

# APPENDIX I

I am a police sergeant in West Yorkshire Police, currently working in East Leeds, attached to the neighbourhood policing team (NPT). I am the sergeant responsible for the Gipton & Harehills ward from an NPT perspective.

I have worked in East Leeds, of which Gipton & Harehills ward is a part, for the entirety of my policing career. Over the years I have spent countless hours on patrol within Harehills and attended hundreds of incidents within the ward.

I am making the following representations against licence application PREM/05068/001 at Maxi Foods, 22 Harehills Road, Leeds, due to the impact this will have on exacerbating the street drinking problem in Harehills, and undermine the work done by the NPT to tackle this issue.

'Street drinking' and 'street drinkers' are the terms used to describe those who publicly consume large amounts of alcohol throughout the day and engage in antisocial behaviour. Many street drinkers are alcoholics, and often homeless and battling other addictions. Street drinking is part of a routine for these people, who meet in groups on the street and public places and consume large amounts of often cheap and easily available alcohol.

These street drinkers are often a focal point for antisocial behaviour. The groups are intimidating to members of the public, and frequently become loud and rowdy as they become increasingly intoxicated. Fights between people in the group are not uncommon, and neither is drinking to point of unconsciousness. Harassment of passers-by and aggressive begging is commonplace. This occurs throughout the day, during what would be considered normal working hours, when businesses are open and members of the public are going about their daily business.

Street drinkers are a particular problem in the Harehills area. Street drinkers are frequently raised as one of the key concerns by residents to the police, and tackling street drinkers is one of the key priorities for the NPT.

The NPT have an open problem solving incident on police systems to assess the scale of the problem, record those involved, and document steps taken to address the issue. This started in December 2021, and in the 13 months since its creation over 100 different street drinkers have been recorded against it. These individuals are not all local to Harehills, with some travelling from elsewhere in Leeds to meet their associates and display their alcoholism on the streets of Harehills. Individuals from Meanwood, Burmantofts, South Leeds, and even Wetherby have been dealt with in Harehills in relation to street drinking by officers.

The impact of this issue cannot be overstated. Data produced by West Yorkshire Police shows that in the year December 2021 to December 2022 over just eight streets in Harehills the Police received 59 calls relating to alcohol nuisance. Examples of these reports include:

WYP-20220409-0591 - caller reporting group of males drinking, causing noise nuisance.

WYP-20220502-1369 - caller reporting female in drink, causing noise nuisance singing the same song for the last 20 minutes and holding a bottle of wine.

WYP-20220620-0138 - Same street drinkers, drinking, shouting and urinating on the street

WYP-20220805-1537 - Male walking around threatening people with a glass beer bottle in his hands.

WYP-20221015-1626 - Large group of adult males in back street drinking/in drink, shouting, swearing and fighting amongst themselves.

WYP-20220131-0823 - call from a business owner large group of males and females in drink outside the premise, shouting, drinking and being abusive.

It is important to note that these are only the calls logged as alcohol nuisance and does not include those further reports which have been logged as various criminal offences, for which the total will be much higher.

The NPT have worked tirelessly to tackle this issue. Many of those involved have been reported to Court for various offences and breaches of closure orders and public space protection orders, and officers routinely patrol the key sites to disrupt and move on those involved.

The biggest challenge in tackling this issue is the availability of cheap alcohol in the area.

The area around off-licences become the focal points for the street drinkers. Work done by the NPT and partner agencies is undermined by businesses continuing to sell alcohol to those involved, which perpetuates the problem.

Street drinkers will move round between off-licences, buying from one until the issues cause them to be moved on and a temporary ban by the staff, before this is relaxed after a period of respite when they have been elsewhere.

However well-intentioned a business is, if they are selling alcohol which is appropriately priced for the demographic of the area, it will be in the sights of the street drinkers. Alcoholism is an addiction and Harehills is well-known as a ripe hunting ground.

Other applications have included proposed conditions such as a minimum sale of £5, and restricting the hours during which alcohol can be sold. These are ineffective at tackling the problem. Street drinkers will often buy alcohol in sufficient quantity to exceed a minimum sale tariff, or include small groceries to meet this threshold. Restricting the hours during which alcohol can be sold is irrelevant, as the street drinking is not usually a problem late in the evening, with data showing peak call demand to the police regarding street drinkers is between 1000hrs to 1200hrs and 1500hrs to 2100hrs.

In the absence of any meaningful conditions which can be imposed, should a further licence be granted in Harehills this will continue to attract street drinkers to the locality and aggravate the issues that the NPT are trying to tackle.