

WITNESS STATEMENT

(CJ Act 1967. s. 9, MC Act 1980, s.s.5A (3a) and 5B MC Rules 1981, r70)

Statement of: Darrell John Butterworth

Age if under 18: Over 18

Occupation: Licensing and Security
Compliance Manager

(if over 18 insert "over 18")

This statement (consisting of 8 page(s) each signed by me) is true to the best of my knowledge and belief and I make it knowing that, if it is tendered in evidence, I shall be liable to prosecution if I have wilfully stated in it anything which I know to be false or do not believe to be true.

Dated the 18th December 2023

Signature: D J Butterworth

1. This report has been commissioned by Chongie Entertainments Limited. It has been requested to form part of a Planning Application for the change of use to an Adult Gaming Centre at 14-16 Station Road Hayes Town UB3 4BE
2. This latest investigation should be considered in conjunction with my two previous reports dated 19th July 2022 and 4th May 2023 (exhibit reference letter DJB 01 and DJB 02 refer). In my report dated the 19th of July 2022 I outline my experience in visiting town centres across England and Wales in relation to Alcohol and Gambling venues. It expresses and evidences the differences between Alcohol licensed venues and gambling venues, and for the purposes of the Hayes Town application the difference between Adult Gaming Centres and traditional betting shops.
3. Since completing my report in May 2023 I have conducted further gambling investigations in Bradford, Crawley, Croydon, Edgware, Halifax, Leyton, Sheffield and Wood Green on behalf of three separate operators.
4. In my report of the 4th of May 2023, I outlined my visits to three London Boroughs where I was able to observe Little Vegas type venues and other Adult Gaming Centre operators. I consider the current proposed venue is most similar to the Edgware area in terms of passing traffic and mixed-use business and residential properties. Having spent six days in these three borough areas, and a decade visiting gambling establishments, I found no evidence to support the conclusion that the operation of an Adult Gaming Centre in a mixed use, business/ residential location, created an increase in crime, disorder or nuisance to residents.

Signature *D J Butterworth*

Terms of reference

5. i) Conduct an investigation in Hayes Town to assess the current situation in relation to Crime and Disorder.
- ii) Compare the Edgware situation with other locations that Chongie Entertainments Ltd. Operate Adult Gaming Centres.
- iii) Assess the likely impact on the local community of opening an Adult Gaming Centre at 14-16 Station Road, Hayes Town UB3 4BE.

Police.uk website

6. In order to conduct a personal risk assessment for my visit I have visited the police.uk website for Hayes Town. Postcode UB3 4BE is covered by the Hayes Town policing area of the Metropolitan Police. Over the previous 12 months the area averages approximately 230 crimes per month. In October 2023 33 crimes were recorded in the Station Road area (exhibit reference letter DJB 03 refers). The largest crime recorded was shoplifting (16), followed by anti-social behaviour (7). In my experience shoplifting and anti-social behaviour are not conduct related to adult gaming centre venues. (source poice.uk website). I have revisited the previous 9 months of data for 2023 which gives a similar outcome.

Overview

7. I have not previously conducted a gambling investigation in Hayes Town. I would describe the town centre to be mixed-use business/ residential in terms of planning considerations. Most premises along Station Road were business at ground floor level with offices and residential properties on the first and second floors. The majority of the current shops are Retail, cafés, off licences, bars, restaurants and take away venues which operate throughout the day time, and late evening.
8. Public transport links to the area are well catered for with frequent all night bus services operating along Station Road and an overground and Elizabethan Line train service. Payable on street parking was also available along Station Road, which was free after 1830 hours and all day on Sundays. Dedicated disabled parking bays were available immediately outside the proposed site.
9. 14-16 Station Road is currently unoccupied; 6 other unoccupied shops were noted along this small section of Station Road along with 2 large office units. Above the shop was potential residential accommodation but this did not appear to be occupied during this visit. The nearest residential properties appeared to be on the opposite side of Station Road in Aquis House.

Observations

10. My observations commenced at 1500 hours on Saturday 16th December 2023 and concluded at 2200 hours on Sunday 17th December 2023.

Signature *D J Butterworth*

Saturday 16th December 2023

11. I arrived in the Station Road area of Hayes Town at 1500 hours on Saturday 16th December 2023. The weather was fine and 11⁰ C. I recorded what I saw and heard into a notes document which I later transferred into this report. I located the proposed premises at 14-16 Station Road. I looked around the area for local authority-controlled CCTV cameras which are often located in town centre areas. Two TZP (tilt zoom and pan) type cameras were identified nearby that appeared to give an unobstructed line of sight to the frontage of 14-16 Station Road.
12. I looked around the area for other Adult Gaming Centres and gambling venues. An Admiral (open 24 hours) was located at 32-36 Station Road with William Hill (x2), Paddy Power, Jennings and Ladbrokes betting offices nearby.
13. I looked around the area for premises which may have been sensitive to a gaming application being made. Saint Anselm Church and Hayes Methodist Church were both located on Station Road. The Baptist Church, Hayes Muslim centre, Hayes Tuition centre, Salvation Army, Botwell Primary school, Immaculate Heart of St Mary church, Nestles Avenue Childrens centre, Hayes Spiritualist Church, Elim Pentecostal Church, and the Hayes and Harlington community centre were further away.
14. At 1600 hours 7 volunteers from the Living Christian Church set up a food bank distribution point at the band stand at the junction of Station Road and Botwell Lane ; 25 people were queuing to collect groceries. At 1610 I entered the Admiral venue on Station Road. No magnetic door lock was in use and no SIA security was employed. Two female staff were working, with 14 male and 1 female customer. I exited the shop and saw a male beggar sat on the footpath outside McDonald's.
15. I then visited the five betting shops in the town centre. None of the shops used magnetic door locks or engaged SIA security to prevent unwanted customers entering. All 5 betting shops had their full entitlement of Category 2 slot machines. No one close to the age of 18 years of age was seen inside any of the gambling venues and no breaches of the gambling objectives were noted.
16. At 1735 I returned to Admiral. No magnetic door lock or SIA presence and 1 male and 1 female staff were present. 17 customers were inside the shop, 6 of whom were females. I was immediately approached by a member of staff and asked if I had visited the shop previously and to let them know if I

Signature *D J Butterworth*

needed any assistance. No such approach was made in any of the betting shops I had been in.

17. Street drinking was observed on two occasions, but this was conducted as the people walked along Station Road and was not observed at static locations or by groups of alcohol dependents.

