

Findings of the Public Consultation Process

Devon and Cornwall Police

Introduction

On the 29th April, 2014 the Licensing Committee considered an application submitted by Devon & Cornwall Police to introduce a Designated Public Place Order (DPPO) to cover the Devonport and Stoke areas of Plymouth. The DPPO has been requested in order to tackle the anti-social behaviour associated with street drinking and the potential for displacement of the problem.

Based on the evidence presented at the time, members resolved to approve a wider public consultation as prescribed by the Local Authorities (Alcohol Consumption in Designated Public Places) Regulations 2007.

The consultation was launched on the 15th May, 2014 with the publication of a Public Notice in the Evening Herald and release of a press notice, and concluded on the 30th June 2014.

A leaflet explaining the DPPO and providing access to a DPPO information pack consisting of an introductory letter and map was distributed to the following individuals, groups and interested parties who live or work in the vicinity of all properties and premises to ensure that reasonable steps were taken to advertise the consultation. The leaflet also advised on how to provide feedback.

- Local Residents
- Local Businesses
- Licensees
- Local Community Groups
- Partner Housing Agencies
- Educational Establishments

Additionally to this, 82 DPPO feedback questionnaires were completed with local businesses and residents. The questionnaire was devised to provide a framework that focused on the main points and allow the information to be quantitatively assessed. The results to the completed returns are set out below

The original application included numerous messages of support from a range of local businesses, residents and schools and further personal responses were documented since the start of the consultation period.

These messages were included in within the document pack considered by Licensing Committee.

Qualitative Results

A representative selection of personal responses from local residents and Community groups are exhibited in this section of the report and reflect personal experiences and the impact that street drinking has on their lives.

The responses will be available for scrutiny when Members consider the results of the public consultation.

"Because of all the street drinkers in Marlborough Street I get people coming to me and saying they are too afraid to go out because they get intimidated by the street drinkers. The drinkers swear and urinate in the street, if you have friends coming to visit its embarrassing then they group by the children's play area people are fed up with it all we would like to be able to live our lives without having to listen to them carrying on."

Local Resident. Pg 52

"I find people who drink regularly on the street can be intimidating and rude. I would like to see an end to it."

Local Resident Pg 55

"As you may or may not be aware, this problem has been a significant blight on the neighbourhood and has detrimentally affected resident's quality of life for several years..."

Devonport Neighbourhood Board Pg 44

"I am the centre manager of welcome Hall and a pro-active resident of Devonport. I am writing in reference to the above order. Having experienced the effect of the street drinkers and others, I am in full support of a DPPO. Without one the current problems in the area will continue."

"These issues include: danger to the members of the public from aggressive behaviour and verbal abuse, falling or stepping on broken glass bottles and other debris hazardous to the environment, Witnessing adults drinking on the streets and outside public houses encourages the younger generation to become involved in alcohol consumption and normalises such behaviour."

Welcome Hall Manager, pg 50.

"...we have been waiting far too long for this measure and it's about time something was done."

Kate Taylor, Councillor. pg 51

"...there was an incident on Tuesday 27th June, when a man quite clearly in drink, was foul mouthed and abusive to a teaching assistant and a group of 4 year old children , who were playing in the nursery playground."

Marlborough Street Primary School, Pg 54.

Personal Responses Made During Consultation Period

"In the meantime Devonport school children will continue to be verbally abused by drunks in the street and the decent residents who live in Devonport will continue to have their streets used as toilets and their lives disrupted..

Many of the vulnerable older residents were always fearful of going to the local shops because of drunks in Marlborough Street. So, I am not surprised to read that the problem of drunken ant-social behaviour remains in Devonport. The reason that it does is because it has never been dealt with effectively."

Comment via Plymouth Herald Website

“The recent application for a DPPO will be welcomed by The Salvation Army Lifehouse because it will enable staff to work with the order especially as it may affect some of the Service Users that reside at the centre.

In recent months we have had to respond to complaints from local residents about the anti-social behaviour. Some of the complaints have been connected to people that live with us. There have also been occasions whereby nobody from The Salvation Army was involved with the disturbance. We always try to work with the local Police station so regular patrols are made by staff to deal with any persons connected to the Lifehouse.

The Lifehouse does accommodate some very difficult clients. Many are trying to get support for deep rooted addictions. With that in mind we make every effort to work with local agencies so that professional help can be accessed.

The order will compliment what we are trying to do within the locally area in continuing to try and improve the relationship within the community.

