

**BEST BAR NONE EVALUATION
2018**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Supported by the Home Office and the police, Best Bar None (BBN) is a UK-wide programme designed to improve standards within licensed premises through partnership between trade, the police, local authorities and other partners.

Best Bar None engenders pride in the town centres where it operates, promoting professionalism and shared commitment, which lead to safer, busier and more successful businesses coupled with reduced petty crime and disorder. The intention of BBN is to provide a way of partnering with licensees and open dialogue to introduce ways to improve their businesses for the safety of customers and their communities.

This evaluation considers outcomes against a number of national aims set by BBN national, as well as a number of local indicators. These has been grouped under the following headings: relationships between partners, improving knowledge, recognition and outcomes for licensees, and community awareness and the impact of alcohol consumption.

Relationships between partners

BBN Aim:

- Building positive relationships between the licensed trade, police, local authorities and other agencies

The BBN coordinator attends PubWatch. Links with Leighton-Linslade PubWatch have been particularly good and have positively contributed to take-up of BBN by licensees in that area.

PubWatch has seen improvement in the quality and involvement of licensees at the meeting.

PubWatch has been a useful forum for promoting awareness raising campaigns and schemes such as 'Ask Angela'; BBN has been a valuable and welcome source of information and resources to partners.

A healthy pool of assessors has been recruited from across the BBN partnership including Leighton-Linslade Town Council, Community Safety, Licensing, Public Health and the Fire and Rescue Service.

Improving knowledge

BBN Aims:

- Improving knowledge and skills of enforcement and regulation agencies, licensees and bar staff to help them responsibly manage licensed premises
- Positively promoting the responsible consumption of alcohol

Venues meet a wide range of criteria to achieve BBN accreditation. Feedback from licensees shows that the accreditation process has helped them to 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. Positive

feedback was received about the usefulness of the templates that had been made available by the BBN coordinator.

BBN has been particularly beneficial for venues that are newly opening and not part of a national company to help them determine the range of policies and training they need. This in turn better equips them with the knowledge they need in their daily business e.g. dealing with incidents, recognising levels of intoxication and responding to underage drinkers.

Efforts have been made locally to encourage continued participation in BBN by licensees and recruit venues to join BBN to ensure that BBN can have a direct impact on improving knowledge and skills.

The standards required to achieve BBN accreditation are made more challenging each year; this ensures venues are striving to improve their business, and to ensure they are managing their businesses responsibly. Whilst this made it difficult for some venues to pursue re-accreditation, other venues benefitted from the standards set by the criteria.

Recognition and outcomes for licensees

BBN Aims:

- Providing recognition for premises which achieve high standards which can include a high-profile award night with category winners and an overall winner
- Responsible owners are recognised and able to share good practice with others
- Highlight how operating more responsibly can improve the profitability of an individual business and attractiveness of a general area.

The BBN awards ceremony was well attended by licensees and BBN partners and positive feedback on the event was received. It was particularly positive that licensees brought their staff teams along to the event to celebrate their successes.

Licensees would welcome a change to the awards types or categories to resolve the perceived unfairness about venues that were more likely to win.

Licensees felt that being part of BBN implied high standards but recognised that this was a result of their knowledge of the scheme and that the community were unlikely to know much about it. Licensees would like BBN to be promoted in the community more widely so that it is recognised as a national scheme which implies certain standards in a 'trip advisor' way which could draw in customers.

Community awareness and the impact of alcohol consumption

BBN Aim:

- Reducing alcohol-related crime and disorder

Given the variety of possible influences on the levels of crime, it is not possible to identify a direct causal link between participation levels in BBN and the volume of crime and disorder. An increase in recorded crime does not necessarily mean that the actual number of crimes taking place has increased. However, BBN

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participation levels can be considered alongside other influences to build up a more informed picture about patterns in the data. BBN partners are invited to provide any relevant information to help understand the trends.

The number of police recorded crimes during peak times in the hotspot areas for Dunstable and Leighton Buzzard have steadily decreased 2015-18; this is despite the numbers increasing across Central Bedfordshire as a whole. Alcohol related ASB in Central Bedfordshire has also steadily decreased 2015-18.

Work to obtain data from local hospitals on admissions for assault injuries which are alcohol related is ongoing and will be used in the 2019 evaluation; this will provide additional information to build up a picture of alcohol related disorder resulting in a hospital admission.

BACKGROUND

Supported by the Home Office and the police, Best Bar None (BBN) is a UK-wide programme designed to improve standards within licensed premises through partnership between trade, the police, local authorities and other partners.

Best Bar None engenders pride in the town centres where it operates, promoting professionalism and shared commitment, which lead to safer, busier and more successful businesses coupled with reduced petty crime and disorder. The intention of BBN is to provide a way of partnering with licensees and open dialogue to introduce ways to improve their businesses for the safety of customers and their communities.

The aims of Best Bar None:¹

- Reducing alcohol-related crime and disorder
- Building positive relationships between the licensed trade, police, local authorities and other agencies
- Positively promoting the responsible consumption of alcohol
- Improving knowledge and skills of enforcement and regulation agencies, licensees and bar staff to help them responsibly manage licensed premises
- Providing recognition for premises which achieve high standards which can include a high-profile award night with category winners and an overall winner
- Responsible owners are recognised and able to share good practice with others
- Highlight how operating more responsibly can improve the profitability of an individual business and attractiveness of a general area.

The work in relation to the above aims for Central Bedfordshire in 2017/18 is assessed in this report. BBN was launched in Central Bedfordshire in 2014, operating initially in Dunstable, with Houghton Regis following in 2015 and Leighton-Linslade joining in 2016.

As well as working towards the national aims of BBN, local indicators were also set for 2017/18 which provides targets for the BBN coordinator and partners in terms of improving numbers of licensed establishments taking part and public awareness.

- **Local indicator 1:** 29 licensees apply for accreditation.
- **Local indicator 2:** All licensed establishments who received accreditation in 2016/17 achieve re-accreditation.
- **Local indicator 3:** 8 additional establishments gain accreditation in 2017/18
- **Local indicator 4:** Increased membership of PubWatch scheme members against number of licenced premises in the parish.
- **Local indicator 5:** Over 3,000 votes received (17% increase).
- **Local indicator 6:** >1 article appeared in the mainstream press of each town (Leighton-Linslade, Dunstable and Houghton Regis).

¹ <http://bbnuk.com/>

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- **Local indicator 7:** Social media – log number of #BBNCentralBeds hits and Facebook likes for articles placed by each town council (providing baseline data for next evaluation)

This evaluation draws from a wide range of information and data including: police recorded crime and ASB data, feedback from the BBN coordinator and assessors, focus groups with licensees, and the safer central community survey.

