

FALKIRK COUNCIL

Subject: SAFER STREETS: UPDATE REPORT
Meeting: ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE
Date: 15 MARCH 2011
Author: DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This report will update Members on Safer Streets project activity for the 2010 festive period. Further to the report presented to Committee in October 2010 outlining the proposal for the festive safer streets activity, this report will update Members on the progress of the project and its' outcomes.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 This is the fourth year of Scottish Government funding for Festive Safer Streets activity with the following funding levels:-

- £30,000 in 2007/2008
- £20,000 in 2008/2009
- £12,121 in 2009/2010
- £14,000 in 2010/2011

2.2 The Scottish Government announced the roll-out of the Safer Streets campaign for 2010/2011 in August 2010 with applications for funding to be submitted by mid October. The Scottish Government were aiming to give Community Safety Partnerships a greater lead-in time to assist in the planning of applications and the delivery of safer streets activity. Funding was allocated on the basis of bands corresponding to average Group 1 crime figures (non sexual crimes of violence against the person) in local authority areas over the period 2006-2009. Falkirk Council area's allocation was £14,000 (Band 4).

2.3 The aim of the Safer Streets programme is to :-

- Reduce alcohol related crime disorder;
- Divert young people away from alcohol related crime and disorder;
- Reduce the fear of alcohol related crime and disorder and increase community reassurance; and
- Strengthen partnership working through joint work to tackle alcohol related crime and disorder

2.4 As detailed in October's Committee report, an application was submitted building on the Safer Streets activity delivered in 2009/2010. The award (£14,000) was announced at the

end of October. Planning meetings with partners were held throughout the process to ensure the smooth running of the project.

3. SAFER STREETS PROJECT 2010/2011

3.1 The project consisted of:-

- Late night taxi marshalling scheme over peak periods during the Christmas and New Year period to reduce alcohol related disorder in the Falkirk Town Centre area;
- Dedicated police officers(2) to support taxi marshals and provide high visibility reassurance policing around the safe zone area;
- Safe Base to provide injured/vulnerable night-time revellers with a safe place to receive advice, support and treatment to enable them to get assistance in getting home or where necessary, transport to the local accident and emergency unit;
- Festive Policing Operation to reduce alcohol disorder to ensure safer streets, this is part of the normal festive police operations; and
- Detached Youth Work interventions over this period from 7pm to 10 pm.

3.2 The festive safer streets operation commenced on the Friday 3rd December through to Friday 31st December 2010 (11 nights). The project operated on Friday and Saturday evenings from 10pm to 4am with additional peak dates identified (Thursday 23rd, Sunday 26th, and Thursday 30th December 2010).

3.3 The taxi marshalling service operates throughout the year on Friday and Saturday evenings funded jointly through Falkirk's Town Centre BID Initiative and the Council's Community Safety budget (£17,048). The Safer Streets funding enabled the additional dates and public holidays to be funded.

3.4 The Safe Base provides visitors to the town centre with a safe place to receive advice, support and treatment to enable them to get assistance in getting home or where necessary, transport to the local accident and emergency unit. The Safe Base is a partnership arrangement with the Scottish Ambulance Service, British Red Cross, NHS Forth Valley, Central Scotland Police; Forth Valley and Falkirk's Alcohol and Drug Partnership; Signpost; Falkirk Council's Community Education Service and Falkirk's Street Pastor initiative and staffed by representatives of the partnership. People were directed or taken to the Safe Base by staff carrying out patrols in the town centre (Central Scotland Police, British Red Cross and Falkirk Street Pastors).

3.5 A planning group was established last year to ensure the smooth running of the Safe Base and was continued with meetings being held from late summer onwards to build on the work already initiated. An Operating Policy was further developed to ensure joint understanding between the partners of the process, responsibilities, security and operating arrangements. Security for the premises was provided by Specialised Security (providers of the taxi marshalling service). A risk assessment was undertaken by Central Scotland Police, with communications (town centre radio link) put in place to ensure contact between the various partners involved in the operation of the Safe Base/Safe Zone. Briefing and de-briefing sessions were also organised as part of this process.

