

**Responses to Consultation on Watford Borough Council's
Draft Statement of Licensing Policy**

Please tick all boxes which apply and attach continuation sheets as necessary

1) Have you read the draft Licensing Policy? It is available at http://www.watford.gov.uk/ccm/content/ehl/licensing/licensing-act-policy-refresh.en
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes 19 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No 4 Not known 3
2) Do you agree with the introduction of a Sensitive Licensing Area policy for these specific areas?
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes 26 <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know
Please give reasons for your answer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Watford is a beautiful place and if we don't pull the reins in now it will quickly become another one of those towns in London known for anti social behaviour" • "Far too many premises already sell alcohol" • "There has been problems with anti social behaviour in the past" • "Having moved to Whippendell recently have witnessed the negative impact of alcohol sales and need for restrictions for the benefit of all" • "There is a drunks/drugs centre at the top of the road and from there it is a short walk to the nearest alcohol outlet" • "Too much litter and noise from drinks" • "Litter, empty beer cans/bottles, etc., all over the place. Crime" • "This will help cut down 'week-end' trouble in Watford town centre and the streets nearby" • "Drinkers leading to anti social behaviour" • "A place of residence should be quiet. The female only gym on Queen Street is disturbing the whole neighbourhood" • "Anti social behaviour, increased crime, polluting rubbish. I live in this area & Queensgate Development has been broken into several times, rubbish left in our residence, fearful" • "So bad environment be less"

- “Public nuisance/crime/ anti social behaviour is very disturbing at any time and especially late night/early morning hours in a residential area and should be prevented”
- “Nuisance, noise, pollution and behaviour from street drinking”
- “The areas identified are in effect gateways to the town centre and as such suffer from antisocial behaviour issues fuelled by the availability of cheaper alcohol late into the evening”
- “We don’t need any more pubs and late night fast food joints in the neighbourhood”
- “There has been a history of alcohol related issues in this predominantly residential area for eg: noise nuisance, damage to vehicles and property and adverse effects on residents peace and quiet. The introduction of a new policy with strict restrictions is very welcome.”
- “Lots of antisocial behaviour outside our property”
- “There are too many small retail outlets selling alcohol in this area. We have the New Hope Trust and a drink/drugs clinic none of their work is encouraged by ease of alcohol purchase here”
- “Given the size of these areas, and the fact that there is much residential property, there are too many establishments selling alcohol. Its availability late into the evening encourages street drinking, leading to anti-social behaviour and causing nuisance to residents in the immediate area, which spills into adjoining streets. There is also litter from places selling other refreshments late in the evening”.
- “The Queens Road area is becoming a hang out for aggressive drunks and beggars. We have witnessed a number of fights and arguments between drunk men in the daytime near the underpass on Queens Road. Walking to the Harlequin Centre is an unpleasant experience and I do not allow my 11 year old to do so on her own because of the drunks and dossers that collect there. Also my 18 year old has said that any under 18 year old can buy anything they like from the off license on the Broadway. There is already a ghetto of unemployed alcoholics living in the area, due to the presence of New Hope Trust and anything that stops drink related antisocial behaviour must be encouraged- for example, our builder saw a drunk man with a loaded crossbow going into Alpha Court on Grosvenor Road only last week. There is also a problem with litter-with empty cans and bottles being thrown on the floor-e.g. two cider bottles in the churchyard yesterday and numerous empty cans and bottles in the gardens at the end of Gladstone Road. Ideally all alcoholics would be banned from drinking in public places and also moved out of the area-Queens Road is a disgrace and no one will want to invest in it whilst we have this problem on our doorsteps”.
- “There is a need to address concerns about licensing hours and availability due to the number of reported incidents in the locality of Queens Road. This includes threatening behaviour towards shop keepers and gathering of drinkers in the area of Queens Rd at the Derby road end outside the YMCA shop., The area attracting drinkers due to availability of alcohol”.

- “There are already far too many places selling cheap alcohol in Queens Road, and the hours already commence too early, and finish too late because of poorly conceived Government legislation restricting the scope of the Borough’s Licensing authorities to prevent nuisance and ASB. Any extension to the number of outlets or their opening hours in Queens Road can only exacerbate this unwelcome and Family unfriendly anti-social activity.

For example, nuisance is caused to mothers with infants having taken their older children to school, and shopping in Queens Road in the morning with alcohol beggars bothering them for the price of their first can of the day. Any earlier opening time would cause the mothers to be bothered in this way actually taking their impressionable children to school.

