

Report of the Assistant Director Governance and ICT

Night Time Economy Review – update report

Summary

1. This report presents updated information on the work so far completed by Members of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) in relation to the corporate review into York's night time economy.

Background

2. At its meeting on 24 June 2013, the Corporate Scrutiny Management Committee (CSMC) expressed interest in developing a theme around the Night Time Economy worthy of 'corporate review', and received a briefing paper in support.
3. The briefing suggested a number of possible areas for review associated with the Night Time Economy which would support the Council's current key priorities in its Council Plan 2011-2015. They agreed to proceed with the theme and requested each of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees identify a suitable review remit in line with their individual terms of reference.
4. The Health OSC acknowledged that the Night Time Economy presented a number of challenges from a health standpoint, in particular a peak in violent crime and anti-social behaviour in the evening and night (particularly on Saturdays), putting a strain on resources at York Hospital's Accident and Emergency Department (A&E - now the Emergency Department) between midnight and 2am, and at their meeting on 11 September 2013 agreed the remit:

Aim

5. 'To work with key partners to identify the relevant issues within the 'health environment' (including the impact on A&E at peak times) and suggest what measures need to be taken in order to address the issues identified'

Objectives

6. To support the remit above, the Committee agreed the draft timetable shown at Annex A and the following objectives:
 - i. Understand how a peak in violent crime and anti-social behaviour in York City Centre impacts on late night and early morning resources at the A&E department.
 - ii. Investigate potential health risks to residents and visitors to York City Centre at night and early morning.
 - iii. Evaluate responses staff consultation and hospital questionnaire to understand people's perception about visiting A&E at night.
 - iv. Examine the impact of any campaigns previously run in York and elsewhere to encourage a reduction in excessive drinking, in an effort to identify successful campaigns for future use in York.

Consultation

7. The Director of Public Health provided a list of key organisations that could be consulted to support the review including representatives of the Emergency Department (ED) at York Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (YTHNFT); the Vale of York Clinical Commissioning Group; the GP Out of Hours Service; Yorkshire Ambulance service and York Street Angels.
8. In line with other Night Time Economy reviews being carried out by the other Overview and Scrutiny Committees, Health OSC agreed to consult with ED attendees during planned night visits to the ED as well as a survey of ED staff. The findings from these visits and from the consultation will be presented in a future report.

Information Gathered to Date

York Hospitals Emergency Department

9. In support of Objective (i) two committee Members met with the Programme Director - Service Development and Improvement, the Directorate Manager for York Emergency Department and a Consultant in Emergency Medicine.
10. They provided information on the ED's "flag system" used to record reasons for attendance using a number of categories, including mental health, domestic violence and alcohol.
11. In 2007 the National Bureau of Statistics reported that a quarter of York's population were in the higher risk category related to alcohol. However, because of the way attendances were being coded in the flag system, the statistics were found to be not properly reflecting the true picture e.g. someone admitted to the ED with a head injury was being coded as such, not as someone who was under the influence.
12. In order to address this issue, in 2011 the ED carried out an audit. Data was collected for one week per quarter throughout the year, based on date, arrival time, sex, age, postcode, arrival method, disposal type, alcohol involvement and diagnosis.
13. During 2011 total ED attendances were 74,128 and in the four weeks audit period total attendances were 5,704. Of the total in the audit period, just 47 were flagged under the old criteria as being related to alcohol. Using the audit results, that figure rose to 533 for the same period, accounting for 6% of the total number of attendances during the day and almost 20% at night.
14. Based on the data collected during the audit period the estimated burden on the ED indicated 9.8% of total attendances were due to alcohol, i.e. 7,742 alcohol related ED attendances from a total attendance of 74,128.
15. Of the 553 alcohol related attendances in the audit period the following diagnoses were made:

- 34% (186) trauma¹;
- 19% (103) adult medical;
- 18% (98) mental health
- 11% (62) social / behavioural;
- 11% (63) head injuries.

