime and disorder
  - Prevention of public nuisance
  - Public safety
  - Protection of children from harm
3. The scheme seeks to promote a safer night-time economy through a consensual approach between licensees, Local Authorities and the Police to supplement traditional law enforcement activity.
4. The scheme is based on voluntary accreditation of licensed premises through an awards scheme which acknowledges that, following detailed monitoring and inspection and marking against pre-determined criteria, licensed premises achieve a required standard in a range of measures, including:
  - the promotion of responsible drinking
  - the effective management of the capacity of premises
  - training of staff
  - possession of effective policies to deal with and prevent drunkenness and drug abuse
  - public safety through the cleanliness of premises, their structural condition, fire exits etc.

5. Independent assessors verify the claims made by the premises during a comprehensive assessment visit. The accredited premises are then put forward to the marking stage where they are marked and ranked according to their score prior to being put forward to the judging phase where a panel of judges examine the applications together with a comprehensive breakdown of the scores for each category. The winners are then announced at an appropriate Awards Ceremony.
6. The scheme serves to promote the local economy whilst tackling anti-social behaviour, and can act as a catalyst for joined-up thinking on a wide range of policies in the management of the night time economy.
7. Whilst Best Bar None is a well-recognised scheme, supported by the Government and the Licensed Retail Industry, a number of other local Licensing Authorities who have operated Best Bar None, have chosen to suspend or replace the scheme due to the level of resources required in administering it.

### ***Purple Flag***

8. The Purple Flag standard, launched in 2012, is an accreditation process similar to the Green Flag award for parks and the Blue Flag for beaches. It allows members of the public to quickly identify town and city centres that offer an entertaining, diverse, safe and enjoyable night out.
9. As the governing body, the Association of Town and City Management has set out the core agenda at the heart of Purple Flag which represents the standards that must be achieved and maintained for accreditation, which in turn will lead to a successful evening economy. These five core standards are:
  - The Policy Envelope: An after-hours policy that shows a clear strategy based on sound research, integrated public policy and a successful multi-sector partnership
  - Wellbeing: Successful destinations are all safe and welcoming with all sectors playing their part in delivering high standards of customer care
  - Movement: Getting home safely after an evening out is crucial, as is the ability to move around the centre on foot with ease
  - Appeal: Successful destinations offer a vibrant choice of leisure and entertainment for a diversity of ages, groups, lifestyles and cultures
  - Place: Successful areas are alive during the day, as well as in the evening. They contain a blend of overlapping activities that encourage people to mingle and enjoy the place. They reinforce the character and identity of the area as well as flair and imagination in urban design for the night
10. Local authorities, town centre partnerships, business improvement districts, crime and disorder reduction partnerships, PubWatch partnerships, civic societies and others can all take part. However, it is usually the Local Authority or Police who take the lead in most cases.
11. Again, whilst the Purple Flag scheme is a well-recognised scheme, the core standards are wider-ranging and it is felt that, in the first instance, a scheme focusing more specifically on the four licensing principles would be more appropriate for Stockton at this stage.

### **Stockton Scheme**

12. In the absence of a suitable national accreditation scheme, the alternative would be to develop a bespoke scheme for Stockton Borough.

13. Attached at **Appendix 1** is a proposed scheme. The scheme is based on meeting a range of standards (mandatory, desirable and exceptional) in respect of the four licensing principles.
14. The scheme would apply to all existing licensed premises, clubs with a further phase of the scheme to include off-sales in Stockton.
15. Originally it was proposed that premises meeting all the mandatory standards would receive Bronze status; premises meeting all mandatory and all desirable standards would receive Silver status; and premises meeting all mandatory, all desirable and all exceptional standards would receive Gold status. However, following feedback from the Trade it is felt more appropriate that bronze would continue to be awarded to premises meeting all the mandatory standards and that premises meeting all of the mandatory and a percentage of desirable standards would achieve silver and similarly gold would be awarded to premises meeting all mandatory and a percentage of desirable and exceptional standards. Justification would need to be provided to allow a judgement to be made.
16. Premises achieving Gold award could have the option of presentation of their award at Full Council.
17. We would aim to make the assessment form available for on-line completion as well as hard copy and it is suggested that assessments could be carried out on a quarterly basis by volunteers from the Talent Network as part of a rolling programme.
18. The accreditation results would be published on the Council's website.
19. There would be three routes into the scheme:

***Route One - Licence Application/ renewal***

20. New premises would be invited to complete the assessment on initial application and existing premises would be invited to complete the assessment at annual licence renewal.

***Route Two – Targeted Inspection Programme***

21. The targeted inspection programme would be enhanced to ensure all mandatory criteria were covered as part of the inspection thereby enabling premises to take part to bronze status. In addition, the inspection would present an opportunity to encourage premises to raise standards by promoting silver and gold level.

***Route Three – Trade Application***

22. Following consultation with the Trade, a number expressed the desire to be able to apply at any given date in the year regardless of renewal or inspection timelines therefore it's proposed to accommodate this within the scheme.

**The Promotion of the Scheme**

23. The scheme could be promoted through existing liaison mechanisms and through the Councils website. A dedicated webpage raising awareness about the scheme and also publicising the venues that have been accredited would enable the public to choose venues based on their award level. In addition social media channels, partners and trade organisations would be encouraged to support awareness raising and to celebrate those who have been accredited, therefore widening the schemes promotion footprint.
24. It is proposed those who have gained accreditation could benefit from the following depending on their level of accreditation

### **Gold Status**

- Window Vinyl's and Posters – showing level of award
- Stockton News coverage
- SBC Social Media Posts/Tweets
- Press release
- Preferential partner for corporate events e.g. SIRF VIP nights, outdoor drinking opportunities
- BID 'Your guide to Bars, Pubs & Restaurants in Stockton' – Special Listing in the printed guide and promotion on website

### **Silver Status**

- Window Vinyl's and Posters – showing level of award
- SBC Social Media Posts/Tweets

### **Bronze Status**

- Window Vinyl's and Posters – showing level of award

The branding for the scheme would need to be in keeping with a theme that depicts Stockton in a safe and sociable light for all, diverse, lively, smart and cosmopolitan.

The scheme rules would enable a re-inspection / assessment where there had been any changes in licensee, or circumstances to ensure the accreditation awarded continued to be appropriate.

The scheme has been developed in consultation with The Licensing Police who would support the scheme and on-going assessment process.

### **Next Steps**

25. Following consultation with Licensing Committee on 29th May, Crime & Disorder Select Committee on 31st May and further consultation with the Cabinet Member for Access Communities & Community Safety, it is proposed that this scheme is presented during National Licensing Week (18-22 June) for Cabinet approval.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

26. Any costs to come from existing budgets.

### **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

27. There are no legal implications in relation to this report.

### **RISK ASSESSMENT**

28. The risk assessment is considered to be low.

### **Deputy Chief Executive**

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Background Papers: None

Ward(s) and Ward Councillors: Not Ward Specific

Property Implications:

None