

## 1. Background

The Wisbech Cumulative Impact Policy has been successfully used since 2015 by the partnership of Cambridgeshire Constabulary, Trading Standards and Public Health (Cambridge County Council). Information has been gathered by the various partner agencies evidencing the harm that is caused by alcohol. To date, it has assisted in preventing a number of 'cut price' style alcohol outlets from opening in areas heavily populated with other such outlets and in areas where street drinking is a problem to the town.

Recent work by the Wisbech Alcohol Project is evidencing the link between prolific littering, public urination and defecation and alcohol. It is also a causal factor in both criminal and ASB including intimidation and violence offences. Since the partnership work has begun and the formation of the alcohol project for Wisbech numbers of incidents have been decreasing but at this time, still remain high.

## 2. Impact and analysis of current CIZ

Figures using the Police Recording system (CORA) show the number of incidents within the Wisbech Town centre wards. This evidences the numbers reducing quite significantly since a partnership approach in 2015 started to utilize the CIZ, preventing further proliferation of alcohol outlets. Failing to target the opening of more alcohol outlets would create an environment where alcohol is sold in more competitive environment where the prices will be cut and would create the potential for alcohol to be sold more indiscriminately. Since the formation of the alcohol project, health and mental health services have seen an increase in demand for support, as street drinkers are directly engaged and offered help.

Alcohol related incidents have moved away from a Night Time Economy issue to be one that currently involves the street drinking community. Increases in litter, public urination and defecation have been reported and these have mainly been in areas evidenced to be used by this group. Some of the town's historic areas have been targeted as they are out of sight of the CCTV cameras and the general public. Sugar Tub Lane and Ghost lane are particularly impacted with Ghost Passage having seen large quantities of human excrement having to be cleared by the public health services.

Officers patrolling these areas have on occasions, been attacked by street drinkers and one PCSO has had a glass bottle thrown at him by an aggressive male who did not want to be moved on.

Other areas within the CIZ and also in the town centre wards, including Tillery Park, Town Park and the St Peters Church gardens all suffer from street drinkers at various times throughout the day and often well into the early hours. Seven pre-planned dispersals have been utilised within the CIZ since 31/01/2014 within the CIZ targeting alcohol and or anti-social behaviours. These powers come under Section 35 of the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

It is useful to note that the Constabulary uses a Secure Information Recording System called SIRCS which is operated by Empowering Communities) and from January 2015 to present 281 pieces of information were placed onto the system – most of this from the town centre alone relating to alcohol. This information has come from the Wisbech Pub watch, Police and, Horsefair Security. It evidences the strong shift from night time pub related issues to street drinking becoming an increasing problem.

Offence / Incident	2012 - 2013	= + / - %	Offence / Incident	2014 - 2015	= + / - %
ASB	2,382 – 2,159	-9.4%	ASB	1,881 – 1,418	-24.8%
Alcohol related crime	970 - 727	-25.1%	Alcohol related crime	786 - 781	-0.6%
Violence	721– 662	-8.2%	Violence	231 - 151	-34.6%
Criminal Damage	580 - 502	-13/4%	Criminal Damage	497 - 483	-2.8%
Alc related Violence	30 - 23	-23.3			
Historic Figures used for CIZ policy					
Offence / Incident	2009 - 2010 - 2011	= + / - %			
Violent Crime	516 – 454 - 504	-2.3%			
Alcohol related Violent crime (% of total violent crime)	211 (40.9%) – 188 (41.1%) – 244 (48.4%)	+15.8% (+7.5%)			
Antisocial behaviour	1858 – 1543 - 1480	-20.3%			

Alcohol related ASB (% of total ASB)	508 – 498 – 533 (27.3% - 32.3% - 36.0%)	+4.9% (+8.7)
Criminal Damage	377 – 372 - 314	-16.7%
Alcohol related Criminal Damage (% of total criminal Damage)	46 – 58 – 69 (12.2% - 15.6% - 22.0%)	+50% (+9.8)

### 3. Benefits and Risks

#### **The Benefits:**

The Cumulative Impact Zone is a very useful tool in moderating the opening of new licensed premises. It places a positive obligation on the applicant to prove how the granting of license would be a benefit to the community. This is a change from the previous position whereby licensing authorities had to provide evidence that the granting of the license would be detrimental to the area. At this time, the only applications into the District Council for new licenses have been for areas in which there are already significant numbers of existing licensed premises.

