

Bawtry Town Council

DMBC Licensing Policy review September 2015

A case for designating Bawtry as a Cumulative Impact Policy area

Currently, only part of Doncaster town centre is designated as a Cumulative Impact Policy area. That reflects the high number of licensed premises there.

Bawtry should have the same status. There are in excess of 20 licensed premises in this small town, which has a population of only 3573. These licensed premises have a very substantial impact upon the people of Bawtry, many of whom live in, or very close to, the town centre where the licensed premises are situated. It is suggested this proportional impact in Bawtry is much greater than in Doncaster centre, where relatively few people live.

Bawtry Town Council has been concerned about the growing number of licensed premises in the town for many years, and has tried, unsuccessfully, to oppose new applications. Last year, the Bawtry Residents' Group was formed. Many residents who have attended Group meetings have expressed the same concern. More specific information about residents' views has been obtained by a survey of residents and business owners conducted in the spring of 2015 as part of the consultation to inform a Neighbourhood Plan. To date, 109 returns have been analysed.

Specific concerns are about noise, litter, nuisance parking, and anti-social behaviour which are all believed to be related to persons (often from outside Bawtry) frequenting licensed premises and the consumption of alcohol. Of the residents who completed a return, 34 complained that there are too many licensed premises in the town. There were 49 complaints about anti-social behaviour, excessive noise, litter, and nuisance parking, with the vast majority of these explicitly related to alcohol consumption. Although these numbers may be considered modest in absolute terms, they actually evidence a serious concern, with many residents no longer feeling comfortable in the town at night, and some feeling unsafe. This fear is accentuated by the lack of a police presence in the town; officers only attend in response to an incident, unlike in Doncaster town centre where they are permanently deployed. Bawtry has a higher than average (within DMBC) number of older residents, and it would appear this fear is most prevalent amongst them.

The growth in the number of licensed premises that has occurred in Bawtry over several years is readily acknowledged to have created a significant night time economy and a degree of vibrancy to the town. That has undoubtedly been of benefit, but arguably mostly to the businesses concerned and to people from across the area who want a good night out. Many of Bawtry's residents also value these facilities, but they also suffer the unwelcome side effects of having too many premises serving alcohol.

Doncaster's licensing policy has objectives of preventing crime and disorder, maintaining public safety, preventing public nuisance, and protecting children. It is suggested that the further unrestricted development of Bawtry as a venue for the consumption of alcohol would be incompatible with the realisation of these objectives. It would not be the intention to use designation of Bawtry as a Cumulative Impact Policy area to try to refuse all new applications for licenses – but to facilitate much improved control of future development, with some differentiation between different sorts of licensed premises and the application of local knowledge. For instance, an application for a licence to serve alcohol in a new restaurant venue might be supported, whereas a similar application relating to a bar might be resisted, on the grounds that the clientele of a licensed restaurant might not be expected to put the licensing policy objectives at risk in the same way as the clientele of a bar might.

Appendix B4

In the relatively short period allowed for consultation about the new licensing policy it has not been possible to identify all the evidence of the need for a CIP for Bawtry that may be available. It is, however, believed that the evidence that has been offered is wholly consistent with that described in Section 7.16 of the proposed new policy, although more may be available from responsible local authorities, such as the Police, the Area Health Authority, and DMBC Environmental Health. It is expected that DMBC gives this matter the most careful consideration, and does not consider the proposal less generously than the historical judgement exercised to apply a CIP to Doncaster town centre. In that context, it should be stressed that people live in Bawtry's town centre; they do not live in very significant numbers in Silver St, the High St, Hall Gate, Priory Walk and Bradford Row.