The in house policy for a client that continually flaunts the rules about drinking in the local area consists of a 28 day warning with a 21 day review. We have had to evict people as the last resort but only when all good advice is ignored. We do not like to take this cause of action because it only compounds the problems they are trying to work through and also it possibly impinges on the community. In such cases like this the order will have the desired effect.

From senior member of staff at local hostel.

“At present early in the morning to late at night Devonport Park Ferry Road side seems to be a no go area for people this is due to the amount of drunks sat around drinking, I have seen them also urinating and defecating around the shelter in the middle of the park this is when I have been walking my dogs with my daughter (5yrs old). Considering the area has schools and young families nearby I think this needs to be stamped out and is now getting out of hand.” Local resident.

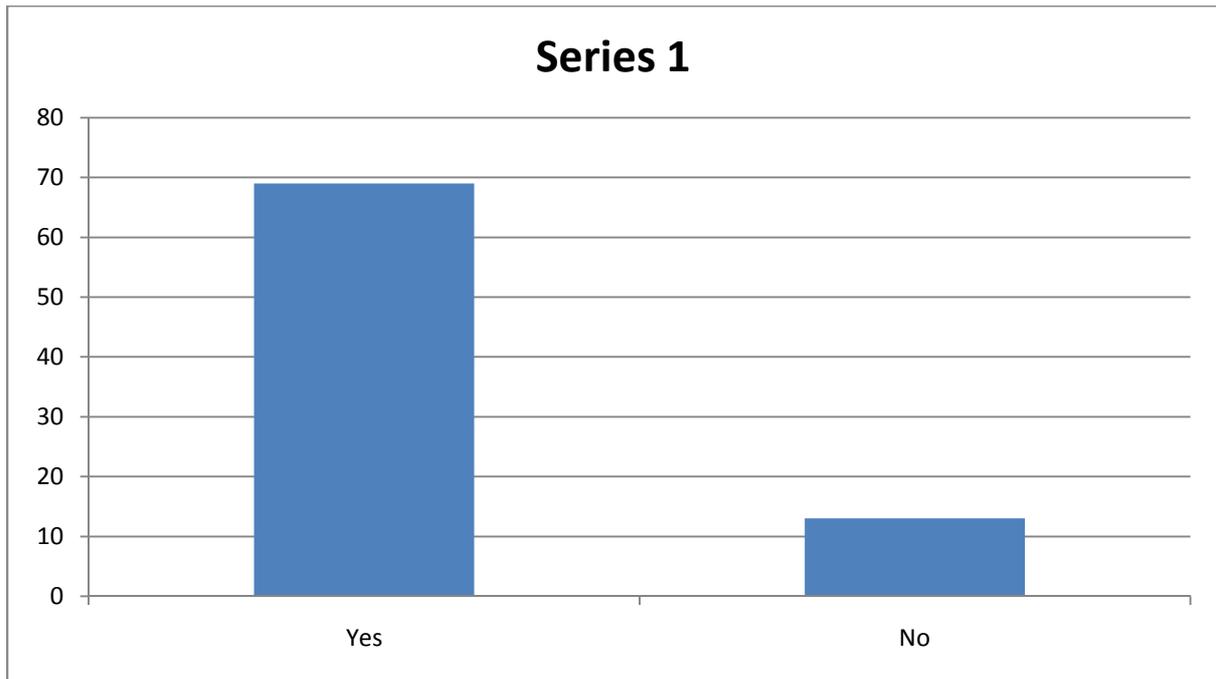
No unsupportive comments were received during the consultation period.

Quantitative Results

The statistics set out below have been drawn from the completed answers submitted on the feedback response form. These were completed at both residential and business premises situated across the proposed DPPO area. A total of 82 people were surveyed and the quantitative results are as below.