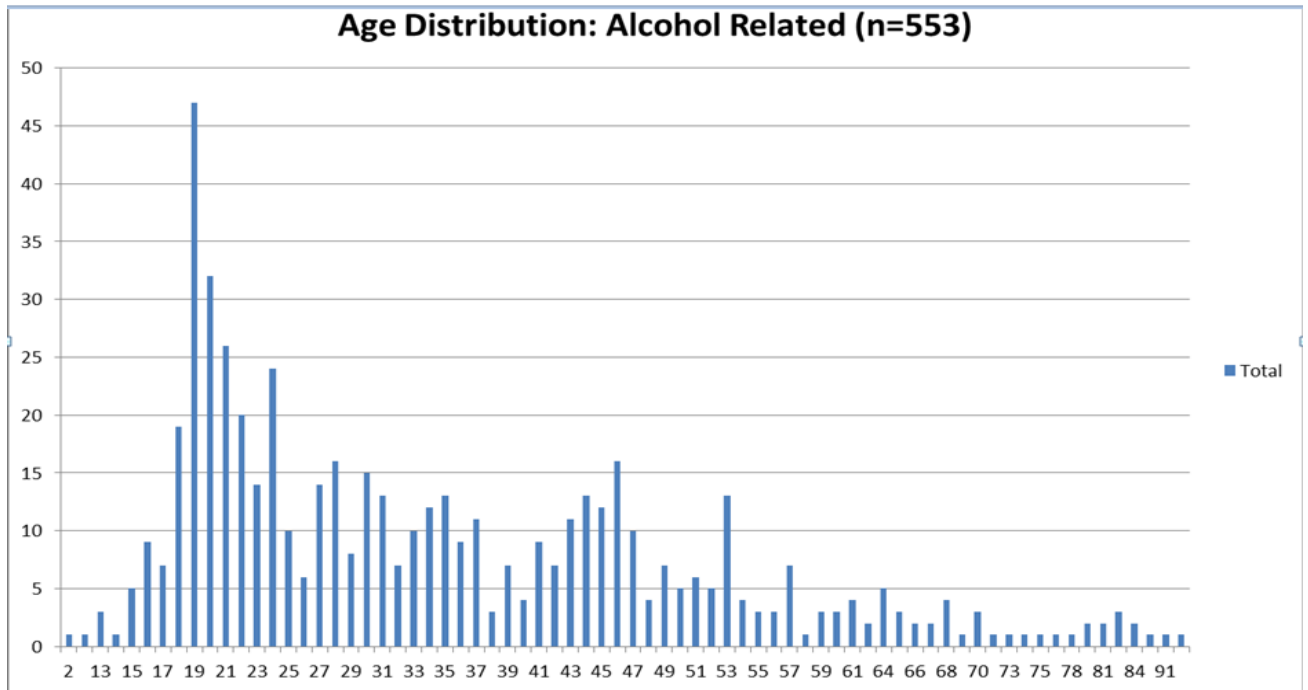
16. Members were made aware that from the postcode data collected 62% of the total number of alcohol related attendances were from the City of York with a significant percentage of the remainder coming from neighbouring areas (11% from Selby, for example). At the weekend the percentage for York postcodes dipped to 54%, still more than half the total number of alcohol related attendances.
17. It was stressed to Members that it was not a tourist problem, a student problem or a stag or hen party problem – it was a York problem.
18. To further support Objective (i) members were made aware that the majority of alcohol related attendances were at night.

Attendances: Day (9am-9pm) v Night (9pm v 9am)

	No alcohol	Alcohol related	Total	Proportion
Day	3,914	249	4,163	5.98%
Night	1,237	304	1,541	19.73%
Total	5,151	553	5,704	9.69%

19. The audit period review revealed the rise in alcohol related admissions at night led to a spike in these admissions from 11pm to 5am peaking at 1am.
20. In the audit period the average age of the total 5,704 ED attendees was 40.4 years while the average for the 553 alcohol related attendees was 34.6 years, covering a span from 2 to 91 years, as shown in the graph below:

¹ Trauma is defined as a physiological wound caused by an external source. It can also be described as a “physical wound or injury, such as a fracture or blow”.



