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## **Westover Express, Westover Road, Bournemouth**

*This report is to be considered alongside the formal representation submitted in respect of an Application for a Premises Licence submitted to the Licensing Authority. It is the intention of Dorset Police to avoid any repeat of information previously submitted and to provide both the applicant (or their representative) and members of the Licensing Sub-Committee with additional information, context and evidence in support of the representation. This report is being completed and submitted as soon as practicable for the benefit of all parties. Whilst all details are correct at the time of completion, Dorset Police reserve the right to amend / introduce additional information and evidence in advance of the hearing.*

### **Background**

This is a new application for an off-licence within a small convenience store located at Westover Road, Bournemouth. This premises is located within a vibrant area of Bournemouth with a variety of retail and residential properties, however, there are challenges around crime prevention that are the focus of the local Neighbourhood Policing Team and partners within the BCP Council Community Safety Department. The applicant is applying to offer the sale of alcohol by retail from 0800-2300hrs daily.

Dorset Police are keen to support new businesses throughout Dorset, however, care and attention must be given to ensuring that there is a high level of trust and confidence that any new or enhanced licensable activity does not adversely impact on the community which it serves.

### **Concerns**

You may hear from the applicant that they intend to offer a community-focused premises offering a variety of convenience products for the benefit of customers of all ages, for tourists and residents and those that visit and work in the Town. Dorset Police welcome this business into the Town and acknowledge that most products being offered for sale are unlikely to cause any adverse impact on the community or public services, including the Police.

The service demand experienced by Dorset Police and our partners throughout Bournemouth Town Centre is often associated with the consumption of alcohol. Issues of concern occur throughout the day through to the late evening and Dorset Police are keen to address and support those offering alcohol for sale to mitigate these common issues wherever possible.

The immediate area where this licensed premises is located has and continues to experience disproportionately high levels of crime and anti-social behaviour, leading to high levels of reporting and demand for service from Dorset Police and our partners. This is a situation that remains under constant review and efforts are continuing to tackle the known issues in this part of Bournemouth.

Members are requested to consider the presence of the nearby YMCA Hostel, also located on Westover Road. This building is used to accommodate individuals with complex needs and some of these needs are often associated with alcohol. The BCP Council Statement of Licensing Policy stipulates three areas of concern where irresponsible off-sales of alcohol can lead to a detrimental impact on our communities with one of these being areas where there are 'alcohol addiction recovery activities' nearby. The policy states that, where evidence exists, applications in these areas are likely to be refused.

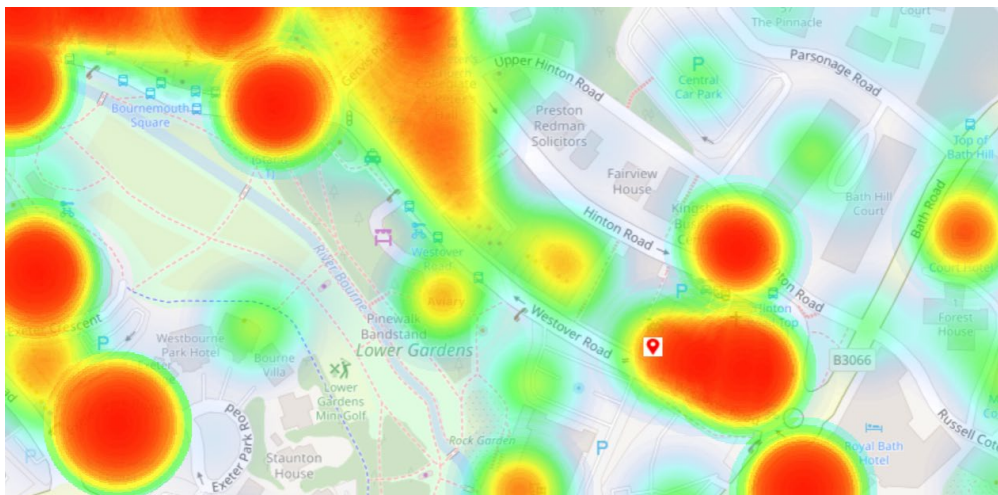
## Statements of Evidence

Dorset Police have produced two statements of evidence from officers that are operationally dedicated to patrolling Bournemouth Town Centre. Both officers are engaged in a variety of activities throughout the Town Centre intended to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour and their operational perspective is the very best representation of the current position in our Town Centre.

