

'Alcohol alley' - street with 22 places to buy booze

MOSTON Lane in North Manchester has been dubbed 'alcohol alley' after it emerged there are 22 licensed premises selling booze on the road. Council chiefs refused an application for another shop on the street to sell alcohol after 600 residents complained.

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A BUSY road has been dubbed Manchester's 'alcohol alley'.

There are 22 licensed premises on Moston Lane, in north Manchester. This includes six off-licences - five of which are within 400 yards of each other.

Council bosses have now refused an application for a seventh after 600 residents signed a petition objecting to plans by a newsagent to sell alcohol.

Manchester's licensing sub-committee refused the application from Moston News amid concern from police and environmental health bosses that another drink store in Moston would add to crime and disorder in the area.

The 1.4 mile road has now been dubbed the city's 'alcohol frontline' by Manchester councillor Pat Karney, who has vowed not to allow the streets to become 'awash with booze'.

Coun Karney said: "Manchester council needs to crack down on shops turning themselves into off-licences. It will create an explosion of alcohol problems in the area which is now saturated with cheap booze. In my opinion there is a direct connection between the growth of these off-licences and hospital alcohol admissions in the area.

"There is quite simply no benefit to it. It will turn Moston Lane into alcohol alley and it will all end up at the doors of the NHS and the courts."

Of the six off-licences on the road, the two biggest - the Co-op and California Wines - are within sight of each other on opposite sides of the road and less than 100 yards apart. Moston News is only a few doors down from California Wines. Other nearby off-licences include Euro News, H&H Wines and Spirits, Royal Wines and Premier Off-licence.

Stephen Holt, chair of the local Trinity and District Residents' Association, was among those who opposed the newsagent's failed application to sell alcohol between 8am and 10pm, seven days a week.

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He said: "We share the views of the council - there are too many applications for liquor licences in this small area. Store owners competing on price encourages crime and disorder, particularly among young people and no more so than in the run-up to Christmas. The innocent victims are the fraternity of residents living in this area."

Bob Hill, of residents' group the Federations of Lightbowne and Moston Associations, added that alcohol was too easy to obtain in the area and pubs had already had to close because of a shift from sociable drinking to boozing in the streets. Three pubs have closed in the area recently.

The M.E.N. revealed earlier this week how Manchester topped a table of areas in Britain most affected by alcohol, with drink set to kill 38,000 in the region over the next decade.



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