

**Objection to Licensing Application
AVRO Stadium Whitebank Road**

Name: Councillor Jean Stretton
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Objection:

I am objecting on behalf of a number of residents of the section of Whitebank Road that directly faces the AVRO stadium site. Representatives of the club have previously advised me that there were just three households on this stretch of road that had issues with the club. I have had complaints about a wide range of issues from residents but not all of these issues are relevant to the current Licensing application.

In order to establish for myself the true number of residents who have concerns about the club that are relevant to the Licensing application, myself and my fellow ward colleagues attended Whitebank Road and knocked on every door in the stretch opposite the stadium from 4pm onwards on Tuesday 3 August 2021.

Result:

- 3 Have no issues with the club
- 7 Out
- 8 Significant concerns about the club that include but are not restricted to those that are relevant to a licensing application. Three of these said that they had already put in an objection to the license application. All of them were against the granting of a full license for the use of the pitchside bar and Macie's.

One of the households that were out have been in frequent contact with me previously with concerns about the club. They have already told me that they have put in an objection to the current license application.

As a result of this engagement activity and previous complaints made to me by phone and email I will predominantly be objecting to this license application on the basis of the Licensing Act (2003) objective – the prevention of public nuisance.

It is important to note that the concerns are not just speculative. They are based on residents' experiences of the club operating Macie's and the Pitchside bar, which I believe AVRO refer to as the VIP Bar, under a series of Temporary Event Notices. Many of these have been at weekends, which has allowed residents to experience what life would be like for them if a full license is granted that allowed the use of Macie's and the pitchside bar.

In terms of public nuisance, residents complain of:

- Men coming over the concrete fence and urinating in full view of the road, pavements and front windows of the properties across the road. I have had a separate complaint about this issue from a resident of Elm Road.
- Man seen "mooning" at occupants of cars who are leaving the vicinity after using the premises.

- Noise and music from the public address system. Tannoy being used as early as 9am on a Sunday. Music playing until late at night. Music playing when residents are trying to get their children down to sleep.
- Noise at closing time including taxis coming and going and car doors slamming.
- Shouting and foul language – this at all times, not just associated with the bars, but residents fear that it will get worse and carry on for longer, especially at weekend if the license is granted.
- Discarded plastic glasses around the stadium.
- The facility is being run and managed by volunteers. Concerns that they do not have the capacity to manage the site well enough to discourage anti-social behaviour.
- Club management “has no consideration for the community”.

Most residents accept that the club house has had a license for several decades and can accept that this should continue. Unfortunately, there has been a recent fire at the clubhouse which means it cannot be used until it is either repaired or rebuilt depending on the outcome of an insurance claim. However, if a license is granted to Macie’s and/or the pitchside bar it will be in place indefinitely. I would argue that the current closure of the clubhouse is not a relevant factor in considering the application as a whole.

The difference between the clubhouse and the two other bars is that the clubhouse is a permanent structure and other than at closing time there is usually very little noise experienced by residents across the road. Both Macie’s and the pitchside bar are out in the open, are not permanent structures and are closer to the homes of residents on the opposite side of the road. The noise from the public address system can be heard very clearly by near neighbours. The noise from people using the bars can also be clearly heard.

After each of the Temporary Event Notice days residents complain that the carpark and surrounding grass verges are littered with plastic glasses. Some even find them in their front gardens. Residents do acknowledge that the club staff/volunteers do collect the glasses from their own premises and dispose of them.

Perhaps the most compelling argument for turning down this application is the impact it will have on nearby residents in terms of the hours of use of the site. Currently conditions placed on the use of the site state that all activity must cease at 10pm on a weekday and at 8pm Saturday and Sunday. Granting this license effectively negates these conditions and means that noise nuisance will continue until well after 11pm as people await taxis to take them home. I have also been sent photographs of people inside the stadium on the pitch at weekend after the 8pm cutoff time.

I have been a ward councillor for Hollinwood for a total of 18 years. Whilst I have previously complained to licensing officers about breaches of an existing license this is the first time I have objected to a licensing application at it’s inception, such is the strength of feeling expressed to me by near neighbours across Whitebank road from the stadium. I would like to ask the committee to reject this application.

Jean Stretton