

From: Ross Hutchins
Sent: 12 August 2025 17:50
To: Licensing
Subject: Objection to Premises Licence Variation – Newlands Newsagents, 111 High Street, Rochester

Dear Licensing Team,

I write as a local resident to submit a formal objection to the proposed variation of the premises licence for Newlands Newsagents, 111 High Street, Rochester ME1 1JS (Licence Ref: Medway/07/PREM/0103).

The application seeks to extend off-sales of alcohol from 19:30 to 21:30 daily. I respectfully request that this application be refused, on the following grounds under the Licensing Act 2003:

1. Cumulative Impact Zone – Rebuttable Presumption Applies

This premises lies within the Rochester High Street Cumulative Impact Zone, as designated by Medway Council's Statement of Licensing Policy 2023–2028 and supported by the 2018 Cumulative Impact Assessment. There is a rebuttable presumption that such applications will be refused unless the applicant demonstrates there will be no negative cumulative impact.

In this case, no such evidence has been provided. The application offers no impact assessment or mitigation strategy addressing the well-documented issues in the zone.

2. Prevention of Crime and Disorder

Extending alcohol sales later into the evening will increase the risk of anti-social behaviour and public disorder. Rochester High Street already faces elevated levels of street drinking and alcohol-fuelled offences, particularly during the evening hours. Police data cited in the Cumulative Impact Assessment supports this concern.

3. Prevention of Public Nuisance

Later off-sales of alcohol are likely to encourage loitering, noise disturbance, and potential public urination. As a resident, I already experience late-evening noise, especially during warmer months. The proposal conflicts with the objectives of the Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) currently in effect, which exists specifically to reduce such alcohol-related nuisance in Rochester town centre.

4. Protection of Children from Harm

The premises is located on a prominent High Street frequently used by school-age children. Extending sale hours may increase the risk of proxy sales and exposure to alcohol-related behaviours.

5. No Exceptional Justification

The applicant's reasoning appears to be based on business viability. While I appreciate commercial pressures, financial hardship is not a valid justification under licensing law where public harm may result. No evidence has been presented to rebut the presumption of refusal under the Cumulative Impact Policy.

Conclusion

Given the location, the established Cumulative Impact Policy, and the documented social issues in the area, I believe granting this variation would be inappropriate and detrimental to public well-being. I respectfully urge Medway Council to refuse the application in full.

Yours faithfully,

Steven Hutchins