

13.40 With regard to licensing hours, the statement of policy should generally emphasise the consideration which will be given to the individual merits of an application. The Government recommends that statements of policy should recognise that, in some circumstances, flexible licensing hours for the sale of alcohol can help to ensure that the concentrations of customers leaving premises simultaneously are avoided. This can help to reduce the friction at late night fast food outlets, taxi ranks and other sources of transport which lead to disorder and disturbance.

13.41 The Government also wants to ensure that licensing hours should not inhibit the development of thriving and safe evening and night-time local economies which are important for investment and employment locally and attractive to domestic and international tourists. Providing consumers with greater choice and flexibility is an important consideration, but should always be balanced carefully against the duty to promote the four licensing objectives and the rights of local residents to peace and quiet.

13.42 Statements of licensing policy should indicate that shops, stores and supermarkets, are free to provide sales of alcohol for consumption off the premises at any times when the retail outlet is open for shopping unless there are good reasons, based on the licensing objectives, for restricting those hours. For example, a limitation may be appropriate following police representations in the case of some shops known to be a focus of disorder and disturbance because youths gather there. Statements of licensing policy should therefore reflect this general approach.