

RESTRICTED (when complete)

WITNESS STATEMENT

Criminal Procedure Rules, r 27. 2; Criminal Justice Act 1967, s. 9; Magistrates' Courts Act 1980, s.5B

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Statement of: **Emma WESTMORELAND**

Age if under 18: **Over 18** (if over 18 insert "over 18") Occupation: **Police Constable 2463**

This statement (consisting of _____ page(s) each signed by me) is true to the best of my knowledge and belief and I make it knowing that, if it is tendered in evidence, I shall be liable to prosecution if I have wilfully stated in it anything which I know to be false or do not believe to be true.

Signature  : **Constable 2463 E WESTMORELAND** Date: **16/05/2020**

Tick if witness evidence is visually recorded (supply witness details on rear)

I am a Police Constable in Cleveland Police presently stationed at Middlesbrough Police station in the Licensing Support Unit. Part of my role is to consider new license applications and ensure that licencees would be able to uphold the 4 licensing objectives and not add to any ongoing problems of crime and disorder in the area they are situated.

On the 30th March 2020 Mr Muhammad Adnan RABANI applied for a new premise license in relation to Yarm Lane Convenience Store, 53 Yarm Lane, Stockton.

This is a new application for a premises licence to allow an already existing convenience store to sell alcohol as an off licensed premise

The times for the sale of alcohol were originally 06:00 – 23:00hrs every day, however the applicant has since modified the hours requested to 09:00 - 22:00 hours every day.

Cleveland Police are of the opinion that by granting this application the crime and disorder and public nuisance objectives would be undermined.

The premise was previously refused a licence to sell alcohol at a Licensing hearing on the 12th April 2016. The committee gave its reasons in the determining notice that they "were

RESTRICTED (when complete)

Continuation statement of:

mindful of the location of the premise and that it was in an area that was a hotspot for alcohol related incidents”.

The committee stated “After giving consideration to all of the evidence and representations made both in writing and orally the Committee were satisfied that on the evidence available to them that if granted the licensing objectives would be undermined and therefore the application for the premises licence was refused.”

Although this is a different applicant, the current applicant states that he has worked at the store for 7 years and owned the store since 2016.

Cleveland Police are of the view that the area is still a hotspot for alcohol related incidents. The shop sits on the Boundary of 2 Council Wards, Parkfield and Stockton Town Centre. Ward profiles conducted by Stockton Council identify the Town Centre ward as the most deprived out of Stockton’s 26 wards and Parkfield as the 6th most deprived ward. The government’s Index of Multiple Deprivation breaks the whole country down into 32,844 smaller areas, called Lower Super Output Areas (LSOA). The last study conducted in 2015 identified the LSOA where this store is located as 014G. This area is in the 73 most deprived areas in the whole country out of a total of 32,844 areas.

The area suffers from alcohol related crime and anti social behaviour, which manifests in street drinking, violence and prostitution.

Part of my role in the Licensing support unit is around tackling prostitution. The main street in Stockton where on street prostitution occurs is Yarm Road a predominantly residential street which is around the corner from the store. When sex workers loiter here they often

Continuation statement of:

do so whilst consuming alcohol, this makes the more vulnerable to crime and disorder and causes anti social behaviour for the local residents. Many sex workers suffer from alcohol and drug related addiction. Also in close proximity to the store is an alcohol and drugs recovery support service, Change, Grow, Live is situated on William Street. The need for such a service in Stockton shows the extent of alcohol and drug related addictions in the area.

There have been 2 violent street murders in this LSOA in the last 18 months.

In addition to this there have been a total of 86 alcohol related incidents in the area surrounding the store in a period of 12 months, of the 86 Alcohol related incidents 22 of them are nuisance events relating to noise problems and drug issues, 17 of the events are domestic incidents that have involved alcohol, 9 are theft related.

Out of the total 86 incidents I have collated a spreadsheet that I exhibit as EEW/1 which shows a wide range of alcohol related events in the area surrounding The Yarm Lane Convenience store.

I have produced a second spreadsheet that I exhibit as EEW/2 that shows a total of 18 incidents that have occurred at The Yarm Lane Convenience Store over the period of a year.

By allowing the premise to sell alcohol it will attract further problems which will then be fuelled by the need for/consumption of alcohol causing the exacerbation of these problems. The area is already suffering from anti-social behaviour and crime as the two spreadsheets show without the addition of another premise which is able to supply alcohol.

The shop has been at this location for a number of years, in recent times Police have been

Continuation statement of:

concerned that criminals use the shop to purchase items with stolen bank cards using contactless payments repeatedly to buy goods in numerous transactions instead of one single transaction where the PIN would be needed. This occurred on 4 separate occasions over a two month period. One such occasion was on the 30th September 2020 at 01:20 hours when a stolen bank card was used contactlessly on four separate purchases to buy goods to the value of £120. This unusual activity on the stolen bank card was flagged by the bank directly to the injured party and not by the members of staff on duty in the store at the time. This raises questions about the effectiveness of staff at the premises to prevent crime and disorder, a key Licensing Objective.

Cleveland Police do not believe issues have substantially changed since the last application was refused and for these reasons believe the application will undermine the Licensing Objectives identified.