

The Licensing Department  
The London Borough of Merton  
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11<sup>th</sup> June 2020

**Re:- Application for Premises Licence at Rowan Road Service Station, SW16 5JF.**

Dear Sir/Madam,

On 21<sup>st</sup> May 2020, an application was received from Motor Fuel Limited for a new Premises Licence under Section 17 of the Licensing Act 2003.

The application can be summarised as follows:-

A "Petrol Forecourt Store" seeking authorisation to sell alcohol 24hrs a day, every day. The application also seeks authorisation for Late Night Refreshment from 2300hrs to 0500hrs, daily.

**Police make objections to this application with regard to all four of the licensing objectives namely:**

**The Prevention of Crime and Disorder  
The Prevention of Public Nuisance  
Public Safety  
The Protection of Children from Harm**

It must be first noted that the applicant has made no attempt to participate in any consultation regarding this application, either prior to submission as per Government Guidelines Sec 182 Licensing Act 2003, or during the 28 consultation period.

I emailed the applicant's solicitor on 28<sup>th</sup> May 2020 with a list of concerns and questions, and I have spoken to the solicitor on the telephone, but I am yet to receive any response. I have visited the premises in a further attempt to discuss the application, I left my business card with the sole member of staff on duty, he had no knowledge of the proposals. I have not been contacted since my visit.

The Rowan Road Service Station is a self-service petrol/diesel forecourt with 8 fuel pumps and a very small forecourt shop. Situated on a main road through a large residential area between Streatham and Mitcham.

Section 176 of the Licensing Act 2003 prohibits the sale of alcohol from a premises primarily used as a garage. The Rowan Road Service Station has one of the smallest forecourt shops of any petrol station I have been in, yet has a reasonable number of fuel pumps. I find it hard to imagine that fuel sales at this venue can be of less value than sales of the basic selection of essentials and cigarettes currently sold in the shop. The plan submitted in the application does not suggest any intention to increase the size of the shop. The primary use of Rowan Road Service Station appears clearly to be that of a garage. I have asked the applicant for more information in this respect for the sub-committee to form an opinion.

The application does not state how the operator intends to manage the safe sale of alcohol. It is not known if the shop will be open to the public through the night, or if service will be via a night hatch. The application mentions that there will be "adequate levels of staff" but does not give any numbers. Given the size of the shop, it would be difficult to accommodate more than two members of staff at any time. Staff must have the confidence to refuse sales to drunks.

Due to the layout of the shop floor, all displays are close to the entrance, making it easy for an opportunist thief to take items from display without fear of being prevented by the cashier. I would like to know what measures the operator will have in place to prevent thefts of alcohol.

I would like to know the intended percentage of display that will be given over to alcohol and from where it will be sold. I would advise limiting the size of alcohol displays to prevent alcohol sales becoming the perceived primary focus of the premises and an attractive destination for thieves.

There are additional risks associated with the sale of alcohol after 11pm at night. To prevent thefts and violent crime, I would strongly advise against the shop being open to the public after 11pm.

I also have concerns about alcohol being available to purchase late at night and through the early hours of the morning. The premises is opposite Rowan Road Recreation Ground, and this could become a desirable area for late night social drinking as street drinkers gravitate towards their source of supply.

Anti-Social Behaviour from street drinkers is an ongoing problem in many residential areas of Mitcham. It is noted that super strength beer and cider is the drink of choice of many street drinkers. If the sub-committee are minded to grant a Premises Licence, I would advise attaching a condition to prohibit the sale or display of beer and cider over 5.5 %abv.

There is no mention on the application of how the operator will train staff in the safe and responsible sale of alcohol, nor is there any mention of refusal processes.

The application does mention for what the Late Night Refreshment authorisation is required.

I do not have confidence in the operator's ability to prevent thefts. Reporting of Thefts of fuel (Drive Outs) has been inconsistent, with periods of several thefts per week reported to Police and other periods of several months with no crime at all. I would like clarity of the operator's current reporting procedures, and also a commitment to record all thefts of alcohol if the licence is granted. It is also important to record all refusals and other incidents in a log book made available to Police.

Due to insufficient information on the application form, and the absence of engagement during the consultation period, I have been unable to properly assess the risk. Therefore, I can only advise the sub-committee to reject the application.

Yours Faithfully



Russ Stevens PC 3852SW 191701

Licensing Officer

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