18. Between 1830 and 2000 hours 18 customers were seen to enter the Admiral venue. Of these 16 entered alone and one pair entered as a couple. Still open in the town centre area at 2100 was Admiral (open 24-hour), McDonald's (closes 2300), Iceland (closes 2100), Paul's Bakery, Paddy Power (closes 2200), Phone Vape off licence, Chicken Cottage, Brothers Food Centre, Ladbrokes (closes 2200), Love Desserts, Emilias, Roosters Spot, Best Food and Wine, Lidl, Papa John's, Savys, William Hill (X2 closes 2200), Biryani, Jennys Burgers, Subway (closes 2300), Zara Take away, Global Wines, Royal Peri Peri, Doaba Kitchen, Hayes Town Pharmacy (closes 2300), Salvador Peri Peri, Euro Kebab, Botwell Inn (closes midnight), Royal Chicken, Goan Café, Pink City, Nancy Raj Hair, Najma Café, Nannonis, Super Perfect Pizza, Lahori Chaska, Hayes Food Centre, Hayes Spice, Hot and Spicy, Mazad, Bal Supermarket, Town Pizza, Kabul Supermarket, Sheger Café, Aaron Food Market, Smoky Hut, Goodaad Sat, Munchies Fish and Chips, Baldev's Food and Wine, Punjabi Lounge, NR News, Hayes mini store, Pind Punjabi, Good Luck Chinese takeaway, Sainsbury's local, Heathrow Inn, Ones Thai Therapy, Nandinis, Neils Barbers, Leveller Café, Hilaac Café, Airlink hotel, Costcutters off-licence, Little Shiraz, Cheatmeals, Chandia Hair, Mashallah Food Centre, NUR food centre, Punjab Chela, Three bites, Tesco express, Aladdin's, KFC, Namaste Gurkha, Save More Superstore, Old Crown, Al Hyderabadli, Chixys Grill, Falooda, Captain Morgans, Kapoor and Son's, Veggie Master, La Roma Pizza, Takaa Tak, Stay Hotel, Asda (24-hour except Sunday), Curry Delight, Orlando Pizza and Phat Bros.

19. At 2200 I returned to observing Admiral and noted that the magnetic door lock system was now being used to vet the customers entering. Between 2200 and midnight 32 customers were seen to enter, 20 as individuals and 12 couples. No group larger than 2 entered throughout this period. Still open at Midnight were Admiral, Love Desserts, Airlink Hotel, Salvador Peri Peri, Euro Kebab, Botwell Inn, Royal Chicken, Lahori Chaska, Hayes Spices, Hayes Mini store, Kabul Supermarket, Hot and spicy, Hayes Food Centre, Cheatmeals, NUR Food Centre, Old Crown, Captain Morgans, Orlando Pizza and Phat Bros. No noteworthy incidents occurred and at 0100 hours I ceased my observations.

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Sunday 17th December 2023

20. At 1100 hours on Sunday 17th December 2023, I returned to the Station Road area of Hayes town and recommenced my observations. The weather was dry and 10°C. Admiral and the five betting shops in the area were already open. Between 1250 and 1430 I entered the 5 betting shops and AGC in the area. None of the premises were using magnetic door locks or employing SIA security to keep out unwanted customers. At 1330 on entering Admiral I noted 1 male staff member and 7 customers (6 male and 1 female), Shortly after entering the shop I was asked if I wanted a non-alcoholic drink. At 1438 I noticed the Hayes Town Chapel setting up for a Carol concert in the band stand at the junction of Station Road and Botwell Lane.
21. At 1459 I saw a female sat on the footpath behind the Hayes Town Centre bus stop who was begging. At 1533 2 metropolitan police vehicles passed along Station Road with their emergency equipment operating. The vehicles did not stop and continued South towards Harlington.
22. Between 1500 and 1630 18 customers were observed entering the Admiral unit; 14 as individuals and 2 couples. Between 1830 and 2000 19 customers entered Admiral; 17 as individuals 1 couple. Still open in the area at 2100 were Botwell Inn, Royal Chicken, Cost Cutters, Doaba Kitchen, Salvador Peri Peri, Hayes Town Pharmacy, Global Wines, Subway, Airlink Hotel, Zara Takeaway, Biryani, William Hill (x2), Ladbrokes, Savys, Fone Station off licence, Papa John's, Emilias, Roosters Spot, Best Food, Love Desserts, Chicken Cottage, McDonald's, Admiral, Paddy Power, Jennings, Little Shiraz, Cheatmeals, Mashaallah Food Centre, NUR Food Centre, Punjabi Chela, Three Bites, Aladins, KFC, Namaste Gurkha, Save more, Old Crown, Tesco Express, Takkas Tak, Stay City, Orlando Pizza, Curry Delight, Phat Bros, Chixys Grill, Al Hyderabaadi, Cherry Food and Wine, Captain Morgans, Falooda Wala, Roy's Barbers, Kapoor Food and Wines, Veggie Master, La Roma Pizza, Hilaac Café, Goan Café, Nancy Raj, Najma Restaurant, Super Perfect Pizza, Lahori Chaska, Hayes Spices, Nandinis, Kulan Barbers, Mazaa, Bal Supermarket, Hayes Food Centre, Hot and Spicy, Town Pizza, Kabul Supermarket, Sheger Café, Waffle and Creams, Smoky Hut, Goodaad Sat, Munchies Fish and Chips, Pub Punjabi, Baldevs Food and Wine, N R News, Hayes Mini store, Pind Punjabi, Good Luck Chinese takeaway, Sainsburys local, and Heathrow Inn.
23. No noteworthy incidents occurred and at 2200 hours I ceased my observations and left the area.

Summary of observations

24. Football along Station Road was busy during the day and early evening dropping to lower levels in the very late evening and early hours of the morning. Vehicle traffic through the area remained busy throughout the day

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and early evening period. Parking in the limited-on street bays was at a premium with vacated spaces being immediately filled.

25. No incidents of crime, disorder or antisocial behaviour was witnessed in Hayes Town during these periods of observations. The largest nuisance heard being the sounding of car horns. This is highly unusual when conducting a town centre location investigation in the evening and early hours of the morning. This lack of notable incidents reflected the intelligence that I had obtained on the location from the police.uk website. Police vehicles were seen passing through the town on one occasion but did not stop in the location. No routing patrolling by the police was seen on foot or in vehicles.
26. Non-aggressive street begging was observed on two occasions during this period. Street drinking by people walking along whilst consuming alcohol from cans and bottles, but this was at a lesser level than I had observed in other similar London boroughs. No static street drinking was observed at any location or drinking by groups who appeared to be alcohol dependent in a fixed location. No rough sleeping or homelessness was observed, all conduct I have witnessed in other London boroughs.
27. Each of the five betting shops visited had their full legal entitlement of four category 2 machines which appeared to be well used by customers. Staff and customers in the gambling establishments acted in a similar manner to that which I have observed in other locations. Most customers entering the Adult Gaming centre (Admiral) did so alone with the largest group observed entering together numbered two. Although it was possible to enter the betting shops and not participate in gambling, on the three occasions I entered the Adult Gaming Centre I was engaged by staff and asked if I needed any help.
28. Smoking was rarely observed taking place outside any of the current betting offices and Adult Gaming Centre and did not cause any issues during these observations. No crime, disorder or noise nuisance was seen to be created by these activities.

