

GLOUCESTER CITY COUNCIL CONSULTATION FEEDBACK
FORM LICENSING ACT 2003
LICENSING POLICY STATEMENT 2011/2014

LICENSING POLICY STATEMENT – DRAFT FOR
CONSULTATION

Special Policy Eastgate Street area

There are currently 13 take away facilities within the short strip of Eastgate Street.

1.7 There are conditions relating to take aways, but these are not clearly defined nor sufficient. Eg “shop front to be kept clear of litter from premises” How is this to be enforced? One greasy piece of chip paper looks very similar to another. How can it be proved that it is from one particular premises as the license holder may say – “that piece of litter is from my neighbour’s take away premises not mine”. There is an argument that police can deal with litter enforcement in reality they are often too busy dealing with drunken incidents and fights to undertake litter enforcement.

The conditions however do not support the aim at 1.7 that license holders should be responsible for minimising the impact of their activities and anti social behaviour by their patrons within the vicinity of their premises. Some take aways brush up outside their premises after ceasing trading. **This condition needs to be upgraded to ensure that regular litter collection is undertaken outside all the premises throughout the course of their operating times.** The benefit would be that Council would save money on employing cleansing operatives, health and safety of members of public would be maintained (slipping on greasy food/wrapping), reduction in appeal to seagull vermin, the environment would be an attractive one for visitors to the area and the City. I have had very disparaging remarks from out of county visitors to the City who are shocked by the condition and state of the Eastgate Street area when they have visited on a night out.

Links with 5.5 (iv) general positive attitude to encouraging good practice from customers – what signs are in take aways to ask customers to dispose of litter in bins.... Can his be another condition on their license

How many litter bins in the area? A survey of public litter bins in the area could be undertaken (these fill quickly and unless emptied promptly defeat the object of having them there in the first place). I am sure it would be acceptable for the take away establishments in the street to “sponsor” the provision of additional bins thereby saving the council the cost of providing them.

2.5 Transportation policies. There are no late night buses that go down Eastgate Street and therefore choice of transport is limited to private vehicle or taxi or choice of walking from Eastgate into Clarence Road/bus station. What is the possibility of getting buses for late night transport to go to Eastgate Street as a stopping/collection point.

3.10 There is traffic congestion due to the design of the street and number of persons exiting Liquid 4am/ TNT 3am and the number of take away facilities in this area . This problem has never been conclusively addressed. Closure of the street at Barton lights was piloted. A proper survey of the whole area by a competent consultant may provide proposals for long term improvement. My observation is that when the street was closed at Barton Gates it was much safer for pedestrians. The taxi rank could be moved to the pull in by GL1 and taxi monitors used to manage the new rank and be present in Eastgate Street to direct potential customers to the rank to catch taxis to go home. This is no greater distance for customers from TNT and Liquid to walk than those from venues like Fever/Butler/Zest do now. No vehicles apart from emergency vehicles should be allowed entrance to Eastgate Street from Commercial Road to Barton Gates after 22.00 hours on Friday and Sat nights. The management of this should be undertaken by City Council officers or agents.

It could be beneficial to include better use of "written dispersal conditions" on new licenses and old ones, to include responsibility of doorstaff to remain outside venues for up to 1 hour after end of operating hours to ensure customers disperse in quiet, orderly manner and this may include directions to public transport of taxi ranks etc.

3.16 There has been no change in the diversity of the area in the last 3 years. No increase in family entertainment, no sit down restaurants, no music diversity (jazz clubs), no comedy clubs. The only new license is Liberty next to TNT marketed as a sports bar.

3.17 No integrated public transport system in place (see comments above)

3.15 "Special Policy". The policy adopted by Council in 2004 as direct response to concerns and information put forward by Gloucestershire Police in relation to incidents of both crime and disorder associated with the area particularly on Friday and Saturday night.....Eastgate Street has, for a number of years, borne the unfortunate distinction of having the highest crime rate for any one street in the County.

Violent crime

Although there has been a total decrease of 40 violent crimes in Eastgate Street between 1st Sept 2009 and 31st August 2010 compared to the same time the previous year, there has been an increase in anti

social behaviour from 388 to 465 (20% increase). It is concerning that although the incidents of inflicting grievous bodily harm (broken jaw/bones etc) are thankfully low (6 offences 09/10) this is an increase of 50% on the previous year 08/09.

ABH figures have decreased from 110 to 88 crimes (this is still more than 1 crime each week).

Hot spots

Violent crime

Liquid – consistently most common place for violent crimes to occur over past 3 years, but levels reduced each year.

Levels of violent crime have also been higher outside TNT, Bar Fever, Butlers. The level has increased outside these locations over the past 3 years.

Criminal damage

Majority of criminal damage occurred lower part of street. (49, 37, 29 for last three years) Butlers, Fever and Fortune House takeaway all subject to damage on more than 1 occasion over the past year. Levels of damage at Liquid have decreased.

Anti social behaviour.

There has been a total increase of 77 anti social behaviour incidents in Eastgate Street between 1st Sept 09 and 31 Aug 2010 compared to the same time the previous year.

The majority of anti social behaviour over the past 2 years have been rowdy or inconsiderate behaviour which has increased by 53 offences from 359 to 412. Levels of begging, nuisance vehicles, malicious or nuisance communication and noise have also increased over the past year compared to the previous years.

Anti social behaviour at Liquid has remained level over the past two years from 64 to 67 incidents per year. A significant increase in anti social behaviour at Fever is identified from 17 to 45 incidents.

Despite a reduction in crime, Eastgate Street has recorded significantly higher levels of violent crime, criminal damage, theft from the person and drugs offences that Southgate, Westgate and Northgate Street. Anti social behaviour in Eastgate Street is also significantly higher than in the other Gate Streets. Times/days of crimes Thursday – Sunday between 2100 – 0400 hours remains significant. It would suggest that the night time economy in the area has contributed to the higher levels of crime and anti social behaviour in the street.

I would therefore propose that the Special Policy adopted by the Council in 2004 remains reasonable, proportionate and necessary to ensure a

reflection of the local balance between the commercial interests of the licensed trade and the impact upon communities that Gloucester City Council serves.

I believe there is scope to ensure that holders of licenses, certificates and permissions improve their working practices by the inclusion of conditions that are enforceable and that support the minimisation of the impact of their activities and anti social behaviour by their patrons within the vicinity of their premises (particularly late night refreshment/take aways)

This would need to be coupled with a robust enforcement regime.