- 3.6 The Community Education Service provided premises at Park Street. The premises were in an ideal location due to its' proximity to the bars and clubs in the town centre. Park Street was operational for young people between 7pm and 10pm on Friday evenings for youth related activities, advice and outreach, with the facility being made available for the Safe Base after 10pm. Briefings were undertaken between the Detached Youth work team and staff at Safe Base prior to the start of the Safe Base operation. The Safe Base was operational over the same period as the taxi marshalling initiative (11 days over the festive period) from 22:00 hours to 04:00 hrs.
- 3.7 Information cards were produced and distributed prior to the festive period. These incorporated information with safety messages, contact details for support and space to record last times for trains, buses and taxis. This was funded through the Forth Valley Alcohol & Drug Partnership. The cards were distributed to Central Scotland Police, pubs and clubs door staff, railway and bus stations, taxis and Forth Valley College.
- 3.8 The Scottish Ambulance Service provided their normal festive coverage, plus providing the Safe Base with a paramedic for minor injury treatment. Ambulance staff worked with the Red Cross to manage the injured, in communication with the taxi marshals, community policing teams, Pubwatch and CCTV cameras via radio links. The Safe Base received in-kind contributions from the British Red Cross (additional 6 volunteers at no cost to the project) and FVNHS contributed an officer to co-ordinate the operation and monitoring of the Safe Base.
- 3.9 Safer Streets activity was marketed through posters, leaflets and news articles. Early marketing of the Safer Streets activity was vital to raise awareness of the initiatives in place to improve night-time safety in Falkirk town centre. A selection of Safe Zone posters were promoted in pubs, clubs, restaurants and takeaways. Posters and "One For the Road" cards were also distributed to major employers in the area and Forth Valley College. Articles to promote the Safer Streets activity appeared in the Falkirk Council News and the Falkirk Herald prior to and during the operation of the Safer Streets project.
- 3.10 The project received in-kind contributions from FVNHS, British Red Cross, Falkirk Street Pastors, Falkirk Council (Community Safety budget for taxi marshalling and the provision of the Park Street facility from Community Education), FVADP for the information cards, Central Scotland Police for their Festive operation and Falkirk BID for taxi marshalling and management costs.

4. IMPACT OF THE SAFER STREETS ACTIVITY 2010/2011

Taxi Marshalling Initiative – "Reducing the fear of alcohol related crime and disorder and increasing community reassurance"

- 4.1 Last year, 2009/10, 7,650 were reported to have used the service. During the eleven day operation in 2010/11, it was estimated that over 15,290 night time economy users used the taxi marshalling service, an increase of 100%.
- 4.2 There were some potential disorder problems that occurred during the running of the service over the period which were diffused by the taxi marshals and where necessary, Central Scotland Police. There were also issues in terms of safety as a result of the adverse weather conditions on the first weekend of the Safe Base. The poor condition of

the footpaths continued to cause incidents throughout most of December. The incidents reported last year of people bringing glasses and bottles to the rank have declined with only two incidents being reported during this year's festive period. This is largely attributed to the vigilance of door stewards at individual venues and the work being done through the Pubwatch Scheme.

- 4.3 The busiest weekend for the taxi marshals was the 17th/18th December with 3,760 users of the taxi rank. Surveys highlighted that the night economy establishments were aware of the Safe Zone and they felt that that it enhanced the image of Falkirk as a safe place to have a night out. The survey highlighted that assisting vulnerable people was seen as the main benefit of the Safe Base, whilst also reducing the burden on staff and resources as well as reducing alcohol related disorder.

Detached Youth Work Interventions

- 4.4 The Detached Youth Work team were working in Falkirk Town Centre engaging with young people over 4 nights during the festive period (24th, 26th, 30th and 31st December) between 7pm and 10pm finishing off at Park Street. This enabled Detached Youth Work staff to update the Safe Base operation on their findings. Safer Streets funding supported the issue of safezone harm reduction bags which consisted of an energy drink, chocolate bar, anti-spike drink bottle tops, wipes and information cards with local taxi numbers and health numbers.
- 4.5 The detached youth workers linked in with local business and distributed their safer streets cards, e.g City Niteclub, Behind the Wall raising awareness of their role and the Park Street drop-in facility, with the example that McDonalds in the Retail Park allowed workers to engage with young people within their premises. Young people and adults responded well to the safe zone bags promoting harm reduction to young people in Falkirk and keeping safe when out drinking. It was also noted that the young people were appropriately dressed for the severe cold weather over the period.
- 4.6 The Detached Youth Work team engaged with 109 young people over the Festive period promoting safer streets, harm reduction messages, healthier lifestyles etc. in relation to alcohol and through this "diverting young people away from alcohol related crime and disorder" in addition to raising awareness of the drop-in service at Park Street and their street talk activities throughout the year across the Falkirk Council area.

Safe Base

- 4.7 During the period of the Safe Base operation 84 clients were seen with the peak nights being Saturday 18th, Thursday 23rd and Friday 31st December 2010. The main reason for attendance was drink related with the following statistics:-

- 61 possible 999 calls were averted and subsequent transfers to A&E, last year 16 possible 999 calls were averted;
- 12 clients were taken to Stirling A&E, six by the Scottish Ambulance Service and six by the British Red Cross;
- 14 possible arrests were prevented due to the operation of the Safe Base/Safe Zone (11 male and 3 female);
- of these 14, seven were Drunk & Incapable; six were victims of violence who were interviewed by Police after treatment;

- the top 3 reasons for requiring assistance were related to violence, alcohol abuse and inappropriate dress; and
- client's ages ranged from 16 to 55 with the majority being between late 20's and mid thirties.

