



Mrs M O'Donnell,
Licencing Authority,
Wirral Borough Council,
Wallasey Town Hall,
Brighton Street,
Wallasey,
Wirral
CH44 8ED

6th December 2016,

Dear Margaret,

We have previously met to discuss my concerns reagrding the impact of the number of Licenced Premises within the Charing Cross area of Birkenhead. As you are aware I am currently covering the Neighbourhood Inspector role within Birkenhead Neighbourhood. As part of my role I am responsible for reducing crime and Anti-Social-Behaviour (ASB). I work in conjunction with partner agencies to solve problems in the neighbourhood. I regularly review the crime and ASB statistics across the neighbourhood and apply a problem solving approach to deal with on-going issues.

I have concerns regarding the availability of alcohol in the Charing Cross area of the Birkenhead Ward and the effect this has on the level of alcohol misuse in the local area and the detrimental effect on the local community. The negative impact on the area is evidenced by the frequency of incidents reported to the Police that are directly related to the misuse of alcohol. The Charing Cross area is situated within close proximity to the town centre. It is an area which is regularly frequented by street drinkers, who engage in various criminal activities and ASB.

Within a mile of the Charing Cross area there are two homeless hostels, which provide support and accommodation for homeless individuals, who have a wide range of problems. Including a high number of residents who are alcoholics. Due to the number of residents and visitors to the area who have alcohol misue issues the Charles Thomspson Mission, Hemingford Street, provides a regular drop-in sevrice for such individuals. The area also contains Wirral Ways to Recovery, who provide services to individuals with drug and alcohol problems.

In order to provide relevent statistical data I have included the crime figures for offences which have occurred in the A344, A342 and A347 beats. These beats surround the Charing Cross area. Throughout the time I have worked within the Birkenhead area (which dates back to 2009) I have reviewed a number of reports of ASB . I am aware the alochol related ASB committed by street drinkers regularly occurs within these beats.

In the six month period between 1st May 2016 and 31st October 2016 the was eighty six (86) reports of alcohol related ASB within Charing Cross and the surrounding area.

In the months between February and August forty-three (43) theft shop offences were committed by street drinkers within the town centre area. I know that the actual figure is likely to be higher, as the above figure only includes matters where we have been able to detect an offence against a known street drinker.

T/Inspector Katie Wilkinson

Birkenhead Neighbourhood

Birkenhead Police Station, Mortimer Street, Birkenhead, Wirral, CH41 5EU

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Each of the reported incidents indicates that the misuse of alcohol was a clear factor in the anti-social behaviour of those persons involved in the incidents. The incidents occurred in public places and were visible to the local community. I know from previous contact with businesses and local residents in the area that they only call the Police when the anti-social behaviour gets 'out-of-hand' as they know the Police resources are stretched. It is a sad fact that the threshold for anti-social behaviour is high within Birkenhead area compared to other areas across the Wirral. The local community tolerate a much higher level of ASB before they contact the Police.

I am aware that the street drinkers are often victims of violence offences. They are targeted by some individuals and singled out and assaulted. The Birkenhead area has historically witnessed targeted attacks on drunken street drinkers, with tragic consequences. An unknown proportion of such assaults are not reported to the police. I have received third party reports about street drinkers, who report they have been attacked, but are not willing to have the details of the incident passed to the police.

The Police were able to successfully investigate these matters due to CCTV in the area. The CCTV evidenced the youths approaching drunken males and assaulting them. The youths in question have been arrested for offences under the Public Order Act, because the street drinkers will not assist the Police. This lack of engagement is due to a number of reasons, one of which being the chaotic life style of the street drinkers. I believe the youths are attracted to the Birkenhead Town Centre area because they view the street drinkers as easy targets, the youths know the street drinkers will not provide statements to the Police. I believe a large number of the targeted assaults on street drinkers (by youths) remain un-reported. The same youths who target the street drinkers are also known to be committing crime and ASB in the surrounding area. I regularly receive complaints from the local electorate complaining about the youth related ASB. It is clear that the youths are attracted to the area by the idea of terrorising the street drinkers, but if they do not target the street drinkers they turn to causing annoyance to the local residents.

I have attended a number of multi-agency meetings regarding alcohol related disorder within the Birkenhead area. It is quite apparent that the Health Service also suffers with the impact caused by alcohol misuse within the area. Due to the alcohol related problems within the area there are two alcohol support out-reach workers who work within the Birkenhead area. I am currently chairing a Problem Solving Group within the town centre to manage the vulnerabilities around street drinkers.

It is not just street drinkers who are involved in alcohol related crime and disorder. I am aware that alcohol is a contributing factor in a number of assaults within the Birkenhead area. In the 6 months between the 1st of May 2016 and the 31st of October 2016 thirty-six (36) offences of alcohol related domestic violence have been reported within the Birkenhead Ward. That figure accounts for 17% more domestic violence reports within the Birkenhead ward than the next ward in the 'league table' (where alcohol was deemed to be a contributing factor in the offence). Incidentally the next highest ward is Tranmere which adjoins Birkenhead ward.

The above data evidences the alcohol-related crime and ASB which occurs on a daily basis in the area directly surrounding the Charing Cross. In my opinion the area would benefit from the implementation of a Cumulative Impact Policy under the Licensing Act 2003.

I would be grateful if you could share the contents of this letter with the Licensing Act 2003 Committee and request that they consider a Special Cumulative Impact Policy for the surrounding Grange Road, Grange Road West and Oxton Road. Should the Licensing Committee be willing to review the licensing policy within that area I would be able to provide further in depth statistical analysis.

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Yours sincerely

Katie Wilkinson
T/Inspector
Neighbourhood Policing

