

Representations For A Review Of A Premises Licence Or Club Premises Certificate Under The Licensing Act 2003

Section 1 – Licence Application Details

Applicant Name (If Known)	Dhillon Food & Wine
Premises Name and Address	68, Dovecot Street, Stockton-on-Tees, TS18 1LL

Section 2 – Authority/Department

- ☐ Trading Standards
☐ Cleveland Police
☐ Environmental Health
☐ Cleveland Fire Service
☐ Planning
☐ Protection of Children From Harm
☐ Public Health
☒ Community Safety

Section 3 – Representation Grounds

The representation is relevant to one or more of the following licensing objectives: Please tick relevant box(es)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Prevention of Crime and Disorder <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Prevention of Public Nuisance <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Protection of Children from Harm <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public Safety
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The grounds of the representation is based on the following: (Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary)
This representation is in support of Stockton Borough Council's Licensing application for a licence review for Dhillon Food & Wine in relation to the undermining of the following licencing objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevention of Crime and Disorder • Public Safety • Prevention of Public Nuisance • Protection of Children from Harm

My name is Adam Bateman, and I am Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council's Problem Solving and Partnerships Officer, attached to the Community Safety Team, based out of SBC 16 Church Road. I have been in post since October 2024, and was previously a neighbourhood police officer. Part of my duties include strategic oversight, from a local authority (LA) perspective, of Operation Shield, Project Harmony, and Operation Nightfall. My involvement in this case relates to Operation Shield.

Operation Shield is a multi-agency and multi-component initiative, aligning Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (SBC) departments and external agencies with a common purpose: to enhance safety and improve public perceptions of safety in Stockton Town Centre. Shield is a direct response to SBC listening to the public about their fears of crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB) in the town centre. Shield also coalesces multiple work streams addressing wider town centre safety and addiction issues, under one unified and identifiable banner for the public. The operation emphasises enforcement and addiction recovery as equal methodologies to problem-solving community safety concerns in the business improvement district, and wider town centre area.

Licensing matters are a key strand of Operation Shield.

Through my work on Shield, I have come to know Dhillon Food and Wine well, known to me as Rowntrees, at 68 Dovecot Street. I travel and work in the area the shop is located, and so pass it, whilst on unrelated business, often. I mostly note incidents as I see them, which has led to more accurate reporting/recording.

My personal interactions with this premises are itemised as below, in a non-exhaustive list (where I paraphrase my original reports):

- On 06/02/2025, I first interacted with the premises, although I was well aware of it prior, through conversations with colleagues that it had attracted ASB issues historically. On the aforementioned date, I visited the premises, in company with SBC Licensing Officer Elliott Beevers. This was one of many visits we conducted that day, as we worked to promote the Stockton 'Reducing the Strength' scheme. Whilst there, I observed Mr Beevers speak with staff about a license condition on the shop, regarding them labelling items with the shop name ('Rowntree'). We had noticed many of their cans of Dark Knights cider, sold as a single can, at 8.4% ABV, were missing these labels.

It is worth noting at this stage, that Dark Knights is often seen in the hands of many persons walking around town, whom are suffering from an alcohol addiction. Dark Knights, along with Black Storm and Black Lancer ciders, are the choice of drink for those with addiction issues, because it is an obscenely high strength beverage, sold at concerningly low prices, and is easy to carry and maintain (it being sold in singles, rather than in packs). It is also convenient to acquire, as many persons living with addiction issues are accommodated in services located within minutes of the few shops which still sell these items.

