

## **Appendix Five -Licensing Responsible Authority**

Special policies to manage the cumulative impact of licensed premises in a defined area has been used by a number of Licensing Authorities across England and Wales. A number of London Boroughs have cumulative impact zones, examples are Hackney, Islington and Westminster.

Cumulative Impact Zones are criticised by members of the Licensing profession for being a blunt tool that often delivers unintended negative consequences. The critics observe that a doughnut effect can result: premises open just outside the zone close to its borders.

In some areas, the critics say, cumulative impact zones in a town centre, have led to a decline in the area with visitors travelling elsewhere. The critics observe that Licensing Authorities have other tools that have proven record of tackling the cumulative impact of licensed premises. They cite, as best practice: Best Bar None awards, Business Improvement Districts and Purple Flag/

That said, the ability to consider the implementation of a cumulative impact zone, special policy area within a Licensing Authority area is crucial tool in ensuring that the licensing objectives set out in the Licensing Act 2003 are promoted.

The Licensing Team is using some of the initiatives the critics cite as best practice within the Cumulative Impact Zone.

### **Best Bar None**

Eight bars within the cumulative impact zone are being assessed for the Best Bar None(BBN) award.

BBN is a national award scheme supported by the Home Office and aimed at promoting responsible management and operation of alcohol licensed premises. It was piloted in Manchester in 2003 and found to improve standards in the night time economy, with premises now competing to participate. It has since been adopted by 100 towns and cities across the UK and is now being taken up internationally.

The aim of BBN is to reduce alcohol related crime and disorder in a town centre by building a positive relationship between the licensed trade, police and local authorities.

It reduces the harmful effects of binge drinking as well as improves the knowledge and skills of enforcement and regulation agencies, licensees and bar staff to help them responsibly manage licensed premises.

The process of becoming recognised by BBN includes meeting minimum standards and culminates with a high profile award night with category winners and an overall winner.

Responsible operators are recognised and able to share good practice with others. A scheme can also highlight how operating more responsibly can improve the profitability of an individual business and attractiveness of a general area.

In 2007 an agreement was reached between Greater Manchester Police, the Home Office and BII, the professional body for the licensed retail sector, to develop the scheme nationally. An independent committee has been formed and is currently chaired by Philip Kolvin QC. BII's role in Best Bar None is to help and foster future development of the scheme.

### **High Strength Alcohol – reduce the strength – single can condition**

25% of the retailers – off sales, have signed up to an agreement to stop selling beers and ciders with an alcohol by volume of over 6.5%. Following licensing reviews, a number of off licences have had a standard high strength condition imposed on their premises licences. This restricts the businesses to selling high strength beer and cider in multiples of three or more cans or bottles – the “single can” condition.

### **Restrictions on opening alcohol and providing plastic cups**

A number of off licences, within the cumulative impact zone, had started the practice of opening alcohol for customers, as well as providing plastic cups to drink from. Community concerns had been raised about crowds gathered in the Brick Lane drinking from plastic cups causing nuisance.

Licensing reviews were triggered and conditions were imposed on the premises licences of a number of off licences prohibiting the supply of plastic cups and the opening of alcohol by the retailer.