Conclusions

29. Having conducted a review of crime and disorder occurring in the Hayes Town area most recorded incidents are shoplifting thefts and anti-social behaviour. In my experience of visiting Adult Gaming Centre establishments across the country these types of venues do not contribute to this type of incidents.
30. There is no evidence on the police.uk website, that the current gambling premises in the area, contribute to these levels of crime and disorder. The

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current betting shops do not need to take basic security measures such as utilising magnetic door entry systems or employing SIA security staff. The Adult Gaming centre did not use SIA security staff and only implemented the magnetic door lock after 2100 hours. Measures which I have seen gambling venues employ in areas where it is necessary to keep out unwanted customers.

31. I have conducted investigations in other London borough with higher crime rates than those experienced in Hayes Town, other areas where Chongie Entertainment Ltd. successfully operate Adult Gaming Centres without causing any increases in crime, disorder or public nuisance.
32. In my previous reports (19th July 2022 and 4th May 2023) I outline the major differences between an adult gaming centre and a betting office which also provides fixed odds betting facilities. I did not observe any conduct during this period of observations that would alter those views and conclusions.
33. Having observed the current gambling premises in Hayes Town over a 20-hour period I did not see any evidence that the current shops contributed to the levels of Crime and Disorder or public nuisance in the area. From observing the locality and community frequenting Hayes Town I considered the area to be less challenging than other locations where Chongie operates.
34. Having observed Chongie Entertainment Ltd. operation of Little Vegas style venues in other areas alongside greater numbers of betting shops and other Adult Gaming Centres I would consider the operation of the Adult Gaming Centres to have a lower impact on the local environment than those created at the betting shops.
35. Any gambling premises may, at one time or another, have a potential customer who may misbehave or act in an anti-social manner. It is how a premises is managed that prevents the situation from continuing or escalating. From what I have seen of the management and company policies developed by Chongie these incidents are rare and are kept to an absolute minimum. I did not see anything in the Hayes Town location that would lead me to consider that the operating of the applied for premises would not be able to be managed in a similar professional manner.
36. These conclusions are based on my experience as a former police licensing Inspector and 13 years' experience as an independent Licensing Consultant.

Darrell Butterworth
Edmund Locard Limited
18th December 2023

Signature *D J Butterworth*

Appendix

Exhibit reference letter DJB 01 Previous report 19th July 2022

Exhibit reference letter DJB 02 Previous report 4th May 2023

Exhibit reference letter DJB 03 Police.uk crime mapping October

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WITNESS STATEMENT

(CJ Act 1967, s. 9, MC Act 1980, s.s.5A (3a) and 5B MC Rules 1981, r70)

Statement of: Darrell John Butterworth

Age if under 18: Over 18

Occupation: Licensing and Security
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This statement (consisting of 11 page(s) each signed by me) is true to the best of my knowledge and belief and I make it knowing that, if it is tendered in evidence, I shall be liable to prosecution if I have wilfully stated in it anything which I know to be false or do not believe to be true.

Dated the 19th July 2022

Signature: D J Butterworth

1. My name is Darrell John Butterworth and I currently operate as a self-employed Licensing and Security Authority Compliance Consultant. I have conducted this business since creating a company, Edmund Locard Licensing and Security Solutions, on the 1st January 2011. I make this statement in relation to my previous and current experiences in respect of applications for Premises Licences under the Gambling Act 2005.

Experience

2. Prior to taking up this role with Edmund Locard Ltd I completed 30 years service with the Greater Manchester Police in a variety of uniform and non-uniformed roles. The longest period of attachment to a department was between 1998 and 2006 when I performed the role of Force Licensing Inspector. This role involved the supervision of 12 divisional licensing officers, tasking and management of a covert licensing unit comprising a sergeant and six constables, developing force policy and enforcement in relation to all licensed units and employment and briefing of a licensing solicitor to act on behalf of the force in more complex licensing hearings.
3. During the period as the Force Licensing Inspector I was responsible for the good conduct and compliance of premises operating under a variety of licences, including outlets involved in selling alcohol, but also those that provided gambling, betting and bingo facilities. I have represented Greater Manchester Police at Magistrates Court hearings, Crown Court Appeals, The High Court, The Court of Appeal and Council Licensing Committee hearings,

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to oppose unsuitable applications and to take enforcement action against those premises whose standards had fallen below an acceptable level.

4. Throughout my period in the central licensing role Assistant Chief Constable Robert Taylor, also from the Greater Manchester Police, was the Association of Chief Police officers (ACPO) lead spokesman on Alcohol and Licensing matters. As a result of this connection I became secretariat to the ACPO National Licensing officers' group and National Licensing Forum (NLF).
5. During my time in charge of the Licensing Unit I worked very closely with David Thornton, the local Gambling Commission Inspector, conducting joint operations on both legal and illegal gaming establishments.
6. In 2006 on leaving the Central Licensing Unit I received a Chief Officers Commendation, recognising the contribution I had made to licensing enforcement across Greater Manchester, particularly in relation to my leadership and commitment shown in developing force policy and training in response to the Licensing Act 2003 and Gambling Act 2005.
7. Between 2006 and my retirement from the Greater Manchester Police in December 2010 I took up the role of Neighbourhood Inspector for the town of Heywood on the Rochdale division. This involved the supervision of over 50 police officers, community support officers and civilian support staff. Within my role as a Neighbourhood Policing Team Inspector I was required to conduct analysis of crime and incident trends to ensure that resources and tactics were deployed appropriately. The outcome of this analysis ensured that resources were deployed in the right numbers, in the right areas at the right time. On a monthly basis I also presented these statistics to the town's multi agency tasking group to ensure all agencies had the relevant information on crime trends.
8. I have continued my professional development regarding licensing knowledge by taking and passing the National Licensees Certificate and National Door Supervisors course. This enabled me to successfully apply for a Personal Licence and become approved by the Security Industry Authority (SIA) as a front line operative. In September 2011 I successfully applied to become a nominated tutor with the BII enabling me to carry out training in the award for responsible alcohol retailing and award for personal licence holders. In October 2018 I attended a training course on Licensing Hearings and Appeals and in November 2019 I attended a seminar for Licensing Consultants.