- On 25/02/2025, at approximately 12:13hrs, in company with Civic Enforcement Officers (CEOs), I observed a clearly intoxicated pair of males walking towards Rowntrees. Both had cans of Dark Knights in their pockets (I was not sure if they were used/open, etc.). I asked them where they got them from, and they refused to say. I then followed as they walked into Rowntrees. Moments later, a member of staff waved enforcement in, and the males consequently left emptyhanded. It was good to see them not leave with new alcoholic items, but I recall thinking that this linked our street drinking issues to that shop. I forwarded the incident details onto SBC Licensing.
- On 03/03/2025, I reviewed some CCTV relating to an incident which had occurred on 09/02/2025. It was CCTV of a male breaching his criminal behaviour order (CBO) by drinking in a public place (street drinking), just outside Rowntrees. There was a group with this male, and it went from 3 people, one of which presented as intoxicated, hanging around the shop, to many more. One goes in and buys Dark Knights, comes out and drinks it in a group with his mates, attracting by the end, a large group of people street drinking and loitering outside the shop. It occurred at approximately 15:40hrs. I forwarded the report onto SBC Licensing.

- On 13/03/2025, at approx. 16:10hrs, I saw around 6 males and 1 female sitting on the steps next to the Rowntrees. Some of the group were sitting on the steps of 66 Dovecot Street. There were several empty cans of Dark Knights Cider littered around the group and on the steps. Several of the group were drinking the cans, which I observed. When challenged by the CEO, the group did not disperse or pour away their cans, and argued with the officer about the PSPO zone (which they were in). Later, at 16:21hrs, I drove past Rowntrees and noticed two males sitting on the steps smoking and drinking from open cans of Dark Knight cider. I forwarded this report onto SBC Licensing.
- On 26/03/2025, at 15:24hrs, I noted a prolific ASB offender walk past me with a low cost, high strength can of cider. The male went into the shop and was served whilst appearing to be intoxicated. I forwarded the incident details onto SBC Licensing.
- On 02/04/2025, whilst on patrol with enforcement in the town centre, I spotted littered cans of 'Lancer,' with a label on it reading 'Rowntree.' This was littered in the bushes at the fountains area, where children and families often sit at. For all those that work in the town, this is sadly a familiar sight at the fountains. I took a photo, which I exhibit as AB/01 (date and time exhibited as per incident log) and forwarded it onto SBC Licensing.
- I am aware that on 02/04/2025 the PLH (Premises Licence Holder) and DPS (Designated Premises Supervisor) changed to the current ownership.
- On 08/04/25, at 11:04hrs, whilst on Dovecot Street, travelling towards the town centre, I observed shouting and swearing coming from a group stood outside of Rowntrees. There were 5 males congregating in a doorway a metre from the shop. 3 of the males causing the most ASB were consuming alcohol whilst shouting/swearing, thus in breach of the PSPO. The cans they were drinking were black, consistent with high strength, low cost cans of alcohol, which two shops nearby sold. I forwarded the incident details onto SBC Licensing.
- On 11/04/2025, from 13:20hrs to 13:40hrs, I was on Dovecot St., on unrelated business, but noticed two large groups of people nearby street drinking, shouting and swearing; causing general anti-social behaviour, in breach of the PSPO. Footfall on the street was very high and there were instances of families, young people, children walking with parents/carers, women pushing prams, walking next to these groups whom were causing ASB. On two occasions I noticed people actively trying to avoid the groups by crossing the street. One group, stood in the doorway of 66 Dovecot Street, next to Rowntrees, consisted of upwards 7 people. It was transient – people kept leaving and joining. The majority of the group were street drinking cans of Dark Knights cider. One of the males was topless whilst consuming the drink. There was also a lot of littered cans next to this group, on the steps. I noted that the nearby shops sold these high strength, low cost cans of alcohol. Across the street, close to CGL on William St., was another group, including a prolific ASB offender (and shoplifter) on the town. She had a can in hand too. All these people presented as intoxicated, and yet had single cans of alcohol in hand. I forwarded my observations onto SBC Licensing. I recall that this incident, in particular, frustrated me, as I saw plenty of young families look intimidated by the street drinking occurring outside of the premises. Given the nature of the occurrence, and my previous experience & prior knowledge, I felt that the ASB was likely to be linked to Rowntrees.
- On 14/04/2025, Mr Beevers and I sat down with the new DPS, who I knew to be Mr Muhammad Adnan Rabani. At this stage, I recall taking a pragmatic and cooperative approach to the matter. I recall being open with Mr Rabani about my concerns, but appreciated that he had just taken over. I impressed upon him that we needed things to turn around, lest the licensing objectives be undermined further during his tenure. With him being new, at this stage, I had no intention of supporting a licensing review, I just wanted the issues to decrease. I remember Mr Beevers discussing with Mr Rabani the benefits of the 'Reducing the Strength' scheme – Mr Rabani did not take to it, but nevertheless, I left the meeting hoping that our informal chat would encourage a de-escalation in complaints.
- Later, still on 14/04/2025, at approx. 13:15hrs, I observed a female known to me as a prolific ASB offender and shoplifter on Stockton Town Centre, standing outside Rowntrees, clearly consuming a can of Dark Knights cider, whilst shouting towards a nearby group of males; 2 out of 3 also consuming alcohol and spitting on the floor, breaching the PSPO. It was a hot

