

Statutory Licensing Committee

9 June 2021

Report title	Ask for Angela - Update and relaunch	
Wards affected	All	
Accountable director	Ross Cook, Director for City Housing and Environment	
Originating service	Licensing	
Accountable employee	Paul Dosanjh	Service Manager: Trading Standards and Licensing Act.
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Report to be/has been considered by	None	

Recommendations for noting:

The Statutory Licensing Committee is recommended to:

1. Approve the cost of redesigning and printing the 'Ask for Angela' posters, business cards and mirror stickers

The Statutory Licensing Committee is asked to note:

1. The plans for the updating and relaunch of the "Ask for Angela" scheme and the timeline.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 To advise the Statutory Licensing Committee of the progress of the refresh of the “Ask for Angela” initiative.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The ‘Ask for Angela’ campaign was developed by Lincolnshire County Council in 2016. The aim of the project was to promote a culture change in relation to sexual violence and abuse and enable those who feel vulnerable in pubs and clubs to discreetly approach staff and request assistance.
- 2.2 Later in 2016 The London Borough of Merton also piloted the initiative with the Metropolitan Police, and it led to a decrease in sexual violence reports in the borough.
- 2.3 City of Wolverhampton Council (CWC) launched the initiative on 4 December 2017. The Council worked closely with Pub Watch and the Police to implement the project. Prior to the launch, there was a publicity campaign with partners working with the press and social media and publicity posters and leaflets were produced. Participating venues received written guidance and a briefing on the Scheme which was provided by Council licensing officers and partners.
- 2.4 The ‘Ask for Angela’ initiative aims to reduce sexual violence and vulnerability by providing customers with a non-descript phrase they can use to gain assistance from staff members in order to be separated from the company of someone with whom they feel unsafe due to that person’s actions, words or behaviour.
- 2.5 By “Asking for Angela”, an individual is alerting staff that they require help. They will be taken aside, or to a safer location, so they can speak in confidence to that staff member about the assistance they need. Options available to staff include offering to call a taxi for the individual; contacting their friends or family; calling the Police or requesting that an individual causing the distress leaves the venue.

3.0 The current situation and future plans

- 3.1 The initiative received a good reception with 28 pubs and clubs in Wolverhampton participating. The success of the scheme has led to the local Police and Crime Commissioner undertaking consultations with a number of local authorities in the West Midlands with a view to them funding the Ask for Angela initiative in their area. At its inception the partners included West Midlands Police, Pubwatch and the University of Wolverhampton
- 3.2 Whilst the scheme is still in operation, we are aware that due to the natural turnover in licensed premises staff and the lockdown that the initial impetus may have been lost and the scheme may not now work coherently and effectively across the City Centre.

- 3.3 Additionally, sexual violence and the safety of both men and woman has become a national issue with concerns rising across society. Accordingly, the relaunched scheme will also include messages that the “Ask for Angela” scheme isn’t just aimed at protecting women.
- 3.4 As the night time economy opens up after the Covid lockdown it appears that this is an opportune moment to refresh the scheme and in so doing send out the message that the City Centre is a safe and welcoming place for an evening out
- 3.5 The relaunched scheme will start with the City Centre licensed premises and then be relaunched in Bilston and Wednesfield town centres later in the year
- 3.6 Discussions are currently ongoing with a large taxi operator about the training of their operators who take the calls/bookings, so that the use of the phrase “Ask for Angela” then triggers a set of actions including calling the police and promptly dispatching a vehicle. Complementary training is being prepared for the taxi marshals which we will have on duty every Friday and Saturday night and for the BID provided Guardian Angels.
- 3.7 In addition to the existing publicity posters, colleagues in the communications team are also producing business cards which can be distributed all over the City and which people can keep in their wallets and purses as a handy reminder of the scheme. The relaunch will also be backed with mirror stickers which can be applied to mirrors in toilets and at salons, nail bars etc to have a wider publicity base. These materials are currently in the design phase but should be available by the end of July.
- 3.8 Some of the existing posters have an image of a women as the scheme user. New publicity material will be less gender specific as we seek to promote the scheme for any users of the night time economy who feel vulnerable during a night out.
- 3.9 New posters etc will also make greater use of the collective equality, diversity and inclusion branding that brings together protected characteristics to show our commitment to fairness, equality, diversity and inclusion. However, to enable the scheme to be relaunched by the end of June existing stocks of the existing posters will be used initially.
- 3.10 Consideration is also being given to a social media campaign. Information is being gathered on the most appropriate platforms and their ability to direct messages at our target group when they are in Wolverhampton. The cost of the social media campaign is as yet unknown and so not included in the cost estimate for which approval is sought.
- 3.11 West Midlands Police, the University, Pubwatch, the Business Improvement District (BID) and the Wolverhampton Domestic Violence Forum are all active supporters of the scheme and its relaunch.

3.12 The scheme will be active and effective from 26 June 2021 as this is the first weekend after the lifting of the remaining pandemic restrictions. Contacts have been made with partners to enable them to prepare to ensure that this target date will be hit. This scheme, as well as several other activities, should also help revive the City's hard-pressed hospitality sector by promoting Wolverhampton City Centre as a safe entertainment venue.

4.0 Financial implications

4.1 The costs of redesigning the posters and producing business cards etc will in the region of £1300. At the anticipated rate of usage this expenditure should pay for enough material to last for approximately two years

4.2 The financial implications from this report will be resourced from within the current approved budgetary provision and monitored as part of the Council's quarterly budget monitoring process.

[SB/24052021/Z]

5.0 Legal implications

5.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report. [JB/24052021/A]

6.0 Equalities implications

6.1 There are no equalities implications arising from this report as it is a relaunch of a current scheme. The relaunch will however support the Council's equality and diversity agenda and contribute to its Rainbow City initiative.

7.0 All other Implications

7.1 There are no other direct implications.

8.0 Schedule of background papers

8.1 Licensing Committee – 29 November 2017 Ask for Angela Campaign