Question 1

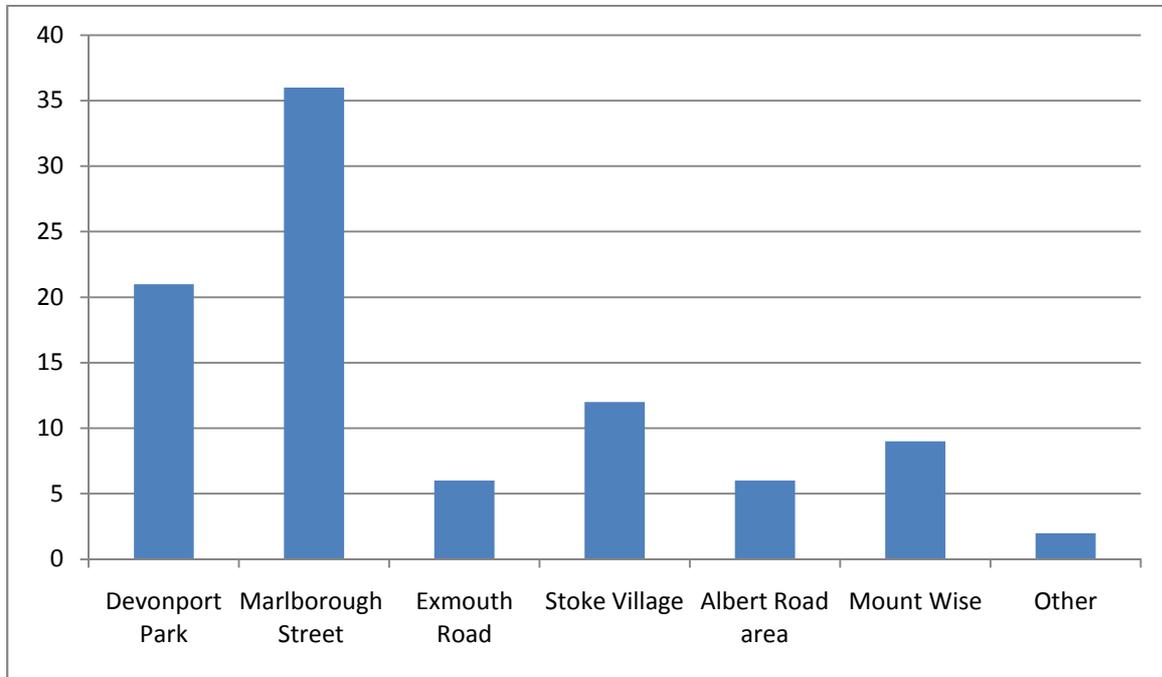
Have you experienced alcohol related crime or anti-social behaviour in the last 12 months?



From this question, 69 from 82 people surveyed had been subjected to alcohol related ASB or crime in the previous 12 months.

(continued)

Based on this response, people were then asked “**What area was this?**” The respondent was offered 7 options for the response based on the most significant problem areas across the proposed DPPO and “other”. All of the areas that were relevant were recorded allowing for greater information to be extracted from the 69 people who responded “Yes” to question 1.