and sunny day and lots of people were walking past the female and group of males. It was noticeable that they were experiencing the anti-social behaviour which the street drinking was causing, due to the looks on their faces and them purposely making distance between themselves and the group. Given the nature of the occurrence, and my previous experience & prior knowledge, I felt that the ASB was likely to be linked to Rowntrees. I forwarded my complaint and observations onto SBC Licensing. I recall it reminding of my observations on 11/04/25.

- On 16/04/25, at approx. 11:00hrs, CEO Baverstock observed a well-known Stockton Town Centre ASB offender – a consistent breacher of the PSPO – at the steps of Storytellers, Dovecot St., close to Rowntrees, ‘downing’/consuming/street drinking a can of Dark Knights cider. Whilst enforcing the PSPO, CEO Baverstock noticed a label on the can, with a ‘Rowntree’ sticker on it. The officer then told me, and I forwarded the report onto SBC Licensing. Later on, at approximately 13:30hrs, I was on foot patrol in the town centre, in company with CEOs Pereira and Baverstock, when we came across a group of persons acting suspiciously outside Cash Converters, Dovecot Street, Stockton Town Centre. The group of about 5 people looked intoxicated, and 2 persons claimed they were selling baked goods which had been voluntarily given to them by Greggs. I suspected they may have been stolen. Behind the two persons acting suspiciously, who appeared to be intoxicated, was an apparently littered, half-drunk can of Dark Knights cider, with a sticker on it, which read ‘Rowntree.’
- On 19/04/25, at approx. 13:41hrs, I was in company with Special Constable (SC) Plura & CEO Pereira (for the April 2025 Op. Shield Day of Action) at William Street, Stockton Town Centre, where several individuals had gathered both on the path and adjacent car park (obstructing car parking bays). The congregation was just outside/on the border of the PSPO zone, but were nevertheless causing anti-social behaviour close to The ARC, which was hosting a music event called Stockton Calling at the time. We engaged with the congregation, the majority of whom were street drinking from cans, which I noticed had ‘Rowntree’ stickers on – indicating they were purchased from the nearby shop. There were lots of littered cans around the group too, with those stickers on. After asking, two prolific ASB/criminal offenders on the town centre picked the cans up. A male and female in the group were not so cooperative, and with can in hand, were shouting and swearing at me. The group later dispersed when more police arrived. Later, at 14:08hrs, I observed a known street drinker (a female who I had dealt with in the earlier incident), walk towards and then into Rowntrees. I observed her come out with a new can of alcohol, like the one she had been drinking earlier. She was clearly intoxicated. After I observed this occur, I went and spoke with the shop keeper on duty and explained that he should not be selling alcohol to intoxicated persons. Later, at approx. 16:20hrs, whilst still in company with SC Plura & CEO Pereira on Operation Shield duties, I observed a female who I didn’t know, but had seen previously walking around the town centre, in company with other known street drinkers, walk towards Rowntrees. The female was clearly intoxicated – I recall seeing her stumble as she shuffled to the shop. Her face & eyes were glazed, and she smelt of alcohol when I had seen her previously in the day. She was sold alcohol in this state. As this was the second occurrence of Rowntrees selling alcohol to an intoxicated person in the same day, I went back to the shop, and spoke with a different shopkeeper about not selling to drunk people. During both times I spoke with staff they claimed that the individual was not intoxicated, and implied that the threshold for whether to sell to someone, amounted to them standing, walking, and talking. The shop staff put me on the phone to someone who they claimed was the owner, a male called Irfan, and I repeated what I had told the shop staff. At 18:25hrs, I was in company with CEO Pereira only, where I binned a littered can of Dark Knights cider, which had a sticker on it which read ‘Rowntree.’ I was outside Citizens Advice on Dovecot Street. I didn’t see who littered it or at what time, but took an image of said can/sticker. I exhibit the image I took of the can with label as AB/02 – date and time of exhibit are as per incident log. All reports from this date were forwarded to SCB Licensing.
- On 22/04/2025, at 12:16hrs, I was on unrelated business at Queen’s Park, off Frederick St., in Stockton Town Centre, when I picked up a littered can of ‘Black Storm’ cider, which had a