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9. Between 2013 and the present date I have conducted investigations nationally on behalf of operators. I estimate that I have visited in excess of 1000 venues licensed under the Gambling Act 2005. A complete list of the dates and areas venues visited is attached to this report (Exhibit reference letter DJB 1 refers). I have also conducted observations nationally in relation to premises licensed under the Alcohol Licensing Act 2003, outlets often in areas close to gambling establishments and often the source of alcohol related crime and disorder. These visits often concluded in the early hours of the morning, a period when Betting Offices had been closed, but 24-hour Adult Gaming Centres and Bingo licensed continued to operate.
10. In addition to acting on behalf of operators I have also conducted observations on behalf of residents, and in September 2017 I conducted 2 days of investigations on behalf of the London Borough of Camden. In August 2021 I conducted independent observations on behalf of the Home Office in relation to asylum seekers and their impact on Crime and Disorder in the West Midland area.
11. I have previously conducted investigations in many City centre locations where Gambling premises are located as well as in town centre and suburban high street locations. In all of these different types of locations I did not observe anything that altered my previously held views, formed during my police service as outlined below, nor did I witness any of the current gambling premises contributing to social, criminal or disorderly issues.
12. It is important to stress that when conducting my observations, I act totally independently of those instructing me and record accurately what I observe. To ensure that my visits accurately reflect the true situation I always insist that local operators are not made aware of my visits taking place. I am informed by those instructing me that this was the case for the current investigation.

Overview

13. I have been requested by Chongie Entertainments Ltd. to formalise an overview of my experience in relation to how Gambling Act applications have developed under the Gambling Act 1968 and Gambling Act 2005 legislation, Although the Gambling Act and Planning applications are two entirely different processes, in my experience, many of the crime, disorder, noise and anti-social behaviour concerns which are raised in representations against a gaming application are also raised in regards to a planning application. As a result, the purpose of this report is to outline my experiences and how they reflect the true position on the high street in respect of AGC/Bingo venues which is relevant to both Gaming and Planning applications.

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14. As noise and public nuisance is not a licensing objective under the Gambling Act, it is often raised at planning hearings as a reason why such an application should be refused. This often-expressed fear of disturbance does not, in my experience materialise, following the grant of a licence or following a variation to a planning application once approved.
15. In my experience of conducting Gambling Act investigations and attending Gambling Sub-Committee hearings, no statistical or video evidence has ever been produced to show that the current betting shops and AGC premises in an area create any of the crime and disorder problems alluded to in the representations. When conducting observations at Alcohol licensed premises, often in the early hours of the morning and in areas where Gambling premises are also located I have had the opportunity to note any conduct by customers of both types of premises. My conclusion from these visits and observations is that the majority of crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour occurring in City Centres and Towns across the country is predominantly generated from late night alcohol licensed premises, to a lesser extent from betting shop premises and an even lower contribution from AGC type premises. My conclusions have remained unchanged since my service with Greater Manchester Police, despite the increase of the AGC/ Bingo premises on the high street, as well as in motorway service stations and airport lounges.
16. There are several reasons for the differences alluded to above, including the fact that people tend to go to high street bingo and AGC venues on their own or in small numbers. An adult gaming centre regardless of floor space attracting more than 10 customers at one time would be highly unusual. Other than playing bingo and the machines there is no event taking place for customers to engage with each other, nor use the venues as a social meeting place. The demographic profile of the customers attending Betting shops and AGC/Bingo venues tends to be older and more mature than those visiting alcohol led premises.
17. During my overnight observations on high street across the country I have not observe AGC/Bingo venues causing noise or disturbance issues in the early hours of the morning due to the age profile of the customer and the small number of clientele who use this type of premises during these hours. This is the opposite of what is found in large bar/ nightclub venues on the high street where large numbers of young customers attend events involving the playing of loud entertainment and alcohol.
18. A group of young people attempting to enter and remain inside gaming venues would immediately be identified by staff. I have never encountered a

Signature *D J Butterworth*

situation during any of my extensive observations at these types of venues where young people sought to enter or remain inside any AGC or bingo licensed venues. On entering this type of premises staff immediately engage with you and often offer soft drinks, refreshment or other forms of courtesy. Another subtle but pleasing aspect of AGC's and Bingo type premises is the standard of their toilet facilities. These are always clean, unlike toilets in betting offices and alcohol venues which are often out of order or if open are uncleaned, disrespected by clientele and unhygienic. I believe this reflects the standards of behaviour and expectations of customers.

19. The staff employed at a high street bingo or AGC premises are not engaged or distracted by taking or paying out on bets so they can spend more time on the "shop floor" observing customer behaviour and resolving any low level issues before they can escalate. This customer interaction allows the staff at these premises to be proactive in identifying vulnerable customers and intervene if necessary. The environment of a high street machine type premises is also generally cleaner and tidier than ordinary bookmakers as there is no need for betting slips, newspapers and pens which often get discarded on the floor.

20. As a result of this less intimidating environment many of the managers of high street machine premises are female and this was certainly the case in the high street premises I have visited. A further difference between high street machine premises and traditional betting offices is people tend to spend less time at a venue on each visit. They do not wait around the venue for an event to start or to finish. As a result of this, customers of high street machine premises do not tend to loiter at a premise other than when playing the machines and do not smoke at the front of the venue between events taking place. I have not observed any issues regarding customers congregating outside the high street machine premises observed during these periods of observations

21. I have previously visited the Rochdale town centre area where a 24 hour machine type premises currently operates as a police officer and more lately as a licensing consultant. The premises has operated at this location continuously for over 30 years, without creating concerns to the local police or licensing authority. The Rochdale town centre is consistently in the top 50 most deprived areas in the country.

Gambling Act 1968

22. Under the Gambling Act 1968 application for a new premises licence would be submitted to the Magistrates Court for the area in which the premises would operate. Any person wishing to object to an application could present

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evidence and the Gambling Committee, guided by the local Gaming Board Inspector would consider the application and grant or refuse the application. Due to the restrictions on the published number of gambling premises in a location, the majority of objections to the new applications came from local operators who sought to prevent new businesses operating in their area. Any party who were not content with the Committees decision could appeal the matter to the Crown Court, decisions of which were used to formulate the licensing framework and afforded a consistency of approach which applicants and objectors could follow.