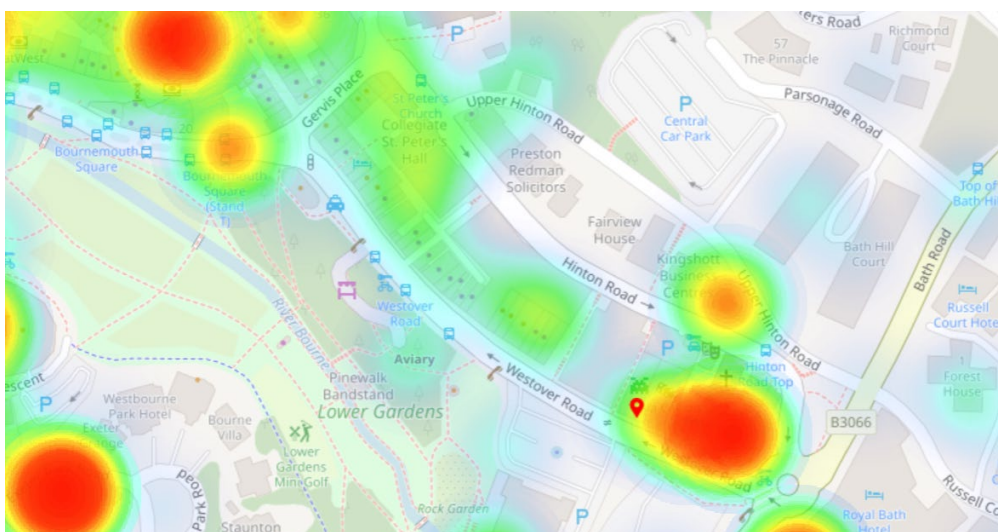
One of the most recent initiatives is the 'Clear, Hold, Build' process of working with partners to identify and 'clear' problems and concerns from the Town Centre. This could be individuals, groups, landlords, business owners etc. that are intent on causing harm to members of the public in the Town. Once that phase has been achieved, a process begins of maintaining a strong presence, building resilience and restoring confidence in those areas, known as the 'hold' phase. Once that is near completion, with support of our partners and the community, the 'build' phase aims to improve infrastructure, encourage investment, and ensure that new developments or improvements can withstand future challenges.

Additionally, officers are tasked regularly with high-visibility patrols as part of our seasonal policing response. These patrols focus on a variety of areas throughout the Town which are intelligence-led and ensure that we deliver an effective policing presence.

The below illustrations represent the progress that has been made over the past 12 months at Westover Road. Dorset Police are keen to ensure that this progress is not adversely affected by additional alcohol provision, which coupled with existing challenges, will likely undermine the progress that is being made. The first illustration shows the levels of crime and ASB over the past 12 months.



Through the effective use of Police resources, and the support of our partners and the community, the level of reporting has reduced significantly. The below illustration shows the same criteria and parameters over the past 6 months.



A significant amount of this crime and ASB is associated with young people and officers frequently report that youths responsible for committing low-level offences in this area are often intoxicated. Whilst there is no evidence to support a Cumulative Impact Zone, Dorset Police are concerned that the addition of a further outlet in an area known for youth-related crime will further exacerbate the issues that we are working hard to reduce alongside our partners.

Dorset Police are concerned that the addition of this alcohol provision will undermine our efforts to tackle crime in this area and impact on the vital support offered to vulnerable people at the YMCA.

Whilst Dorset Police have concerns regarding the operator for this premises, we are aware that there is currently no 'fit and proper' test within the Licensing Act 2003 which would offer any opportunity for us to invite an assessment of the operator based on their delivery of alcohol provision and other unlicensed activities at other outlets associated with them.

### **Available Outcomes to the Sub-Committee**

To assist the members of the Sub-Committee, Dorset Police make the following submissions in relation to the available outcome options in respect of this Application for a Premises Licence –

#### **Grant the Premises Licence as applied for**

Dorset Police are of the view that to grant the application as proposed would likely result in an increased demand for Police and other public services' support whilst undermining the efforts of the community and public services to address the existing challenges at Westover Road.

#### **Modification of the Conditions of the Premises Licence it considers appropriate for the promotion of the licensing objectives**

Dorset Police are grateful for the mediation that has occurred between Dorset Police and the applicant's former licensing consultant. The conditions offered during that mediation are as follows –

*Westover Express will meet all 4 Licensing Objectives as shown below, in particularly through ensuring comprehensive staff training, good neighbour practices, Challenge 25*

*All staff working at the premises concerned with the sale of alcohol shall be trained in accordance with the SWERCOTS scheme or such other scheme as may be approved by Trading Standards or the Licensing Authority from time to time and shall receive refresher training at least every 6 months.*

*A record of all staff training shall be maintained and kept on the premises and made available on request to an authorised officer of the Council or the Police.*

*The premises shall not stock, sell or supply bottles of any cider, beer or lager that has a strength of over 5.3% in a size greater than 1 litre. Further, the premises shall not sell single bottles or cans of any beer, cider or lager that has a strength of over 5.3%*

*A further notice reading "We do not sell single cans or bottles of beers, ciders or lagers that are stronger than 5.3%" will be displayed at or near the beer display area.*

*All spirits shall be displayed only behind the counter area.*

*Alcohol shall only be displayed in areas visible from the sales counter or covered by CCTV.*

*No sale of alcohol shall knowingly be permitted to anyone under the influence of illegal drugs. Appropriate signage advising customers of the Policy shall be prominently displayed throughout the premises.*

