

To: Licensing

Date: 18/12/25

From: Trading Standards

Ref: 1176434

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**Representations Objecting to the Application by Jalinder Singh AHUJA**

Designated Premises Supervisor and Director of Smarttech Reading Ltd

Application for a Licence to Retail Alcohol at Reading Local, 88 Broad Street, Reading, RG1 2AP

(Currently operating as a mobile phone repair, technology, and vape shop)

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Trading Standards, as a responsible authority under the Licensing Act 2003, submits the following representations:

- **History of Non-Compliance**

Mr AHUJA has a documented record of failing to comply with laws and regulations designed to protect the public:

- *2016:* As director of an importing company, he was prosecuted and fined by Harrow Trading Standards for selling counterfeit and unsafe toys.
- *2018:* Trading as Smokemart in Hammersmith, he received a written warning from Hammersmith & Fulham Trading Standards for selling a nicotine inhaling product to a 15-year-old. He was offered free training on preventing age-restricted sales but failed to attend on four occasions.
- *2019:* Trading as Smokemart in Hammersmith, the business sold alcohol to two under age volunteers, aged 15 and 17.
- *2020:* At the same premises, over 100 litres of smuggled alcohol and more than 20 litres of counterfeit vodka were discovered. He was subsequently convicted following prosecution by Trading Standards in 2022.
- *2020:* Trading Standards officers at Hammersmith & Fulham Council received complaints from two nearby schools as well as the Met Police. Two pupils from Year 9 and one from Year 11 allegedly bought spirits from the shop. In another report, a group of Year 11 boys were said to be regularly drinking alcohol supplied by the shop. As a result, one boy developed a 'significant and long-running alcohol problem' for which he was receiving treatment. The shop's staff were also accused of giving a free bottle of vodka to a boy as a 16th birthday present. The reports said that the boys were regularly supplied the illicit alcohol at the back door to avoid detection and had to pay more than the normal price to obtain the spirits.

- **Business Interests**

Mr AHUJA is involved in seven other active companies. Further details are required to establish the extent of his involvement in the Reading premises and how he intends to manage his time.

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**Grounds for Objection**

It is submitted that Mr AHUJA is not a suitable person to hold a licence to retail alcohol within the Borough. His history demonstrates a disregard for public protection and regulatory compliance with persistent and serious failures of the licensing objectives.

The application seeks permission to sell alcohol from a prominent town centre location until 01:00 hours, which appears to present an opportunity to exploit vulnerable individuals for profit and is likely to attract a significant level of anti-social behaviour.

No additional licence conditions are considered sufficient to mitigate the risks posed by granting this application to this applicant.

END