

APPENDIX 4

On behalf of the licensing authority of Watford Borough Council, I object to the application for a new licence to permit the sale of alcohol for consumption off the premises at Watford Superstore, 43-45 Market Street.

My representations are on the grounds that this application will undermine the licensing objectives of the prevention of crime and disorder and the prevention of public nuisance.

This premises is within Market Street, which has had historic issues of residents and businesses suffering from anti-social behaviour, primarily, but not exclusively, caused by street drinkers. Liam Fitzgerald, the Council's Anti-Social Behaviour Co-Ordinator, details the effects of the street drinkers in a separate statement, and touches upon the extensive application of local authority and police resources to address this problem. The application of resources has included working with premises to identify street drinkers and other problem drinkers, and to prevent sales to such groups. Premises have also adopted, by condition on their licences where required, to not stock super-strength alcohol or single cans or bottles of certain drinks.

The street drinkers were attracted to Market Street by the number of premises which could sell alcohol, and the low price of alcoholic goods which was a result of competition between stores, as each store lowered prices to attract custom. Although I can not pass comment on the need for another premises selling alcohol, my concern is that the effect on this premises of competition from other shops will result in discounting and low price deals, which would be attractive to street drinkers and problem drinkers, who are more likely to engage in ASB, or cause concern to residents and businesses.

There is little indication from the submitted Operating Schedule that the applicant is aware of the local area or the problems which have occurred. Although CCTV is mentioned, and some measures to protect the premises from thefts, there is no mention of any measure to deter street drinkers, such as by not stocking super-strength alcohol, or not stocking single cans, both measures which have been implemented previously to deter problem drinkers. However, the applicant should be commended for volunteering to adopt 'Challenge 25' as an age policy.

I am also concerned that the beer fridge is closer to the entrance of the premises than to the counter. The plan submitted with the application also shows a shelving unit between the beer fridge and the counter, potentially prohibiting or at least obscuring the view of the beer fridge. This fridge may also be obstructed from the meat counter by another shelving unit. This is a concern because this area can not be effectively managed by staff within the premises, and may result in theft attempts by problem drinkers or even by children. The presence of CCTV cameras covering this area is not sufficient, and is not a physical barrier.

In accordance with the council's licensing policy, the licensing authority requests that there are conditions attached to this licence to deter street drinkers and other problem drinkers. It is felt that the following conditions, taken from the council's pool of model conditions, would help address some of the concerns listed in my representation:

- 1) The hours for sale are reduced to a terminal hour of 11pm on Monday to Saturday, and 10:30pm on Sunday.
- 2) No single cans or bottles of beer or cider shall be sold at the premises.
- 3) There shall be no sales of miniature or quarter bottles of spirits of any kind.
- 4) There shall be no self-service of spirits at the premises.
- 5) No beers, lagers or ciders of above 5.5% ABV (alcohol by volume) shall be sold at the premises.
- 6) A log (which may be electronically recorded) shall be kept detailing all refused sales of alcohol. The log should include the date and time of the refused sale and the name of the member of staff who refused the sale. The log shall be available for inspection at the

premises by the police or an authorised officer of the licensing authority at all times whilst the premises is open.

The layout of the premises should also be revised so that no alcohol is obstructed from view, to allow staff to effectively monitor all alcohol on display at all times. This may require the beer fridge to be relocated or, if this is not possible due to the location of power points, the shelving units to be reconsidered.

It is not expected that these conditions would remain on the licence indefinitely. There will be scope to review the need for these conditions should the premises establish a good trading history, with few or little incidents, over a period of time. A careful, measured, approach is recommended because this is a special area, covered by a special policy, with an unfortunate past. The problems which blighted this area can still be felt in the number of representations submitted against this representation by residents and businesses up and down Market Street. Too much change too soon could have a negative impact.

Regards

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