Utilizing the CIZ, Cambridgeshire Constabulary and partner agencies have been able to work with persons who abuse alcohol and, support such individuals by providing advice, assistance and signposting them to support services to divert them from alcohol related criminality.

We have been able to target those areas used by street drinkers, addressing the associated anti-social behaviour issues and have made effective use of Public Space Protection Orders where street drinkers have congregated in areas causing a detrimental impact on people's home life.

Through this partnership approach, joint patrols of Fenland District Council Environmental Health Workers & Cambridge Constabulary Staff take place to engage with the street drinking community and sign post them to the help they may require. This may include getting them linked to a GP and providing them with details of mental health or alcohol misuse workers. The success of this approach is demonstrated through the large rise in requests for help seen by these agencies. Monthly meetings are carried out by the Wisbech Alcohol Project where partner agencies meet and share relevant information and review those currently at risk.

It is still evident that in areas of street drinking there is a high proportion of alcohol related ASB, urination and defecation, with the associated impact this has on public perception and fear of crime. The local community have made this one of their local priorities for the police to tackle and our ability to deliver on this priority has been facilitated through the benefits provided by the CIZ.

There is still a large foot fall in the town centre within pub clusters and although alcohol related incidents have decreased in relation to the pubs, there is still associated ASB and criminality - however these are being challenged and tackled through the Pubwatch scheme which is working to reduce these incidents further. The Pubwatch scheme uses SIRCS to share information between themselves, the constabulary and other partner agencies, who regularly meet to discuss incidents of bad behaviour and ban the worst offenders for a period of time.

#### **The Risks:**

The overriding concern at this time for the Constabulary is the prevalence of street drinking in Wisbech which is a concern to the public and blights some of the town's most beautiful areas, affecting the tourist appeal of the town. These problems are exacerbated by the ease of availability of cheap alcohol from shops and the removal of the CIZ would almost certainly lead to an increase in alcohol related problems.

The removal of the CIZ would result in additional premises opening within the areas where licensed premises are already prolific. This would, in turn, result in an increase in alcohol related issues which would lead to a greater demand and workload for the various enforcement and partner agencies and is therefore likely to involve an increase in enforcement action, with the associated costs this would bring.

## **4. Conclusion**

While it is right and proper that legislation such as this is reviewed on a regular basis, it is the view of Cambridgeshire Constabulary that the benefits provided by this legislation improve quality of life issues for local residents and represents an important tool that allows us to both prevent crime and ASB. As such, we believe it is important the legislation remains in place.

As part of this review, we have reviewed incidents outside of the CIZ and it is our assessment that the current geographical limits of the zone remain both appropriate and proportionate for the town at this time. Consideration was given to extending the area covered but our assessment is that this would not significantly improve the current effectiveness of the zone.

The CIZ need not have a detrimental effect on the businesses in the town and it appears that the on and off trade have not been affected by the CIZ. While some businesses have applied for and have been refused applications, these refusals have been as a result of the applicant being unable to provide evidence of the benefit that would be provided to the community, rather than the business in question.

Wisbech is benefitting from a reduction in crime and associated disorder within the CIZ, as a direct result of the efforts of both the local policing teams, partner agencies and voluntary teams. Those most at harm have been provided with help when they need it and those who have moved to the town seeking employment are being assisted with housing through the partnership approach. The CIZ is contributing to making Wisbech a safer place to live work and visit. In retaining this legislation, the Constabulary is able to maximise the benefits to the local community and businesses, therefore Cambridgeshire Constabulary would seek to retain the CIZ at this time.

