

Summary of evidence collated by West Midlands Police to support the introduction of a Cumulative Impact Policy within Stourbridge Town Centre

In March 2001, there was only one nightclub in Stourbridge, which was closed for refurbishment until June 2002. During that time statistical information shows that violent crime levels predominantly remained below the average of 25 offences per month. High capacity venues were opened in October 2002, November 2004 and January 2005. This led to significant rise in violent crime well above the average of 25 offences per month showing peaks of 48 offences when the licensing hours changed in November 2005.

A comparison of recorded crime and disorder was undertaken with Stourbridge town centre; Halesowen town centre; and the Waterfront Merry Hill. The statistical information shows a downward trend in violent crime in the latter two areas with levels remaining predominantly below the average of 10 offences per month in Halesowen town centre, against the upward trend in Stourbridge town centre with an average of 25 offences per month.

A further comparison was made between Halesowen and Stourbridge town centres during the four-week period, 10th April to 8<sup>th</sup> May 2006 of the total recorded crime and alcohol offences. In Stourbridge town centre there were 210-recorded crimes of which 19% were alcohol related compared to 129-recorded crime of which 8% were alcohol related in Halesowen town centre.

Both Halesowen and Stourbridge operate well-attended and enthusiastic Pub Watch schemes, the primary role of which is to prohibit persons who commit offences on licensed premises. Currently Halesowen have 24 people subject to a ban whilst Stourbridge have 145 individuals.

To tackle the expanding nighttime economy and its attendant problems in Stourbridge town centre, the police, in the latter part of 2004 revised their shift patterns. They permanently posted a fully resourced public order van to the area during weekend periods and increased their town centre team.

The above evidence clearly demonstrates that the rise in crime and disorder in Stourbridge town centre is a direct consequence of the concentration of late night venues together with the large numbers of people they attract into the town at night, predominantly on a Thursday, Friday and Saturday.

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