21. It is evident there was a spike in alcohol related admissions at age 19 and 20 but the graph shows this is not just a young person’s problem.

Under 30

30 or over

Total attendances = 2,411
Due to alcohol = 263

Total attendances = 3293
Due to alcohol = 290

10.91%

8.81%

22. And it was not just men. Of the total number of alcohol related admissions 36% were women. Results from the audit period found:

Female attendances = 2,725
Due to alcohol = 199

Male attendances = 2,979
Due to alcohol = 354

7.3%

11.88%

23. Effect on Ambulance Service

Members were informed that 18% of the 1,655 ambulance attendances at ED during the audit period were alcohol related. Of the alcohol related arrivals at ED during that period 54.6% (302 people) arrived by ambulance while of the non-alcohol related arrivals 26.27% arrived by ambulance. If the 18% alcohol related ambulance attendances were removed from the equation the ambulance service would hit all its turnaround targets.

24. To further support Objective (ii) a number of Committee Members have met with the Ambulance Service since the publication of this report and their findings will be included in a future report.
25. Effect on length of Stay
Alcohol related attendances during the audit period accounted for 9.6% of admissions staying in the department between two and three hours; 13.7% between three and four hours; 14.9% between four and six hours and 20% over six hours. It means a disproportionate number of patients go into breach i.e. over four hours. Many of the alcohol related attendances were not considered to be a healthcare issue but a protection issue.
26. In addition, half of all patients coming to ED with mental health issues are under the influence of alcohol. Before they can be seen by a psychiatrist they have to be sober, and can block a cubicle or a bed for several hours.
27. For example, a 29-year-old man was brought in by ambulance and was too drunk to speak or stand up. He slept in a cubicle for two hours and it was a further two hours before he was sober enough to stand up – with two security men in attendance to stop him wandering off around the department and falling over. When he was finally able to stand properly he needed to pass water but was still too drunk to fill a bottle and urinated all over the cubicle. He had money and keys for accommodation and finally left after five hours following an ambulance journey, multiple observations, a security presence, and a blocked cubicle.
28. Effect on Hospital Staff and Other patients
Members appreciated that the length of stay for alcohol related attendees had huge implications for staff and other attendees with some patients having to wait in inappropriate places for hours. Staff had to deal with intoxicated people who were often confused, unable to stand up and abusive. In many instances these people were accompanied by friends in a similar state. Some ED staff also reported they were not keen to stay in the department because of the abuse they got. However this did not stop them giving all their patients the care they needed.

GP Out of Hours Service

29. The Out of Hours service operates when GP surgeries are closed. It is for urgent and serious medical problems that cannot wait until the next day. The service operates out of York Hospital and is located in the ED department. Information to the Committee from the acting Clinical Director for Unscheduled Care which covers the GP Out of Hours (OOH) service revealed the Night-Time Economy had almost no impact on the service but accepted it did have a considerable impact on the ED itself. While OOH doctors are at the hospital patients have to be referred to them.

Vale of York Clinical Commissioning Group

30. The CCG is responsible for the planning and purchasing of the vast majority of health services across the area. This includes hospital care, mental health and community services.
31. To further progress work on Objective (i) a meeting was held with the Senior Improvement and Innovation Manager of the Vale of York Clinical Commissioning Manager on 4 October.
32. It was noted that the CCG had Emergency Care Practitioners based at GP surgeries across the area. One of their roles is to enable patients to be treated in their own home so they do not need to attend ED. The Emergency Care Practitioners are able to carry out minor medical procedures such as stitching and can also administer some medications such as antibiotics.
33. The CCG also compiles data around hospital admissions which revealed that most of their attendance data around alcohol comes in as cuts and minor injuries and most are at night.
34. It was also noted the figures reveal a peak around the younger part of the population and that half are discharged without treatment, indicating these are the ones who are not medically unwell and do not need to be admitted to hospital.