Cheap uncontrolled alcohol supply in cans and spirit bottles at extended hours causes nuisance by encouraging “pre-loaders” and “post – loaders” consuming alcohol in the street before and after going to the pub, completely without any form of control. This causes bursts of late night rowdiness, often in large peer groups, drunken loud behaviour along the streets late at night, and the jettisoning of rubbish and alcohol containers and other consumable detritus, into people’s gardens and also the disgusting practice of urinating into them. Further, there is a measure of violence and criminal damage occurring as a result. This must certainly be prevented from expanding any further, and heavily discouraged and restricted in scope at the source of alcohol supply in Queens Road”.

- “There are some examples which I have relayed to the Police with respect to anti-social drinking within the St Albans Road area from Leavesden Road to Leggatts Wood rise. This is a result of first hand experience as I live in the area and also a ward councillor of part of the area.

The result of the street drinking and the behaviour of certain known street drinkers has resulted in some local residents having fear walking past him as he often asks for money as they walk past, if they refuse the response is profanity. This resulted in people fearing abuse and nuisance caused by them.

I support the introduction of a sensitive licensing area. I have local residents complain about the litter caused by the street drinkers, for example between the service road between Oakdene Road and St. Albans Road/Longspring.

One of the individuals, who is a known street drinker has also begun to sleep rough in Brixton Road. Again this is public nuisance as this is also associated with urinating and excreting faeces. I have local resident stating: “The anti-social behaviour has got worse. I returned home from work the other day to what was clearly a homeless man urinating in the street. Homeless persons sleep in the car park at on the left as you enter Brixton Road. It is a complete embarrassment and I actually dread friends and family coming over in case they see any of this”

- “The street drinker is often seen drinking on the bench outside Christchurch, Bruce Grove and the bench outside Longspring-the impact of this is that it has encouraged

other people to join him and their behaviour can be appalling at times. This has resulted in a group of people drinking within the area and outside the church-which runs many family run community events, including a mother and toddler group. I believe this will help in protecting children from harm associated with this anti-social behaviour.

I have witnessed street drinkers urinating in the street and this again is something which is a nuisance.

There are a number of off-licences in the St. Albans Road area as well as shops which have late night licences, including the Esso petrol station which has a 24 hour licence”

- “I am in favour of including Queens Road in a Sensitive Licensing policy area for the following reasons:

The Broadway currently has 6 retail outlets selling alcohol which collectively provides customers with access to purchase from 8am to 10pm. There are an additional 2 alcohol selling outlets at the St Johns road end of Queens Road. The current licensee works closely with police and the council to maintain certain standards to prevent alcohol related ASB, i.e., no sale of single cans, not selling to street drinkers, etc. This working relationship is not to be underestimated or indeed the licensing hours which residents and ward councillors have worked hard to restrict. Any new additional similar outlets will undoubtedly have a negative impact on what is a residential area. Any policy which serves to restrict any further outlets trading in the area would be of benefit to the community.

The police currently work extremely hard to manage the issues of street drinking and ASB. Any further outlets would put additional pressure on resources which is not viable given the road’s proximity to the High Street where a heavy police presence is required.

Alcohol selling retail outlets tend to be open for extended hours. These late hours invariably affect residents with noise and litter disruption. Replacing a traditional 9-5 shop with another alcohol selling shop will again affect the “status quo” and why this policy would prevent this.

There is a high volume of alcohol selling shops already in the road. In order to attract new visitors to the area and support existing traders it is essential to provide an eclectic mix of retailers in the area. There is a strong link between derelict area and crime and so it is essential to provide an environment that will attract all different types of businesses to enhance the area’s economy and wellbeing”.

- “ I have already made my opinion clear regarding the numbers of retail sites offering alcohol in Queens Road, when I sent my letter against the Queens Road late trading hours application.

This attitude applies to virtually every area within the borough, there are only so many sites required in any one of them. There should be a similar overall restriction not just in the three areas selected, and the question is not just where or at what time one can buy alcohol, but how strictly it is monitored and enforced by the Borough’ officers and licensing panel, the Police and most importantly the Courts on

appeal.

As a former retailer of Consumer products (not food or alcohol) I well appreciate the retailers desire to make profit in any way possible and if that includes moving high cost and highly tax goods then many will find ways to “bend” the rules. The fact that it is available in multiple places anywhere causes irrational and greedy retailers to bend the rules and more importantly the Law to their own advantage.

I would sight the blatant lack of transparency and detail in the recent Queens Road retailers application, where he supplied only half the truth by omitting the more difficult and more relevant details against his argument and thus skewed the details of his application in his favour.

That could almost be translated as criminal misrepresentation.

However more importantly, in my now possibly out of date interpretation of the law, the manner and delivery of the Licensing panels ruling left too many opportunities for the new application.

I fear to repeat my own experience of 15 years as a licensing Magistrate including Chairman of the Licensing Panel: there was and there has always been a co relationship between alcohol and crime, one might generalise by stating one fuels the other and versa versa.