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN PARTNERS

BBN Aim:

- Building positive relationships between the licensed trade, police, local authorities and other agencies

Much work has been done in 2017/18 to build positive relationships between local partners in Central Bedfordshire. Pubwatch is the licensed trade's equivalent to Neighbourhood Watch, tackling the specific and unique problems faced by the pub on-trade. Licensees work together to improve the safety of their premises, for the benefit of their staff and customers. PubWatch presents a useful opportunity to promote the values of BBN and encourage licensees to apply for accreditation. The BBN co-ordinator has been regularly attending PubWatch meetings and provides information about BBN.

Before September 2017, there were 8 members of the Leighton-Linslade PubWatch with around 6 regular attendees. Since then the group has been rejuvenated with a new Chair and Secretary in post, alongside regular attendance from the BBN co-ordinator and the active recruitment of licensees. Membership has grown to 15 with around 12 regular attendees. This improved attendance has had an impact on the number of licensees who have joined the BBN scheme by hearing about the value of being a part of it from other PubWatch members who have BBN accreditation. The BBN Coordinator has also been able to promote schemes like 'Ask Angela' and awareness raising poster campaigns such as the World cup 'domestic violence' campaign. These are all campaigns that if adopted by venues, can be used as evidence for BBN accreditation.

There is currently no PubWatch or similar scheme in Houghton Regis, although the Town Clerk is supporting efforts to start one. There has been a decline in PubWatch attendance by Dunstable licensees; being a larger area with more establishments, it is harder to bring them all together. Attendance at each meeting is normally around 7 venues, and this has not changed since September 2017. Despite attendance levels, the quality of the involvement at meetings has improved. For example, more conversations are had with CCTV and the police about key local or national events, how they will affect business and what business preparation needs to be in place such as using plastic glasses or getting more security staff. These are all elements that can also be brought into their BBN accreditation assessments.

A healthy pool of new assessors has been trained and recruited from a breadth of BBN Partnership teams including: Leighton-Linslade Town Council, Licensing, Public Health, Community Safety and most recently, the Fire and Rescue Service have committed a staff member for the 2019 assessment round. This in turn brings specific in-house knowledge that the assessors can share with licensees during the assessment and fresh ideas on how to promote BBN further. For example, the Public Health BBN assessor and partner has suggested that recommending BBN accreditation can be included on new premises license application approvals.

Local indicator 4: Increased membership of PubWatch scheme members against number of licenced premises in the parish.

Achieved in Leighton Linslade. PubWatch has been a useful forum to raise awareness of BBN values in Leighton-Linslade, but has been a less successful forum in Dunstable due to poor attendance by

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licensees. There is currently no PubWatch scheme in Houghton Regis, however this is being considered by the town council after encouragement and information provided by the BBN coordinator.

Recommendations:

- **Establish PubWatch in Houghton Regis.**
- **Work to improve PubWatch attendance by licensees in Dunstable with the continued support from Dunstable Town Council.**
- **Continue to attend PubWatch and raise awareness in Leighton-Linslade.**
- **BBN coordinator and the new Community Safety Officer from CBC (in post Autumn 2018) work closely together.**
- **Work with licensing colleagues to make obtaining BBN accreditation a recommendation on new premises license application approvals.**
- **Review evaluations of BBN schemes in other LA areas to inform future work and the for the sharing of best practice.**

IMPROVING KNOWLEDGE

BBN Aims:

- Improving knowledge and skills of enforcement and regulation agencies, licensees and bar staff to help them responsibly manage licensed premises
- Positively promoting the responsible consumption of alcohol

PARTICIPATION IN BBN

A number of the local indicators for 2017/18 were set to focus efforts on increasing participation in BBN by licensees to widen the impact of BBN in terms of the improving skills and knowledge of licensees and staff and encourage responsible alcohol consumption by customers. The total number of licensed establishments participating in BBN has decreased this year, with a distinct difference in participation between the towns; there has been a decrease in both Dunstable and Houghton Regis, and an increase in Leighton-Linslade (see table 1).

Table 1: Summary of licensed establishments participating in BBN 2014-18

Number of BBN licensed establishments	2014	2015	2016	2017-18²
Dunstable	6	9	12	7
Houghton Regis	-	1	3	1
Leighton-Linslade	-	-	7	10
Total	6	10	22	18

This is also reflected in the percentage of the total number of licensed establishments in Dunstable and Houghton Regis taking part in BBN:

Table 2: Percentage of licensed establishments participating in BBN 2014-18

Number of BBN licensed establishments	2014	2015	2016	2017-18
Dunstable	24%	31%	38%	25%
Houghton Regis	-	17%	50%	16%
Leighton-Linslade	-	-	29%	38%

The declining figures for attendance at Dunstable PubWatch is mirrored in BBN participation figures.

² Due to a gap in BBN co-ordinator, data for 2017 and 2018 have been combined.

There was a three-month gap between BBN coordinators where BBN was not being promoted which may have had an impact. However, the new BBN coordinator has been proactive in promoting BBN and engaging with licensees by attending regular PubWatch meetings across the three areas and visiting individual establishments who have been harder to reach due to lack of responses to email/phone contact or lack of attendance at Pubwatch. It is important to note however, that despite limited promotion 2014 to 2016 as BBN was being introduced to different areas, take up by licensees was very good; this may have been due to the introduction of BBN as new scheme and licensees incentivised to take part with the prospect of awards.

Local indicator 1: 29 licensees apply for accreditation

Not achieved: This KPI assumed that all previously accredited venues would maintain accreditation. It did not consider that some shut down and some did not choose to pursue accreditation again. This reduced the number by 5 in Dunstable, and 2 in Houghton Regis.

Local indicator 3: 8 additional establishments gain accreditation in 2017/18

Not achieved: Numbers in Leighton-Linslade increased, however the numbers in Dunstable and Houghton Regis declined.

Recommendations:

- **Set realistic targets for 2019 that take into account attrition due to: closures of establishments, changes of ownership and licensees choosing not to re-apply.**
- **The BBN group to develop an action plan to increase the number of licensees applying for accreditation in 2019. This should be treated as a priority to ensure that promotion of BBN is an ongoing process throughout the year, particularly through social media and PubWatch e.g. having a 'pub focus' fun case study on different pubs in the local press or social media.**
- **Consider whether additional funding can be obtained to extend BBN to other areas such as Biggleswade & Sandy or Flitwick & Ampthill.**
- **The national coordinators of the BBN scheme have not yet provided any national data which can be used for comparison: this should be pursued to consider local performance alongside national trends.**

BBN ASSESSMENT CRITERIA AND STANDARDS

The standards required to achieve BBN accreditation are made more challenging year on year. This is led by BBN National, the purpose being to ensure the venues are striving to improve their businesses, to help them manage their businesses responsibly, and to prevent those already involved from simply using it as a tick box exercise to maintain a publicly beneficial award. Whilst this serves to improve standards, it has inhibited some licensees from proceeding with the accreditation process, and may be off putting for some pubs new to the scheme who have to start from scratch compiling all the evidence required. For example a minimum of ten written policies and procedures need to be shown at the assessment e.g.