Gambling Act 2005

23. With the introduction of the Gambling Act 2005 jurisdiction on the grant or refusal of a new application for a premises licence came under the scope of the local authority with any appeal made to the Magistrates Court whose decisions were not binding. In my experience one of the detriments of the new act was the removal of this evidence tested approach to the decision-making process. A further consequence of the new legislation was a reduction in the role of the local gaming inspector.
24. Section 153 of the Act requires the Gambling Commission and Licensing Authorities to aim to permit the granting of a licence so far as is in keeping with the legislation and gambling commission guidance. Had Licensing Authorities adopted this section the onus on proving that a licence should not be granted would rest on those making representations against an application. In my experience the majority of Licensing Authorities adopt the opposite position as that outlined in the legislation and aim to refuse an application unless the applicant is able to satisfy the committee that they will not undermine the licensing objectives.
25. Between 2010 and 2018 I attended licensing applications at local authority gambling act licensing sub committees and on rare occasions on appeals to Magistrates Court. During this period the main grounds of the representations made were predominantly made under the Crime and Disorder licensing objective, and to a lesser extent the protection of vulnerable people and protection of Children from harm objectives. The main evidence in support of such objections was the crime and disorder currently occurring in an area generally, and not the crime and disorder that is currently occurring at betting shops and AGC/Bingo premises. Nor what crime and disorder is likely to occur should a new application be granted in these areas.
26. As stated above during my 30 years police experience and 12 years as an independent licensing consultant I have never seen any evidence that AGC's/ Bingo type premises undermine the Crime and Disorder licensing objective. It is therefore unsurprising that when challenged to provide evidence to support their position, those making representations, have been unable to do so.

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27. This lack of evidence that AGC/Bingo venues create Crime and Disorder was illustrated in a recent case in Newcastle when a freedom of information request identified that the three AGC/ Bingo type premises in Clayton Street had only been the creator of 4 incidents in the previous 12-month period despite one of the units having a 24-hour licence to operate.

Jan-Dec 2001

Venue 1 (24-hour licence)	2 crimes recorded. 2 incidents
Venue 2 (Not 24-hour licence)	No crimes. 2 incidents
Venue 3 (Not 24-hour licence)	No crimes or incidents

It is unsurprising that requests for Freedom of Information relating to the number of incidents and crimes occurring at gambling premises are now being refused by police forces stating that it is a breach of data protection legislation. As a result, the only public access records that are available to operators and consultants is the police crime websites. A review of these websites can show the number and nature of crimes and incidents occurring in a location but are not venue identifiable, nor can the information be extracted to obtain causal factors.

28. In recent years, perhaps as a result of the number of cases being approved by Licensing Committees or overturned on appeal, those local authorities who seek to refuse applications and those who wish to make representations against new AGC/ Bingo licences have sought to prevent the application via the planning application stage. However, often the grounds of the representation against the application still relies on the mis held belief that these types of premises create crime and disorder in an area. That beggars, street drinkers and other vulnerable members of society will be attracted to them and that children will try to gain entry to a premises.

29. As outlined above I have never observed any of these occurring in the numerous area I have taken observations and given evidence to committees on what I have witnessed. Also, restrictions have been placed via the planning regime on the opening hours that venues can operate based on the same evidence that the premises will undermine the crime and disorder licensing objectives. In my experience of visiting 24-hour AGC/Bingo venues the premises become even quieter in the early hours of the morning and do not have a negative impact on the high street at peak times as an alcohol licensed venue may do around 2300 hours on a Friday and Saturday night.

30. In a number of cases where an application has been granted and representations feared the impact of the opening of an AGC/ Bingo premises I have offered to return to the area on behalf of residents, local businesses

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and the local licensing department to conduct an investigation free of charge, should an area not continue in the same manner following the opening of a venue. At no time has any individual or group contacted me following the granting of an application requesting me to revisit an area.

31. I am also unaware of any licence that was granted despite representations being made that the Crime and Disorder, vulnerability or the children's Licensing Objectives would be breached, having had their licence reviewed having failed to operate in the manner which I expected or consider to be the norm.

32. A further issue often raised in representations is the harm that is caused by irresponsible gambling in general. As this usually manifest itself away from the premises, I am not able to quantify this in regards to individual premises or the different operators that engage my services.

Incidents at Chongie Leisure Ltd.

33. In order to assess the impact that a 24-hour licence may have on the licensing objectives in comparison with a venue that only operates for part of the day I have requested from Chongie Leisure a list of their venues (see appendix 2), their opening times and the incidents recorded (see appendix 3).

34. It is important to note that because an incident is recorded it does not necessarily follow that the operator was undermining the licensing objectives or that the incident recorded would merit the police being notified or requested to attend to assist the manager. An example of this from the incident list would be a barred customer attempting to enter a venue which was notified 21 times in the 114 incidents.

35. Chongie Entertainment Ltd currently operate 9 Adult Gaming Centres across the South East of the country. From appendix 2 it can be seen that the venues have operated since 8th November 2021 with the most recent opening in Croydon on the 30th May 2022.

The table below shows each venue, its opening date, hours of operation, total number of incidents recorded and the average number of incidents per week.

Venue	Opened	Hours	Incidents	Average incidents/week
Croydon	30/05/2022	24 hours	7/114	1/week
Peterborough	14/04/2022	24 hours	22/114	1.5/week
Hammersmith	29/03/2022	2200	3/114	0.2 /week
Reading	11/01/2022	24 hours	52/114	2.4/week
Aldershot	17/03/2022	24 hours	10/114	0.6/week

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Luton	02/02/2022	24 hours	12/114	0.5/week
Woodgreen	08/11/2021	2300	1/114	1 in 8 month period
Crawley	25/11/2021	2300	6/114	Less than 1/month
Wardour Street	11/12/2021	0200	1/114	1 in 7 month period

36. From the statistical figures above it can be seen that few incidents occur at any of the venues regardless of where they are located and what hours the licence is granted for. These instances, recorded by the shop managers supports the fact that AGC's generally, and those with 24 hour licences, do not create crime and disorder in a location.

37. I have visited the Wood Green area especially in relation to both gambling and alcohol licence applications on numerous occasions and I am aware of the crime and social challenges in the area. Having only recorded 1 incident at the venue in such an area clearly demonstrates the fact that Chongie and other AGC operators do not create crime, disorder or nuisance in the areas which they seek to operate.

38. I have conducted investigations in respect of applications for Gambling Premises Licences since October 2013. Since that time I have conducted observations in several London Boroughs, Acocks Green Birmingham, Blackpool, Doncaster, Droylsden Manchester, Hareshills Leeds, Newbury, Newcastle, Rochdale, Spalding, Walsall (x2), and Worcester. These visits were conducted following similar concerns that have been raised in respect of the majority of applications I have investigated.

Summary

39. In my experience AGC/ Bingo venues are now common sights in airport lounges, motorway service areas and local high streets. Having visited a large number of these sites in different locations I have never seen any evidence of them creating crime and disorder or being an attractive location to vulnerable individuals or young people. My experience leads me to believe that Gambling in locations where trained staff are available to respond and observe customer behaviour can only be safer than gambling on machines at unstaffed venues or on line where 52% of all gambling now takes place.

