



## **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

**16<sup>th</sup> November 2017**

### **Briefing Note: Night-time Economy**

#### **Role of the Police Licensing Team in Licensing Laws:**

As you will know it is the local authorities within any given town or district that lead on the Licensing Act 2003, the regulatory legislation dealing with the licensing of alcohol sale and supply, regulated entertainment and late night refreshment. The police however have a big role to play in this and are one of several other responsible authorities within this regime.

As you will also know there are four licensing objectives which any licence holder is obliged to meet when applying for and then managing an operation licensed under the Act. These are:

The Prevention of Crime & Disorder

Public safety

The Prevention of Public Nuisance

The Protection of Children from Harm

Northamptonshire Police have a dedicated Licensing Team consisting of one sergeant (me), two licensing constables and three administration staff. Roles and responsibilities include:

- Day to day scrutiny and any necessary follow-up action for all applications for new licences, variations and temporary events to make sure that they meet the licensing objectives, particularly but not exclusively in our case the prevention of crime & disorder.
- Daily scrutiny of incidents, intelligence and crime pertaining to licensed premises and the night-time economy and action where necessary in upholding licensing objectives.

- On-going with the licensing community including licensees, door staff, street pastor and more either through Pubwatch and other group forums or individually.
- Proactive work streams such as bar staff vulnerability training, test purchase operations, multi-agency licensed premises compliance visits to name a few.
- In my role as Licensing Sergeant I also have a role in providing an updated weekly briefing product to officers conducting Operation Nightsafe duties.

### **Night-time Economy Policing**

For many years now Northamptonshire Police has had Operation Nightsafe which is our response to the threats and risks caused by the Friday/Saturday night (and other dates e.g. bank holiday Sundays) festivities in the town. In Northampton we have a fairly condensed night-time economy zone fondly referred to as the "tennis racquet" due to its shape on a map with Wellingborough Rd being the handle and the centre of town being the head of the racquet.

For Northampton this now consists of a sergeant and 10 officers per night specifically dedicated to this operation and above and beyond normal night-time policing levels. It is actually very new (first weekend in November) that this contingent of officers has been above and beyond the normal response capability. Pre-November and historically officers performing this duty were part of the response teams on duty for the wider policing of the borough. Now they are an add on drawn from other officers who normally work in other departments but are seconded away for the night to Nightsafe. The downside is that they are then occasionally abstracted from their normal roles.

The strategic aims of the operation are:

- Reducing incidents of crime
- Reducing Vulnerability
- Protecting People from harm

The tactical aims are very much proactive, preventative and partnership working orientated with high visibility intelligence led foot patrols and engagement with our partners in the night-time economy (licensees, door staff, street pastors etc) but also with revellers to identify early risks of vulnerability or of over-exuberant, anti-social or violent behaviour utilising prevention tactics like dispersal powers, early arrest, fixed penalty notices or merely officer presence to prevent escalation.

The busiest time of night for us, echoed by our crime figures and health (A&E) statistics is between 01.00hrs – 05.00hrs and crime hotspots in the town during these times are unsurprisingly Bridge Street and The Drapery.

Generally speaking in this town our licensees are a responsible bunch who are happy to work with police and other agencies, we have a strong Pubwatch scheme and all but a very small minority go above and beyond to try and protect their customers from harm, be it harm from violent behaviour, over-drinking, drugs, theft, sexual violence. However whenever you mix alcohol, exuberance and young people in large congregations there are going to be issues we all have to try and manage to reduce their impact and they are forever having to stay on their game to meet these and some new challenges along the way while making enough money to stay in business.

### **A Changing Town**

With the university moving to waterside in September 2018 this town is going to see some very noticeable changes which along with massive opportunity for the town are going to bring along a number of challenges. Already we have a number planning applications in the pipeline for town centre student accommodation which are going to bring a hundreds of young people to the town centre on a 24/7 basis. Their safety is going to be paramount if the reputation of this town isn't to suffer as a consequence.

The new student union building, The Platform, will become a focal point for student day and night-time activity not just at the weekends but throughout the week day evenings and many of our local venues are already taking advantage of the local student population putting on student nights into the early hours Mon through Thursday whilst catering for the general population at the weekends.

The student population of our university hails from places such as London, Birmingham, Milton Keynes, Bedford and Luton and we have already seen the signs of city influence on our night-time economy. Mostly, from a police point of view, this has been some of the bad influences such as drugs and gang culture because a small minority of city based students and their associates back home identify Northampton as another opportunity to do their deals, come into conflict with local groups and impact on the local community.

As for me I am around in this role until September 2019 and then I hang up by police uniform for good and the next 22 months are going to be interesting.