- 4.8 As a result of 61 averted ambulance and 999 calls, the Scottish Ambulance Service saved £15,250, Stirling Royal Infirmary (A&E) saved £6,100 and Police estimate that their assistance would have cost £6,832 but more significantly saved 244 policing hours. Estimated savings for the emergency services in 2009 were £1,600 for NHSFV, £4,000 for the Scottish Ambulance Service and £1,792 for Central Scotland Police with a saving of 64 hours.
- 4.9 Reviewing Central Scotland Police Storm calls for service (Public Nuisance, Disturbance, Assault) show a reduction over the festive period from 53 in 2008 to 35 in 2010, a reduction of 34%.
- 4.10 The first weekend of the Safer Streets operation, while still operational, was problematic. There were a reduced number of partners / volunteers able to attend due to transport problems. The subsequent dates went ahead as planned.
- 4.11 The operation of the safe base was greatly improved this year due to the project having a dedicated co-ordinator to manage the facility, processes and monitoring of the activity at no cost to the project. The co-ordinator also liaised with Town Centre venues with regard to visitor numbers, events and closing times to assist in their preparation for the operation of the Safe Base.
- 4.12 *“Strengthening partnership working through joint work to tackle alcohol related crime and disorder”* was identified as one of the outcomes that the Scottish Government's Safer Streets programme was looking for Community Safety Partnerships to achieve. Partners reported on their positive experiences of working together, see Appendix 1. There is strong commitment from the partners to develop this work over future festive campaigns and other peak times for alcohol related disorder. Signpost, the Alcohol and Drugs initiative, have identified that three people have self referred as a result of the safer streets project, two referrals were alcohol related and one was related to cocaine use. Central Scotland Police reported on the positive aspect of joint working, dealing with injuries and emergencies directly by trained medical staff saving police time involved in non criminal incidents.
- 4.13 A further meeting of the partnership group was held after the running of the Safe Base, which reported positive feedback from all the partners involved, Red Cross, NHS Forth Valley, Streets Pastors and Signpost. Partner reports were discussed with particular focus on the report produced by the safebase co-ordinator. One of the issues discussed was concerning the severe weather conditions experienced during December and the lack of gritting of the pavements within the safe zone area and the subsequent falls. Another issue concerned taxi drivers, they were slightly reluctant to accept clients from the Safe Base but this was resolved by staff at safe base escorting clients to the taxi rank. Storm nightclub was the busiest venue outwith the safe zone requiring assistance with 10 clients.
- 4.14 Falkirk's BID team undertook a survey of the night-time economy outlets. The survey showed that assisting vulnerable people was seen as the main benefit of the Safe Base whilst also reducing the burden on staff and resources in addition to reducing alcohol

related disorder. The survey participants were also asked if the Safe Base would be beneficial at other times throughout the year with the following responses:-

- 32% of respondents felt that there would be a benefit during sporting events such as Old Firm matches, World Cup etc.;
- 32% of respondents felt that there would be a benefit during public holidays, including Halloween;
- 32% of respondents felt that there would be a benefit from having the Safe Base all year round; and
- 4% of respondents felt that there would be no benefit of having the Safe Base at other times

4.15 The following quotes were recorded on the Safer Streets activity:-

- “This is an excellent scheme and gives peace of mind for staff and customers alike throughout the festive season. It should definitely be kept going and could be an advantage on Old Firm matches”...**Marion Stewart...Wellington Bar.**
- “All staff and management at Behind The Wall are in full support of the Safezone project. Safety is a top priority for us and this is something which helps and supports staff & customers alike by allowing us to manage our resources effectively and offer peace of mind and practical help to vulnerable people. Keep up the good work.”...**Paul Kenny..... BTW Supervisor.**
- “Safezone offers the knowledge that those who need assistance will receive it promptly without adding to the burden of the already stretched emergency services. Storm supports Safezone and would like to see it in some form, for key dates and events such as Halloween.”...**David Johnston, Prop. Storm.**

5. CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 Over the last few years, the taxi marshalling scheme has proved a successful and popular tool in managing and diffusing any potential opportunities for alcohol fuelled disorder at peak times within the town centre. This has resulted in the continued funding of the taxi marshalling scheme at weekends throughout the year.
- 5.2 The Safe Base initiative has proved successful, building on the work that was undertaken last year as a result of the commitment to the initiative from all the partners. Planning of this project has been crucial in ensuring the smooth running of the Safe Base with the development of operating and risk management procedures as part of this process.
- 5.3 During the past four years we have made significant progress in enhancing Falkirk town centre as a safe and enjoyable place to visit at night time and over weekends as a result of the Safer Streets initiative.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 6.1 **Note the Safer Streets Activity and results for December 2011; and**
- 6.2 **Note that Officers over the course of the next few months will review the options for extending the Safe Base to other peak periods throughout the year and will report back to Committee on this.**