40. In many of these areas machine companies already operated sites successfully and without criticism from the local enforcement authorities. I have been able to visit operational sites in these other areas and confirm that their operation did not lead to issues of crime and disorder nor did they attract street drinkers, beggars or other vulnerable individuals. I am unaware

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of any concerns being raised in respect of any of these areas since the licences were approved.

Conclusion

41. There are many social issues, criminality and disorderly conduct visible on most high streets in the country. In my experience the granting or a refusal of an AGC/ Bingo licence into these areas does not increase the likelihood of such instances occurring. It is also unlikely to reduce the number of the occurrences in an area that were previously taking place.
42. Applications by Chongie Entertainment Ltd to open premises in a location does not normally introduce anything new into a location that is not already available to the local community. I have never seen any evidence produced at Gambling Committee or planning hearings that would lead me to believe that the granting of a 24-hour AGC into most areas would undermine the licensing objectives.
43. At paragraph 16, 17,18 and 19 above I outlined what I consider to be major differences between a betting office premises and a AGC/Bingo premises. What I have observed nationally reinforces my experiences outlined above. Although the main cause for concern appears to be the fear of crime and disorder and protection of vulnerable people, This view is not supported by the record of incidents at their venues collated by Chongie. I have not observed any conduct or received other conflicting evidence which would cause me to reconsider my position. In my experience the change of a premises from an often empty high street unit to an AGC premises will improve the area for local residents and businesses and reduce the likelihood of crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour in an area.

Darrell Butterworth

19th July 2022

Appendix

Exhibit reference letter DJB1 - Areas and dates previously visited to conduct gaming investigations

Exhibit reference letter DJB 2 - Photograph of service area gaming area

Exhibit reference letter DJB 3 – Photograph of airport lounge gaming area

Exhibit reference letter DJB 4- List of venues and opening dates

Exhibit reference letter DJB 5 – Incidents at Chongie Leisure venues

Signature *D J Butterworth*

WITNESS STATEMENT

(CJ Act 1967. s. 9, MC Act 1980, s.s.5A (3a) and 5B MC Rules 1981, r70)

Statement of: Darrell John Butterworth

Age if under 18: Over 18

Occupation: Licensing and Security
Compliance Manager

(if over 18 insert "over 18")

This statement (consisting of 8 page(s) each signed by me) is true to the best of my knowledge and belief and I make it knowing that, if it is tendered in evidence, I shall be liable to prosecution if I have wilfully stated in it anything which I know to be false or do not believe to be true.

Dated the 4th May 2023

Signature: D J Butterworth

1. Chongie Entertainments Limited has commissioned this current investigation. It is a supplementary investigation to my previous report dated the 19th of July 2022 (exhibit reference Letter DJB 1 refers). The current investigation has been requested following a decision of the Planning Inspectorate dated 4th of March 2023. In their reasons for refusing the appeal the Inspector cited a lack of evidence to demonstrate that the extending of the permitted hours beyond 2300 hours would not have a negative impact on resident's peace resulting from a venue operating these extended hours.
2. The Inspector cited noise from groups of more than two customers talking outside, customers arriving and leaving in vehicles, and groups smoking outside as a source of disturbance to residents.

Methodology

3. Chongie Entertainment Limited have requested observations be conducted at three separate areas, (Wood Green, Croydon, and Crawley) similar in social and business demographics in order to test the veracity of the Planning Inspectors findings. The observations would take place on a weekday and weekend trading period at each of the three locations between 2200 hours and 0400 hours. A total period of 36 hours observations over 6 nights. The units observed would be a mixture of Chongie 24-hour operations and other similar gaming venues. It was requested that I maintained a record of noise issues, general footfall, customer numbers, method of arrival, method of departure, numbers smoking outside, and other venues open in the area, which may have an impact on residents.

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4. I recorded all my observations onto a notes document from which I have produced record of observations logs and tables so that each venue and period can be easily compared.
5. I do not profess to be an acoustic expert, but I have conducted basic noise level readings within my report to support my own audible perceptions.

Wednesday 19th April 2023 (Wood Green)

6. I have previously conducted investigations in the Wood Green area in relation to Alcohol Licence applications, reviews, and Gaming applications. I am familiar with the Haringey London Borough Council licensing and gambling policies. I have also visited this area in a social capacity.
7. I arrived in the Wood Green area at 1500 hours and commenced my observations at 2100 hours, concluding them at 0415 hours the following morning. The main source of noise disturbance, which I observed from within my hotel, was the passing of motor vehicles with loud exhaust systems, loud stereo from vehicles and Emergency Service vehicles.
8. I recorded my observations into a notes document from which I later produced a record of observations log (exhibit reference letter DJB 2) and a table (table 1) of customers attending the venues. I also recorded non gambling pedestrians passing through the area and examples of noise created.

Summary of 19th April 2023 observations

9. All but one of the customers observed entering or leaving the gambling venues were male. The largest group observed entering or leaving at the same time was two. Only lone males were observed smoking outside the venue. Throughout the 7-hour period of observations only three customers arrived in vehicles. Most customers arrived and left alone and on foot. None of these customers created any noise nuisance. The largest creators of noise were passing vehicles and street cleaning vehicles.

Thursday 20th April 2023 (Croydon)

10. I arrived in the Croydon area of London at 2100 hours and conducted my observation until 0415. I have not conducted licensing or gambling investigations previously in the Croydon but have visited Croydon in a social capacity. The area appeared like those previous visits. I recorded my observations into a notes document from which I later prepared a record of observations log (exhibit reference letter DJB3 refers) and a table of data (table 2 refers).

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Summary of 20th April 2023 observations

11. The venue is located alongside a light railway tramline making parking during access times difficult. No residential accommodation was identified in the immediate area. The venue was frequented by a larger proportion of female customers to those observed on the night's investigation in Wood Green. The largest noise created was by groups of intoxicated pedestrians, street cleaners and passing trams. The gaming venue customers did not create any noise nuisance whilst entering, smoking, or leaving. The largest group observed entering or leaving was two. The largest number observed smoking outside was two.

Friday 21st April 2023 (Croydon)

12. I remained in the Croydon area, continuing my observations at 2130 and concluding them at 0415 hours the following morning. I again recorded my observations contemporaneously and have produced these notes in a record of observation log (exhibit reference DJB 4) and a table of statistics (table 3).
13. During this period of observations, I concentrated my findings on Croydon High Street where two machine type premises are located (Admiral and Game Nation), as well as revisiting the sites of other gaming venues in the town. The location of the High Street venues was unique in that the two gaming venues were the only operators open in the late evening and early morning trading periods after the closure of Tesco Express at 2300 hours.
14. It therefore provided an ideal opportunity of assessing what impact these premises had on the locality without the added influence of traffic, local stores, take aways or alcohol licensed premises. I was also able to externally observe both premises simultaneously due to the lack of other distractions and interference. The ability to observe both premises and count the customers entering and leaving should be taken into account when considering the footfall and entry /exit figures in table 3.

