

Middlesbrough Council

The Licensing Act 2003 - Responsible Authority (RA) Representation

Representation by the Licensing Department, Middlesbrough Council as a Responsible Authority, in respect of application made under the Licensing Act 2003 by Cleveland Police for a review of the premises licence for The Empire, Corporation Road, Middlesbrough, TS1 2RT

Licence holder details

Name and Address of Premises

The Empire, Corporation Road, Middlesbrough, TS1 2RT

Name of current licence holder or club holding club premises certificate (if known)

The Middlesbrough Empire 2008 Limited

Number of premises licence or club premise certificate (if known)

MBRO/PR0139/019085

It is my opinion that the operation and management of The Empire is having a significant adverse impact on the promotion of the following licensing objectives:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Prevention of Crime and Disorder |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Prevention of Public Nuisance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Public Safety |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Protection of Children from Harm |

Grounds for representation (including details of any previous representations)

The Licensing Department has serious concerns in relation to the running of the business and the management's non-compliance with legislative requirements, particularly in relation to underage sales.

For a number of months the Council and Police Licensing Officers have been receiving information from a number of sources about underage children gaining access to the premises which has ultimately led to serious incidents of crime and disorder as described by Cleveland Police in their application for a review of the premises licence.

On 14 January 2022 information was received from Stockton Council's Licensing Manager in relation to concerns raised by Stockton Council's Child Exploitation Team about underage sales of alcohol in 3 Middlesbrough licensed premises. One of the premises identified was The Empire.

On 7 February 2022 I visited the premises to discuss the concerns with Ashley Wem, Managing Director of The Empire. I advised Mr Wem that the information we were receiving suggested that The Empire was a venue known for being easily accessible by underage customers. Mr Wem advised that he was aware of the issue and that he had recently sacked a member of door staff for accepting 'back handers' to allow access. He also stated that they were doing their best to prevent access but that it was difficult as occasionally customers already inside the premises would open the fire exists to the side of the premises to allow access to their friends who were underage. The stated that as a result of this door staff would then search the premises to identify and eject those responsible.

Since this visit the Council and Cleveland Police have continued to receive information and complaints in relation to underage sales at the premises, including from a concerned parent. This information has been forwarded to Cleveland Police. As a result I fully support the review of the Premises Licence for The Empire, submitted by Cleveland Police.

Name of RA Representative: Tim Hodgkinson, Licensing Manager, Middlesbrough Council

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Dated: 30 May 2022