

27 November 2017

Report of the Strategic Director of Communities
and Place

Psychoactive Substances and Anti-Social Behaviour

SUMMARY

- 1.1 Novel Psychoactive Substances (NPS) are drugs which were designed to replicate the effects of substances like cannabis, cocaine and ecstasy. Up until 2016 they were not controlled (hence their previous name 'legal highs'). They are however now prohibited under the Psychoactive Substances Act (2016) even though they began to appear in the UK drug scene in around 2008/09 – and have thus gain significant popularity. They fall into four main categories:

- Synthetic cannabinoids
- Stimulant type drugs
- 'Downer'/tranquilizer type drugs
- Hallucinogenic drugs

With the advent of the Psychoactive Substances Act it is now illegal to produce, supply, or import them for human consumption – including for personal use. Possession for personal use is not an offence, unless in prison

- 1.2 Derby City Council has had a Novel Psychoactive substance strategy in place since 2015. This has been very effective in reducing substance misuse related hospital admissions and supply of prohibited drugs. However more recently there has been an increase in the use and availability within the city centre which has resulted in some increase in Anti-Social Behaviour and public and media concern. This is most evident in the behaviour of users who appear dependant on the type of used, in a 'zombie' like state. Amongst Derby's cohort of drug users a relatively small group of drug users are using these new drugs either as replacement for more expensive and less available drugs or to supplant their existing use. The specific issue is concerned with a cohort of largely homeless individuals who are smoking and ingesting a hallucinogenic product euphemistically referred to as 'mamba' or 'spice'. Hallucinations ensue – followed by an almost comatose (or 'zombie' like) state that lasts for 15 min following consumption. This state can be very distressing to onlookers and can appear near fatal although it isn't – and individuals recover to a 'normal' intoxicated state soon after.

- 1.3 This drug use and behaviour has had a significant impact upon the safety, both real and perceived in the city centre, particularly in the St Peters Cross area. The city has approximately 20 individuals who are causing this on street nuisance.

1.4 **Partnership Response:**

The response to this issue is within the wider context of city centre community safety and the partnership work associated with Asb and rough sleeping/alcohol and drug use. The individuals committing Asb have been targeted through a strategy of Engagement-Education-Enforcement. All of this activity is centrally managed by Public Health through a tasking programme board (Partnership Engagement and Enforcement Programme – PEEP) – which oversees daily tasking, information sharing and monthly offender management. This work involves a range of partners including the Police, community safety, housing Probation, Drug and Alcohol services and voluntary sector providers of support and housing. Derby City council has dedicated significant resource to this problem over the last few months. The Council through Public Health commissions: 2 dedicated housing outreach workers; 2 drug outreach workers; 2 substance misuse safeguarding workers (include a logistics coordinator role) and hostel staff, to patrol the city centre streets Monday to Friday. These workers operate in conjunction with City rangers, PCSOs and the city's Police team

This on-street multidisciplinary team attempts to engage and encourage the 'mamba' (and other drug) users into treatment, into stable housing or into health services. If all that fails they work with the police to reduce ASB, identify when crimes occur and provide intelligence. Drug treatment is not a solution in isolation to the mamba problem. It augments the aforementioned multidisciplinary approach – with a greater emphasis needed on enforcement/reducing supply

Specific actions and outcomes include:

- Police Enforcement: Operation Chesney, there have been 33 arrests and 41 dispersal orders. Under Operation Casella, a mobile police station has been parked on St Peters Street leading to 47 arrests and 38 dispersal orders. Casella will continue to run over the next 10 weeks to provide reassurance to the public. The police continue to work with partners and attend the PEEP meetings. The patrol strategy includes areas where enforcement may have displaced activity. A range of orders have been granted by the Courts including Criminal Behaviour Orders which both prohibit offenders from certain activities and places and put positive requirements such as drug and alcohol treatment.
- Increased numbers of individuals in drug and alcohol treatment
- Increased numbers of individuals in housing and accommodation support services
- Deployment of the mobile police station at St Peters Cross providing a more reactive police response and community engagement.
- Reports from East Midlands Ambulance Service (EMAS) illustrate a massive reduction in ambulance call outs for NPS related emergencies. In the summer of this year on one day EMAS were called 68 times to Derby city centre. In recent weeks this is now zero

- The proposed Public Space Protection Order will provide new enforcement powers for the Police and Council in relation to NPS and other intoxicating substances. This order will come into force in early December 2017

1.5 The response to this issue has been characterised by effective partnership working, led by Public health in the council. For a number of years the council has worked in partnership to manage the night-time economy. This work on NPS use, rough sleeping and begging (which are associated problems) has highlighted the need for a similar approach to the day-time economy interventions (delivered by the PEEP) being replicated for the NTE.

1.6 Whilst the strategy of Engagement, Education and Enforcement has been successful, there continues to be a number of challenges:

- Increased enforcement and targeting of these individuals can and will potentially cause displacement
- The issue of NPS cannot be viewed in isolation it is part of wider social challenges such as housing, reduction in support services, mental health and range of other issues.

RECOMMENDATION

2.1 To consider the information provided and make any comments and relevant recommendations on the content.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

3.1 To ensure that Board members are kept updated on the development of

3.2 To ensure that the Board has sufficient opportunity to make any comments or recommendations in relation to the issues discussed.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

4.1 The Psychoactive Substances Act received Royal Assent on 28 January 2016 and came into force on 26 May 2016

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1 None.

This report has been approved by the following officers:

Legal officer	N/A
Financial officer	N/A
Human Resources officer	N/A
Estates/Property officer	N/A

Service Director(s) Other(s)	Richard Martin: Public health Assistant Director
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For more information contact: Background papers: List of appendices:	Andy Thomas 01332 643020 andy.thomas@derby.gov.uk None
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IMPLICATIONS

Financial and Value for Money

1.1 None.

Legal

2.1 None.

Personnel

3.1 None.

IT

4.1 None.

Equalities Impact

5.1 None.

Health and Safety

6.1 None.

Environmental Sustainability

7.1 None.

Property and Asset Management

8.1 None.

Risk Management and Safeguarding

9.1 None.

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

10.1 Building stronger and safer communities