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To: [Wajed Iqbal](#)
Subject: Ice cream licenses
Date: 23 December 2024 12:29:39

Licensing Department
Pendle Borough Council

Subject: Request for Immediate Reinstatement of a Cap on Street Trading Permits for Ice Cream Vendors

Dear Licensing Officer,

I am writing to express my deep concern and the concerns of many other long-standing members of the local ice cream vending community regarding the recent decision to lift the restriction on the number of street trading permits issued by Pendle Borough Council for ice cream van operators. While I appreciate the council's intentions to promote inclusivity and expand opportunities for trade, the practical impact of this decision has been overwhelmingly detrimental to those already operating in this challenging sector.

I respectfully urge Pendle Borough Council to review and reconsider this policy. A fair and equitable solution—one that supports established vendors, mitigates conflicts, and prevents market oversaturation—lies in reinstating a cap on the number of street trading permits issued. Such a measure, implemented in consultation with existing traders, will ensure the sustainability of the trade and protect the livelihoods of those who depend on it.

Key Issues with the Current Policy

1. Market Oversaturation: An Unsustainable Business Environment

The ice cream vending trade is inherently seasonal, limited by weather conditions, school term times, and customer demand. Even in optimal circumstances, the trade operates on tight margins, which have become increasingly strained due to rising fuel costs, higher stock prices, and the broader impacts of inflation.

The removal of the permit cap has led to an influx of new vendors, saturating an already limited market. Established traders, who have invested years building relationships with their communities, now face additional competition for the same finite pool of customers. This has resulted in:

- **Diminished Earning Potential:** Many long-standing vendors are already reporting significant income reductions, with some questioning the viability of continuing their trade.
- **Unfair Displacement:** Traders who have served specific areas for over a decade are now being forced to compete with newcomers unfamiliar with local practices, leading to unnecessary and disruptive overlaps.

Without intervention, the continued proliferation of licences will force many established traders out of business, undoing years of hard work and service to the local community.

2. Tensions and Conflicts Between Vendors

For decades, ice cream vendors in Pendle have adhered to an unspoken understanding of “patches,” informal territories that each vendor serves. These agreements, forged through mutual respect and long-term cooperation, have allowed the trade to function harmoniously.

However, the removal of the cap has disrupted this balance. New vendors, unaware of these historical arrangements, are entering areas traditionally serviced by established traders. This creates a breeding ground for:

- **Misunderstandings:** Unintentional encroachments on long-standing territories fuel resentment among vendors.
- **Escalating Conflicts:** Without clear boundaries or council intervention, minor disputes risk escalating into

significant altercations, potentially involving property damage, legal disputes, or even physical violence.

The council's failure to account for these dynamics has shifted the burden of conflict resolution onto the traders themselves. This not only undermines trust within the community but also exposes the council to potential liability for failing to anticipate and mitigate such risks.

3. Lack of Oversight and Mediation from the Council

By issuing street trading permits without regard for the practical realities of the trade, Pendle Borough Council has inadvertently created a situation where disputes are inevitable. While the council has prioritised expanding opportunities for new traders, it has neglected to provide mechanisms to manage the consequences of this policy, such as:

- **Designating Trading Zones:** The absence of designated trading zones or clear guidelines has left vendors to navigate conflicts on their own.
- **Providing Mediation Support:** The council has not established a formal process to mediate disputes between vendors, leaving tensions to fester unchecked.

Without structured oversight, the current policy exposes both traders and the council to unnecessary risk, ranging from damaged community relations to potential legal or reputational consequences.

Why Reinstating a Cap Is Essential

1. Safeguarding Livelihoods and Economic Stability

Reinstating a cap on the number of street trading permits will protect the livelihoods of long-standing traders who have invested years into their businesses and communities. A limited number of permits ensures that:

- **The Market Remains Viable:** By preventing oversaturation, traders can continue to earn a sustainable income without fear of being undercut or displaced.
- **Experienced Vendors Are Valued:** Those with a proven track record of serving the community are given the stability they need to continue contributing to the local economy.

2. Preventing Conflicts and Promoting Harmony

A capped permit system allows the council to enforce clear guidelines for trading areas, reducing the likelihood of disputes. By consulting with existing vendors to map out territories, the council can foster a fair and respectful environment that benefits all parties.

3. Aligning with Best Practices from Other Local Authorities

Many councils across the UK have successfully implemented capped permit systems for street traders, recognising the importance of balancing competition with market sustainability. For example:

- Local authorities in the Preston area have capped permits and introduced trading zones to ensure fair competition while avoiding conflicts.
- These systems have proven effective in maintaining harmony among traders and ensuring a stable business environment.

Pendle Borough Council has an opportunity to follow this precedent, demonstrating its commitment to supporting local businesses while promoting fairness and transparency.

Proposed Actions

To address these concerns and ensure a sustainable future for the ice cream vending trade in Pendle, I propose the following:

1. Reinstating a Cap on the Number of Street Trading Permits

- Work with existing licence holders to determine an equitable limit that balances market demand with trader sustainability.

2. Introduce Designated Trading Zones

- Develop a framework to define trading territories, with input from long-standing vendors, to reduce overlaps and disputes.

3. Establish a Dispute Resolution Process

- Create a formal mechanism for resolving conflicts between vendors, ensuring that issues are addressed fairly and efficiently.

4. Conduct Regular Reviews of the Licensing Policy

- Periodically assess the impact of the licensing system to ensure it continues to meet the needs of traders and the community.

Pendle Borough Council has a responsibility to ensure that its policies support the economic stability of local businesses while promoting fairness and community harmony. The decision to remove the cap on street trading permits, while well-intentioned, has had serious unintended consequences that threaten the livelihoods of long-standing vendors and the safety of the community.

Reinstating a cap, in consultation with existing traders, is not only a fair and balanced solution but also a necessary step to prevent further disruption and conflict. I urge the council to act swiftly and decisively to address this issue, demonstrating its commitment to the well-being of all stakeholders.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I am more than willing to meet with the council to discuss this proposal further and to work collaboratively on a solution that benefits everyone involved.

Yours sincerely,



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