The general public’s present attitude to alcohol and it’s availability is quite understandable, as they see the results of excess drinking at the base level of rowdiness, bad behaviour, the “mess” caused and lack of respect for others property at grass roots, so to speak.

I understand the coalition government is currently reviewing the problems of alcohol misuse at national level, therefore I belive the last thing Watford Borough should consider is the setting up of these “areas”.

- “Many times food and alcohol related litter is left in front of our house or on top of our bin at night time. At late night once a drunk person was trying to open our door. The exhaust machines used by Pepe’s and Taj make a lot of noise”.

3) Do you agree with the reasons for Sensitive Licensing Area policies in these areas?

Yes 24

No

Don’t know 1

Blank 1

Please provide reasons or other evidence to explain your answer

- “Litter is a problem we also have had graffiti, theft, drug dealing on our property and

there was a sexual assault outside our flat”

- “ I would like to think it would reduce anti social behaviour. There are several outlets in Queens Road where you can purchase alcohol bottle, store, spar, Londis and the Polish shop. are so many outlets really required? These places lead to people drinking on the benches outside Queensgate flats facing Derby Road. They get rowdy & urinate against the wall”
- “These are mixed residential/commercial areas, so residents deserve protection from the adverse effects of late night alcohol sales and late night refreshment”
- “ The people causing the problem rarely live in the neighbourhood in which they are causing the disturbance. They don’t take into consideration the local residents so anyway of preventing this disturbance should be beneficial”
- “It will be safe aswel”
- “Extend it if possible but keep the shops in the area they belong- A High street”
- “Waste of Police time, waste of sleep time/ unable to sleep”
- “I agree with the sensitive licensing area. It will help to stop trouble in the town centre”.
- “See empty cans everywhere”
- “Street drunks hang around areas where they can buy cheap booze”.
- “Street drinkers in particular in and around Whippendell Road do cause misery for all and impact on community relations”.
- “There is built up residential area with a significant amount of takeaways causing litter, noise and pollution”
- “People drinking in street”
- “There are over a dozen takeaway just on Whippendell Rd creating nuisance and litter. How many more do we need?”
- “Absolutely- about time!! It will help residents feel somewhat secure.”
- “Common sense”
- “As stated above, but also because being close to the town centre, means that residents in these areas are already impacted by the after-effects of people drinking in town, without it being exacerbated by alcohol being readily available in the immediate vicinity. As a local resident, living near Queens Road, I have witnessed and suffered from anti social behaviour”.
- “Restricting and limiting the hours of operation will surely create less litter, less noise and less drunk related crimes but I think restrictions should start from 10.00PM”

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4) Do you agree that the introduction of Sensitive Licensing Areas will help in promoting the licensing objectives (prevention of crime and disorder; prevention of public nuisance; protection of children from harm; and public safety)?

- Yes 28
- No
- Don't know 1

Please give reasons for your answer

- "There are still several outlets in the area selling alcohol so I don't know how big an impact it will make"
- "Any new policy to help residents live a more peaceful life is always welcome. The support of the council or any other organisations involved is what the residents need"
- "Less pubs and places where you can buy alcohol late will hopefully reduce anti-social behaviour, therefore making it safe to walk home late without fearing for your life"
- "Restricting the availability of alcohol in these areas will reduce their attractiveness to town centre visitors and street drinkers, so should reduce levels of ASB"
- "Take away the ability to buy alcohol – no street drinking"
- "But it needs to be strictly policed, local residents should be alerted to any changes or applications to any premises selling food or drink. The number of premises in each area allowed to sell alcohol should be limited".
- "So it will protect children to stay away from crime"
- "The crime rate has gone up in Queens Street, Lord Street and Loates lane. People could park their cars without thief, now constant break-ins"
- "This will prevent nuisance, night fight"
- "I live in Marlborough Road and can hear the 'shouting' and foul language late at night"
- "Cut down availability of alcohol in area. Should drink in pubs and ref not in street".
- "This generates a bad influence on children in this area".
- "Would also like this proposal applied to current licensing agreements those when violated".
- "Late night anti social behaviour and litter all need limiting"

- “There is too much nuisance in Whippendell Rd at night especially at Fri night and Sat night and way too many takeaway packets and kebabs and food dumped on our streets encouraging rodents and foxes”.
- “We have had to call the police repeated times- this adds costs to our taxes”
- “If there is a control on the availability of alcohol and also late night refreshments, I think it can help to counter some of the problems, and lead to the achievement of the objectives. It would be good to look to improving the areas, and increasing the diversity of commercial usage, and enhance the residential habitations”.
- “Although we also need more active policing to stop alcoholics from installing themselves in public places”.
- “The introduction of an SLA would give the committee a chance to review licence applications in the light of current circumstances at the time. It will enable the factors mentioned to be analysed and taken into consideration with regard to the licensing objectives. Importantly it will help reduce any growth in demand competition leading to low prices It would act a control factor to enable the licensing objectives to be fulfilled”.