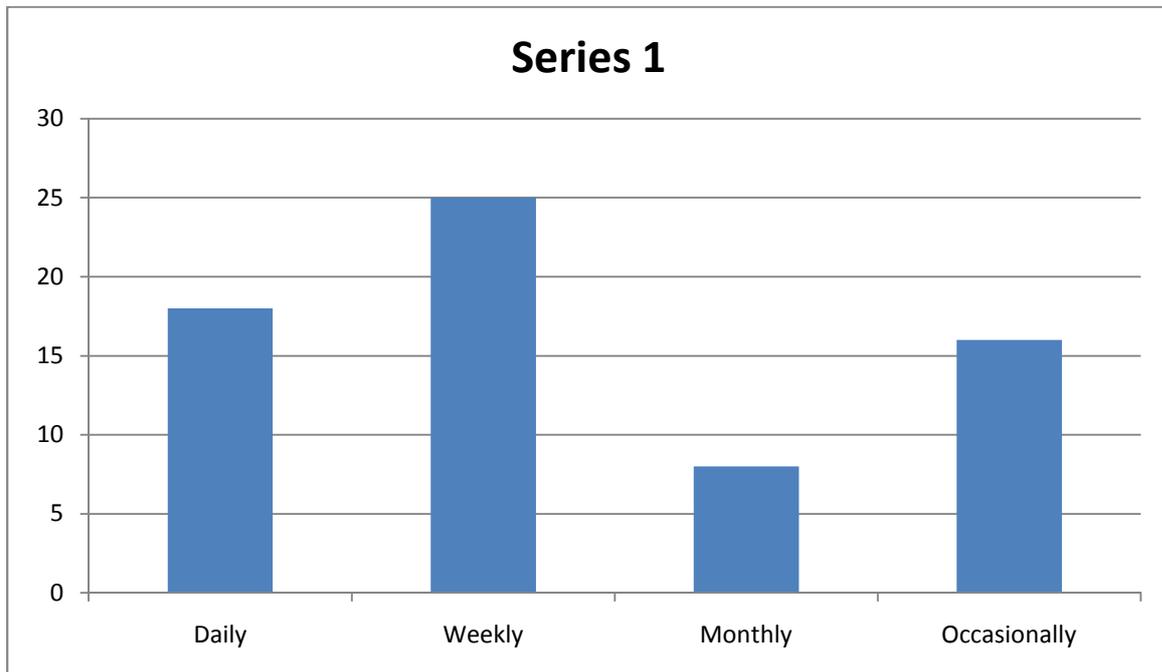


The feedback from these questions demonstrates that the most problematic areas are the Marlborough Street area, Devonport Park and Stoke Village areas within the proposed DPPO area. More significantly, this supports the proposed size of the DPPO as displacement from Devonport Park and the Marlborough Street could end up impacting up on the neighbouring areas, which already has an existing perceived problem with alcohol related anti-social behaviour.

(continued)

Question 2

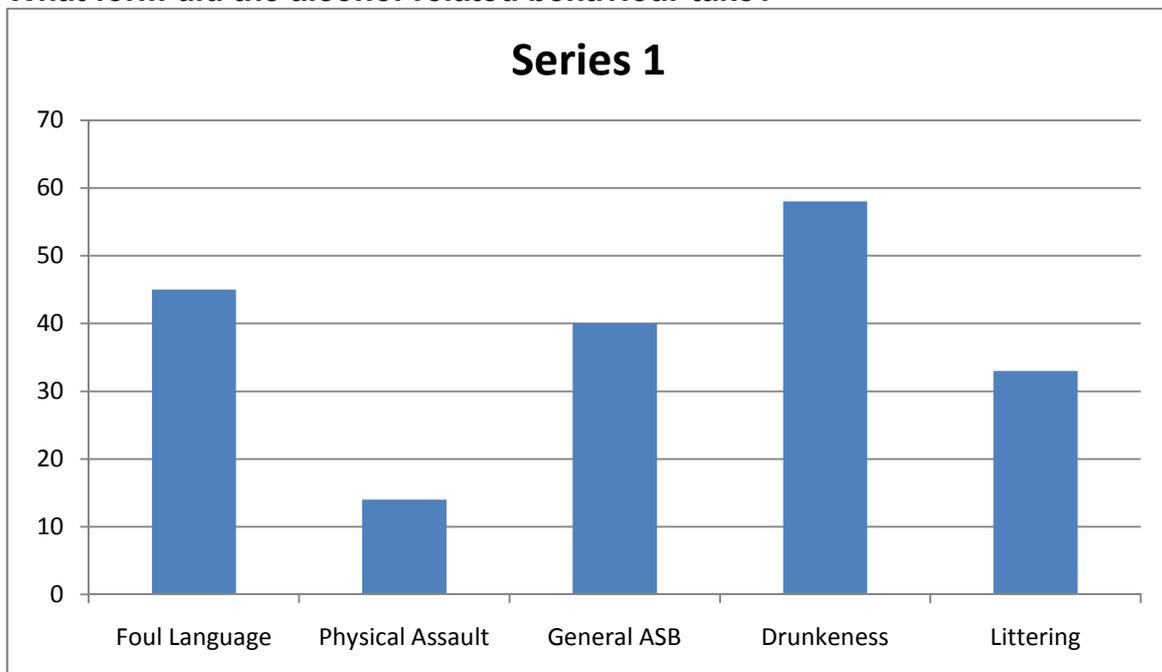
How often have you been subjected to this alcohol-related behaviour?



This data is very telling, demonstrating that over 64% of people responding to this question had experienced alcohol related crime or anti-social behaviour on a weekly or monthly basis.

Question 3

What form did the alcohol-related behaviour take?