Summary of 21st April 2023 observations

15. The Admiral unit on High Street was the busiest venue of this type visited during this series of observations. On this night three males are seen to enter Game Nation at 2328. As they only remained on the premises for six minutes, I formed the opinion that they had entered out of curiosity as opposed to being regular clientele of this type of establishment. This was the only occasion that a group more than two was observed entering a venue. Most people entered alone, with occasional pairs.

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16. At 0101 I witnessed a male customer being ejected from Admiral and refused re-entry. He banged on the front doors, until he was threatened with the police attending, then left. This was the only occasion of disorderly conduct observed during the series of observations.
17. Whilst Admiral was the busiest venue observed in terms of people entering, smoking outside, and leaving I assessed the High Street area of Croydon to be the quietest of the three areas visited. I confirmed my audible perception with a noise level reading which gave a peak of 30dB and an average of 25dB. This was the lowest noise reading I have ever recorded in a town centre location and was more in line with residential areas.

Saturday 22nd April 2023 (Wood Green)

18. I returned to the Wood Green area of London and recommenced my observations at 2100 and concluding them at 0430 hours the following morning. I again recorded my observations contemporaneously and have produced these notes in a record of observation log (exhibit reference DJB 5) and a table of statistics (table 4).

Summary of 22nd April 2023 observations

19. During this period of observations, I concentrated most of my time at the Merkur venue on Wood Green High Road whilst also revisiting other venues in the area. It was immediately notable following my previous night's visit to Croydon the impact the presence of traffic, licensed premises, restaurants, takeaways, and other late-night businesses made to the general environment, and the impact this had on noise levels.
20. During this evening's observations three customers of Merkur all smoked outside at the same time. This was the largest group of customers smoking observed during this series of observations and only occurred for less than a minute. On all other occasions most of the smoking was by individuals and occasionally two people.
21. On the evenings observations I noted the largest number of customers exiting a venue at the same time. This was at 2257 hours when five males and a female exited the Little Vegas venue. Ironically, this exodus was generated by the venue closing at 2300 hours as a result of the current planning condition.

Thursday 27th April 2023 (Crawley)

22. On this evening I took observations in the Crawley Town Centre area where Admiral, Merkur and Little Vegas all operate 24-hour machine venues. I have previously conducted an alcohol licence investigation in Crawley town centre, and I am familiar with the night time economy. The area appeared like my

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previous visits. I arrived in Crawley at 2200 hours and my observations ceased at 0430 hours the following morning. I recorded my observations into a notes document from which I have prepared the below summary and record of observation log (exhibit reference letter DJB 6).

Summary of 27th April 2023 Observations

23. During this period, I concentrated my investigation on the Admiral and Merkur operators in Queens Square, whilst also visiting the Little Vegas operation trading on Broadway. Queens Square is a pedestrianised area, so all customers arrived and left on foot. Due to the layout of Queens Square, I was again able to monitor the two venues simultaneously so the results and figures should be read in that context.
24. Even when taking both premises together this was still the quietest location visited during these observations, in terms of customers entering and leaving Admiral and Merkur, and numbers smoking outside. No noise nuisance was witnessed by any of these customers, with noise in the area being created by other non-gaming customers passing through Queens Square.

Friday 28th April 2023 (Crawley)

25. My observations in Crawley town centre on this evening commenced at 2100 hours and my observations ceased at 0415 hours the following day. I recorded my observations into a notes document from which I have prepared the below summary and record of observations log (exhibit reference letter DJB 7 refers).

Summary of 28th April 2023 observations

26. On this evening I concentrated my observations and investigation on the Little Vegas situated on Broadway in Crawley town centre. Although this was not the busiest area in terms of pedestrian foot traffic and customers entering and leaving the premises, it was the busiest location visited in terms of customers smoking outside. Although these numbers remained low, and no noise disturbance was created by these smokers who numbered five at one time for less than two minutes.
27. The constant noise created in the area was from intoxicated revellers passing along Broadway to and from Crawley High Street where most late-night alcohol licensed premises were located. The largest single noise created was by a motorcycle with an adapted exhaust pipe which drove along Broadway past Little Vegas on two separate occasions. I was able to monitor this noise as it passed by my location which had a peak level of 82dB. This was a similar noise reading as passing emergency service sirens recorded on Wood Green High Road the previous week.

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28. Two customers of Little Vegas were seen to leave and walk from the premises before entering vehicles parked in nearby on street parking bays. Due to the distance, they had parked away from the venue I did not note their arrival by vehicle but have assumed for the purpose of my calculations that they would more likely have done so. A security guard was also observed arriving and leaving Little Vegas in a patrol car. It was not clear whether he was a customer or an employee of the company. For completeness he has been included in the recorded figures.

Planning Considerations

29. **Does the presence of machine premises increase disturbances in their neighbourhood?**

From these observations I was able to assess the impact that these venues had on their locations. The customer use of these premises in all areas during the late evening and early hours of the morning was low. The numbers attending was low in comparison with the numbers of non-gamblers passing through all the areas for other reasons.

30. In Croydon where the only premises operating late at night are machine premises, no disturbance was created by the presence of the venues and the lowest noise was noted. The risk of noise nuisance to residents was greater from passing vehicle traffic, inconsiderate drivers and intoxicated pedestrians in the other areas visited than those created by customers of the gaming establishments.

31. Further evidence that the presence of these type of business do not cause a nuisance to local resident comes from the Planning Inspectorate. An interview in Wood Green with residents *"indicated that they have not experienced any negative effect in terms of noise."* This is then clarified by the Inspectorate that the venue did not currently operate after 2300. The fact that a 24-hour machine premises currently operated four doors further along did not appear to have been a consideration.

32. **Did customers congregate outside, talking in large numbers creating a negative noise impact?**

The number of customers smoking and congregating outside was low. On only one occasion were five customers observed outside a venue for less than two minutes. On most occasions lone individuals and occasionally pairs of customers where outside for short periods of time. Most smokers did not engage with other smokers and appeared anxious to return inside to continue their play.

33. Did customers arrive and depart in vehicles which may create a disturbance?

In considering this question, I discount the areas where parking is impossible (Croydon High Street and Queens Square, Crawley) or restricted (George Street, Croydon). In the other areas observed only five customers travelled to the premises by car. The remaining 121 customers attended the immediate vicinity on foot. I concluded that most customers to these venues are local. Residents were more at risk of being disturbed by vehicles parking outside to visit nearby cash machines and take aways.