'Must provide evidence of a written policy on prevention of illegal drug & psycho-active substance (legal high) use and supply on the premises.' **(BBN Scoring booklet 2018, Section A, E7)**

In addition, all the assessment criteria have to be evidenced by venues, this includes evidence of recording systems for things such as lost property, staff training, incident and accident books.

Some feedback was received³ from licensees from establishments who decided not to pursue re-accreditation in 2017/18:

- An assessment was cancelled by the licensee in Leighton-Linslade citing personal problems. She was quite down and commented on giving BBN up as she didn't think she would have time to work on it.
- *'I have been through the paperwork and the amount of stuff we have lost moving from [our previous owners] to [the new Brewery owner] is huge. We would fail abysmally. There is currently no staff training provided by the company and the new H&S system has not yet gone live. Although we are assured these things are coming, I have very little faith that we will have them in time for this years assessments. Hopefully, this will change in time for next year.'* (Licensee, Dunstable)
- *'I did attend an information event at the white house regarding BBN about 18 months ago which was very informative and useful. Given that we are a very tiny bar only open before events for 45 mins and occasionally if we have an interval at one of our events, we do not experience the problems that local publicans have and I do not feel that at this stage it would be advantageous for us to participate. Should this change I will contact you regarding enrolling on the scheme.'* (Licensee, Leighton-Linslade)

Furthermore, it appears that venues in this industry locally have an ongoing issue with staffing which impacts on their ability to dedicate staff time to the assessment. Preparation for the accreditation assessments can take a long time, particularly if the establishment is not part of a national company where many standard policies exist. An assessment takes two hours to complete which is the quickest part of the process.

'The process is quite a lengthy process, it's not something that can be done in a day. To make sure you've got everything together, for when the assessor arrives, is not something that is a five-minute job [...] that's the long bit. the actual assessment is quite quick.' (Licensee, Dunstable)

This process will be slightly longer for those entering the scheme for the first time without experience of gathering the evidence, and can be supported further with template policies provided to venues in advance of the assessment. Feedback from licensees highlighted the usefulness of the templates provided by the BBN coordinator. Creasey Park have developed a very good 'Crime Scene Prevention Policy' which they have shared and have agreed it can be adapted as a template which can be used by other licensees in Central Bedfordshire. Most establishments do not have such a policy in place so access to this kind of template is a positive outcome of participation in BBN.

At the focus groups with licensees it emerged that they found ordering of the BBN scoring booklet clunky, in that some policies had to be referred to at several different places in the document.

Looking through the criteria, it's massive and a lot of documentation is repeated. [...] I'd sat down for like an hour and a half and done the first 2 pages just with post-it notes and then I'm writing section 1 part 1, 2, 3 and 4 for one document. I think it needs to be streamlined. I'm not trying to take anything from what you need to know away from it but streamlining that will take a lot less time to do. For me, I got myself quite wound up, I think I cancelled it once as I wasn't prepared for it.
(Licensee, Leighton-Linslade)

³ Obtained verbally or via email.

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A lot of the venues had to cancel and re-book (often more than once) the assessment appointment and some had to pull out of the assessment completely as they were not going to be able to put in the time by the deadline.

'I had to reschedule, I didn't have anyone covering me [on the day of the assessment] so I had to work and do the assessment' (Licensee, Dunstable)

Although the time investment required was difficult for some, and a barrier to taking part for others, the benefits of the accreditation process could be seen by BBN licensees

'I feel like I am on top of all our paperwork since BBN. I update the paperwork as I go each week.'
(Licensee, Leighton-Linslade)

I learned a lot, when the lady came and done the assessment with us, I did learn a lot about things you can do better. They conducted the assessment brilliantly, when they'd done the assessment we were impressed. (Licensee, Leighton-Linslade)

The landlord of this year's winning establishment (Golden Bell) in Leighton-Linslade said:

'Going through the assessment process for the Best Bar None Awards scheme, opened our eyes to the things that we should be aware of. Lisa (Drew, Landlady) has written new policies to ensure staff know how to deal with situations when they arise. For example, at staff team meetings we shared counter terrorism awareness. Staff are more vigilant now. These are things you never think of in your everyday life until you run a venue like a pub. We have run businesses before, yet a pub brings a different set of challenges.'

Licensees at the focus groups highlighted some good practice in keeping BBN evidence up to date. For example, they had created a BBN folder for the accreditation assessment which they continued to update throughout the year. As and when company policies were updated they would photocopy the relevant sections and add to the BBN folder; this helps to minimise time needed to collate the evidence when seeking re-accreditation.

Between 2016 and the 2017-18 accreditation periods, the Lancer (Leighton-Linslade) had their accreditation revoked after an incident captured on CCTV was reviewed by the partnership group. Since this incident, a new manager is in place at the establishment and they have achieved accreditation again. This highlights that BBN accreditation provides a snapshot of an establishment at the time of the assessment only. Information sharing with partners (e.g. at Pubwatch, police) enables major breaches to be considered by the BBN partnership group. Appropriate action can then be taken, with the hope that the licensee can be supported to seek accreditation during the next assessment period.

Local indicator 2: All licensed establishments who received accreditation in 2016/17 achieve re-accreditation.

Not achieved: Some establishments did not reapply for accreditation. Some closed and some felt that too much work was needed to meet the requirements.

Recommendations:

- **Review the local indicator to reflect that not all establishments are able to re-apply for re-accreditation.**

- Consider support that can be provided to licensees to enable them to reapply for accreditation e.g. through increased availability of templates.
- Mentoring and shared learning between licensees should be facilitated by BBN partners.
- Consider using mystery customer scores⁴ to determine the extent to which venues in Central Bedfordshire (both those participating in BBN and those who are not) are promoting responsible alcohol consumption.
- Review the ordering of the BBN scoring booklet to make it easier for licensees to present evidence against each criteria using their policies.
- Introduce a licensee self-assessment form which is completed before and after accreditation; this could be used to evidence improvement in knowledge and skills through BBN participation.

AWARENESS OF RESPONSIBLE ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION AMONG STAFF

BBN has helped to set standards for staff training and safety checks which establishments are able to demonstrate they have in place. Feedback from licensees at the focus groups highlighted that participation in BBN has been particularly helpful for venues that are new and for those not part of larger companies; they found it helpful in terms of raising awareness, staff training and highlighting issues they would have otherwise not thought of.

