



LICENSING ACT 2003
REPRESENTATION ABOUT WOODY'S EXPRESS, 103 THE PARADE
Reference 15/00518/LAPRE

As the Licensing Authority for the Borough of Watford I am writing to make the following representations about this application received on 02.04.2015:

The premises have been a take-away within the central part of Watford's night-time economy for many years. The licensing authority is aware that such premises have the potential for being a flash-point for alcohol-related crime, particularly in the early hours of the mornings as people leave nearby clubs and pubs. Such problems are well documented, and underpin the licensing authority's policy LP3 for this part of the town.

Policy LP3 was intended to reduce alcohol-related crime and disorder by limiting the hours of licensed establishments. It has largely succeeded in reducing crime and disorder and the policy should be maintained to ensure crime and disorder does not again escalate to pre-policy levels.

Woody's Express are clearly a take-away premises and according to policy LP2 should be generally restricted to opening only until 0100 (other than for special occasions), to further policy LP3 for the reasons stated earlier.

This application seeks to extend beyond the 0100 threshold by some considerable distance on Monday, Friday and Saturday until 0315 the following day. This would in the licensing authority's considered view have an impact on slowing the rate of dispersal of people leaving from Oceana nightclub in particular, who would be attracted by a further place to visit rather than to leave the town centre.

The licensing authority is concerned that there is the potential for these additional people, particularly when the weather is dry, to congregate in the immediate vicinity of Woody's (which is very small), either waiting to be served, waiting for friends, and/or eating. Common sense suggests that this would not be a quiet activity with large numbers of people (the majority of whom would have been drinking alcohol) and has the potential to cause disturbance to direct neighbours, the current occupiers of Faircross House and the future occupiers of JSA House a short distance directly opposite The Parade.

Having scrutinised the operating schedule and application form, the licensing authority cannot find any singular reason why this application ought to be

made an exception to either LP2 or LP3. The application does not address how it will contribute towards reducing public nuisance other than a bald assertion that staff will be “trained to ensure its prevention”. Nor does the application follow the Secretary of State’s guidance (at paragraphs 8.33 to 8.41 of the March 2015 edition) to take local factors into account when preparing their operating schedule. This is all the more remarkable when one takes into account that the applicants operate several other licensed premises including one in the High Street, and were recently refused a licence for the very same premises as this application.

LP3 might be applied to restaurants, café-bars, other entertainment venues, cafes or premises providing non-alcohol licensable activities. As detailed above, the premises cannot fall within this class of exception as they are a take-away. Equally, they have not within their application demonstrated they should be an exception to LP3 by contributing to the family-friendly development of the town centre; effecting a real reduction in capacity of alcohol sales; or replace vertical drinking establishments with seated consumption and waiter service.

In light of the above policy factors the licensing authority’s stance is that granting the application as sought would undermine the intention behind policy LP3 through potentially increasing late-night crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour in a relatively confined area. Accordingly the licensing authority’s view is that the application ought not be granted beyond the hours set out in LP2.

Jeffrey Leib
20 April 2015