

**Khan, Nav**

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**From:** Winster, Frederick [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 22 June 2020 01:02  
**To:** Khan, Nav; Leeds District Licensing  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Application for an off licence at Zuber Store. Seaforth Place, Harehills. Reference: PREM/04543/001. [OFFICIAL]  
**Attachments:** ZUBER - PREM1 - REDACTED.PDF

Classification: OFFICIAL

Sir / Madam,

I have been made aware of the attached application for an Off Licence at Zuber Mini Market, 29-31 Seaforth Place, LS9 6AF.

As the Neighbourhood Policing Sergeant for the Gipton and Harehills ward I feel obliged to object to this application. The granting of a licence is likely to increase crime and disorder, and public nuisance.

I have a very broad remit, but in brief my role is to focus on local policing issues through community engagement, problem solving and early intervention. In practice this means myself and my team of officers deal with longer term problems affecting the community. I have worked in different roles as a police officer in Leeds for 16 years, and have been in my current post for around 18 months. Over that time I have built up a good understanding of the local area through speaking with members of the public, partner agencies and organisations, my staff members, and reviews of information on police systems. I am also an operationally active police officer and have continued to have direct experience of working in the Harehills area.

It may be useful to outline my professional experience of problems created by alcohol use in the close vicinity of the proposed licence location.

When I took up my post in January of 2019 I was quickly apparent that “street drinking” was a genuine problem and had been for a significant length of time. Individuals would gather at the junction of Cowper Road and Harehills Lane with between 4 and 15 adults present at any given time. They would drink from cans, and sit in the bus stop or to the rear of a local business at that junction on a daily basis. This generated noise nuisance while the group shouted and argued amongst themselves, litter from discarded cans and bodily fluids left behind, and calls to the police and ambulance services due to intermittent violence. Members of the public reported being intimidated and dissuaded from using local businesses and a bus stop at that junction which drinkers regularly used. This information was received through PACT meetings (public meetings with members of the public), calls to the West Yorkshire Police call centre, emails to our Neighbourhood Policing Team, and direct observation by myself and my officers.

As a result I refreshed our problem solving occurrence which documents the actions we take to tackle local problems. Only the most pressing and complex issues result in the creation of such an occurrence, and for perspective there are currently eight across the ward area – one of which remains street drinking. Despite the focus of the entire policing team, additional resources, and strict enforcement of the Public Spaces Protection Order – which allows officers to seize alcohol – it took until the start of August 2019 to have a significant impact on the issue. We had also modified the street architecture by adding fencing, working with addiction treatment agencies, and several other measures. The crime and nuisance was caused, and continues to be caused, by adults with alcohol addiction. The difficulty in overcoming such addictions in part explains the extreme difficulty police have had in addressing the problems associated with street drinking.

The groups of street drinkers very much remained a current issue in Harehills, although migrated to a more secluded location on nearby Compton Road. This dramatically reduced the impact on members of the public as reflected in reduced reporting to police. It also made disruption of the group more challenging because they were less visible to

passing officers. We continued to receive intermittent calls at a reduced volume. For example, in January 2020, one of the drinkers was attacked after arguing with unidentified local youths, resulting in grievous bodily harm. I am aware the Cleaner Neighbourhoods team had been clearing the area of rubbish including discarded cans on a daily basis up until the coronavirus pandemic, and had to undertake a major operation clearing cans out of a section of derelict land adjoining Compton Road.

This problem is in no way solved, and continues to be a significant local policing issue. With the introduction of coronavirus legislation, the gatherings of drinkers became illegal and they were repeatedly warned or issued fines on Compton Road. The grouping then moved back to their previous location on Harehills Lane, near the junction with Cowper Road, before eventually being largely displaced from the immediate area using the new legislation. This is relevant for several reasons. Firstly, the effect is likely to be temporary. Secondly, it shows how fragile the reduction in reports of crime and nuisance are, as the situation is influenced by external factors – which could include the increased availability of alcohol. Finally, we continue to receive occasional reports, and continue to see alcohol consumption in breach of Public Spaces Protection Order legislation. I am writing on the 20<sup>th</sup> June 2020, and my records show local officers seized alcohol from drinkers on the 7<sup>th</sup> June and 16<sup>th</sup> June, on both occasions from Harehills Lane. Even while restrictive legislation remains in place we continue to experience problems with nuisance – and wherever there is unregulated alcohol consumption on the streets at high levels, there is a likelihood of associated criminality in the form of assaults or public disorder.