'I think it raises awareness about levels of intoxication.' (Licensee, Dunstable)

'Saturday night for instance we had an event at our place, and I just took a step back and watched the staff to see if they've listened and read everything we've gone through and I've got to say they were very, very good. There were a couple of lads that came up there which didn't look 18 and they would not serve them unless they had ID and I thought well done. Then just after that we had someone taken ill [...] the ambulance took 2 hours 15 minutes to come out to him, you can't give the ambulance team a hard time, but [my staff] handled it brilliantly, they took him in to the committee room, took him away from everyone else and handled it brilliantly. Even [the ambulance staff] said they'd handled it all properly which was good and that was all part of the BBN process, where they've been reading up on what to and not to do.' (Licensee, Leighton-Linslade)

Even for venues which are part of a national company and have access to national resources in terms of policies and staff training, participating in BBN can help to re-focus licensees in dealing with issues more specific to their premises as one focus group attendee noted:

'It's good at re-focusing you on, cos we have a turnover of staff, making them aware about the serving underage drinkers, as we have a problem with underage drinking [...].' (Licensee, Dunstable)

⁴ This method has been used by Bedfordshire police before using actors and actresses to visit venues and attempt to be served.

RECOGNITION AND OUTCOMES FOR LICENSEES

BBN Aims:

- Providing recognition for premises which achieve high standards which can include a high-profile award night with category winners and an overall winner
- Responsible owners are recognised and able to share good practice with others
- Highlight how operating more responsibly can improve the profitability of an individual business and attractiveness of a general area.

BBN AWARDS

The 2017/18 awards ceremony was well attended with a total of 72 guests, including 40 from 12 BBN accredited establishments. One of the coordinators of BBN National was in attendance. Eight awards were presented to six different venues for the highest overall points in the accreditation process, and the People's choice award. It was a good opportunity for licensees to bring some of their staff along to celebrate their success as a team. Positive feedback on the success of the event was obtained from both accreditors and licensees.

'Thank you for a lovely evening, nice venue and well organised event.' (Licensee, Leighton-Linslade)

The focus groups with licensees revealed that there is a perceived unfairness between venues with temporary bars and those venues whose sole purpose is to sell alcohol when it come to the points system in the accreditation process. The venues with temporary bars tend to be council operated businesses which have management support and systems in place. Some licensees felt this makes it easier for council operated establishments to complete the assessment process and that they have greater ability to gain additional points for going above and beyond what is required.

The reason probably most of us suffered, was for two or three years on the trot a leisure centre won BBN. A Central Bedfordshire owned leisure centre won Central Bedfordshire Best Bar None. So, a lot of people will have been disheartened [...] (Licensee, Dunstable)

There is support in place to counteract this perceived imbalance - such as the readily available templates for policies and procedures required for the accreditation. This kind of support will help independent venues who do not have a head office to provide standardised paperwork. Independent venues also felt they were at a disadvantage in scoring points when it came to things like CCTV as they were much less likely to have it than a larger venue or brewery owned venue.

Focus group participants agreed that a change to the types and/categories of awards that are given would help to resolve the perceived unfairness. For example, having awards for different types of venue, or awards for particularly innovative or exceptional work which meets the aims of BBN and keeps customers safe. This would provide an excellent opportunity for the sharing of best practice with other venues.

PROFITABILITY OF VENUES

In focus group discussions it emerged that BBN was seen as something which implied certain standards to licensees:

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It implies that that it is managed properly and checked by BBN and you come up to the standards that the public want. Whether it ashtrays outside, silly things like that, keeping an eye on CCTV, that's what it means you've got that so CB council have given you that or you've earned it as a plaque to say you are BBN we haven't got it for no reason, we've got it because of X, Y, Z. (Licensee, Leighton-Linslade)

There was an appetite for this to be promoted more widely in the community so that BBN could be something which can draw in customers. For example, BBN window stickers have been introduced with the aim of them being used as an indicator about a venue in a similar way to food and drinks awards. It was agreed however, that for this to work, a much greater level of public awareness is needed. Feedback was that more promotion of what BBN means should be done throughout the year, so that the Central Bedfordshire community understand what being BBN accredited means and will seek BBN accredited venues when they are choosing where they want to go in a 'trip advisor' type way.

We want everyone to know about it. (Licensee, Leighton-Linslade)

Nobody knows what [BBN] is about [...] The food hygiene is a national thing, people are aware of that, they aren't aware of what BBN is all about. (Licensee, Leighton-Linslade)

Suggestions of how to do this included having a featured 'pub of the month' which can be promoted through social media and in local publications. A request for more 'high level' national awareness work was also made, it was felt people need to recognise this as not just a local scheme but a national campaign.

The coordinator will work with BBN National to see what investment is being made to promote the scheme nationally, while putting together a communications plan which includes regular BBN features in social media and print press – making BBN a more valuable scheme for licensees to be part of. Community awareness is discussed in further detail in the following section.

Recommendations:

- **Implement different awards for 2019 which will improve the perceived fairness by licensees e.g. awards for different types of venue and/or an award to recognise innovative or exceptional work meeting BBNs aims and keeping customers safe.**
- **Work with BBN national to find out about national promotion of the scheme.**
- **Develop a communications plan which includes regular BBN features in social media and print press.**
- **Promotion of BBN is a partnership responsibility; all BBN partners should promote the scheme.**

COMMUNITY AWARENESS AND THE IMPACT OF ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION

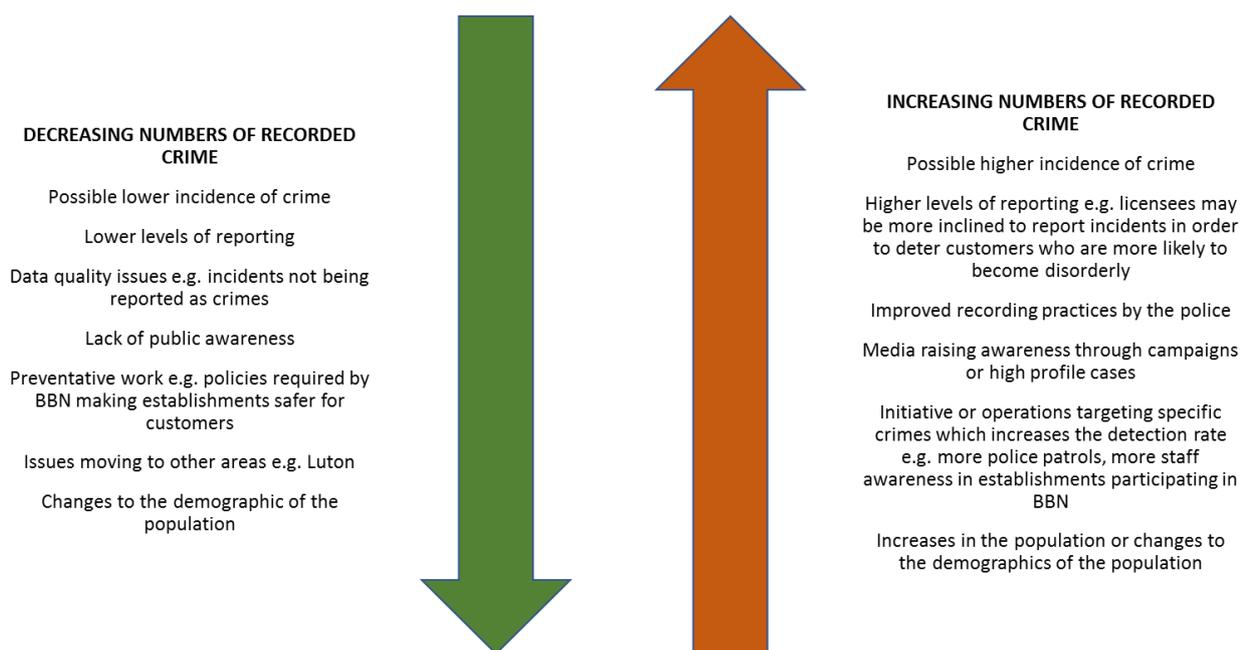
BBN Aim:

