

## **Appendix 4b**

### **Consultation on amendment to Statement of Licensing Policy**

Blackpool Council (the Council) as licensing authority has been reviewing the policy dealing with the Town Centre Saturation Area.

The Council's aim is to create a "world-class resort destination: a great place to visit, a better place to live". Reducing alcohol related nuisance and disorder in the town centre area has a vital part to play in achieving this.

The saturation policy was first introduced in January 2007 because the licensing authority was of the opinion that the number, type and density of premises selling alcohol in the town centre was leading to serious problems of nuisance and disorder. This policy only affected applications made on or after 31<sup>st</sup> July 2007.

Whilst the policy was subject to consultation, applications were received and granted for two substantial premises the first in Market Street with a capacity of approximately 600, the second in Talbot Square with a capacity of 1600. Neither of the premises has, as yet started to operate.

Since the policy was introduced, the Licensing Committee has been asked to deal with two applications for new premises licences within the saturation area. The first, an application in Queen Street was refused the second on the Promenade (with a capacity of approximately 330) was granted as the Committee felt that the applicant offered the family friendly type of facility it wanted to attract.

The practical effect of these applications is that at some time in the future there will be on offer at least an additional 2500 drinking spaces within the town centre area of Blackpool. The licensing authority is of the opinion that the licensing objectives will be further undermined when all these premises taken together are fully operational therefore action needs to be taken to strengthen the town centre saturation area.

The existing policy contains the following exception (found at 3.8.1)

*"The licensing authority wishes to encourage "family friendly" entertainment in the town centre. To promote this acceptable grounds for an exception to the special policy, even in the light of representations may be that the applicant can demonstrate that the main activity in the premises is not the consumption of alcohol, and that the premises is aimed at family groups. The onus is on the applicant to show why an exception should be made"*

Concerns were raised following the second hearing that the policy was not robust enough to protect the town centre area from the additional alcohol related problems that were likely to occur as a result of these additional drinking spaces.

At its meeting on the 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2008, the Licensing Committee discussed the options available to it to tighten up the policy and as a result voted to consult on adding the word “predominantly” so that the first line of section 3.8.1 would read “The licensing authority wishes to encourage predominantly “family friendly” entertainment in the town centre”. Your views are now sought on this proposal.

**Question:** Do you think that the proposed amendment would have the effect of strengthening the saturation policy?

Alternatives available to the licensing authority are:

1. Do nothing and maintain the policy in its existing form
2. Delete paragraph 3.8.1 in its entirety

**Question:** Would either of these options better achieve the licensing authority’s aim – if so which option would you put forward. What are your reasons?

**Question:** Is there any other action Blackpool Council should consider taking to promote the licensing objectives?

Comments should be made in writing to be received no later than Friday 5<sup>th</sup> December 2008.

Responses should be addressed to:

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