



Belfast City Council

Report to: Licensing Committee

Subject: **Alcohol Misuse/Consumption on Buses and Proposed Measures for Entertainments Events**

Date: 20th August 2014

Reporting Officer: Trevor Martin, Head of Building Control, ext. 2450

Contact Officer: Stephen Hewitt, Building Control Manager, ext. 2435

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	Members are reminded that, at your meeting on 16 th April, you received representation from Mr Robert Fitzpatrick, Chief Executive of the Odyssey Trust Company, and Mr Adrian Doyle, General Manager, Odyssey Arena, regarding the Hardwell concert which took place in the Odyssey Complex on 7 th February this year. Members will recall that a major incident was declared following large numbers of young people turning up at the venue having misused alcohol. Mr Fitzpatrick wanted to discuss the incident and to explore how we might work together to try and tackle the wider and long running societal problems of alcohol abuse in N. Ireland.
1.2	Members will also recall that similar problems were encountered on the final night of last year's Tennents Vital at the Avicii concert when there were incidents of anti-social behaviour mainly caused by young patrons attending the event by bus/coach.
1.3	In both events, many of those attending by bus/coach arrived already intoxicated having 'pre-loaded' with alcohol on their journey. Some of those attending also had made considerable journeys spending lengthy periods on the bus.
1.4	Whilst it is against the law to consume alcohol on coaches it is widely acknowledged that this is difficult for both operators and the PSNI to enforce. The other related problem is the ready availability of alcohol to young people attending these events and there is a need to assist in the work that is being done to address this.
1.5	Following April's meeting you agreed that a report be submitted to a future meeting providing further details on the extent of that work, including advice around the consumption of alcohol on buses, and outlining ways in which the Council could coordinate the work.

2	Key Issues
2.1	The issue of people arriving at events for entertainments having consumed excessive alcohol is a widespread and persistent problem. Whilst it is exceptionally difficult to control and neither

	<p>the legal responsibility of the venue owner/licensee or the Council we all invariably are involved in the subsequent fallout. We therefore all need to look at working together to tackle the problem, to protect the people abusing alcohol, to ensure people living in the area of the event are not inconvenienced and to ensure the event runs safely for everyone.</p>
2.2	<p>To that end, primarily officers have been in close contact the Roads Division and their Vehicle Policy Branch within DOE to establish the current law relating to this issue. These details, including interventions by various Ministers can be found in Appendix 1.</p>
2.3	<p>Essentially the Vehicle Policy Branch is responsible for vehicle safety, regulation and bus operator licences. Last year they conducted a consultation on proposals for a new licensing regime to include more powers for them to deal with vehicle regulation, such as the conduct of operators to ensure that no alcohol is consumed on board their buses.</p>
2.4	<p>Discussions with the Vehicle Policy Branch centred on how we could work with them to prevent or reduce the ability of patrons to consume alcohol en route to a concert. Building Control has suggested utilising the upcoming Tennents Vital event as an ideal test case for a joint operation.</p>
2.5	<p>Several meetings have been held to discuss a campaign to raise awareness on the dangers of consuming alcohol on buses and a potential enforcement operation to support the campaign. The Vehicle Policy Branch has a member database of approximately 285 bus operators who will be the main target of the campaign.</p>
2.6	<p>In addition to consulting with the main enforcing authority Officers also set up a working group to examine the Tennents Vital event of last year and, in the longer term, to look at any indoor or outdoor concert which might be of concern. The group included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Belfast City Council <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Building Control ○ Communications ○ Community Safety ▪ DOE Roads Division, Vehicle Policy Branch ▪ PSNI ▪ Federation of Passenger Transport ▪ Translink (Metro / Ulsterbus / Rail Operations) ▪ MCD Promotions ▪ EventSec ▪ Dr Aisling Diamond ▪ Tennents ▪ Drinkaware ▪ Pubs Of Ulster ▪ Police Community Safety Partnership's (PCSP's)
2.7	<p>A full resume of the lessons learned at those meetings is contained in Appendix 2 of this report.</p>
2.8	<p>Learning from those lessons and wider experiences it was thought useful to try to establish measures and test their viability in tackling the issues. Meetings have been held in preparation for this year's Tennents Vital which have been very productive in identifying some short term measures that will be put in place for this event and also how the group could work together to help address the issue in the absence of robust legislation to tackle the problem.</p>
2.9	<p>The group has agreed a number of actions to be completed specifically in connection with the upcoming Tennents Vital event being held on the 21st and 24th August. Full details of those measures including the accompanying documents are contained in Appendix 3.</p>
2.10	<p>It is the intention that the working group would be replicated for any similar future event in Belfast and indeed across the province and any future campaign. It is also the intention that</p>

	<p>this type of campaign would be used for any indoor concert event, such as those held at the Odyssey complex. However, a campaign would only be proposed, if required and at the agreement of any promoter and organiser.</p>
2.11	<p>The Building Control Service will lead a review of these measures with the working group to judge their effectiveness. Any improvements or lessons learned will be incorporated into any future campaign.</p>

3	Resource Implications
3.1	<p><u>Financial</u> None. Current budgets will cater for officers coordinating and attending meetings for the campaign and in providing the use of Council billboards for advertising space.</p>
3.2	<p><u>Human Resources</u> None.</p>
3.3	<p><u>Asset and Other Implications</u> None.</p>

4	Equality and Good Relations Considerations
4.1	<p>There are no equality or good relations issues.</p>

5	Recommendation
5.1	<p>Taking into account the information presented, the Committee is requested to endorse the campaign and provide any advice or feedback on how it could be further promoted.</p>

6	Documents Attached
	<p>Appendix 1 - Law in Relation to Consumption of Alcohol on Public Transport Vehicles Appendix 2 - Lessons Learnt from Tennents Vital 2013 Appendix 3 - Measures put in place for Tennents Vital 2014</p>