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DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

Date: 17 February 2011

Ref: ABB0311AK

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LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 1. Report to Environment and Community Safety Committee , 26 October 2010

Any person wishing to inspect the background papers listed above should telephone Falkirk 01324 506011 and ask for Alice Keenan

PARTNER REPORT EXTRACTS 2010-2011

Street Pastors Quotes:-

- “ There were a few minor scuffles which mainly broke out at the Behind the Wall bar, yet again the Police were quick to diffuse the situation”
- “Several people were escorted back to the base in Park Street to be treated for minor injuries by the paramedic. None needed additional hospital treatment ... it was really important to know that there was a manned place of refuge for people (if needed) throughout the night
- “We came across two or three fights as they broke out, mainly outside licensed premises ... training is much appreciated in knowing how to diffuse situations like this”
- “We finished off the night with the usual visit to the Storm Night Club after 3am and witnessed some scuffles although again quickly dealt with by the police and door stewards. Several girls were removing their shoes on the way out and it was amazing to see them walking barefoot in minus 5 degree temperatures ... on or two were glad to receive a pair of flip flops.”
- “We headed home about 4am, cold, yet grateful to having played apart in helping those who struggled on the icy pavements, those who needed an ear to hear them and to be part of a huge team effort on the street ... be encouraged that Street Pastors and all the other services are doing a tremendous job in keeping Falkirk safe..”
- “ At around 2.30am things really began to get busy. The Base began to resemble a Hospital Accident & Emergency Department with multiple assaults and incidents being treated. On one of our last patrols we kept an eye on one young man, obviously intoxicated, staggering in the opposite direction from the taxi rank he said he was looking for. As we followed him we saw him fall heavily, hit his head and lie unconscious on the ice. We put him in the recovery position and immediately called for assistance. He sustained quite serious head injuries and was taken to Stirling Royal Infirmary”

Central Scotland Police Quotes:-

- “Felt that it was a good way to operate, and took the pressure off the officers on the street and the Ambulance staff”
- “I enjoyed working with the other services and learnt their protocols. I think this is a good initiative and would be great to have all year round”.

Signpost Quote:

“Safe Base enhanced service delivery as people got instant access to services on the street and they were able to see the collaborative nature of service delivery”.

Signpost Updates

23/12/2010

On arrival at safe base I met the other professions who were on duty consisting of Paramedics, Police Officers, First Aiders, Taxi Marshals, Street Pastors and the Safe Base Co-ordinator. We were then placed into teams and designated areas to patrol. My role was to gather the information of the contact records i.e. Date/Time, Gender, Age, Post Code (first 4 digits) the reason relating the visit then the outcome. First contact was a female brought in by First Aid Team she had collapsed outside a pub in Manor Street (alcohol related) was treated by paramedics then later discharged. Next contact, was a male who had suffered from a diabetic hypo he was treated by the paramedics given glucose he was advised to attend hospital however declined, he later left with a friend. A young male had been at City Night club with a group of friends, he was attacked by 3 males who were detained by the police, he was treated by the paramedics then transported to FV Royal for further tests. Another young male was attacked inside City Night Club and was brought into the safe base by two Police Officers, he had injuries to his face due to being assaulted with a glass; he was later transported to FV Royal. Street Pastors had noticed a male lying on the ground unconscious, they alerted Safe Base. First Aiders attended the scene and he was brought into safe base (alcohol related), he had slipped on the ice, he became violent when getting examined, Police Officers were called until the situation had calmed down, he also was transported to FV Royal for x-ray. I really enjoyed my experience at Safe Base working along with other professionals and hope to continue with the multi-agency arrangements next year.

Saturday 11th December 2010

Thursday 30th December 2010

Friday 31st December 2010

Over the 3 nights I was on duty within Safebase, there were 24 people who attended the base for assistance. On entering the base it was predominantly myself who obtained details from those attending, or their friends/partners. It was often necessary for myself to remove friends/partners from the room where the patient was being treated as they were agitated or upset, this allowed the paramedic a better opportunity to assess the patients. Alcohol played a large factor throughout with the majority of people presenting intoxicated. On 31st December there were a number of people attending the base who had been attacked with glass/bottles. Statements were taken by the police at the base by the victims and the paramedic who treated them. Ongoing liaison with the street pastors, police and British Red Cross proved useful throughout each evening. On Thursday 30th and Friday 31st, I joined the Red Cross on patrol and aided an elderly gentleman back to the base to be assessed by the paramedic.