

B&M, UNIT 223A, 44-45 DUDLEY STREET, THE MANDER CENTRE, WOLVERHAMPTON**ADDITIONAL STEPS/CONDITIONS TO PROMOTE THE LICENSING OBJECTIVES**INTRODUCTION

B&M has 518 stores in England & Wales and 501 stores are licensed for the sale of alcohol (the remainder are generally not licensed due to a planning restriction or covenant on the site).

B&Ms range of alcohol is limited in scope, in this case 16 bays out of 519 at the Dudley Street store.

Alcoholic drinks are primarily wines, beers and ciders but with a very limited range of spirits.

Crucially, alcohol at B&M is sold at ambient temperature and there are no refrigerated display cabinets. As such, beers, wines and ciders are not sold to be drunk immediately, but complimentary to a purchase of food and other goods.

Price point for alcoholic drinks (established by surveys in England and Scotland) indicate that whilst B&M is a discount retailer, it does not discount alcohol. Alcohol is generally priced at a level above leading supermarkets. Alcohol is not a loss-leader at B&M.

B&M works with the police and licensing authorities nationally to promote the licensing objectives. It will happily de-list an item or a range of alcohol if requested to do so, where the sale of alcohol risks undermining the licensing objectives.

B&M stores generally open 08.30 to 20.00 Monday to Saturday and 10.30 to 16.30 on Sundays, with extended opening hours in the run up to Christmas. To avoid having to apply for TENS for Christmas, extended hours for licensing are applied for at all stores. Similarly, whilst Sunday trading legislation currently restricts opening hours on Sundays, to avoid having to vary licences if the permitted Sunday trading hours are changed, extended trading on Sunday is applied for. B&M confirms that it complies with all Sunday trading restrictions and will not open or sell alcohol outside of those permitted hours.

B&Ms age verification and till prompt system for preventing underage sales are thorough and considered to be the best in class in the retail industry.

OBJECTIONS TO APPLICATION

B&M acknowledges that its new store in Wolverhampton sits within the City Centre Cumulative Impact Area (CIA). B&M notes that the current Policy creates a rebuttable presumption that an application for a new off-licence will be refused within the CIA.

B&M is aware of objections to this application from Public Health, the Licensing Authority and four residents. No objection has been made by the Police.

Objections relate to concerns about:

- The hours applied for to sell alcohol (07.00 to 23.00, 7 days a week)
- B&M being attractive to street drinkers
- Increased risk of disorder and nuisance
- Children buying alcohol
- Anti-social behaviour and drunkenness in the streets
- Cheap alcohol
- Saturation of licensed premises within the CIA

COMMENTS ON OBJECTIONS

B&M notes the objections that have been made to its licensing application.

B&M is prepared to modify its application to take account of (some of) the very valid concerns raised. It is prepared to modify its licensing hours and to add additional conditions to its licence application, in order to ensure that granting the licence would not undermine the licensing objectives. However, it would point out that its alcohol is sold to be consumed at home. It is not cooled for immediate consumption. It is prepared to restrict high ABV products which are attractive to street drinkers. In light of these revisions, it does not believe that granting the licence would add to cumulative impact in the CIA. If it were the case that B&M stores undermine the licensing objectives, its stores would be subject to review in many of the towns and cities where it trades (including within a number of cumulative impact zones, such as Blackpool). This is not the case.

B&M also notes the objection made by Public Health, although the spatial map referred to provides a link to “gambling premises licences” in the footnote, so it has not been possible to verify if this data is correct. If the data shown in the map shows all alcohol licensed premises, this includes both on and off licensed premises. A more accurate comparison would be a map showing all off licensed premises within the CIA to establish whether there is any level of saturation. Public Health is requested to provide a map showing details of off-licences only within the CIA.

PROPOSED REVISIONS TO LICENCE APPLICATION

- Hours for sale of alcohol to be restricted to 08.30 to 20.00.
- There are to be no single can sales of lagers, beers or ciders.
- Sales of alcohol are not to include any super strength lagers, beers or ciders where strength exceeds 6.5% ABV (alcohol by volume). This restriction shall not apply in respect of specialist branded, premium priced products – such as craft ales, local or micro-brewery specialist products, boxed gifts or national celebratory or commemorative beer, lager or cider.
- A full time security guard will be employed at the premises (and on duty during peak trading hours).

CONCLUSION

In light of these revisions B&M would ask the objectors to accept that the opening of its store will not undermine the licensing objectives in the CIA and that the Premises Licence application should be granted.