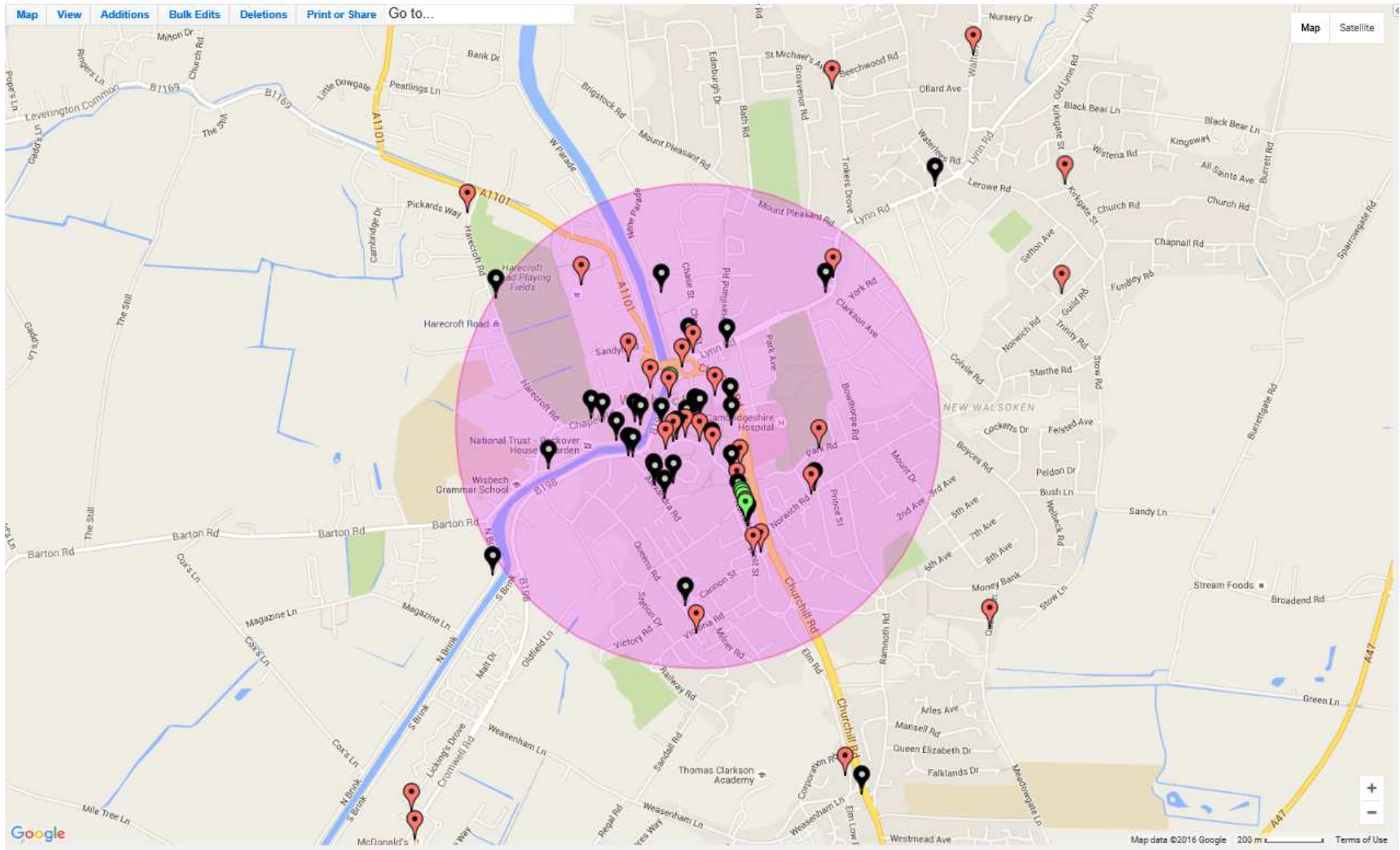
#### Map Keys:

