

REGULATION COMMITTEE
10 SEPTEMBER 2008

SUBJECT	PROHIBITING THE CONSUMPTION OF ALCOHOL IN DESIGNATED PUBLIC PLACES (To inform the Committee of an application received for a Designation Order in Shefford and the process by which the Order will be made)
REPORT OF	Director of Corporate and Democratic Services
<i>Contact Officer: Mark Woolsey (Tel: 01462 611025)</i>	

IMPLICATIONS

SUSTAINABILITY	None
LINK TO COMMUNITY PLAN / CORPORATE PLAN AND OBJECTIVES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Crime reduction and tackling anti-social behaviour ▪ To encourage Community members to feel safe, at ease and free from crime in their homes and neighbourhoods.
RISKS	None
FINANCIAL	No direct financial implications, however, staff time will be allocated to facilitate requests for the designation
LEGAL	Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001
PERSONNEL/EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES	n/a
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT/SAFETY	The use of the powers given to the Police as a result of the Designation Order will contribute to the reduction of anti-social behaviour in the District.
TRADES UNIONS	n/a
HUMAN RIGHTS	To be taken into account when considering the evidence for making the order.

OTHER DOCUMENTS RELEVANT TO REPORT
Report of the Police and Flitwick Town Council

RECOMMENDATION(S): (1) That the director of corporate & democratic services be authorised to proceed with the necessary consultations under the local authorities (alcohol consumption in designated public places) regulations 2001, in respect of the possible further alcohol designation order in Shefford; (2) That the committee appoint three members to meet informally with the director of corporate and democratic services to consider the outcome of the consultation and report back to this committee.
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1. Shefford Town Council, with support from the Police, have submitted an application for an Alcohol Designation Order (ADO) to be made for areas in Shefford.

Background

2. Mid Bedfordshire District Council adopted the powers under the Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001 ('The Act') at its meeting of the 22 January 2008, to allow for Alcohol Designation Order applications to be considered in the district.
3. The Licensing & Regulation Committee received a report at its meeting of the 12 May 2004 setting out the provisions of the Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001 and the procedures to be followed for making a Designation Order.
4. The Council has made two previous ADO's in the district, one for the areas of Ampthill, Biggleswade, Cranfield and Flitwick and a further one in the area of Stotfold. A further ADO for Flitwick is currently being consulted upon.

The Application

5. Shefford Town Council has submitted an application for an ADO, with the full support of the local Police Officer.
6. The report from the local Police Officer, in support of the application, broadly details the problems which are being suffered, and is attached at Appendix 1.
7. An ADO is considered necessary due to the number of alcohol related incidents occurring in the town.
8. However, the precise details of the nuisance and the areas affected have not yet been explored. In order to investigate the nuisance and to satisfy the Council that an ADO is necessary and appropriate in these areas it is proposed that, as with previous applications, the consultation be delegated to the Director of Corporate and Democratic Services. The Director of Corporate and Democratic Services will consult with the consultees identified in the legislation and will also receive representations from the Police and Town Council on the precise areas to be designated.
9. To assist in this process it is proposed that the Regulation Committee appoint three Members to meet on an informal basis with the Director of Corporate and Democratic Services, or her representative, and officers from the Community Services Team to consider the outcome of the consultation
10. If it is agreed that an ADO should be made, a recommendation will be made to Council.
11. In view of the Police support it is recommended that consultation under the Local Authorities (Alcohol Consumption in Designated Public Places) Regulations

2001 be commenced and be delegated to the Director of Corporate & Democratic Services in respect of the request received from Shefford Town Council.

Background Papers: Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001.
Home Office Letter of Guidance.
The Local Authorities (Alcohol Consumption in Designated Public Places) Regulations 2004.
Licensing & Regulation Committee Report: 12 May 2004.
Council Reports: 22 January 2004 and 28 July 2005.

Location of Papers: Priory House, Monks Walk, Chicksands, Shefford, Bedfordshire SG17 5TQ

File Reference: RL.47.02

Proposal for an alcohol free zone in Shefford

Police Report

Shefford is a small rural town in Mid Bedfordshire with a rapidly growing population.

It has seven public houses and off licence facilities at the supermarket and mini supermarket on the outskirts of the town. There is also a hotel that holds a licence to sell alcohol and a number of restaurants in the town that are also licensed.