*Whole service area is visible to Management and staff who will be trained and supervised by a DPS and their authorised staff*

*CCTV is installed to cover all trading and immediate access and exit routes.*

*Posters will be visible from the window to deter customers from congregating by the main door and to remind them to be considerate of neighbours and residents.*

*An incident log shall be kept at the premises. The log shall include the date and time of the incident and the name of the member of staff who has been involved. and made available on request to an authorised officer of the Council or the Police, which shall record the following:*

- (a) any complaints received*
  - (b) any incidents of disorder*
  - (c) any faults in the CCTV system / or searching equipment / or scanning equipment*
  - (d) any refusal of the sale of alcohol*
  - (e) any visit by a relevant authority or emergency service*
  - (f) all crimes reported to the venue*
  - (g) all ejections of patrons*
  - (h) all seizures of drugs or offensive weapons*
- This log to be checked on a weekly basis by the DPS of the premises.*

*A CCTV system, shall be installed to cover all entry and exit points enabling frontal identification of every person entering in any light condition.*

*There must be a member of staff on duty at all times that the premises are trading under this licence who is able to access the CCTV and produce images to the Police on request.*

*The CCTV system shall continually record and cover areas where alcohol is kept for selection and purchase by the public, whilst the premises is open for licensable activities. It shall operate during all times. when customers remain on the premises. All recordings shall be stored for a minimum period of 31 days with correct date and time stamping. Recordings shall be made available immediately upon the request of Police or an authorised officer of the council throughout the preceding 31 day period. The CCTV system shall be updated and maintained according to police recommendations.*

*Challenge 25 Age Verification policy to be adopted and advertised with posters.*

*Adequate rubbish bins provided close to the building.*

*The holder of the licence shall undertake a risk assessment regard to the deployment of SIA door supervisors on any occasion when the premises are open beyond 23:00 hours.*

*A copy of any such risk assessment shall be kept up the premises and made available for inspection by police or other authorised officers.*

*Deliveries including alcohol will require appropriate ID at point of transfer.*  
*Any staff employed under the age of 18 will be constantly supervised.*

If the members of the Sub-Committee determine that it is appropriate to grant a premises licence to permit the sale of alcohol, Dorset Police would invite the members of the Sub-Committee to apply the above the conditions, or similar, to the Premises Licence to ensure that the premises is meeting the minimum standards required of a premises of this nature.

Dorset Police do not consider that applying the above conditions will mitigate the concerns identified above.

### **Exclusion of a licensable activity from the scope of the Premises Licence**

Dorset Police do not consider that this is an appropriate option for the Sub-Committee members.

### **Refuse to specify a person in the licence as the Designated Premises Supervisor**

There are no concerns regarding the DPS proposed to justify any objection on these grounds.

### **Refuse the Application for a Premises Licence**

Dorset Police continue to support the view that this option should always be a last resort for the Sub-Committee. Whilst fiscal issues are outside of the considerations of the Sub-Committee, Dorset Police consistently adopt a proportionate approach, wherever possible, to remain sensitive to commercial viability of businesses and draw on our expertise to encourage applicants to adopt proportionate measures to ensure that the licensing objectives can consistently be promoted. This convenience store is likely to remain viable as a store offering a broad variety of alternative products if no alcohol is available.

Whilst Dorset Police are keen to support responsible and appropriate licensable activities, we remain of the view that this application, given its location and current conditions being offered should be granted cautiously and only where the Sub-Committee can be satisfied that the Premises Licence Holder can uphold the Licensing Objectives with the appropriate restrictions and conditions.

### **Conclusion**

The Sub-Committee are reminded that Paragraph 2.1 of the Licensing Act 2003 Section 182 Guidance produced by the Home Office states that, "*Licensing authorities should look to the police as the main source of advice on crime and disorder*". We believe that we have provided an evidence-based summary of our concerns above, as required by Paragraph 9.43 of the Section 182 Guidance. On this occasion you have the benefit of reading the first-hand experience of PC Hannah Gryba who is well-respected throughout the Town and is at the centre of the Neighbourhood Policing Team's efforts to address the crime and disorder affecting the Town Centre.

This road in Bournemouth Town Centre has previously been known as the 'Bond Street' of Bournemouth, however, has more recently been associated with vagrancy, street drinking and begging, much of which is alcohol related. Dorset Police and our partners are working with the community to address much of these issues, however, there is concern that the addition of this alcohol provision in this sensitive area will undermine these efforts and introduce additional challenges which will affect the progress that has been achieved.

Dorset Police invite the members of the Sub-Committee to carefully consider each of the available options, however, to consider refusing this application on the grounds that it will likely not promote the licensing objectives.

Dorset Police do not intend to repeat the above concerns to the members of the Sub-Committee during the Sub-Committee hearing, however, as the Licensing Authority's main source of advice on matters relating to crime and disorder, we will be happy to answer any further questions that you may have during the forthcoming hearing.