

## Oliver Hoban

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**From:** Hunton, Andrew  
**Sent:** 07 February 2025 11:24  
**To:** Development Control  
**Subject:** Change of Use to Cafe/Wine Bar, 71 Lowther Street, Whitehaven

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(Copy to NPT)

Your ref 4/24/2426/0F1  
My ref CO/1656/25

### FAO Sarah Papaleo

Many thanks for your consultation dated 8<sup>th</sup> January 2025.

An application for another Licensed Premise in this locality has significant implications for police resourcing. I have consulted with the Neighbourhood Policing Team that patrols this area and the Supervisor's comments are appended below:

"I write with reference to the consultation validated on 23 December 2024 in relation to the premises at 71 LOWTHER STREET, WHITEHAVEN involving CHANGE OF USE OF PART OF THE GROUND FLOOR FROM BANK TO CAFE/WINE BAR.

I am the Neighbourhood Policing Team and Licensing Sergeant that covers this area.

The NPT wishes to bring these concerns to the attention of the Planning Authority for this application, whilst acknowledging that responsibilities under the Licensing Act rest with Cumberland Council.

I have reviewed the documents listed within the planning portal in respect of this application. I do feel that the Police need to make representation given the intended change of use of the building to licensed premises.

The location of the building is in Whitehaven Town Centre and would be in the centre of the main area of licensed premises which provide the main NightTime Economy for the town and indeed, West Cumbria at the weekend. This premise is also adjacent to an area of residential properties. The addition of another licensed premises here is a serious concern for us.

The application itself lacks detail, and I have been unable to identify within the published documents reference to the capacity or any public safety considerations. The application does not reference any safety and security features beyond the fire escapes, i.e. indicating compliance with Policy DS4 of the Copeland Local Plan.

As the local Policing Sergeant my interest and concerns relate to the impact on local crime and disorder, and I have a duty to notify the Planning Authority regarding my concerns about the impact this development may have. In the last few years this small town has seen a resurgence in popularity of the NightTime Economy and in the variety of licensed premises. Not by coincidence there has been a significant increase in the amount of anti-social behaviour reports and violent crime.

In 2021 the officers at Whitehaven dealt with 941 crime and public order offences. In 2024 this had grown to 1109 and analysis of data has demonstrated that a high proportion of these violent assaults and public order offences have occurred within the area of licensed premises or related to persons who had been patrons immediately before. These are the recorded crimes for the area and do not include all calls for service involving antisocial behaviour that sit below the criminal threshold or do not involve recordable crimes. This area in Whitehaven has been identified as a Hotspot for antisocial behaviour and serious violence as part of statistical analysis and has been subject to additional police patrols as part of the response to this using Home Office funding to provide this – this funding expires in March 2025 with no likelihood of replacement. This places strain on limited local policing resources who are dealing with an ever-increasing demand.

Our concern around this high level of crime has prompted ongoing work with Licensee's and partners to try to reduce the number of assaults and violence against women and girls. This has included the supply of additional Security Industry Authority staff to provide security at taxi ranks at peak times to ensure the safety of those leaving the area and to ensure patrons can get safely home. There has also been a Local Focus Hub case around these issues involving all partners and Licensees working together to provide a safer environment around taxi provision and having a safe night. Work has also been ongoing between police and the local Pubwatch scheme around providing a safe environment - and problem solving around concerns regarding an increase in reported 'spiking' incidents and violence offences.

The Application Form suggests the premises will be open between 0800 and 0200 daily and this gives me concern. The NightTime Economy in Whitehaven cannot provide enough taxis and safe transport home at present for those already partaking, let alone with extra demand from additional premises. This realisation formed a large part of the Local Focus Hub case and simply put, there are not enough taxi drivers willing to work in the NightTime Economy to provide this service. This issue has been seen to impact upon the effective winding down of the NightTime Economy on closure of late opening premises and has contributed to the crime and disorder seen in the locality.

I do not wish to provide a disproportionate response to this application, but it is difficult to consider the full impact another bar will have without knowing its capacity inside and out and other public safety considerations. I have spoken with the Licensing Department at Cumberland Council, and they have not been approached by the applicant in respect of any Licensing application. Cumbria Constabulary has had no contact from the applicant in respect of any Licensing application and I would strongly encourage them to contact us to be able to acknowledge our concerns and to understand the wider context of this proposal.

Whilst the Licensing Authority is required to publish a Statement of Licensing Policy that: ".....sets out the basis on which decisions under the Licensing Act 2003 will be made. The policy strives to achieve a local balance between the commercial interests of the licensed trade and the communities they serve and affect, a balance between freedom and responsibility."

We wish to clarify if Cumberland Council (Copeland) makes any contribution to – and can influence - the Cumulative Impact Assessments – as referred to under S141 Policing and Crime Act 2017:

[Policing and Crime Act 2017 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2017/11/section/141)

The Constabulary recognises and acknowledges the importance of development of new business and regeneration of the area and is very supportive, however the late night opening and potential impact of this application must be considered and a balanced approach taken.

However, we also wish to draw attention to the Government publication 'Modern Crime Prevention Strategy' which makes particular reference to the provision of drinking establishments and the resultant demands on Emergency Services - to the detriment of local communities:

[6.1770 Modern Crime Prevention Strategy final \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/6.1770-Modern-Crime-Prevention-Strategy-final)

## **Alcohol as a Driver of Crime**

What the evidence shows

Over the last decade, in around half of all violent incidents the victim believed the offender(s) to be under the influence of alcohol at the time of the offence, a proportion that increases in incidents between strangers, in the evening and night, at weekends, and in public places."

This evidence is reflected in my statistics described above."

**David Macdonald MCMI**

**Police Sergeant 154**

**Neighbourhood Policing Team**

**Derwent and Esk Quadrant - Cumberland Basic Command Unit**

The Constabulary contends that the number of Licensed Premises in this area is contributing to the increase in recorded crime – an effect that cannot be addressed by merely imposing conditions under the Licensing Act 2003.

Although 'Designing out crime' is referenced in the Local Plan (Item 6.4.6), it is an objective that must be recognised in a wider context (S17 Crime and Disorder Act 1998).

I trust the above comments explain the Constabulary's position on this application. I shall be pleased to refer any queries to the NPT for consideration.

Best regards

**Andy Hunton**

**Designing Out Crime Officer**

Cumbria Constabulary

Brunel Way, Durranshill Industrial Estate, Carlisle, CA1 3NQ