Shefford has experienced a large number of alcohol-related incidents and problems over the last few years. Certain areas in particular have been affected more than others. An alcohol restriction zone is a permanent piece of legislation and although it is accepted that it will not solve all the problems in the Shefford area, I believe that it will reduce the number of alcohol-related incidents and if Policed properly will identify the main offenders.

The main areas identified as Trouble Spots by the Police and the Town Council are as follows;

Somerfields, Black Swan, White Hart, Brewery Tap and The Bridge are situated in the centre of the Town and all these areas are amongst the worst for alcohol related incidents. There are three public houses in close proximity of Somerfields, being The Black Swan, White Hart and The Bridge.

Large groups of youths are always trying to purchase alcohol from Somerfields and when refused have resorted to pestering local residents or other youths above eighteen with ID. There is evidence to suggest that some people in their twenties purchase alcohol for youths to drink in and around the town centre.

Some of the problem areas are Duck Lane, High Street and Old Station Way car park. During the summer months alcohol is consumed at The Meads and near to the river Hiz. There have been complaints of verbal abuse towards members of the public using the town and park/river area.

Offences such as criminal damage within the town are closely connected with the consumption of alcohol. This affects the town not only criminally but drinking in the town also produces litter which is also an offence.

The local Council is responsible for the collection of this and a large amount of the litter is empty alcohol bottles or cans. This is not only expensive, but unsightly for members of the public using the town and its recreational facilities. Beer bottles are being thrown in the street and parks causing them to smash. The broken bottles are left behind leaving a mess but also the obvious danger to residents in the town and dog walkers.

Bottles are also being smashed in the kiddies play area behind the church, Kingfisher Way and Millennium Green. The changing facility at the Millennium Green has had its windows broken several times, by vandalism over the last few years.

High Street

There are four public houses in close proximity to the town centre. The Black Swan, White Hart, The Bridge and the Brewery Tap. Residents who use the facilities in the town have made numerous complaints about underage drinking in the Car Parks and verbal abuse from the offenders when challenged. Cars in the car park have also been vandalised as a result of these individuals. The area outside the public houses in the town centre have been subject to a large number of Public Order incidents mostly alcohol related.

Somerfields Store and the Car Park

Has become a gathering area for drinkers and there have been a large number of complaints from customers about verbal abuse from the groups involved. The security staff call the Police regularly to sort out problems of public order or nuisance from groups of drinkers.

Amphill Road

There have been numerous complaints over the years from residents who live in the area. Most of the complaints are alcohol connected. Reports have been received of drunkenness, abusive language, bottle throwing, fighting and criminal damage.

Churchill Way

These complaints were more frequent until the recent change of ownership of the Esso Filling Station. These reported incidents went down during the building work of the new Tesco but have slowly increased in recent months.

I anticipate there will be more reported incidents during the summer months. To try and improve the quality of life issues for residents in this area I opposed the alcohol sales application for Tesco, which was shortened to 6am - 11pm.

App 1

Ivel Road

This is another area which has suffered from alcohol related anti-social behaviour. The police have received numerous complaints of criminal damage to vehicles, assault and affray. They also get regular complaints of noise from drunken people using the road, which continues into Clifton Road.

It should be made clear that these problems are not restricted to just the under 18 age group, where police already have confiscation powers. The 18 plus age group are present with the younger element and on many occasions it is they who are obtaining the alcohol and supplying it to the youngsters. The implementation of restriction zones would assist police to combat the problems caused by street drinking by groups and individuals of all ages. It would also assist in instances where the need arises to curtail the effects caused by pub users spilling into the street and disturbing residents during and after licensing hours and effectively result in assisting landlords to keep a tighter rein on their patrons. This in turn should result in an improvement in the quality of life for residents in the areas previously mentioned.

I would like to suggest that area known as Digswell off Hitchin Road remains out of the alcohol free zone, as it is a location, which is used for special events especially during the summer months.

The designation of these particular areas is proportionate to the problem and specific in targeting the areas that generates alcohol-related complaints. This report is therefore submitted to the Mid Beds District Council for due consideration.

Steve Busby Shefford Neighbourhood Police Officer.