Street Angels

35. To support Objective (ii) a meeting was held with Street Angels team leaders on 11 November 2013 to discuss their work and how they help ease the strain on the hospital's Emergency Department.

36. Street Angels York is a Church-led initiative that is made up of volunteers who want to help make York city centre a safer and better place. Volunteers walk the city streets in the late evenings into the early hours of Saturday and Sunday caring for, practically helping, and listening to people, especially those in vulnerable or difficult situations.
37. All the volunteers are trained and the team leaders were keen to stress that they did not go looking for trouble but they work with people who are in trouble. Their role is to look out for people in a vulnerable situation such as those who have had too much alcohol and those who had become separated from their group or party.
38. The Street Angels have two forms of contact “casual” and “significant”. Significant contact is where team members spent a lot more time with those people in need and these are recorded at the end of the night. In York centre there are between two and six recorded significant contacts each night they are on patrol.
39. As a result they estimate that their work is able to prevent an average of five ED attendances every weekend, approximately 260 a year. Street Angels consider it their duty to care for these people to enable them to get home safely. A lot of the people they care for are very drunk and the Street Angels sit with them, usually in their minibus, until they are sober enough to make their way home.
40. Example 1: A Street Angels Team needed to help a very drunk girl who it later transpired has just broken up with her boyfriend. She was on anti-depressants and was not supposed to drink, but she did. She was frothing at the mouth and clearly distressed. They called for paramedics to assess her but rather than send her to hospital they stayed with her until she was well enough to get home.
41. Example 2: Volunteers were concerned about a man in his 40s. He was dressed in a suit and had blood on his face. They followed him and he pulled a tag off his wrist and threw it away. The tag revealed he had discharged himself from Bootham Park Hospital. He then broke a bottle and tried to cut his own throat. They called the ambulance services and the police also attended. The police stood back while paramedics spoke to the man and resolved the situation.

The Volunteers praised the way in which the police and paramedics regularly work together in this way to achieve best outcomes for people in distress.

42. Example 3: They noticed a young man acting strangely. He was dressed in combat gear and would not speak to the volunteers.

He began jumping on the stalls at Newgate Market. The police were called but they told the volunteers there was nothing they could do unless he committed a crime. It transpired the man had mental health issues and had not had his medication that day. It took the volunteers two to three hours to encourage him to take a Mars Bar.

43. Example 4: A man started lashing out and caught one of the Street Angels. They were concerned for their own safety and the safety of passers by. The man lashed out again then fell to the floor and banged his head and was able to be helped and treated.
44. The volunteers have also helped people who have had seizures and others who have threatened to jump off bridges.
45. In support of Objective (ii) the volunteers identified several issues they considered presented health risks.
46. Issue 1: The spiking of drinks is said to be a growing risk to people using licensed premises. Drinks can be spiked by extra shots of alcohol or by drugs. In the main this involves younger females who are sometimes abandoned in the street because people think they are drunk when often they are not.
47. Issue 2: The volunteers reported there was a significant amount of “pre-loading” in York. This is when people drink cheaper alcohol at home or elsewhere before coming to the city centre.
48. Issue 3: Some girls get drunk and become very vulnerable because of the predatory nature of some of the men in the city centre. Street Angels are trained to notice anything unusual and look at the age and attire of people in the city centre. On occasions such as university Freshers’ Week they noted an increase in the number of 30-40 year old men in the centre. If the volunteers notice girls in a vulnerable situation they stay with them until they are reunited with their friends or are able to get home safely. *“We feel we have prevented a lot of rapes.”*
49. Issue 4: There is a lot of broken glass on the city centre streets at night bringing the potential for injury. The night-time patrols are often called to help with minor injuries caused by broken glass.

At the end of an evening out women who have been wearing heels often go barefoot, sometimes resulting in their feet being cut.

50. Street Angels – who give flip-flops to these people - asked the committee to back the Pop-Campaign – a petition to get glass banned from late-night city centre bars and clubs (for further information see:

www.pop-campaign.co.uk/).

