

**Levelling-Up Scrutiny Committee Strategy Review  
Draft Blackpool Alcohol Prevention and Harm Reduction Strategy 2024-2027 Informal Meeting  
Wednesday 13 December 2023 at 6.00 pm, Via Teams**

**ATTENDEES**

(Cllr) Matthew Thomas                      (Cllr) Sarah Smith                      (Cllr) Pam Brookes  
(Cllr) Jo Farrell

Judith Mills, Consultant In Public Health (Health Improvement and Adult Public Health),  
Kerry Burrow, Public Health Practitioner (Alcohol and Tobacco), Public Health

**DECLARATIONS**

There were no declarations of interest.

**DRAFT BLACKPOOL ALCOHOL PREVENTION AND HARM REDUCTION STRATEGY 2024-2027**

Judith Mills, Consultant in Public Health (Health Improvement and Adult Public Health) and Kerry Burrow, Public Health Practitioner (Alcohol and Tobacco) gave a detailed presentation on the Draft Blackpool Alcohol Prevention and Harm Reduction Strategy 2024-2027.

Judith Mills advised that the new strategy document had been in the very early stages of development, therefore feedback was essential to ensure the strategy would be relevant to Blackpool.

She advised that nationally, budgets for alcohol services over the last 10 years had been cut, and that the previous national strategy had not been developed since 2012. In addition, historically the drug and alcohol services had been collated together with the two services now separated.

The impact of Covid had increased drinking levels in Blackpool, which had continued after the pandemic ended. In addition, a reduction in the number of people accessing treatment services had also been evident.

Blackpool had been awarded grant funding which was specifically aimed at targeting Drug and Alcohol Treatment Services.

The main vision for Blackpool would be to reduce alcohol-related deaths and the harmful impact of alcohol. Partnership working with the criminal justice system, NHS and other partner agencies was required to be successful.

Kerry Burrow clarified that an alcohol specific death was defined as 'A death where alcohol had been listed as the primary cause'.

Members were reassured that the figures for alcohol related deaths for Blackpool and visitors were recorded separately.

Judith Mills provided Members with key successes achieved through the last strategy and also the challenges and opportunities ahead. These included:

- The launch of the Lighthouse Alcohol Service.

- Successful blocking of new applications (off-License premises) in the cumulative impact area.
- Being advocates for Minimum Unit Pricing.

Members discussed early intervention and details of what offer had been available to schools. Judith confirmed that the aim had been to ensure all schools had the best resources available across the board. In addition, a pilot had commenced with joint working with the Council's Children's Services to provide group work support targeted for young people in schools.

The Strategy document highlighted 8 Priority areas:

- Overcome the legislative barriers that block population level change in relation to harmful alcohol consumption
- Better inform children, young people and parents about the potential harm of alcohol use in childhood
- Ensure we intervene early to reduce alcohol harm in children and young people
- Stop stigma to improve access to services when people need it and to maintain recovery
- Improve the options and take up by people facing challenges in their use of alcohol for treatment, recovery and aftercare
- Effectively address co-occurring mental health and alcohol issues
- Reduce repeat admissions for hospital and prison
- Reduce the impact of alcohol on families and the outcomes for children

Judith Mills and Kerry Burrow highlighted that for the strategy to work, co-production and partnership working would be key. Mental Health Services would be working with the Alcohol Service to co-treat patients.

In addition, the Criminal Justice Service would support and be able to make the appropriate referrals to treatment services.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Members thanked the team for their presentation and their commitment to improving alcohol prevention and harm reduction in Blackpool.

Whilst Members appreciated the document had been at the very early stages a number of recommendations were provided in the following areas:

1. With regards to the early intervention and support offer to schools, Members suggested that they felt School age children and young people would benefit from a face to face 1 hour session in an assembly setting.
2. Priority 2 - Members requested that marketing of the information available to parents be presented using different forms of social media platforms to enable the information to reach a wider audience.
3. Priority 5 – Members echoed the need to train staff to offer advice and motivate people to reach out and get the most appropriate treatment for their needs.

4. To explore 'Wet Area' where street drinkers can gather safely, reducing antisocial behaviour, as part of the town centre re-development. Members requested that they be provided with evidence, case studies and comparable data from other local authorities that already provided a 'Wet Area'. Members requested that all Levelling-Up Committee Members be involved with future consultation on any potential proposals for a 'Wet Area'
5. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) – Members requested that a dashboard be developed to monitor progress.
6. Members asked for the Governance section to be simplified, to include a summary for each organisation, what their responsibilities were and who could make decisions.