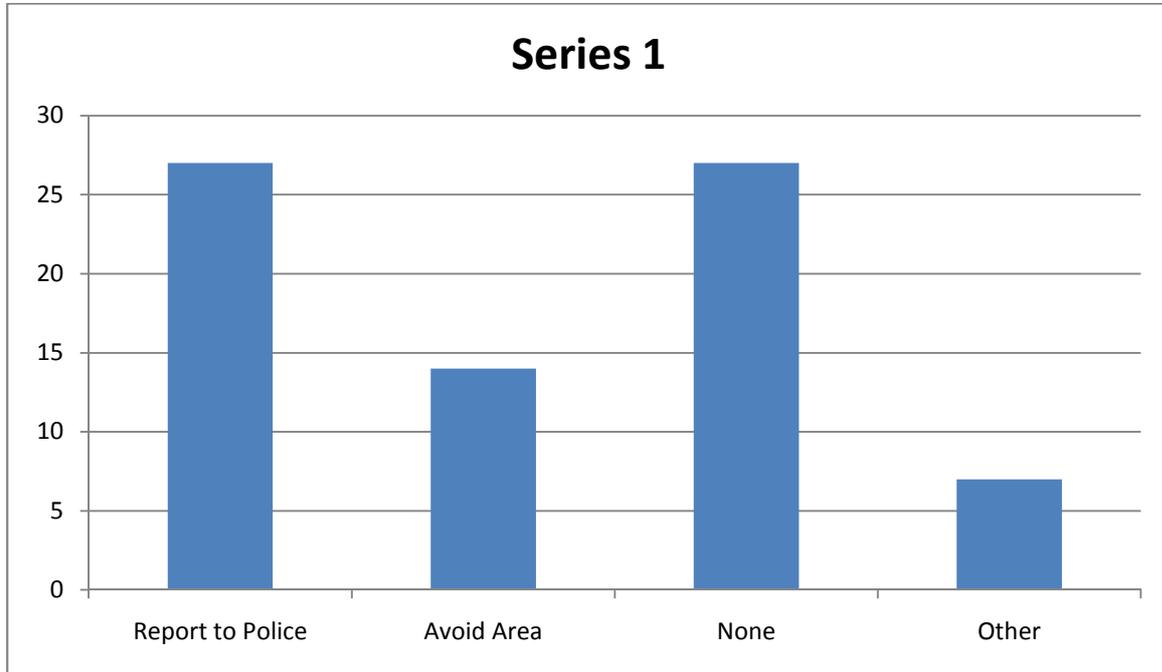


For these responses, the respondent was asked to select as many of the factors as they thought were relevant to the question. The people questioned provided 190

responses, with drunkenness and foul language making up over 53% of the responses.

Question 4

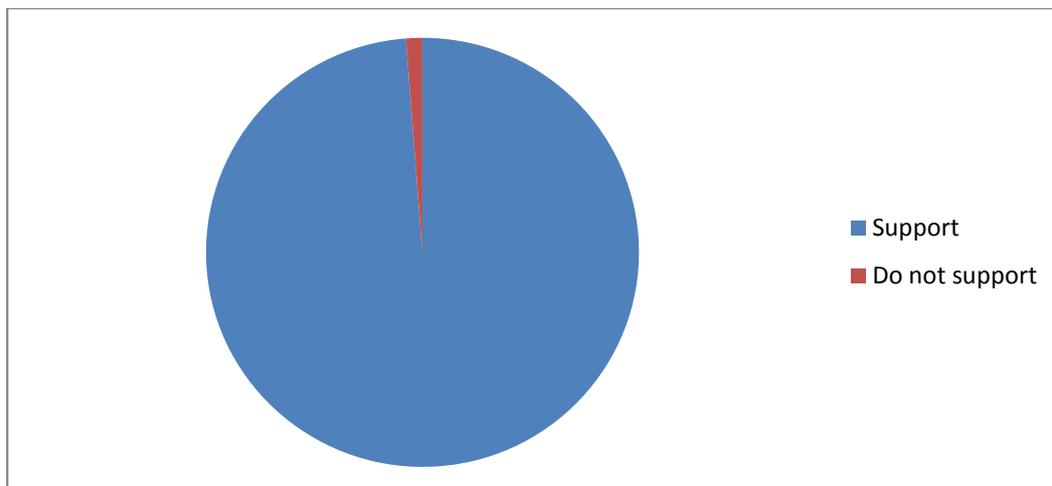
What action did you take as a result of this behaviour?



This is also a significant set of results. Whilst the number of incidents reported to police has been significant historically and since the beginning of 2014, this information shows that over 60% people surveyed have not reported these incidents to the Police.