34. A further recent phenomenon not referred to in the Planning Inspectorates decision of the 4th of March 2023 is the existential increase in the number of delivery drivers attending fast food venues in the early hours of the morning. These delivery drivers attend in cars, on pedal bikes but most of them ride mopeds. They then hang around the outside of the takeaway venues awaiting orders to be received or prepared before riding off to make their delivery, often in breach of road traffic regulations and with a complete disregard for pedestrians or the impact on residents.

35. I witnessed this problem in all three locations throughout the late evening and early morning trading periods, with more than ten mopeds and pedal cycles observed outside the more popular takeaway venues (Photograph exhibit reference letters DJB 8 and DJB 9 refers). This issue appears to have increased since the Covid restrictions were in force.

36. Did customers arrive or depart in groups of more than two?

On only two occasions did I see three young males enter and leave a venue. As one group only stayed inside for 6 minutes, I formed the view that they had entered out of curiosity rather than being regular customers. On all other occasions, most customers arrived and left the venues alone or occasionally in pairs.

Conclusion

37. This was the most extensive period of observation that I have been requested to undertake in relation to the use of and the impact of machine type gaming venues. A total of 42.25 hours over 6 nights at 12 venues in three separate locations. Each venue differed in respect to residential, mixed use, vehicle access and location. As a result, any application and the relevance of all or part of this report and its finding should be considered on an individual basis.

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38. Prior to conducting this recent investigation, I had conducted numerous night-time investigations at alcohol and gaming venues all around the country. I have expressed my opinion on the crime and noise impact of gambling premises in my initial statement of the 19th of July 2022. What I observed and noted during the current investigation has reinforced those views, the accuracy and reasoning for which can now be statistically supported.
39. I am unaware of any machine type premises having their licence reviewed, let alone revoked for breaching the Gambling Act licensing objective for disorder issues created by their operation. I am aware of alcohol licensed premises having their licences challenged in similar circumstances. If gambling premises, particularly venues licenced for machines, are creating a nuisance I would expect to see similar applications for licensing committees to consider an amendment to a licence or impose conditions.
40. Any of these venues, may from time to time suffer an isolated incident such as the one observed outside a venue in Croydon at 0020 on the 22nd of July 2023. It is how an operator responds to such incidents that is important to consider. It may be that barring the individual involved on this occasion would be sufficient to prevent the incident from reoccurring in the future.
41. My findings during this and previous investigations is that these types of gaming venues do not create increases in crime or noise in locations where they are licensed. Customer use is low, and the impact of other factors nearby (vehicles, delivery drivers, inconsiderate motorist, intoxicated pedestrians, and emergency vehicles) create a higher and more realistic cause of disturbance to residents where machine venues operate.

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Exhibit Reference Letter DJB 3

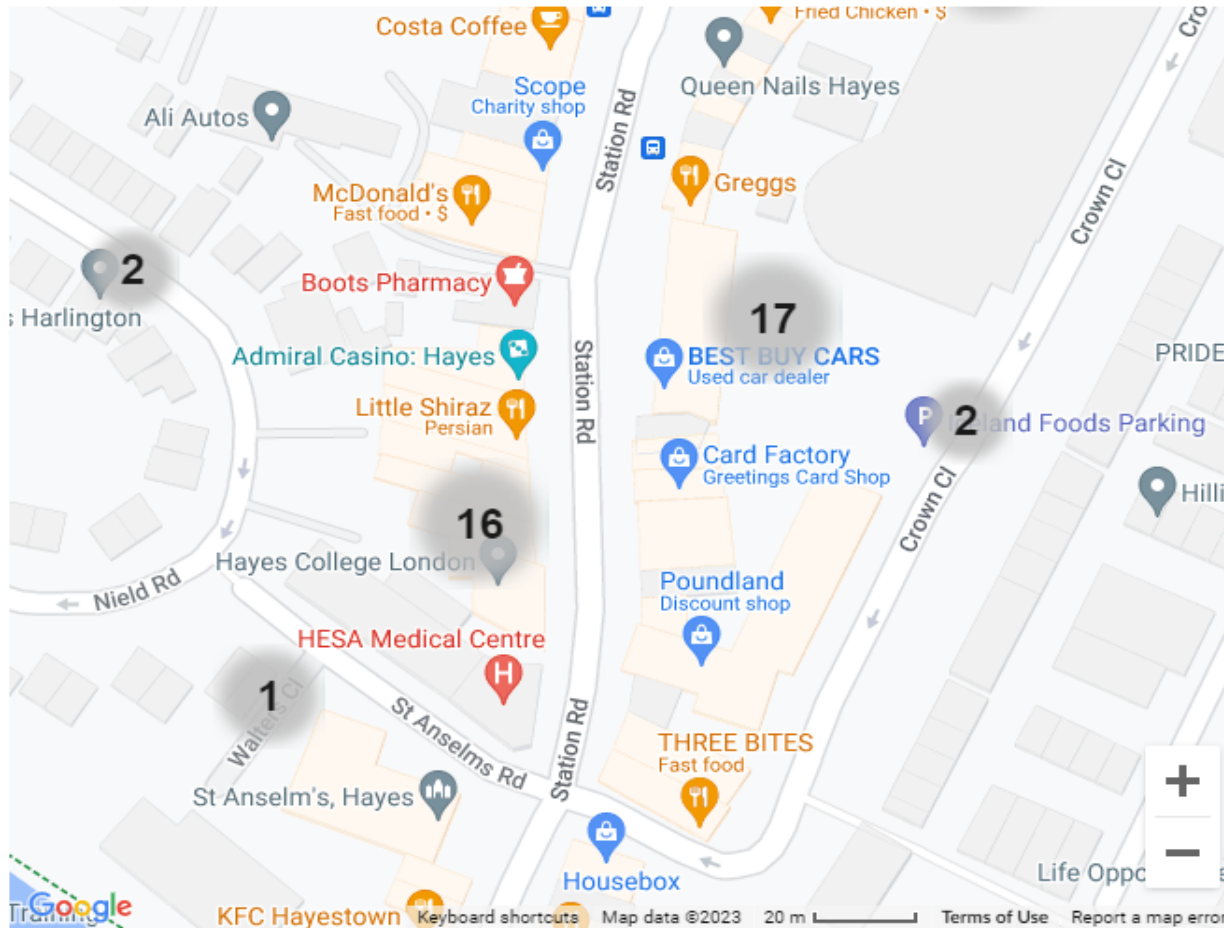
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