

Local Alcohol Action Areas (LAAA)

Expression of interest to become a LAAA

<p>1. Who is the lead contact: (Name / Job Title / Address / Phone / Email)</p>	<p>Kath Donald Strategic Manager, Community Safety Community Safety Unit (CSU) Gravesham Borough Council 1st Floor, Civic Centre, Windmill Street, Gravesend, Kent DA12 1AU Tel. 01474 33 78 09 Email: kath.donald@gravesham.gov.uk</p>
<p>2. Who is the Senior Responsible Owner for your proposed project: (Name / Job Title)</p>	<p>Sarah Kilkie Assistant Director (Communities) Gravesham Borough Council</p>
<p>3. What is the exact location of your proposed LAAA: (A LAAA can be any size from a single town centre to a whole local authority area)</p>	<p>Gravesend Town Centre (across Riverside, Pelham and Central Council Ward areas)</p>
<p>4. Which of the three LAAA aims (reducing alcohol-related crime and disorder, reducing alcohol-related health harms, promoting growth by establishing a diverse and vibrant night-time economy) will your project address?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing alcohol-related crime and disorder; • Promoting growth by establishing a diverse and vibrant night-time economy.
<p>5. Please describe the issues that make this aim/these aims a priority for you. (500 words max)</p>	<p>Whilst alcohol-related crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB) experienced in Gravesham may not be as great as seen in some of the country's major city centres, its negative impact on a relatively small town centre is considerable and of concern to all local partner agencies. Alcohol misuse and irresponsible drinking behaviour is a recognised contributory factor particularly in relation to violent crime (including domestic abuse taking place both in private and public areas), criminal damage and a range of ASB issues. This results in fear of crime and concerns for personal safety amongst the local population that discourages people from visiting the town centre, places a considerable strain on services, particularly Kent Police, whilst adversely affecting trade for responsible licensed premises, publicans and retailers. It also reduces the town's capacity for attracting new businesses and investment.</p> <p>Despite significant reductions in crime and ASB having been achieved in recent years through determined multi-agency working, crime and disorder in which alcohol misuse is a key feature, continues to be a problem locally:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recorded ASB fell by almost 20% in 2012-13 but Gravesham still has the 3rd highest rate of ASB incidents per 1,000 population

of the 12 Kent Districts (37.8 offences). ASB cases handled by the Community Safety Unit (CSU) invariably involve behaviour that is alcohol-related whether it manifests itself in complaints of rowdiness or noise, verbal abuse and/or intimidation;

- Street drinking in the town has become a real issue and was linked to 110 ASB incident reports to Police between June-August 2013, placing considerable demands on the service's resources. Council services have seen a significant rise in the number of complaints from retailers and businesses about street drinkers intimidating customers and staff, repeatedly urinating in public places and discarding bottles/litter irresponsibly. Complaints have also increased from residents living in town centre neighbourhoods of street drinkers behaviour as they will frequently move from one location to another, including parks and open spaces that then cannot be enjoyed freely by others;
- Criminal damage in the town is predominantly linked to ASB and crime that is alcohol-related. In 2012-13, Gravesham's rate of recorded criminal damage offences was the second highest amongst Kent Districts);
- Recorded incidents of domestic abuse are high - Gravesham saw the largest volume increase in any Kent District last year with a rise of 22.7% or an increase of 343 incidents. Alcohol misuse is a feature in the majority of these incidents but there also appears to be an increasing number of incidents occurring in public rather than private places. Generally these take place in our town centre, often but not exclusively, during night-time economy hours;
- Violent crime locally has been increasing and in 2011/12 approximately 526 violent crimes were directly attributable to alcohol – the second highest rate in any Kent District;
- The town centre's NTE is limited with little beyond drinking establishments. There is a very under-developed evening economy and existing alcohol-related problems (both day-time and night-time) hinder progression. With a fast-growing population (the most diverse in the County), there is potential for development and an opportunity to create a vibrant evening and night-time centre of attraction.

