

Alcohol strategy consultation  
4th Floor Fry  
2 Marsham Street  
London  
SW1P 4DF  
February 5<sup>th</sup> 2013

Dear Sir or Madam,

The Greater Manchester Business Leadership Council is writing to endorse the Government's proposal to introduce a minimum unit price for alcohol. We wish to lend our support to the proposals with the additional view that we do not think implementing these proposals will impact negatively upon the economy. For this reason we support a minimum unit price of 50p.

The Greater Manchester Health Commission previously provided public leadership on this matter in order to help spark a public debate. The Business Leadership Council contributed to this work with the leadership of William Lees Jones. The Commission (now the GM Health & Wellbeing Board), and individual local authorities and Health & Wellbeing Boards are responding separately. We support the content of the GM Health and Wellbeing Board's response (attached) with the following additional comments:

- Regarding **effects on employment and absenteeism**, evidence from Sheffield University, published by DH in 2008 stated that generally, all policy options that target harmful and hazardous drinkers are effective in reducing alcohol related harm in the workplace. The size of the effect is dependent on the extent of price increases. Unemployment due to alcohol problems is focused on harmful drinkers and is estimated to reduce as prices increase: e.g. 3,800 avoided unemployment cases for 30p versus 12,400 for 40p minimum price.
- Regarding the **regeneration of our town centres** one of the key findings from the NW Big Drink debate was that nearly half of participants avoided the town centre at night because of the drunken behaviour of others, and half felt that action was needed to tackle alcohol issues in their area. Implementing minimum unit price and reducing social disorder arising from irresponsible consumption of alcohol will support our work to create vibrant, attractive and economically productive town centres.
- Regarding **impact upon GM business**, our understanding is that implementation of minimum unit would have minimal impact upon the major supermarkets. Debate within GM has focused upon the effect of cheap alcohol and 'pre-loading' upon on-trade sales. In principle, the 'community pub' has an important role to play in terms of encouraging responsible drinking and social

cohesion. GM discussions have suggested that minimum unit price will help support local pubs and responsible drinking. A local major brewery, JW Lees, has publicly lent its support to the campaign in GM for these reasons.

