

Dear Margaret,

The purpose of this letter is to provide you with sufficient information for you to be able to prepare a report for the Licensing Committee so that they may consider whether public consultation should take place regarding the introduction of a Special Cumulative Impact Policy (SCIP) for the Charing Cross area of Birkenhead town centre.

In May of this year Councillor Brian Kenny and Councillor Jean Stapleton requested a meeting to discuss their concerns regarding alcohol related anti-social behaviour and the availability of alcohol in the Charing Cross area. At the meeting the introduction of a SCIP for the Charing Cross area was discussed. It was agreed that research would be undertaken to assess whether there was good evidence that crime and disorder or nuisance was occurring, and if so, whether the problems were being caused by customers of Licensed Premises or that the risk of cumulative impact was imminent.

The results of that research were as follows,

- Analysis undertaken by the Wirral Community Safety Partnership identified that the Charing Cross area had the highest number of incidents of alcohol related anti-social behaviour anywhere in Wirral during the period 1st April 2012 to 31st March 2013 and that 34% of all complaints of Street Drinking in Wirral were received in relation to the Charing Cross area of Birkenhead.
- In July 2013 a report completed by a Senior Manager from the Council's Supported Housing and Homelessness team identified that Street Drinkers "have volitional reasons for drinking in the street, centred on social aspects and the expense of drinking in traditional establishments/public houses".
- Within the area where the incidents of alcohol related anti-social behaviour were the highest there are thirty one Licensed Premises, seven of which are licensed for the sale of alcohol for consumption off the premises, which are the source of the supply of alcohol for the Street Drinkers.
- The Government's Alcohol Strategy, published in 2012, states that "there is evidence of a link between the number of venues selling alcohol in one area and levels of harm, whether this is crime, damage to health, or harm to young people", and as evidence of this cites a study by Popova, S., Giesbrecht, N., Bekmuradov, D. and Patra, J. (2009), Hours and days of sale and density of alcohol outputs: Impacts on alcohol consumption and damage: A systematic review.

The conclusion drawn from this research was that the cumulative impact of the concentration of Licensed Premises in this area is contributing to the Licensing Objectives being undermined.

In August 2013 Merseyside Police wrote to the Licensing Authority for Wirral and requested that an approach to Cumulative Impact be included in its Statement of Licensing Policy. I understand that the Licensing Committee is due to meet to consider whether the public should be consulted on this matter. I would like to provide the following evidence to support the application,

- Between 1st November 2012 and 31st October 2013, 434 crimes were recorded in the Charing Cross area.
- 226 (52%) of the crimes took place in premises licensed for the sale of alcohol for consumption off the premises.
- 342 (78%) of the crimes were Theft offences.
- In 174 (40%) of the crimes, alcohol was a factor.
- In 9% of all incidents (572/6298) recorded in the area, alcohol was a factor.
- In 2010/11, there were 4.6 alcohol related crimes per 1000 people in Wirral.
- 1 in 9 of all crimes In Wirral are alcohol-related.
- In Wirral alcohol causes 121 deaths per year, of which 63 are alcohol-specific.
- The economic cost to Wirral of alcohol problems in terms of health, social cost, criminal justice, and lost productivity is estimated at £127million per year, of which £25million are healthcare costs.
- Charing Cross is in an area where the Rate of Alcohol Related Hospital Admissions is the highest in Wirral (NI 39 2010/11).

As a result of the available evidence it can be shown that there is good evidence that crime and disorder or nuisance is occurring, and that customers of Licensed Premises are causing the problems, and that the risk of cumulative impact of the concentration of Licensed Premises is imminent.

This application is supported by Community Impact Statements provided by Councillors, police officers, business owners and residents and who work and live in the area.

Merseyside Police has identified the boundaries of the area where the problems are occurring and respectfully request that the Licensing Committee agree to commence consultation with those specified in section 5(3) of the 2003 Licensing Act regarding the introduction of a Special Cumulative Impact Policy (SCIP) for the Charing Cross area of Birkenhead town centre, specifically in relation to premises that are licensed for the sale of alcohol for consumption off the premises.

This report is submitted for your consideration.

Simon Barrigan
Licensing Sergeant
Wirral BCU