- Reducing alcohol-related crime and disorder

ALCOHOL RELATED CRIME AND ASB

It is hoped that participation in BBN will contribute to a reduction in the number of alcohol related crimes and ASB incidents. Police recorded crime data for 1st April 2015 to 31st March 2018 and police recorded ASB data for 1st August 2015 to 31st July 2018 was analysed.⁵ The data presented below must be treated with caution. Police recorded crime data only covers crimes that come to the attention of the police and are recorded as crimes – an increase in recorded crime does not necessarily mean that the actual number of crimes taking place has increased.⁶ There are a wide variety of possible factors which can influence the numbers of recorded crime as shown in the figure below:

Figure 1: Selected examples of factors influencing levels of recorded crime



Given the variety of possible influence on the levels of crime, it is not possible to identify a direct causal link with BBN. Increases or decreases in numbers could be explained by many factors, of which participation in BBN may be one. Nevertheless, it is important to monitor the numbers and make efforts to understand any trends. Other contributing factors should be discussed, and partners are invited to provide any information that may be relevant e.g. differences in police recording practices, opening or closing of other licensed premises, prevention or support initiatives etc. Other sources of evidence such as accounts from licensees,

⁵ More recent police recorded crime data is currently unavailable.

⁶ ONS (2018) Statistical Bulletin – Crime in England and Wales: year ending March 2018. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/>

health data, topics discussed at Pubwatch can be used to consider if the police recorded crime data is reflecting true levels of crime and what other specific local factors could also be having an impact.

When BBN was first introduced in 2014, violent crime in Central Bedfordshire was a concern:

- In 2014 15% of all recorded crime was Violence Against the Person (VAP) offences; since then this has gone up to 20% and is in line with national trends.
- Although the number of VAP offences in Central Bedfordshire have gone up from 2,760 in 2015-16 to 3,357 in 2017-18 the percentage of recorded crime that is VAP has remained stable at 21%.
- Approximately one fifth of VAP offences occur between 10pm and 4am Thursday to Sunday, and 12-4am Monday.
- 27% of VAP offences are recorded as alcohol related.

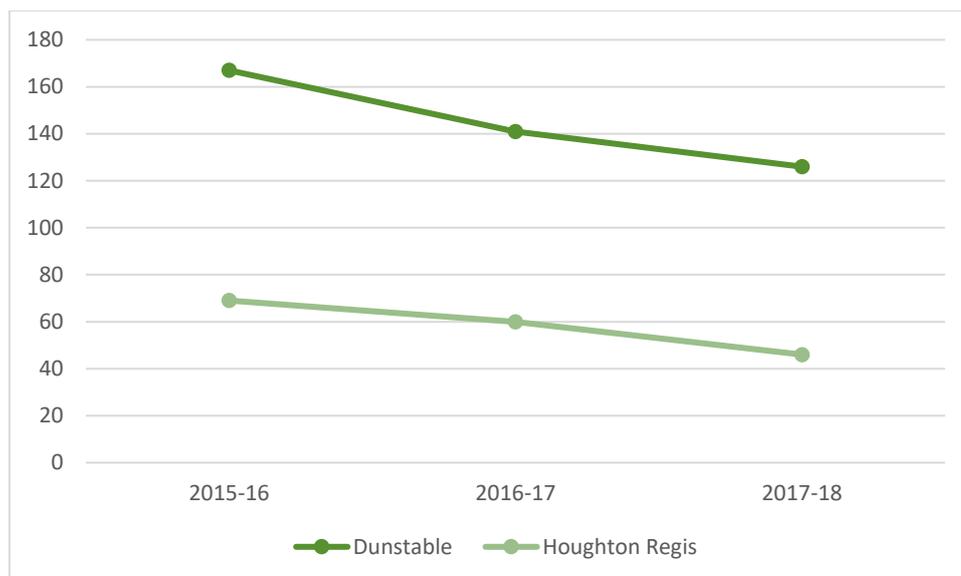
VAP is not increasing disproportionately compared with other crime types; although violent crime should remain a concern and be monitored.

The following figures and tables provide data for 2015-18 for crimes which are commonly related to alcohol. It is important to note that it is not possible through the data to identify where an offender or victim was drinking before the incident. For example, they may drink in one premises and then go on to commit crime further along the street outside another or they may not have been drinking at all but get involved in an incident outside a pub or club. When the topic was discussed with licensees during the focus groups there was a consensus that they felt uncomfortable about linking crime rates to their area or establishment, particularly for those 'end of evening' establishments which might be the last stop for customers who had been drinking in several other places that evening.

For the purposes of this evaluation, reviewing the crimes that occur in the main hotspot areas where licensed establishments are, is most likely to reveal any impact of BBN on crime and disorder. Please note that the number for the most relevant crimes only have been analysed; crimes that are not likely to be alcohol related (e.g. burglary) have been excluded. The overall Central Bedfordshire figures for these crimes at any time of the day or night has increased by 17% since 2015/16. Overall, across both Dunstable and Leighton Buzzard, the number of relevant offences in the key hotspot areas have declined year on year 2015-18.

