



Consultation Response for Statement of Licensing Policy
Stafford Borough Council

On receipt of the consultation documentation from Stafford Borough Council regarding the review of their Statement of Licensing Policy, Staffordshire Police have considered the proposed document, and its contents and offers the below response from the Police Licensing Unit as a Responsible Authority.

It is formally requested that consideration be given for the inclusion of a Cumulative Impact Assessment as part of the wider policy.

The provision of the Cumulative Impact Assessment Policy for a specified area can be relied upon when appropriate to prevent a further rise in alcohol related crime and disorder in relation to licensed premises.

It is recognised that these policies should only be relied on when relevant and not be utilised to prevent economic growth within a given location. In addition, in areas where Licensing Authorities have such a policy when the Police use or reference to the policy has been challenged by the legal profession representing the licensing trade, the Police have been able to demonstrate that it has been proportionate in the circumstances to cite it.

The Police continue to assess all applications on their own merits and can demonstrate that through engagement with the applicant Premises Licences have been granted without the need for a hearing before the licensing subcommittee. This has also been the case where such policies exist.

In normal times these businesses continued to flourish, largely with no calls for service to the Police, which shows an operational demonstration that the licensing objectives are not being undermined.

There is a variant of licensed premises situated within the locality that due to a number of factors around them that do bring the need for a policing response whether that be from those operationally policing the locality or the Police Licensing Team, and it is premises of this nature where this type of policy is recognised as being relevant whether it be a new application or a variation to an existing one.

It is appropriate to highlight that it is not just premises that are licensed to sell alcohol that can contribute to incidents of crime and disorder, but also those that are authorised to carry out the provision of late-night refreshment. These premises by the nature of their operation, usually being busiest at the end of a trading night at weekends are focal points for persons already intoxicated to gather which can then and often does lead to incidents of violence and/or disorder. This is referenced in the Revised Guidance issued under section 182 of the Licensing Act 2003, specifically Ch 14, para. 21:-

In some areas where the number, type or density of licensed premises, such as those selling alcohol or providing late night refreshment, is high or exceptional, serious problems of nuisance and disorder may arise outside or some distance from those premises. Such problems generally occur as a result of large numbers of drinkers being concentrated in an area, for example when leaving premises at peak times or when queuing at fast food outlets or for public transport.

The Police are also aware that some local authorities nationally previously removed their respective CIA zones due to the Covid pandemic, however there were also a high proportion who retained them as did authorities within Staffordshire. It is also worthy of note that some authorities that removed their respective CIA policies have since reintroduced them as with the correct usage, and also with the scrutiny of the licensing subcommittee should a matter be brought before them, each application can still continue to be viewed on its own merits with the authorities still having the ability where appropriate to utilise the CIA to keep communities safe from an increase in violence and disorder.

This balanced approach is shown by the Police allowing for both businesses to come to the town centre and prosper without impacting on the already existing issue of violence and disorder, and those which can be shown to have a detrimental impact are prevented when appropriate from further negatively contributing.

It is recognised that with the revision of the policing model there is now better coverage of the borough by Staffordshire Police, however this is one strand of tackling crime and disorder.

It is therefore requested that a Cumulative Impact Assessment policy be created and attached to the Statement of Licensing Policy when published, to include alcohol sales (on and off) and the provision of late-night refreshment, as it is considered an appropriate element to be contained within the wider Licensing Policy.

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