Question 5

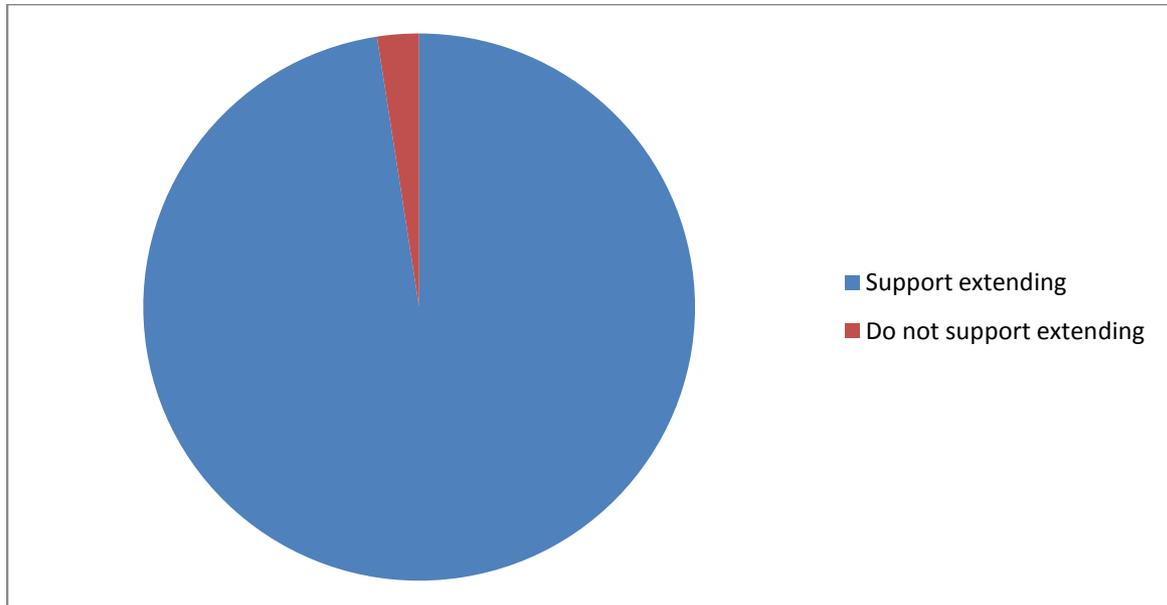
Do you support the proposal of a Designated Public Places Order for The Devonport area?



81 of the 82 people questioned supported the proposed DPPO for the Devonport area. The other person did not provide an answer.

Question 6

If a DPPO were granted for the Devonport area then the problem could be displaced to neighbouring areas. Would you support the DPPO area being extended to include neighbouring areas?



80 of the 82 people questioned supported including neighbouring areas within the proposed DPPO area. One person did not provide an answer and only one did not support the area being extended.

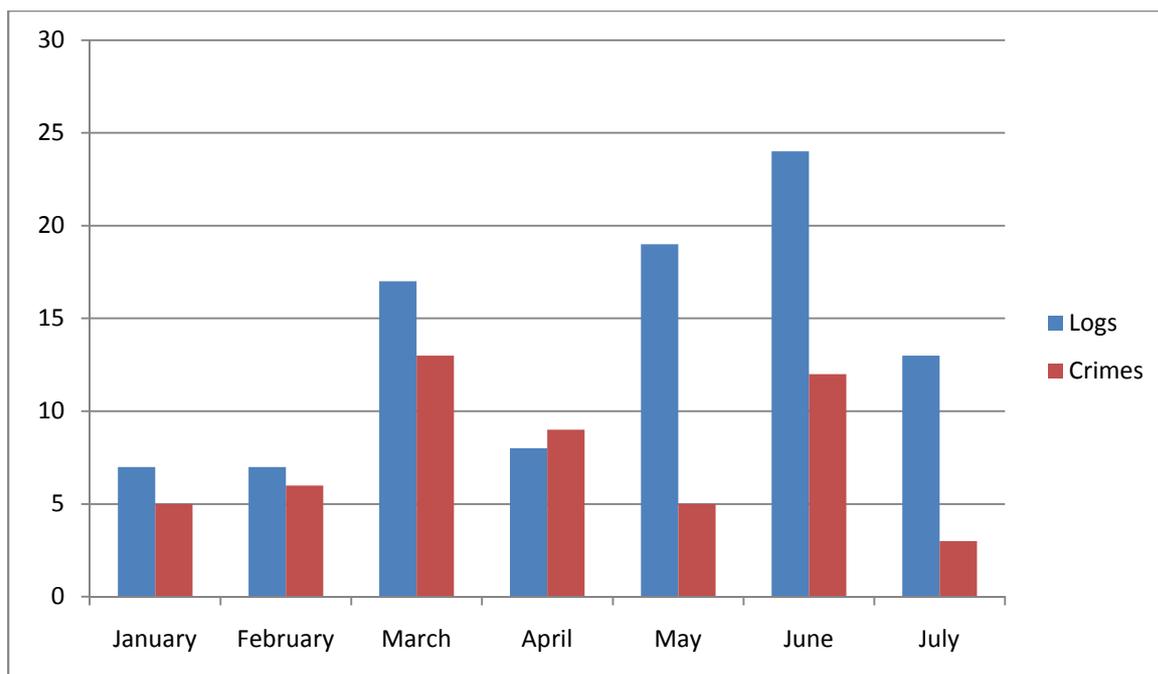
Police recorded incidents between 1st January and 31st July 2014