Figure 2: Number of offences in the hotspot areas for Dunstable and Leighton Buzzard 2015-18

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The following tables show the data broken down by offence type and show the percentage of crimes which have been recorded by the police as alcohol related:⁷

Table 4: Crime data for Dunstable (including Court Drive, High Street North and High Street South)

	2015-16		2016-17		2017-18	
	No. of offences	% (n) alcohol related	No. of offences	% (n) alcohol related	No. of offences	% (n) alcohol related
Criminal damage	16	44% (7)	15	20% (3)	15	13% (2)
Other theft	22	0% (0)	27	4% (1)	20	5% (1)
Possession of drugs	9	56% (5)	5	20% (1)	2	0% (0)
Possession of weapons	4	0% (0)	3	100% (3)	1	0% (0)
Public order	20	50% (10)	17	47% (8)	13	15% (2)
Robbery	6	0% (0)	4	0% (0)	3	0% (0)
Theft from the person	1	0% (0)	3	0% (0)	2	0% (0)
Violence with injury	57	39% (22)	46	43% (20)	46	24% (11)
Violence without injury	32	56% (18)	21	24% (5)	24	46% (11)
TOTAL	167	37% (62)	141	29% (41)	126	21% (27)

⁷ Please note that the reliability of the crime being recorded as alcohol related is dependent on the information provided by the caller at the time of the crime, and accuracy of recording by the operator or police officer.

Public order and violence with injury offences have seen the largest decline in the Dunstable hotspot areas 2015-18. In particular, the proportion of those offences that are deemed to be alcohol related has also declined from 50% to 15% for public order offences and 39% to 24% for violence with injury offences.

Public order, violence with injury and violence without injury offences have seen the largest decline in the Leighton Buzzard hotspot areas 2015-18 (see table 5). As with Dunstable, the proportion of these offences that are deemed to be alcohol related has declined significantly.

Table 5: Crime data for Leighton Buzzard (High Street and Lake Street)

	2015-16		2016-17		2017-18	
	No. of offences	% (n) alcohol related	No. of offences	% (n) alcohol related	No. of offences	% (n) alcohol related
Criminal damage	7	0% (0)	6	17% (1)	8	25% (2)
Other theft	10	0% (0)	10	0% (0)	1	0% (0)
Possession of drugs	3	0% (0)	2	0% (0)	1	0% (0)
Possession of weapons	2	50% (1)	1	0% (0)	0	-
Public order	3	67% (2)	2	0% (0)	4	25% (1)
Robbery	1	0% (0)	0	-	1	0% (0)
Theft from the person	0	-	1	0% (0)	0	-
Violence with injury	30	57% (17)	28	29% (8)	25	36% (9)
Violence without injury	13	62% (8)	10	40% (4)	6	17% (1)
TOTAL	69	41% (28)	60	22% (13)	46	28% (13)

The above tables paint a positive picture about the levels of recorded crime in areas where BBN has been introduced.⁸

The police recorded ASB data shows a similar pattern of decline, figure 2 shows that the levels of alcohol related ASB⁹ across Central Bedfordshire has decreased each year 2015-18. Part of the explanation of this decline is a system implemented by the police to improve data quality and accuracy of recording; this has avoided an issue where some calls were incorrectly recorded ASB. Currently, 1 in 7 ASB records are quality checked by Bedfordshire police; errors are corrected and operators are given feedback to improve the quality of recording. Please note that due to the smaller numbers of alcohol related ASB recorded, it is not possible to analyse the numbers in hotspot areas during peak times.

⁸ Given that the numbers are low, it is not clear what the causes are for the decline, if there are driving factors for this or if it is a natural level of variation in recorded crime numbers.

⁹ Alcohol related ASB has been identified using ASB data provided by the police. It has been manually coded by the Community Safety Analyst by reading through the notes for each record.

Figure 2: Alcohol related ASB 2015-18



Recommendations:

- Partners to provide any additional information or data which contributes to an understanding of the factors influencing the reduction in crime and ASB to help build a more accurate picture of the impact of BBN.

ALCOHOL RELATED HOSPITAL ADMISSIONS AND AMBULANCE CALLOUTS

Central Bedfordshire BBN partners have identified the harmful effects of binge drinking is a key concern to be addressed. To assess the potential impact of BBN or any other local initiatives on this, health data needs to be obtained. There are three hospitals that the Central Bedfordshire community could access. Data will be sought from these to try and build up a picture on rates of alcohol related admissions:

- Bedford hospital: There is an ISA between Central Bedfordshire Council and Bedford Hospital Trust for the sharing of admissions due to alcohol-related assault. This has been signed and agreed and CBC are currently liaising with the hospital about the first set of data. It is hoped that this will include some historical data.
- Luton & Dunstable hospital: Public health in Luton are currently facilitating access to this data.
- Milton Keynes hospital: As this is outside of Bedfordshire we do not currently have any ISA in place. Public health in Central Bedfordshire are assisting with enquiries.

Recommendation:

- Continue to pursue access to alcohol related hospital admissions under the existing ISA.
- Pursue ISAs in relation to ambulance call outs, or other relevant health related data.

COMMUNITY AWARENESS

A key measure of community awareness of BBN is using the number of People's votes received for the annual BBN awards. The People's vote is promoted through all three Town Council's social media, council magazines, CBCs publications and also by venues themselves. Licensees participating in the focus groups described ways they promoted the people's vote:

'We've done it a few different ways in the past, we've set up a booth area and said come and vote for us and what do you think we could do better, we've done it with a clipboard too.' (Licensee, Dunstable)

'We put it on all our social media.' (Licensee, Dunstable)

There has been a 54% decrease in the number of votes received in the 2017-18 People's vote compared to the previous one.

Table 3: Number of People's votes received 2015-18

Year	Number	% difference
2015	790	-
2016	2,565	225%
2017-18	1,176	- 54%

There are a number of possible reasons for the decline in the number of votes received this year:

- In 2016 the vote was open for two months. However, due to the tighter timeline for the 2017/18 vote it was only possible to keep the vote open for one month.¹⁰
- Establishments in Dunstable appeared to be less engaged this year. For the first time, paper voting sheets were provided to venues on request; subsequently only 5 of the 18 venues reported back with the number of 'paper' votes collected in their venue.
- Evidence of the venues promoting the online vote through their social media/websites is limited. Most establishments did not actively promote the Peoples vote.

Feedback from licensees revealed that the People's vote was something they did not find easy to promote and that different issues were experienced by different types of venue. Smaller or part time venues felt they would never be able to achieve the same number of votes as venues that are open seven days a week with a higher footfall. Late night venues felt it was difficult to engage customers at that time of night.

'It's hard for us as we are at the end of most people's night, they want to come for a dance and meet people, so going through a questionnaire isn't really something they want to do.' (Licensee, Dunstable)

¹⁰ It is not known exactly how and where the Peoples Vote was promoted from 2014-2016, therefore a comparison is hard to make.

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Some licensees felt that the process of going online was onerous even where there was an incentive to do so; therefore, engaging people in a voting process where there was no direct benefit to the customer is difficult.