label on it, which read as 'Rowntree.' I did not see who littered the can, but took an image. Queen's Park has become a significant ASB hotspot recently for street drinking, homeless encampments, public order offences, unauthorised fires, etc., and so this demonstrated to me, the reach of the impact that the sales of Rowntrees' very cheap high strength cans of alcohol have, on services across the borough. I exhibit a photo I took of the littered can with the label on it as AB/03 – date and time of exhibit are as per incident log.

- On 12/06/2025, on foot patrol at approx. 14:20hrs, whilst in company with Cleveland Police officers, they have pointed out and passed comment on some items on display for purchase at the shopfront of Rowntrees. These items were weighing scales and metal pipes. The metal pipes had symbols on the packaging which were consistent with a Class B drug. The pipes and weighing scales can be used for the weighing and use of Class A to C controlled drugs. These items aren't illegal to sell, although I would class them as drugs paraphernalia when taken together. The pipe especially is something I have personally witnessed being in use around town in conjunction with drugs. I exhibit photos I took of the items in the shop's display as AB/04 – date and time of exhibit are as per incident details. I view the shop openly displaying these items with this kind of packaging, as undermining efforts to protect the public from harmful substances.
- On 13/06/2025, I made a referral to SBC Licensing following repeated complaints from a local business that was being frustrated by street drinkers buying alcohol locally and then congregating behind their premises, on William Street, junction with Dovecot Street. This shows the impact of Rowntrees selling alcohol to known street drinkers.
- On 02/07/25, I forwarded a report from CEO Pereira onto SBC Licensing, that regarded: whilst responding to ongoing ASB issues behind the same above businesses premises, she had observed a prolific town centre ASB offender street drinking with a bottle of Blacks Storm and bottle of Fireball, labelled up with 'Rowntree' stickers. The CEO reported that this individual and others were very intoxicated, and were slumping over & dozing off. On 04/07/2025, CEO Pereira explained that the intoxicated male from 02/07/25 had purchased additional alcohol whilst under the influence at around 14:00hrs. The officer added in the report that on 03/07/2025, she also witnessed a group being served alcohol from Rowntrees, whilst being visibly drunk. All details from the CEO's observations were passed to SBC Licensing.
- On 19/07/2025, whilst on the Op. Shield July Day of Action, I observed – at 07:40hrs – a large group of mostly women, who presented as drug or alcohol addicted persons, outside Rowntrees, with open cans of Black Storm in hand. I was close enough to see the 'Rowntree' stickers on the cans. They were swearing and shouting, causing general ASB, and being in breach of the PSPO.
- On 23/07/2025, I phoned a local business back as they had complained about escalating ASB issues involving street drinking occurring behind their business premises. In conversation with the business owner, they stated to me that they have seen Rowntrees selling alcohol "all the [time] to drunks." I forwarded on the complaint, and what I had discussed with the complainant, to SBC Licensing.
- On 01/08/2025, at approx. 14:03hrs, I was in company with CEO Pereira, as we were dealing with a large group of street drinkers causing ASB at the rear of the previously mentioned business premises suffering from ASB. A male known locally as a prolific ASB offender in the town centre was drinking from a can of Dark Knights cider with a label on it, reading 'Rowntree.' The male was repeatedly slumping over and dozing off. His conduct was so concerning that staff from CGL (Stockton Drugs & Alcohol Recovery Service) were present, to support with first aid issues.