5) Do you agree with the size of the proposed Sensitive Licensing Areas?

- Yes 24
- No 2
- Don't know 4

Please give reasons for your answer and offer a description of where the area should cover if you disagree

- “Queens Road especially seems a dodgy road. There are several late-night fast food take away places- we really don't need anymore-besides we should be promoting healthy eating. The pub at the end of the Queens Road/ Loates Lane which has changed hands several times is now closed down seemed to attract unsavoury characters. Something really needs to be done to improve this street and encourage local traders bakers/florist perhaps certainly not a pub or another chicken joint”.
- “Yes the areas concerned are those where the licensed premises are”.
- “I hope it covers the entirety of Whippendale Road and the side roads”.
- “In my local area it should cover “The Beadway” Queens Road, Loates lane, Duke Street and Ean Street. Plus Southevon road and Cross Street. As Duke Street is

regularly used as a pedestrian route by late night noisy people who have been out drinking“.

- “It should cover Queens Street, Lord Street and Loates lane“
- “I think should be no licensing for small shops as for large shops like ASDA or so
- I would like to see Marlborough Road included in this area. Also it will make people think about what they are doing“
- “I believe this is an important start but should be expanded further at a later date“
- “Although unsure why the area cannot be expanded to all across Watford excluding the town centre. Otherwise could damage the perceptions and house prices within each area“.
- “This is the hey area of concern“
- “The residential area should be kept quiet, safe and clean for our kids. You dont even want to walk at night because of anti social behaviour“.
- “Could be extended“
- “These areas need fewer (far fewer) licensed outlets and more control“
- “These seem to be the areas outside of the town centre itself, with a high-density of licensed premises“.
- “Unsure that this will be large enough“.
- “Whilst this is a start, consideration could be given to restricting the number of licences to sell alcohol (Cumulative impact zone) in each area could be a possibility for the future unless reported incidents cease“.

6) We are considering whether the Sensitive Licensing Area in Whippendell Road should replace our current Cumulative Impact Zone. Which policy do you think would be more suitable for Whippendell Road?

Sensitive Licensing Area 16

Cumulative Impact Zone 6

Please give reasons for your answer

- “If I understand this correctly the SLA is more strict than the current CIZ. If this is implemented hopefully we will not have to review it in 5 years time. Any application will be automatically declined“. SLA
- “I think the three areas identified have similar physical, retail and residential

characters and similar levels of ASB so should be treated in a consistent way". SLA

- "More "in depth" policy" - SLA
- "Don't know as it is not my local area so I am not aware of the current issues".
- "I don't live live on Whippendale Road so my opinion does not count".-SLA
- "Alcohol is problem for this and this is leading to fights in nights"-SLA
- "People will know that this area is covered by the sensitive licensing area and will think about getting into trouble. It will also help the Police". -SLA
- "Litter is considerable. Consumption of food on roads especially late at night (Durban Rd West) and drinking on road with associated noise"- CIZ
- "Unsure- favour both, i.e., increased licensing restrictions and enforcement of no drinking in the area. Remains a constant problem".
- "More suitable for local needs"- SLA
- "We need to be sensitive in our decisions and choices as to what effect they may cause those around us". -SLA
- "Better to refuse the application altogether-too many alcohol selling establishments in proximity already" -CIZ
- "Whichever gives the best regulation. My wife and I enjoy a drink and the majority of which is not purchased locally"
- "I think the policy is more specific, and it gives greater control in dealing with licensing applications.- SLA"
- "Unsure of the issues in that area".
- "Both"
- This offers tighter control over alcohol licenses.

7) Please state your name

If you wish your name to be withheld from the public report, please tick this box

8) Are you a ... ?

- local resident -22
- local business 4
- Councillor 4

- Premises Licence/Club Premises Certificate holder
- responsible authority
- Personal Licence holder
- other – if so please state – 1 (registered charity)

9) In which area do you live or work?

- Whippendell Road - 11
- Queens Road - 10
- Market Street – 2
- Other – 2

How to respond

We would welcome written comments on the proposed amendments or the policy generally to the address below or by email to licensing@watford.gov.uk by 20 September 2013.

If completing this questionnaire online, you may save it on your computer and submit it by e-mail. If you have been sent this questionnaire by post, please submit it using the pre-paid envelope enclosed.

Your name (unless withheld) and any comments will be included in a public report to be considered by the Licensing Committee on 22 October 2013, after which the revised policy will be considered by Full Council on 20 November 2013.

Licensing Team
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