'If you just do it online, I don't know what promotions you do, but my clientele, if you do a promotion where they have to go in, log in and put their name in or e-mail to win a t-shirt or whatever if you're lucky, they just don't do it, they can't be bothered.' (Licensee, Leighton-Linslade)

Members of the public who submitted a vote for the 2018 BBN awards were asked if they had heard of BBN before voting; almost three fifths (58%) had not. This is an improvement from the vote in 2016 where 69% had not heard of BBN. Over three quarters had heard about the People's vote via social media. This reinforces the ongoing publicity work that could be done via social media to promote BBN and raise awareness of the aims and benefits. BBN is currently promoted via all three Town Council's social media and it is unlikely to get wide readership from the wider Central Bedfordshire community. Furthermore, when the 2017-18 People's vote was promoted on social media, the national BBN # was used. There is therefore currently no way of measuring the number of hits and likes that are coming from the Central Bedfordshire community when posts on social media are made. This would be easier to monitor if a designated local Central Bedfordshire BBN # is used and/or if BBN had designated social media.

Local indicator 5: Over 3,000 votes received (17% increase).

Not achieved: There was a 54% decrease in the number of votes compared to 2016. Despite this, the proportion of voters who had heard of BBN prior to voting has increased by 11%. Social media is a successful method of raising awareness of BBN via the People's vote and could be used to a greater extent.

Local indicator 6: More than one article appears in the mainstream press of each town (Leighton-Linslade, Dunstable and Houghton Regis).

Achieved. 1 article appeared in Leighton-Linslade and Dunstable. Social media coverage in Houghton Regis.

Local indicator 7: Social media – log number of #BBNCentralBeds hits and Facebook likes for articles placed by each town council (providing baseline data for next evaluation)

Not achieved: As the national BBN # was used for this public vote, and there is not a separate social media presence for BBN in Central Bedfordshire, it is not possible to determine the local figures.

Recommendations:

- **Ensure the People's vote is open for a two month period in 2019.**
- **Consider strategies for increasing the numbers voting in the People's vote e.g. research strategies used by other areas in the country that have introduced BBN.**
- **Explore options to increase coverage and promotion on social media of the People's vote**
- **Consider the use of designated BBN social media accounts to support readership among licensees and the community across Central Bedfordshire.**
- **A dedicated Central Bedfordshire BBN # should be created and used in all social media posts.**

- BBN partners should support any communication campaigns and share posts on their own social media including the local BBN #
- Increase the number of communications from BBN throughout the year to ensure continued awareness raising among the public.
- Put regular BBN articles in local press throughout the year to raise awareness among the Central Bedfordshire community about BBN and to demonstrate the value of being part of this scheme to venues who are not currently not participating.

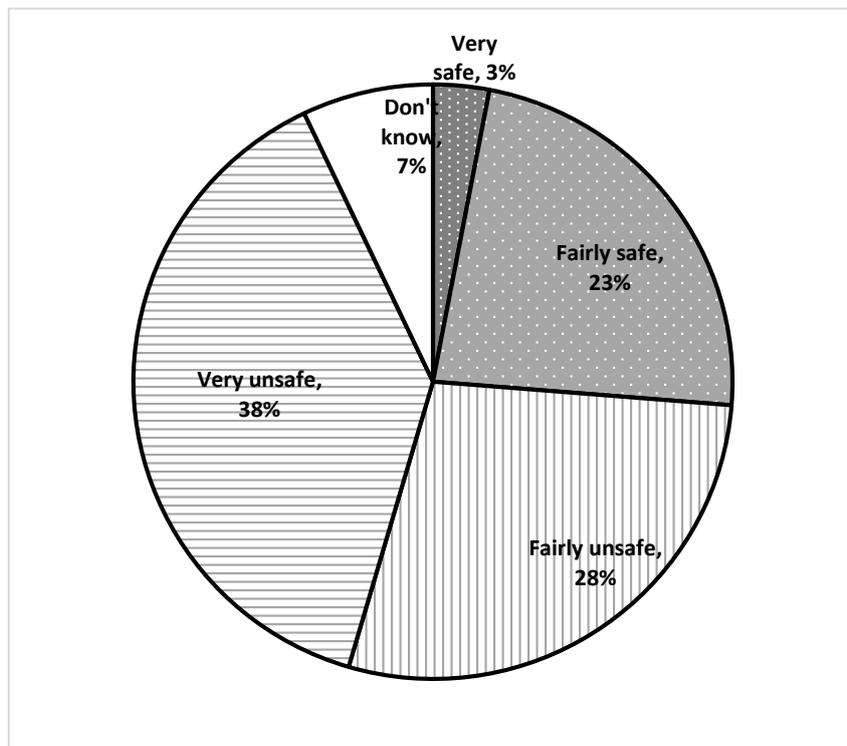
THE SAFER CENTRAL COMMUNITY SURVEY

A new Safer Central Community Survey was launched at the end of May 2018 for any resident of Central Bedfordshire to complete. The survey provides the Central Bedfordshire Community with an opportunity to feed back to the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) issues related to crime and disorder which are important to them. The findings will help to understand the views and experiences of the communities, will be taken into consideration when analysing what the CSP priorities should be and can contribute to the evaluation of initiatives such as BBN.

The survey will be open for any member of the public to complete throughout the year. At the time of writing this evaluation¹¹ 448 completed surveys have been received. Respondents were asked about their perceptions of safety walking in town centres at night, and alcohol related ASB.

Respondents were asked how safe they felt walking in town centres at night. 66% said they felt fairly or very unsafe (see figure 2).

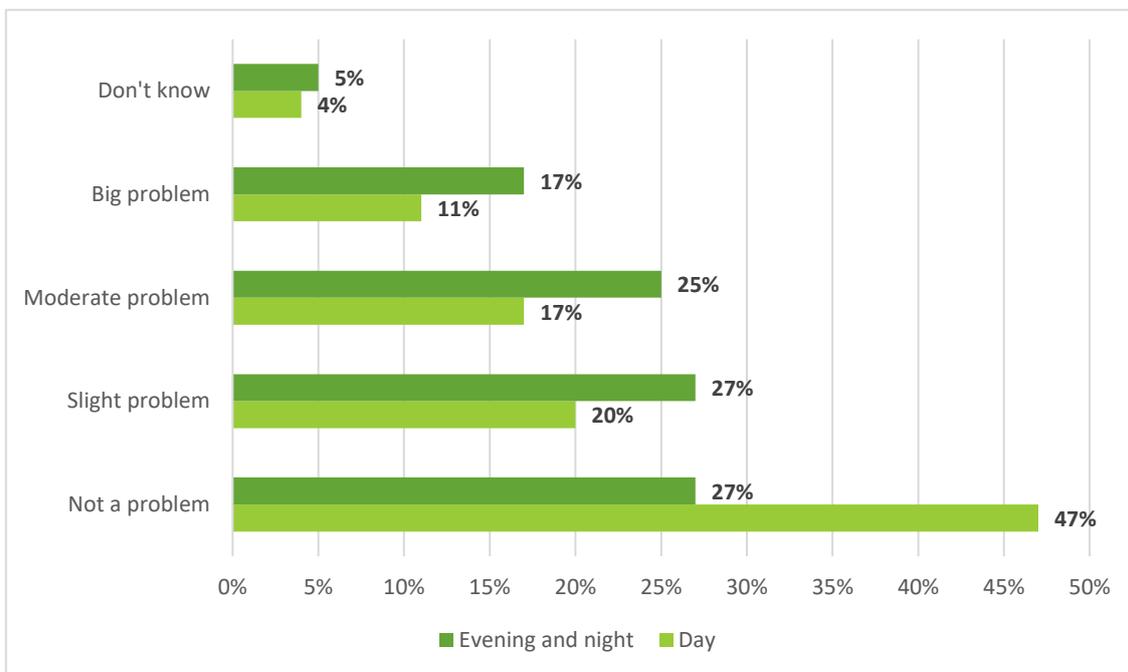
Figure 2: Safer Central Community Survey responses: How safe do you feel walking in town centres at night?



