

Cumulative Impact Area - Rochester High Street

This Cumulative Impact Area will cover the area shown in the below map. There is also a list of roads at the end of the appendix.



The Rochester High Street Cumulative Impact Area will apply to the following applications for the sale of alcohol for consumption on the premises, off the premises and on and off the premises.

- a. New premises licence applications
- b. Material variations for existing premises licences
- c. Provisional statements for premises licences

Evidence summary

Evidence, provided to the Authority, shows this area has unacceptably high rates of:

- a. Criminal offences, the highest density occurring in the High Street and surrounding areas.
- b. Anti-social behaviour, the highest density occurring in the High Street, Corporation Street and surrounding areas.
- c. Domestic Abuse.
- d. Begging.
- e. Deprivation.
- f. Alcohol related hospital admissions.
- g. Alcohol related littering, street drinking, urination and defecation and street drinking.

The majority of respondents to community questionnaires, carried out in 2022 and 2023, and a focus group, consisting of six residents of the area, felt licensed premises in this area contribute towards alcohol related issues. They indicate that the issues within this area are experienced during the day, the evening and into the night, which in turn, indicates that nighttime economy premises, as well as off licences, contribute to the issues.

Rochester High Street area overview

Rochester is unique due to its historic setting. It is the location of extensive heritage assets, such as Rochester Cathedral, Rochester Castle and The Guildhall. The train station has direct links to London and down to the coast and there are extensive car parks available for short and long stays. Rochester has an established reputation for street festivals in the High Street area, such as the Sweeps Festival and the Dickens Festival, as well as open air concerts and events in the Castle grounds.

As a result, Rochester attracts many tourists, visitors and business travellers alongside catering for the local residents.

The High Street area is mixed-use, with hundreds of residential and commercial properties in the road, streets and alleyways which link the town centre to other nearby residential areas.

The offer in the High Street has evolved to support the historic attractions through the provision of commercial leisure, such as restaurants and cafés, reinforcing its attractiveness for day and evening activities. There are several pubs and late-night venues, and it is the primary late-night economy in Medway.

There are also several off licences, which are small convenience stores, corner shops and newsagents. Many of these sell products which are termed as 'super strength' beer and cider i.e. cheap beer and cider products over 5.5% ABV, making cheap, high-strength alcohol readily available.

The Rochester Public Space Protection Order implemented by Medway Council to try and prevent anti-social behaviour covers the majority of the Rochester Cumulative Impact Area.

There is potential to increase visitor numbers, local engagement and raise Medway's image as a tourist destination by enhancing and strengthening the above offer, by encouraging a range of diverse venues. The Authority wants to support and encourage businesses which complement and support these assets, increasing dwell time, growing local spend and improving the economic health of the town centre.

Notwithstanding the existence of the Cumulative Impact Area, members are supportive of applications which will positively benefit the High Street in line with the aspirations outlined above.

The key aim in Rochester High Street is to encourage and expand the leisure, tourism and business visitor offer, with the intention of providing premises attractive to all age groups and a diversity of licensed premises primarily centred on the day and early evening economy. The kinds of application which would be encouraged include:

- a. Restaurants and cafés, with an emphasis on good quality family friendly venues.
- b. Premises where the sale of alcohol is ancillary to the main business, such as:
 - i. Exhibition and art venues.
 - ii. Theatres and cinemas.
 - iii. Hotels.
- c. Venues which complement and enhance Medway's heritage.

This is a less restrictive approach than is suggested in the Statutory Guidance, which suggests that licensing authorities can adopt a policy of refusing all new licences where special areas of cumulative impact apply, subject to their discretion being engaged.

List of roads included in this Cumulative Impact Area

Addresses on both sides of all roads shown in the above map are included in the Cumulative Impact Area unless otherwise stated.

While every effort has been made to include all roads within the above area, there may be omissions, errors or additions due to ongoing development, and the following list is only intended as a guide. It is the applicant's responsibility to confirm the location of their premises.

Almon Place
Bishops Walk
Blue Boar Lane
Cazeneuve Street
Corporation Street
Crow Lane
Davey Court
East Row
Eastgate
Eastgate Terrace
Gravel Walk
High Street to the junction with Nags Head Lane
La Providence
Maidstone Road from East Row to King Street
Northgate
Star Hill from Corporation Street to King Street
The Terrace
Union Street
Victoria Street