



Cultural and Economic Services Committee

Date: 15 October 2018

Title: Best Bar None

Purpose of the Report: To provide an update on the Best Bar None Scheme

Contact Officer: Sarah Jewell, Best Bar None Coordinator

Corporate Objective/s		LLTC Three Year Plan - Aim 2 Objective 26
Implications:		
Financial	✓	Officer post funded by Central Bedfordshire Council. Scheme delivery financed through partnership contributions and funds carried forward from previous year.
Human Resources		
Operational/Service delivery	✓	Scheme delivery information and dates provided within this report. Essentially the award scheme will be undertaken in 2018.
Procedural/Legal		
Risk/Health and Safety		

1. RECOMMENDATION/S

Should members be minded, the recommendation is to:

- 1.1 To note the report
- 1.2 To confirm the Town Council's intent in continuing the delivery of the scheme for a further year and that it expands to include the towns, Biggleswade and Sandy.
- 1.3 To confirm that the Town Council will continue to provide line management for the Best Bar None Coordinator on behalf of scheme partners.
- 1.4 To set aside the sum of £1,000 from earmarked reserves, Economic Development (970/9018), as the Town Council's contribution to the delivery cost of the scheme

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Best Bar None (BBN) is a UK-wide programme designed to improve standards within licensed premises. The scheme serves as a learning, or training opportunity for many Licensees towards good and safe management practices of their premises including key factors that contribute towards addressing alcohol related crime and disorder. It is considered that the scheme helps to 'professionalise' the work of Licensees.
- 2.2 Licensed premises can apply for Best Bar None accreditation and a plaque is given to those premises who pass an assessment carried out by British Institute of Inn-keeping qualified local assessors. The assessment process is updated every year to ensure it remains current thus giving value for reassessment of Licenced premises.
- 2.3 Awards are given to those who achieve the threshold level (?) with additional awards being given to those venues achieving the most points in their assessment. In addition, there is also a 'people's choice' award voted by the public. The latter, serving to ensure the scheme has a profile with the public who then, can make informed choices about visiting venues which have achieved the standard necessary to secure the award status.
- 2.4 Venues in Dunstable, Houghton Regis and Leighton-Linslade are covered by this scheme.
- 2.5 The Best Bar None Officer was first recruited by the Town Council in 2016 with a salary and small delivery budget provided by CBC, with contributions for partner organisations.
- 2.6 The second year's salary was again funded by CBC. The delivery budget was secured by using underspend and directly asking the Town Councils of the participating towns to financially contribute. Other partners gave officer time free to undertake the many assessments meetings with Licensees.

Dunstable TC	£500
Leighton-Linslade TC	£500
Houghton Regis TC	£200

- 2.7 In summary, Best Bar None:
- Promotes and builds good relationships between premises, local police, Fire services and local authority services, such as Public Health, Public Protection, Community Safety.
 - Shows, through accreditation, that a licensed premises has a commitment to operate to a high standard.
 - Provides national evidence indicating that the scheme can increase footfall to businesses by creating a safer night-time economy.
 - Provides positive messages about safe places to socialise in as accredited venues will be part of an area wide marketing campaign promoting the scheme, benefiting business's, and the locality's profile.

3. UPDATE

- 3.1 An early evaluation of the BBN scheme to date is in draft form and being led by CBC's Community Safety Analyst (Appendix A).

Executive summary (key points) –

- Links with Leighton-Linlode PubWatch have been particularly good and have positively contributed to the take-up of BBN by licensees.
- A healthy pool of assessors, essential for delivering the scheme, have been recruited from across the BBN partnership including Leighton-Linlode TC.
- Feedback from licensees shows that the accreditation process has helped them learn new information, keep up to date with policies and procedures and helped them to identify issues they should be aware of as part of the licensed trade.
- BBN has been particularly beneficial for venues that are newly opened or not part of a national company/brewery, to help determine policies and staff training needed.
- Standards required to achieve BBN accreditation are made more challenging year on year; whilst this made it difficult for some venues to pursue re-accreditation/accreditation, other venues benefitted from the standards set by the criteria.
- The BBN awards ceremony was well attended. It was particularly positive that licensees brought their staff teams along. Licensees would welcome a change to awards types or categories to resolve perceived unfairness about venues that were more likely to win.
- Licensees would like BBN to be promoted in the community more widely and at a national level.
- It is not possible to establish a direct causal link between participation levels in BBN and the volume of alcohol related crime and disorder, or alcohol related hospital admissions. However, BBN participation levels can be considered alongside other influences to build up a more informal picture about patterns in the data.
- The number of police recorded crimes during peak times in the hotspot areas for Leighton-Linlode and Dunstable have steadily decreased 2015-2018. Alcohol related ASB in Central Bedfordshire has also steadily decreased 2015-2018. BBN partners are invited to provide any relevant information to help understand the decrease in crime and ASB found.