51. Street Angels confirmed the campaign had been rolled out by some local authorities with a great deal of success. It was launched in 2004 after a worker was assaulted on Christmas Eve when he tried to assist and protect a female colleague. He was attacked with a glass bottle and was left fighting for his life after his face and throat were slashed.
52. They would also back any campaign that addresses the binge drinking culture or examines how some pubs and clubs are able to offer low priced drinks to attract people to their premises.
53. The team leaders wanted the committee to note that the city centre police, ambulance service and door staff are all helpful and professional but they understood their frustrations.

Analysis

54. The Committee should note that 19.73% of the night time attendances during the audit period were alcohol related. However there is no definitive evidence to prove the spike in Emergency Department attendances on Friday and Saturday nights (as detailed in paragraphs 18 & 19 above) is as a direct result of the city centre's late night economy, as it is not known what percentage of the attendances are as a result of drinking in licensed premises in the city centre, at home or elsewhere.
55. The Committee may wish to consider whether it is reasonable to conclude that the huge influx of people frequenting licensed premises in the centre at the weekend has a significant bearing on the figures – particularly alcohol related attendances.
56. Similarly there is no concrete evidence to confirm the high percentage of alcohol related diagnoses of trauma; social / behavioural; mental health and head injuries can be put down to violent crime or anti-social behaviour linked to the city centre night-time economy. But, again bearing in mind the influx of people into the city centre on a Friday and Saturday night, it would suggest it played a significant part.
57. In regard to the length of time attendees spent in the ED, Members recognised that alcohol related attendees spend a disproportionate length of time in ED as highlighted in paragraphs 25-27.

58. Members also recognised it was unpleasant for other patients to be in a department where people were drunk, and agreed that patients with a need to attend ED should expect a better experience.
59. Members might therefore conclude from the evidence provided that the high number of alcohol related attendances at night is putting a strain on staff, their time, beds and cubicles and waiting times at the Emergency Department and on the Ambulance Service, as evidenced in paragraphs 13-19; 13 and 25-27.
60. In regard to the issues raised by Street Angels (as shown in paragraphs 35-53 above) the Committee noted their efforts to reduce the numbers attending the ED, expressed their appreciation in the work done by Street Angels, and questioned whether more could be done to support their volunteers.
61. In regard to the issue of broken glass on city centre streets, the Committee noted that the NTE Review being undertaken by the Community Safety Overview & Scrutiny Committee would be addressing the issues of commercial waste and detritus on city centre streets during the evening.
62. Finally, whilst recognising that much of the information gathered to date relates to the effects of alcohol consumption on the resources of health partners, the Committee might wish to consider what, if any, other night time economy related activities may be having an impact on ED at peak times.

To Progress the Review

63. The committee should note there is still a need to evaluate the responses from the emergency department staff survey and patient consultation to understand people's perceptions of visiting the emergency department - Objective (iii).
64. In addition, to achieve Objective (iv) the Committee has to examine the impact of any campaigns previously run in York and elsewhere to encourage a reduction in excessive drinking in an effort to identify successful campaigns for future use in York.
65. Following this it is suggested the Committee put the review on the agenda at a future meeting to discuss the findings to date, agree what, if any, additional information is required and formulate recommendations to CSMC.

Implications

66. The implications associated with the recommendations arising from this review will be identified and included in the Draft Final Report once work on this review has been completed.

Council Plan 2011-15

67. This review relates to the following key element of the Council Plan 2011-2015: 'to protect vulnerable people'.

Risk Management

68. There are no risks associated with this report. Any risks arising from the recommendations in the Final Draft Report will be identified and addressed accordingly.

Recommendations

69. Having considered the information provided within the report the Committee are recommended to note the work on the Review to date and the measures needed to progress the Review.

Reason: To ensure compliance with scrutiny procedures, protocols and workplans.

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Report Approved



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18 Nov 2013

Wards Affected:

All



Background Papers: None

Annexes:

Annex A – Review timetable

Annex B – Abbreviations