

**IN THE MATTER OF AN APPLICATION BY THE CHIEF CONSTABLE OF
WILTSHIRE POLICE FOR A CUMULATIVE IMPACT POLICY IN THE AREAS
OF SWINDON TOWN CENTRE AND BROADGREEN.**

STATEMENT OF INSPECTOR SAUNDERS

I, **Paul Saunders**, Police Inspector, Swindon Central Sector Commander
will say as follows:

1. In considering whether a Cumulative Impact Policy (CIP) is appropriate for Swindon it needs to be shown that the crime and disorder problems are caused by the patrons of a number of premises, rather than any one individual premises. It is not necessarily due to the concentration of licensed premises in the affected areas, though this is a significant factor, but rather the total impact of those combined licensed premises on crime and disorder. This is the case for both the Night Time Economy (NTE) areas and for the Broadgreen area.
2. Within Swindon Town Centre the majority of the violent crime and disorder problems occur close to licensed premises, but because of their proximity it is not always possible to attach those incidents to the customers from a particular premises.
3. Within the NTE area the closeness in proximity of the premises encourages and creates a culture of circuit drinking; patrons are constantly visiting and then leaving numerous premises at the same time making it almost impossible to identify those premises they may have visited during the course of the evening.
4. In the case of Broadgreen we have a similar problem with Street Drinkers who are buying their alcohol from off-licence premises in the area, but it is almost impossible to tie down which premises is selling the alcohol to those causing the Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB), but we are satisfied that it is coming from within the area.
5. Although the current legislation allows the Police to deal with individual premises which might be poorly managed, it does not allow for the Police to deal with the

larger problem of the total impact of having a high concentration of licensed premises in a small geographical area.

6. The Town Centre police team has instigated a number of initiatives to actively reduce the levels of crime and disorder. These include:
 - The creation of a proactive licensing officer to work alongside the existing police licensing officer and work with licensees across the NTE area.
 - Specific operations to address the serving of drunken or under-age customers have been undertaken for many years (Op Drink) and have sought to tighten up procedures and professionalise the venues.
 - Working with licenced premises to improve safety through the introduction of Polycarbonate glasses, improved CCTV and Challenge 25 policies.
 - Police-delivered training to staff in venues of Drunkenness and how to recognise and deal with it.
 - Training packages for police officers on Licensing Legislation
 - Active participation with Pubwatch schemes
 - Joint-agency work with Trading Standards in relation to off-licences and under-age sales
 - Use of Licensed Premises Exclusion Orders and Police bail conditions to ban individuals from the area
 - Regular multi-agency visits to licensed premises in the proposed areas to check on licensing infringements
7. Most notably Swindon Police have been running Operation Diamond on Fridays and Saturdays, between 2100-0600, for at least the last 10 years. This involves dedicated resources in the NTE areas, which mainly consists of foot patrol in the hotspot areas. Dedicating officers can prove resource intensive at times of peak demand. The most significant issue and impact is the lateness of the venues closing times. With venues closing at 0600 it is not uncommon for officers to still be attending NTE related incidents at 0630 in broad daylight.
8. The policing of the night time economy involves the use of all the tools available to it, including Dispersal Powers under the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014.
9. S35 of the ASBCP Act 2014 is regularly utilised in order to designate the NTE area as a dispersal zone. This power is not intended to be a long term solution and can only be authorised for up 48hrs at a time. Directions to leave a locality are given to individuals causing or likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress. This enables officers to intervene at an early stage and prevent a minor case of disorder becoming a more serious incident. Up until October 2014, these powers were conferred under Section 27 of Violent Crime Reduction Act 2006 but have now been replaced by more wide ranging powers. On a typical Saturday night in the NTE area between 5-10 people are directed to leave the area.
10. Anecdotally, some licensees have claimed that a saturated market has led to cost cutting, aggressive drinks pricing and a lowering of standards around admission policy.
11. It would be beneficial for the police to see a cumulative impact policy in Swindon for

a number of reasons apart from supporting the aim of reducing violent crime and disorder.

12. The creation of a cumulative impact policy would increase goodwill and foster improved relationships between the police and current traders within the night time economy. It would also demonstrate to residents living within the vicinity of the cumulative impact policy that the police are actively trying to reduce the impact of too many licensed premises. This would be particularly beneficial to the area of Broadgreen, which is predominantly residential and one in which the residents have suffered ASB relating to street drinkers for a long period of time. It regularly features as a neighbourhood priority and is one which we are working with partner agencies to try and resolve.
13. At the present time two multi-agency working groups, which have been established under the direction of the Chief Executive of SBC, Gavin Jones, are looking at solutions to the issues presented by street drinking within the Broadgreen area. These have been brought about due to representations from local residents through the local ward councillors. CIP is one of the significant powers which the groups are looking at in order to assist with the growing issue.
14. In relation to the NTE areas, our main belief is that it would promote diversification within the night time economy that we currently do not have, by preventing more vertical drinking establishments and encouraging different types of premises and activities leading to a more balanced type of evening economy. We are very keen to assist with moving the NTE towards a situation of managed growth, which is the essence of what CIP is all about. This has been clearly demonstrated with the Regent Circus development, which the police are very supportive of as a move in the right direction in terms of a vibrant NTE which caters for all
15. The geographical analysis clearly shows a pattern of reported crime and disorder in the defined area. Throughout the attached report the defined area is continually highlighted as being a peak area for violent crime, anti-social behaviour and calls to police service, which is primarily due to the large number of licensed premises within this area. Police resources are primarily directed to this area saturated with licensed premises to contain and control the levels of offences, leaving other areas potentially vulnerable.
16. If a cumulative impact policy for the identified areas of Swindon is found to be appropriate in light of the evidence contained in this report, it will not change the methodical, fair, open and robust manner in which the police deal with the current licensed premises or the limitations currently placed on any applications. The cumulative impact policy's primary value will be to prevent any additional premises being licensed or applying for a change of use without first addressing the cumulative impact problems within those areas.
17. As the operational policing commander for the area in which the CIP is proposed I would like to stress that the intention of the police is not to stifle or discourage growth or regeneration in any area of Swindon, but to give the panel the power to help to shape the NTE in Swindon in the way that the Local Authority and partners want it to be developed.

Statement of truth

The facts stated in this witness statement are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signed:.....

Inspector Paul Saunders

Dated..23rd February 2015.....