- 3.2 Re-focus of the Best Bar None Scheme

Early evaluation and discussions within the Partnership group have resulted in the re-affirmation that Best Bar None's accreditation scheme's role is to promote good practise and training among licensees. This important role fits into the wider spectrum of public safety, complimenting schemes supported by other organisations such the Police with PubWatch. Through good practise and training, Best Bar None has a role to play in prevention of crime and disorder, but cannot be directly connected to reduction. BBN is an important tool for prevention and preparedness and as such should be measured according to a licensees preparedness opposed to its crime and disorder numbers.

3.3 Due to the evidenced impact on licensee’s learning through undertaking the award resulting in improved management practices, the proposal of the scheme partners is to extend the scheme to include Biggleswade & Sandy. As this is a Central Bedfordshire Scheme, it was felt the expansion should incorporate the northern most part of the county. It also has a healthy PubWatch which is a good ‘in’. In the future further expansion may include Amphill & Flitwick.

3.4 Ideas for the future of BBN:

1. Expand the learning opportunity of scheme applicants and their continuous development – develop an annual BBN Focus. Choose a focus/theme for each year. E.g. in 2019 it could be ‘vulnerability. This will help inform champions about key assessment criteria, will be a nice hook for our communications (more interesting than generic BBN is great tweets etc.) and can be linked to the Innovation Award.
2. Recruit a BBN Champion from each venue. They will be invited to a BBN session to find out what their venue needs to do to achieve BBN, plus additional ‘training’ from partners on key areas including the BBN ‘focus’.
3. Innovation Award. Have an award that all pubs can aim for/enter on a level playing field. No matter how large or small the venue, whether owner run or brewery managed, all licensees can do something in their venue to address vulnerability of their customers. This would be a judge led award, and can be used by us to enter into the National Awards.

3.5 Timeline for BBN 2019

2018	
Oct	Budget finalised for BBN for financial year 2019/ 2020
2019	
Nov - Jan	Promotion of BBN and the up and coming assessments
Jan	Assessor get-together and refresher meeting
Jan/ Feb	BBN Champion session
Mar - May	Assessments
Jun - Aug	Peoples Vote
Sep	Award event
Oct	National application opens

3.6 The salary and delivery budget combined to continue the scheme for a further year is £20,000. CBC has confirmed their contribution of £15,000 for the next financial year. All partners in the BBN partnership group are contributing to the running costs. (Police, Fire, Town Councils, CBC departments including Public Health, Public Protection and Community Safety).

3.5 Committee is asked to contribute to the 2019/20 scheme to the sum of £1,000.

4. NEXT STEPS

4.1 Confirm the delivery of a 2019/20 scheme and its expansion to include Biggleswade and Sandy, i.e. a budget. Partnership group representatives to

seek agree their budget contribution from their respective organisations.

- 4.2 Develop linkages with Biggleswade and Sandy venues through forums such as PubWatch.
- 4.3 Promote BBN through social media and town council publications to raise BBN profile.
- 4.4 Continue attending local PubWatch meetings to keep Best Bar None 'top of mind' with local venues in preparedness for next year's assessments.
- 4.5 Develop a new 'innovation award' which is promoted among all pubs to create an award that is fair to all.
- 4.6 Assessments to begin in Spring 2019.
- 4.7 Continue to demonstrate the value BBN. Deliver a continuous programme of BBN awareness raising should be carried out in local press and in social media.

5. CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 Early indication of the emerging evaluation plan offers an encouraging picture of how the scheme directly influences good practise in licensed venues, a key to preparedness for community safety issues from fire to crime and disorder.
- 5.2 The strength of the BBN delivery partnership has increased over the two-year period and based on the emerging evaluation of the project and increasing partner engagement, the steering group has expressed initial support for the scheme to continue and expand to Biggleswade and Sandy.
- 5.3 The Town Council currently line manages the BBN Coordinator post. Partners have requested that this arrangement continues.
- 5.4 All partners are contributing to the delivery of the scheme. Committee has enough funds in earmarked reserves should it wish to confirm a financial contribution.

END