¹¹ 11th September 2018

Figure 3 shows that the community feel that people drinking, being drunk or rowdy during the day is less of a problem than during the evening or night. This is not surprising given that most social drinking takes place at night. However, it would be useful to monitor these views over time to assess if there are any changes in these perceptions in the community.

Figure 3: Safer Central Community Survey responses: How much of a problem is people drinking, being drunk or rowdy during the day vs evening and night?



Some respondents provided further detail about feelings of safety at night and alcohol related crime and ASB. Several comments referred to town centres feeling unsafe due to behaviour related to alcohol:

'I feel more vulnerable to be on my own at night in a town centre.'

'I think all town centres are to be avoided at night. Often the pubs are turning out and drink often affects people.'

'Years ago, I felt safe at night. People got drunk but the violence was nothing compared to now. I do not feel safe even in a car sometimes.'

'Some towns get rowdy at pub closing times.'

'The drunkenness of some large groups of young men make for an intimidating atmosphere in Dunstable.'

One respondent noted that they felt safe due to local initiatives:

'I feel safe because of the voluntary community schemes that exist to make it safe (e.g. StreetWatch and PubWatch), but I feel unsafe due to being severely de-prioritised when it comes to policing, especially in the evenings.'

Some respondents felt that more police, lighting and CCTV would make them feel safer:

'Need more lighting and CCTV in town centre areas and alleyways.'

'I feel unsafe when out after dark due to inadequate street lighting – pillage of customers from public houses- drunks, speeding drivers and drug dealing.'

'Lack of police in the streets dealing with low level disorder.'

'Lack of police at night, drunkenness.'

Survey responses will be analysed once more in the 2019 BBN evaluation to determine any changes in community views.

Recommendations:

- **Use data from the Safer Central Community Survey in the 2019 BBN evaluation to assess any changes in the views and experiences in the community.**
- **Use data from the safer Central Community Survey in the 2019 BBN evaluation to conduct a geographical analysis of community views to determine if there are different views in different areas where BBN has been adopted.**

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Relationships between partners

- Establish PubWatch in Houghton Regis.
- Work to improve PubWatch attendance by licensees in Dunstable with the continued support from Dunstable Town Council.
- Continue to attend PubWatch and raise awareness in Leighton-Linslade.
- BBN coordinator and the new Community Safety Officer from CBC (in post Autumn 2018) work closely together.
- Work with licensing colleagues to make obtaining BBN accreditation a recommendation on new premises license application approvals.
- Review evaluations of BBN schemes in other LA areas to inform future work and the for the sharing of best practice.

Improving knowledge:

- Set realistic targets for 2019 that take into account attrition due to: closures of establishments, changes of ownership and licensees choosing not to re-apply.
- The BBN group to develop an action plan to increase the number of licensees applying for accreditation in 2019. This should be treated as a priority to ensure that promotion of BBN is an ongoing process throughout the year, particularly through social media and PubWatch e.g. having a 'pub focus' fun case study on different pubs in the local press or social media.
- Consider whether additional funding can be obtained to extend BBN to other areas such as Biggleswade & Sandy or Flitwick & Ampthill.
- The national coordinators of the BBN scheme have not yet provided any national data which can be used for comparison: this should be pursued to consider local performance alongside national trends.
- Review the local indicator to reflect that not all establishments are able to re-apply for re-accreditation.
- Consider support that can be provided to licensees to enable them to reapply for accreditation e.g. through increased availability of templates.
- Mentoring and shared learning between licensees should be facilitated by BBN partners.
- Mystery customer scores should be obtained to determine the extent to which licensees (both those participating in BBN and those who are not) are promoting responsible alcohol consumption.
- Review the ordering of the BBN scoring booklet to make it easier for licensees to present evidence against each criteria using their policies.
- Introduce a licensee self-assessment form which is completed before and after accreditation; this could be used to evidence improvement in knowledge and skills through BBN participation.

Recognition and outcomes for licensees:

- Implement different awards for 2019 which will improve the perceived fairness by licensees e.g. awards for different types of venue and/or an award to recognise innovative or exceptional work meeting BBNs aims and keeping customers safe.

- Work with BBN national to find out about national promotion of the scheme.
- Develop a communications plan which includes regular BBN features in social media and print press.
- Promotion of BBN is a partnership responsibility; all BBN partners should promote the scheme.

Community awareness and the impact of alcohol consumption:

- Partners to provide any additional information or data which contributes to an understanding of the factors influencing the reduction in crime and ASB to help build a more accurate picture of the impact of BBN.
- Continue to pursue access to alcohol related hospital admissions under the existing ISA.
- Pursue ISAs in relation to ambulance call outs, or other relevant health related data.
- Ensure the People's vote is open for a two month period in 2019.
- Consider strategies for increasing the numbers voting in the People's vote e.g. research strategies used by other areas in the country that have introduced BBN.
- Explore options to increase coverage and promotion on social media of the People's vote
- Consider the use of designated BBN social media accounts to support readership among licensees and the community across Central Bedfordshire.
- A dedicated Central Bedfordshire BBN # should be created and used in all social media posts.
- BBN partners should support any communication campaigns and share posts on their own social media including the local BBN #
- Increase the number of communications from BBN throughout the year to ensure continued awareness raising among the public.
- Put regular BBN articles in local press throughout the year to raise awareness among the Central Bedfordshire community about BBN and to demonstrate the value of being part of this scheme to venues who are not currently not participating.
- Use data from the Safer Central Community Survey in the 2019 BBN evaluation to assess any changes in the views and experiences in the community.
- Use data from the safer Central Community Survey in the 2019 BBN evaluation to conduct a geographical analysis of community views to determine if there are different views in different areas where BBN has been adopted.