It is clear to me that the very significant police resources invested into this issue have reduced but not resolved the problems associated with street drinking in Harehills.

Of particular relevance to this application we did work and continue to work with Leeds Licensing to dissuade local off-licences from selling to problematic individuals. There is a pattern where a particular off-licence will, after time, refuse to serve individuals intending to drink on the street. This is generally after education by police officers and the problems which the drinkers bring to the store through disruptive behaviour; individuals will often be banned from stores over time. However, because there is a proliferation of stores selling alcohol, there are always other options. Within 350 metres of this proposed licence are at least six shops selling alcohol of a similar type to the proposed off-licence.

Most drinkers do not live locally and travel to the area to consume alcohol. Information from the drinkers suggests that the ready availability of cheap alcohol is one of the drivers for this. My assumption is that stores compete on alcohol pricing, so an increased number of shops would further drive down costs and make the area more attractive to those consuming alcohol on the streets. There are 36 adults linked to our problem solving occurrence related to street drinking, and only 9 live within the ward area. This also demonstrates that problematic individuals will be more than willing to walk a short distance to the proposed Off Licence from the locations mentioned above.

I have noted that one of the proposed conditions to the granting of a licence is to sell alcohol at less than 6.5%, and to keep it behind the counter. Were a licence to be granted I would strongly support this, as the most popular drink is lager with a percentage strength above 6.5%. However, a wide range of drinks are consumed on the street, including spirits, high-strength ciders, and lower-strength lagers / ciders. For example, one low-strength fruit flavoured cider became popular for a short time, presumably due to heavy discounting. I do not feel strongly about the condition not to sell single cans, different stores have tried this with varied success – drinkers tend to pool resources and take advantage of price deals. I do not believe the proposed conditions will negate the likelihood that crime and nuisance will be increased by the granting of a further off-licence.

I am heartened to read that the applicant has found positive comments regarding the area on social media. They reflect my own opinion that there is a strong local community spirit, and that there are many positive aspects to Harehills which are not always highlighted. However, as with every area, it has challenges, and one of these is the consumption of alcohol on the street, which I feel I have described at length above.

I have focused on the consumption of alcohol on the street and associated problems, but alcohol is a driver for many different crime types, ranging from very serious (such as domestic violence) to relatively minor (such as public urination, also raised repeatedly with the police by local residents). I have carried out demand analysis of the streets surrounding the proposed off-licence. I have researched Seaforth Place, Back Seaforth Place, Seaforth Terrace,

Seaforth Avenue, Berkeley Avenue, Back Berkeley Avenue, and Ruthven View. I have not included Strathmore Drive and Seaforth Avenue as these are much longer streets and likely to distort any figures.

For the previous 12 months there were five calls to the above streets which were logged as alcohol-related, and this is an increase from three for the previous 12 months. Similarly, across the entire ward area there was an increase from 123 for the period 2018 – 2019 to 140 for 2019 – 2020.

On the surrounding streets calls to police logged as “Adult Nuisance” remained stable at 8 for both of the twelve-month period – but this is against a backdrop of a decrease from 205 to 185 across the ward area. Consumption of alcohol by youths is not considered a significant local problem by the police, although for completeness “Youth Nuisance” decreased on surrounding streets across the period against a slight increase across the ward area.

In the application it is noted that not many calls are received to the immediate area. This is potentially misleading as (for example) crime figures do not always reflect lived experience; a significant number of issues are underreported, and crime levels nationally are lower than the majority of the public would expect. What the figures I have included above do show is that public nuisance and crime types which tend to relate to alcohol consumption are either maintaining current levels or slightly increasing. This is at a disproportionate rate to the rest of the ward area. As a result, I am of the opinion that increasing the availability of alcohol to that vicinity will, in turn, further increase crime and nuisance on the surrounding streets.

Thank You,

Fred

Sergeant 6344 Fred Winster  
East Leeds Neighbourhood Policing Team (Inner East).  
Team 1 (Gipton and Harehills).  
Leeds District.  
Killingbeck Fire & Police Station.  
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