

LICENSING COMMITTEE: 5 December 2006

Report of the Chief Strategic Planning and Environment Officer

CHALLENGE 21

1. Background

- 1.1 One of the main problems that local residents report in connection with the retail sale of alcohol is that of local off-licences selling alcohol to underage persons.
- 1.2 The message from the Government following the release of figures relating to the most recent alcohol misuse enforcement campaign (AMEC) is that the trade still must do more to combat the sale of alcohol to under 18s in licensed premises. The overall figures show that one in three minors taking part in test purchasing exercises were able to buy alcohol in pubs, bars and clubs with one in five being able to purchase in off licences. Overall, the figures are not very different to those seen in the previous alcohol misuse enforcement campaign and as a result the Government has called for further action to be taken by the trade.
- 1.3 A consortium of trade organisations have now got together to assist off-licences and convenience stores to meet their obligations under the Licensing Act 2003 as part of the 'Challenge 21' initiative which is supported by the Home Office.

2. Details of the Challenge 21 Initiative.

- 2.1 The 'Challenge 21' scheme is recommended for all premises which sell alcohol and other products which are age restricted. Traders are asked to seek proof of age from anybody who appears to be under the age of 21. The campaign aims to create a culture of expectation that in pubs, clubs, off licences etc. that proof of age should either be offered or produced on demand and that this should be the norm as far as the sale of alcohol to young persons is concerned. Asking for identification at an age limit that is higher than the legal age for sale of the product means that traders are much more likely to avoid an illegal sale to someone who looks older than their true age.
- 2.2 With the support of the Home Office the Retail of Alcohol Standards Group's (RASG) have adopted the Challenge 21 initiative principle, where if you appear 21 or under you will have to show ID to be sold alcohol. The RASG is issuing posters to reinforce the principle and to cut the incidence of sales of alcohol to minors by the end of the year. The RASG is made up of major supermarket retailers and Association of Convenience Stores, British Retail Consortium and

the Wine and Spirit Trade Association. The posters, details of which are shown in Appendix B, are supplied free of charge to convenience stores and off-licences. The provision means that local shops can have the same signage as all the major retailers, to demonstrate their joint agreement to tackle this issue and raise the culture of 'Challenge 21' with all customers.

- 2.3 To encourage the adoption of the 'Challenge 21' scheme the licensing authority has written to the holders of all Premises Licences which permit the retail sale of alcohol for consumption of the premises only to recommend and provide advice on the adoption of the 'Challenge 21' scheme. A copy of the letter is contained in Appendix A.

3. Achievability

This report contains no equality personnel or property implications.

4. Legal Implications

- 4.1 All decisions taken by or on behalf of the Council must (a) be within the legal powers of the Council; (b) comply with any procedural requirement imposed by law; (c) be within the powers of the body or person exercising powers on behalf of the Council; (d) be undertaken in accordance with the procedural requirements imposed by the Council eg. standing orders and financial regulations; (e) be fully and properly informed; (f) be properly motivated; (g) be taken having regard to the Council's fiduciary duty to its taxpayers; and (h) be reasonable and proper in all the circumstances.

5. Financial Implications.

- 5.1 The licensing service is required to be self financing with all expenditure being met from fees and charges which are reviewed annually. The cost of providing the advice to the holders of Premises Licences will be met from the existing budget.

6. Recommendation

- 6.1 That the report be noted.

SEAN HANNABY **30 October 2006**
CHIEF STRATEGIC PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT OFFICER

This report has been prepared in accordance with procedures approved by Corporate Managers.

Background Papers: None

LETTER TO CARDIFF OFF-LICENSEES

Dear

Subject: Licensing Act 2003 – Challenge 21

As the holder of a Premises Licence which permits the sale of alcohol you will know it is illegal to sell alcohol to underage persons. The authority will take enforcement measures against those who break the law. Not only can any member of your staff be faced with an instant fine if this occurs but *you*, as the holder of a Premises Licence, could also be prosecuted with a maximum fine of up to £5000 on conviction and your licence could be revoked.

This Authority is backing a Government-led initiative and supports a nationwide **Challenge 21** campaign aimed at stamping out underage drinking. The idea is simple: to say to young people – if you look under 21 you should expect to be asked to prove your age. The campaign aims to create a culture of expectation that proof of age should either be offered or produced on demand and that this should be the norm as far as the sale of alcohol to young persons is concerned.

The initiative is entirely voluntary but this authority would recommend it to you. To take part you can obtain a Retailers Pack **free of charge** by calling the 'No ID No Sale' hotline on 0870 2401221. The pack contains copies of the new signage, posters etc that all reinforce the 'Challenge 21' principle and raises the culture of 'Challenge 21' with all customers. The signage provided is highly visible and will be an important deterrent to those who would seek to purchase alcohol illegally.

If you need any further advice or information please do not hesitate to contact the Licensing Section of Cardiff Council on Cardiff (029) 20871651.

Yours faithfully

Councillor Brian Griffiths
Chair of Cardiff Council Licensing Committee

CAMPAIGN POSTERS