6. Please set out what action is currently taken to tackle these issues. (500 words max)

Gravesham has an excellent record of partnership working and considerable efforts have already been made to try to address the issues described above including:

- Establishing of a well-supported Drug and Alcohol Action Group to co-ordinate multi-agency activity to reduce alcohol-related crime and ASB;
- Instigation of a 3 month Dispersal Order in the town centre area by Kent Police (supported by the Council) primarily to address and provide some respite from increasing and persistent problems associated with street-drinking;
- Close working with G-Safe (Town Centre Crime Reduction Initiative) and delivery of the Safer Socialising Scheme (similar to Best Bar None) to encourage responsible management of licensed premises;
- Use of G-Safe Exclusion Orders to bar offenders of alcohol-related ASB who are abusive/intimidating to retailers, businesses, their staff or customers;
- Joint work between Council and Police Licensing Officers enforcing licensing conditions and promoting responsibility in the sale of alcohol;
- Implementation of the Kent Community Alcohol Partnership in Gravesham's secondary town centre (with the possibility of roll-out to other locations in future);
- Enforcement of Alcohol Control Zone conditions operating in the proposed project area;
- Street Pastors (working closely with Kent Police, CSU and G-Safe) patrol on Friday and Saturday nights to reduce opportunities for alcohol-related ASB and/or violence;
- Promotion of local drug and alcohol treatment services to those involved in alcohol-related crime and ASB;
- Considerable seasonal work to counter potential increases in alcohol-related violence and risks to personal safety (particularly in the Christmas/New Year period);
- Preliminary planning for the possible seeking of Purple Flag Accreditation – this remains an ambition but the evening and NTE of the town is felt to be insufficient to achieve this at the current time.

<p>7. Does your area wish to be one of five that will benefit from intensive support from the Home Office communications specialists? If so, please briefly explain how you think you might benefit.</p>	<p>Yes. Public perceptions about the level of crime and disorder in our town, particularly ASB and alcohol-related disorder, are often negative. This has a very real impact on residents' and visitors feelings of safety, on our ability to attract new and retain existing businesses in our town. Best efforts are made to publicise joint work that is taking place but these seldom receive the degree of publicity that they deserve. In turn, negative stories often make headlines. We would welcome additional support in identifying steps that we can take to better get our message across about positive work that is being delivered in response to community concerns about alcohol-related issues affecting the town centre to increase public confidence - both the in partner agencies commitment to tackling them and in the potential that our town has to offer.</p> <p>Gravesham is very well-placed geographically for future regeneration and development; its proximity to the capital, high-speed train service to London and train links to Europe are all very positive features. However, as a small town the issues we have described are having an adverse effect on our ability to fully promote the Borough, establish an evening economy and develop NTE. A positive communications strategy in respect of how alcohol-related crime and ASB is being addressed could be hugely beneficial.</p>
<p>8. Please confirm that this expression of interest has the support of the chief executive of your local authority and the police and crime commissioner of your force area.</p>	<p>This application is submitted with the support of the Kent PCC, Ann Barnes and Gravesham Borough Council's Chief Executive, David Hughes.</p>
<p>9. If one of your project's chosen aims is to reduce health harms, please confirm that it has the support of your local clinical commissioning group and the chief executive officer of the local acute trust.</p>	<p>Not applicable.</p>
<p>Signed: <i>Kath Donald</i></p> <p>Print Name: Kath Donald</p> <p>Organisation: Gravesham Borough Council</p> <p>Contact details if not provided above:</p>	

Please return this form to Andy Parsons, Drugs and Alcohol Unit, Home Office, 4th Floor Fry Building, 2 Marsham Street, London, SW1P 4DF. If you have any queries regarding the application process please contact Andy Parsons on 020 7035 1921 or e-mail Andrew.Parsons1@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk