

Operation Abingdon from Lancashire Police re: Night Time Economy

Scanning:

Alcohol plays an important part in today's society and in the economy of most towns and cities throughout the UK. Alcohol is used recreationally by a large proportion (90%) of the adult population. There is however a significant downside to excessive alcohol consumption, not only through the impact it has upon the health service but also in relation to the theft of property, physical assaults and criminal damage.

Lancashire Constabulary's Western Division (Blackpool and The Fylde Coast) and the Queen Street area of the town centre is a hot spot area for such incidents, which are centered around the late night economy.

Analysis:

In 2005 and 2006, the main centre for crime and disorder centered on the Walkabout Bar which is owned and operated by Regent Inns PLC. The premises were specifically designed and marketed to target the 18 - 24 year old age group that have a reputation of drinking to excess and becoming involved in criminal activity. At night the music played in the venue is extremely loud and patrons are encouraged to stand and purchase large amounts of alcohol.

Between 23/11/05 and 07/11/06 it accounted for over 1.2% of all violent crime within the division (which equated to 65 violent crimes). This figure is approx 5 times higher than the next most prolific premise in the town of a similar size.

Response:

Local engagement with the licence holder and staff was positive, but changing the premises operating practices and design was difficult due to pressure from the National perspective. As the premises formed part of a national brand they had to follow ideas by set by senior management.

- Covert visits to the premises to gather evidence of licensing breaches and other offences.
- Engagement with senior management from Regent Inns.
- Co-operation from partner agencies including Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service, Blackpool Borough Council Licensing Department, Health and Safety, Immigration Dept.
- Collating crime statistics and evidence in relation to behaviour of door staff and management when dealing with problems inside.
- Increase number of pro-active high profile Police visits to premises.
- Submission of premises licence review to Blackpool Borough Council

Assessment:

Crime figures from 2006 and 2007 results obtained –

	<u>01/01/06 to 31/12/06</u>	<u>01/01/07 to 31/12/07</u>	Increase / Decrease
All Crimes	159	66	-58%
Violent Crimes	82	28	- 66%
Thefts	71	28	- 60%
Incidents attended	362	185	- 49%