In summary, this off-license has historically been linked to, in some way, the causes of ASB related street drinking (with associated crime & disorder, and public nuisance) in Stockton Town Centre. When the PLH and DPS changed in April 2025, there was a real opportunity for the premises to change its course of conduct, and its reputation. Unfortunately, this did not happen, and the situation only appears to have escalated. I regularly receive anecdotal complaints of street drinking related ASB early in the morning, and, given this is the only shop selling alcohol in the town centre between 06:00hrs and 08:00hrs on a normal working day, I have no doubt that this off-license has contributed

to much of our early morning issues, and I'm sure the public would call into question why anyone should be able to sell alcohol at 6am in the morning, especially single cans of 'high strength low cost.' The pattern of incidents I have outlined are a real concern, and completely undermine our efforts to improve safety and the perception of public safety in Stockton Town Centre. A key strand of the Operation Shield strategy is slowing down & decreasing a habitual street drinker's daily intake of alcohol. This is not only a harm reduction approach, intended to save lives in the long-term, but also to reduce the level of intoxication habitual street drinkers operate at. It is believed that doing this will reduce violent offences & alcohol induced crime & disorder, thus improving community safety – indeed, this is why Community Safety has thrown itself at supporting the 'Reducing the Strength' scheme. Moreover, we accept that habitual street drinkers will make all efforts to continue consuming alcohol (they are addicted after all), but if we can minimise the harm unto them by reducing accessibility to high strength low cost alcohol, then clearly that is an endeavour worth following up; one supported by Public Health. Generally, the impact of street drinking leads to poor perceptions of public safety, public nuisance, intimidation, and harassment to the public and local businesses. The time and costs of emergency services and the council's CEOs dealing with alcohol related incidents is also a concern, and sales of alcohol – particularly high strength – to drunk persons, as is alleged in this case, is only going to exacerbate the burden on our emergency services.

The documented concerns about this off-license mean that the well-evidence allegation of sales of alcohol to drunk persons, in breach of the Licensing Act, are not tolerable. The defence in interview regularly consisted of Mr Rabani claiming that the persons in the CCTV clips are 'always in that state,' and therefore it was fine to sell them alcohol. I recall thinking this was lined up with similar blasé comments made by shop staff when I had challenged them earlier in the year. With regards to the allegation of sale to a child, Mr Rabani showed, on interview, a video of a young girl, who he claimed to be the same person in the CCTV clip, introducing herself and her adult age in the shop, surrounded by unknown males. No ID was seen.

In conclusion, there are recent and historic concerns regarding this off-license making sales to drunk persons, who are then causing issues in the town centre, such as breaches of CBO, shoplifting, assaults, street drinking, aggressive begging, etc.. It is clear that this off-license, in some part, fuels ASB in the town centre, and, given its location, also significantly profits from the addictions of Stocktonians, through breaches of the Licensing Act, namely sale to drunk persons. The course of conduct of this shop is therefore not conducive of overall community safety aims, as it undermines the following licensing objectives:

- Prevention of Crime & Disorder
- Prevention of Public Nuisance
- Protection of Children from harm
- Public Safety

Exhibits

AB/01



AB/02



AB/03



AB/04





Signed: A. Bateman	Position: Problem Solving & Partnerships Officer, SBC Community Safety	Dated: 26/08/2025
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When complete this form should be returned to the address above or e-mailed to licensing.administration@stockton.gov.uk

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Date Received		Checked By	
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