

DRUGS DOGS OPERATIONS

OFFICER REPORTING: ALAN BARWISE, LICENSING MANAGER

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To provide the Forum with information about the joint police / council drugs operations as request by the Forum itself.

2. OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION:

That Crime and Disorder Forum notes the information provided about the operations.

3. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The dogs used are Passive Drugs Dogs – these will indicate to the handler if drugs have been detected on either a person or within the premises. Handlers are always very cooperative and proactive. In general they are ex-Police Officers and are always willing to offer advice to both operatives and members of the public alike.

Typical evening: -

A briefing is always held at a Police Station normally taken by an Inspector, who will inform the personnel of all procedures regarding health and safety, transport arrangement, communications, procedures once within a venue, arresting and custody facilities. Normally, up to 12 premises are visited, though plans can change if last minute intelligence is received by TVP. The number of premises visited will vary depending on whether the operation is run within one Town Centre or across the Borough. Sometimes checking the queues can be very successful without actually entering the venues.

Around 12 Officers are required for an operation. These are normally a mix of Town Centre Teams, Specials, on occasions PCSOs, and Licensing Officers from both RBWM and TVP. This requires a TVP Minibus, an RBWM Minibus and pool vehicles.

When we arrive at the venue.

Vehicles are always parked out of sight, the licensing officers from both RBWM and TVP will enter the premises and inform the Designated Premises Supervisor (DPS) that we are conducting a passive drugs dog operation NOW. The Inspector is then informed by radio, the Police Officers are then dispatched to the venue. If music is being played loudly we request that it is turned down slightly and sometimes the lights are lifted slightly, we always try and balance this request with a desire not to dampen the evening proceedings.

Toilets are inspected and checked out by the handler and dog first – this is to establish if usage has been taking place, within the premises. The handler and dog then walks around all the customers in the licensed areas, this is always conducted in the presence of the DPS/Manager and a dedicated Police Officer. If the dog indicates to the handler of drugs being present on either a person or item of clothing, they will be questioned and searched by the Police Officer (Sect 23 Misuse of Drugs Act 1971).

We operate very quickly once in the premises and always answer any questions that members of the public may have, at all times we try to allay any concerns. Members of the public, staff of the premises and the licensing trade historically have always received these operations very well. Most people respect the fact that we are giving a very firm message to all concerned that illegal drug taking will not be tolerated at these venues.

Feedback is always given after the operation to the DPS/Manager.

Venues Chosen

All premises visited have signed up to the drugs dog and itemiser agreement, this is agreed at the local Pub watch Schemes which are fully supported by both RBWM and TVP. Before a venue is visited by Drugs Dogs we would have normally conducted, at the request of the DPS/Manager a swab testing of the venue's toilets, if the readings taken have been high then a passive drugs dog operation would be discussed. We only visit a venue after the DPS/Manager has requested it and given written consent for the operation.

Cost

One (1) handler and two (2) dogs - £450 per evening.

Operations per year

We have programmed six (6) operations to be conducted from July 2008. So far, two operations have been completed.

4. CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT

The paper has been seen by the local police.

5. IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial

There financial implications of each operation are given above.

5.2 Legal

Misuse of Drugs Act 1971

5.3 Human Rights Act

None of the Human Convention Rights will be affected by this decision.