In order to evidence the continued on-going problem with alcohol related crime and disorder within the proposed DPPO area, research was commissioned into the number of Police logs and recorded crimes which are directly related to alcohol. A log is created whenever a call is received by the Police which requires attendance or resourcing by a Police Officer or PCSO. A crime is recorded in accordance with national crime recording standards when the circumstances of an incident determine that a crime must be recorded. Crimes can be recorded without a log being generated and most police logs generated do not result in a crime being recorded. The below summarises the number of logs and crimes reported within the DPPO area between 1st January and 31st July 2014.

Police Incidents

There have been a total of 95 Police logs created with reference to alcohol related anti-social behaviour across the proposed DPPO area between 1st January and 31st July 2014. There have been a total of 53 alcohol related crimes across the same period. These figures do not include alcohol related offences occurring within an address, such as domestic incidents.

The below charts show the distribution of alcohol related logs and crimes chronologically throughout 2014.



This chart shows that there has been a significant drop in the number of alcohol related logs and crimes since the introduction of the dispersal order and this thematic appears to have continued into August as well. It is clearly not yet at an acceptable level and a commitment to extend the order has not yet been made.

Police Action Taken Around Alcohol Related Disorder

The problem of alcohol related crime and anti-social behaviour has been a problem for a number of years in the Devonport area. The problem escalated over the winter of 2013 and the on-going problems have placed a significant drain on the Police resources of Plymouth. The Devonport Local Policing Team, supported by the Devonport Response department have engaged in a range of resource intensive problem solving measures that have resulted in an overall decrease in the number of alcohol related crimes across the Devonport sector. Below is a summary of the work undertaken and a brief description of the nature of the work.

Multi-Agency 'Street Drinker' Meetings

It was identified that there street drinker issue was something affecting Plymouth as a Policing area rather than just Devonport as an individual Policing area. A working group was established and problem drinkers across the Plymouth area were identified. The anti-social behaviour process was escalated against those identified resulting in over 20 people being placed on Acceptable Behaviour Contracts with full Anti-Social Behaviour Orders being obtained against a number of individuals. A number of problem drinkers were given access to accommodation and also support from Harbour with their alcohol and drug addictions. This is an on-going and evolving process.

Street Drinker Days of Action

Additional Police resources were identified and tasked to deploy on a Days of Action targeting Street Drinking. A combination of plain clothed patrols to identify offences and high visibility zero tolerance enforcement resulted in a number of offenders

being arrested and dispersed from the area using Direction to Leave Powers. Information was also obtained which became of use to the Police licensing department.

Outreach

Police Officers accompanied by Plymouth Access to Housing employees and Harbour staff undertook street patrols to engage with people drinking in the streets to offer them 'on the street' support with alcohol addiction and obtaining permanent accommodation.

Licensing

The Police licensing department has worked closely with local off licenses to ensure that they are keeping to their respective license conditions. Local shops were encouraged to discontinue selling single cans of high alcohol strength lager and reminded of the legality of selling alcohol to people who appear already under the influence of alcohol.

Dispersal Order

A section 30 Anti-Social Behaviour Act of 2003 order was introduced in a small area of Devonport which provided Police and PCSOs with powers to disperse people engaging in ASB away from the area for a period of time. This power was introduced on 12th June 2014 and a number of people have been dispersed from the area since its introduction. The dispersal order runs until November 2014.

Police Directed Tasking

A tasking log was introduced to ensure that on a shift by shift basis an individual officer would have responsibility for proactively engaging with people drinking on the street and recording any relevant information on to the log. This allowed for close monitoring of emerging nuisance behaviour and provided high visibility presence in the areas affected.