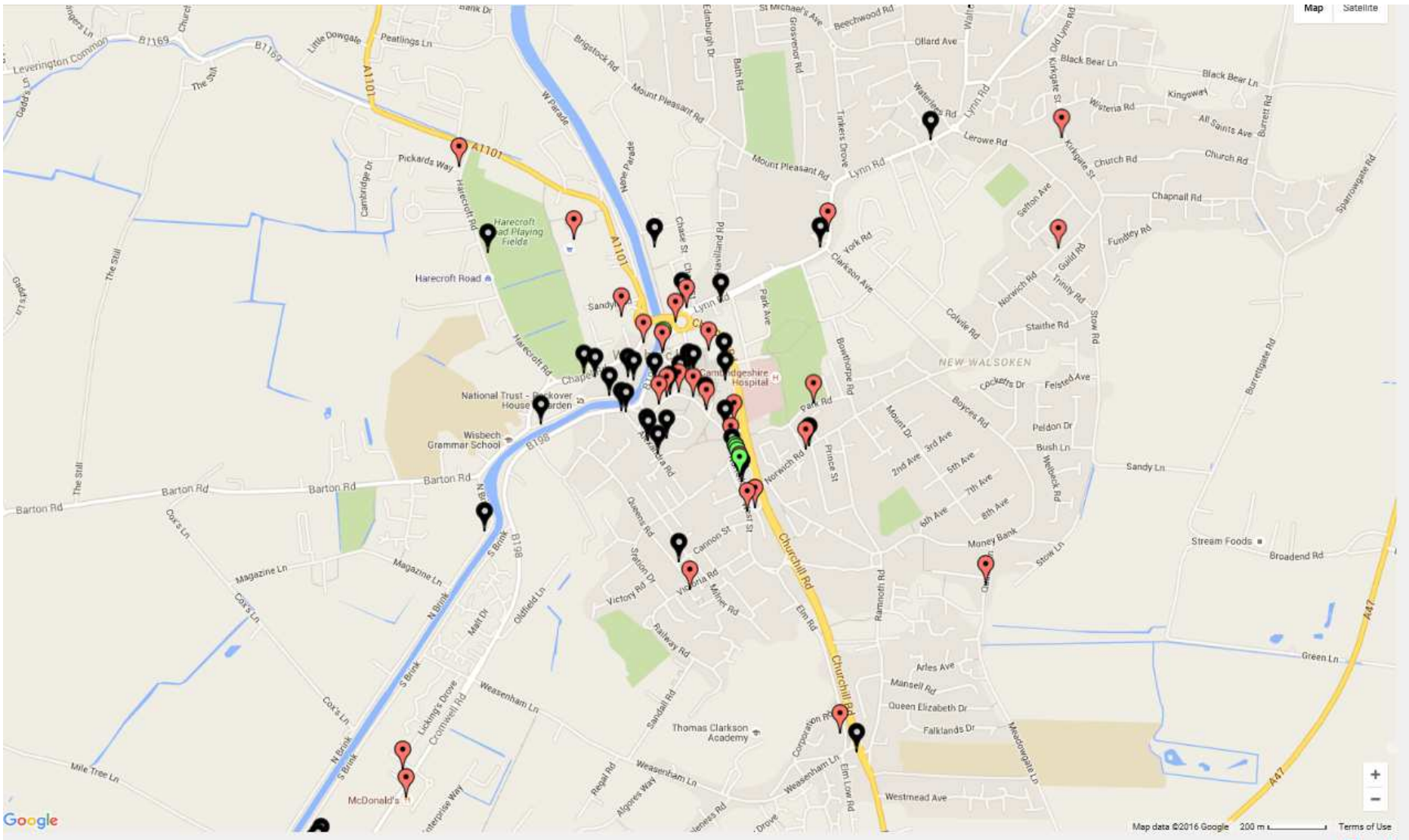
Red Markers – Off Sales location

Black Markers – On Sales location

Green Markers – Late Night refreshment (23:00hrs onwards)

Purple zone indicates area of current CIZ (approx)





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