The targeted Police activity has delivered in terms of prosecuting offenders and reassuring the community. It has proved very labour intensive and a lot of the activity is not sustainable in the longer term due to constraints on Police resources.

Views of Devonport Police Officers

Police Sergeant Steve Fleetwood, Neighbourhood Team Leader, Devonport.

"As NTL for Devonport the DPPO has taken a considerable amount of work, time and resources on behalf of D and C police and their relevant partners. The work that has gone in has been prioritised by the objectivities and outcomes as follows:

The use of the DPPO empowers PCSOS's with powers to remove alcohol from those engaging in anti-social behaviour. This elevates a huge amount of pressure from front line policing and allows the officers who are empowered by the community to effectively serve them. Further to this, it enables the officers who are at the front of community intelligence to approach and dispose of the offenders in a matter far more substantial than offering words of advice. By this I mean they have the power to start the evidential chain in criminal proceedings offering excellent value for money to the community.

In line with the PCC's objectives for 2014 the implementation of the DPPO in consultation with the community effectively assists in the community policing and addressing their own issues."

PC Ryan Pengelly, Neighbourhood Beat Manager, Devonport.

"I have been in this post since January 2014 having previously worked at Devonport as a Response Officer in 2007. Upon my return, it was clear that that the problem of street drinking had continued. This issue has proved a massive drain on Police resources and has a huge impact on the perception of the quality of life in Devonport. I have previously worked in an area where a DPPO has been in force and know that it is a tried and trusted power to significantly reduce alcohol related anti-social behaviour in the longer term. I view the DPPO as an essential tool for reducing the impact of street drinking on the Devonport Community. The discretionary element of the power means that it will only affect those in the community who think it is appropriate to drink to excess and cause problems, meaning that the public spaces in Devonport will still be accessible to people who want to be sensible and considerate in their use of alcohol."

PCSO Sam Blake, Police Community Support Officer, Devonport

"I have worked with officers in areas where DPPOs have been in force and it is clear that this is a powerful tool that PCSOs can use to proactively deal with alcohol related anti-social behaviour. I think that the DPPO will be really useful for Devonport PCSOs when dealing with the on-going problem of street drinking."

Photographs

During the consultation period, photographs were taken in some of the public areas showing the scale of litter that is left behind from street drinking on a regular basis.





Conclusions

This report has endeavoured to capture the views of all aspects of the community and represent them in a fair and ethical manner. Much of the information is statistical, however this combined with the 'personal responses' does give a clear insight into the public opinion of the alcohol related problems which clearly exist in the Devonport area.

It is clear that the community is thoroughly in support of this tool being introduced and enforced in the Devonport area, entrusting the Police to appropriately make use of their discretion when utilising the DPPO powers. The overwhelming support to include neighbouring areas such as Stoke and Mount Wise (where street drinking has not been as significant a problem as in Devonport) within the order, shows that the community understands the potential for displacement and are supportive of the DPPO area being designed with displacement in mind. However, given the feedback showing the perceived scale of alcohol related problems across Mount Wise and Stoke Village, then there would be legitimate claims that these areas could be included as a DPPO area within their own right and not only to prevent displacement.

These powers where applied will help mitigate nuisance and disorder to members of the public that is associated with consuming alcohol in public places. Within the DPPO area there are three Primary Schools and many children have to travel through areas where street drinking is an issue. Clearly, based on the personal responses, the community do not want children to be exposed to this behaviour at key stages of their lives where they are developing their own moral boundaries about what is right and wrong.

The crime police incident statistics show that, in spite of the resource intensive policing operations and multi-agency support work that has been taking place, the consumption of alcohol continues to have a significant impact up on the community. The quantitative information obtained also showed that 60% of people surveyed did not report the incidents to Police. This shows that the number of Police logs and crimes is likely not to reflect the actual scale of the problem.

Also, as evidenced by the account from a senior member of staff from the Salvation Army Hostel, the access to alcohol and the apparent acceptance of drunkenness is

doing little to assist vulnerable people with deep rooted addiction in overcoming their own battles and establishing a platform for them from where they can move forward.

In conclusion, of those who contributed to this public consultation the overwhelming majority were in favour of the granting of a DPPO for Devonport and the neighbouring areas such as Mount Wise and Stoke Village.

Police Constable 1508 Pengelly
Neighbourhood Beat Manager
Devonport

Inspector 5362 Harris
Sector Inspector
Devonport & West