

Council tell Granton Food and Wine to make alcohol display smaller

A convenience store in the north of the Capital has been told to curtail a proposed expansion of its alcohol display after the licensing board said they had “never seen an increase like this before”.

Granton Food and Wines on West Granton Road is undergoing a large extension and applied to the Edinburgh Licensing Board to up the increase the display of alcoholic products from 22m to 110m of linear space. But councillors raised fears the rise was too big – leading to the owners agreeing to trim the area used to display alcohol.

Alistair Macdonald, representing Granton Food and Wine, told the board that the owners described the current premises as the size of “a matchbox”. The store’s extension, being built to the rear of the shop, will increase the sales area from 55 to 220 square metres.

Mr Macdonald said: “An increase in alcohol is no way of detriment to any other products sold – the largest increase is in the food area. It will now have a large display of fruit and veg – they will also have things like birthday cards and stationery.

“This facility would be an asset anywhere in the town. The attention to detail is absolutely fantastic. It was a tiny shop with a tiny display. It’s now going to be a larger shop and the display reflects that. This additional area will be

for beers and wines.

"The alcohol is basically down one wall. At the moment, they have a small display and they are having to squeeze everything in that. They do not want it cramped the way it is just now."

Councillors were told that the new premises won't be ready for another month so it was unlikely that a site visit by councillors to see the proposals for themselves would be worthwhile.

Chairman of the licensing board, Cllr Norman Work, raised concerns that allowing such a big increase of the area to display alcohol would lead to other businesses wanting similar treatment.

He said: "I'm concerned about the size of increase, regardless of the store increase. I was thinking about asking for a locality report from the police.

"The increase will probably set a massive precedent."

He added: "We are very supportive of independent retailers and we don't want to stop anybody trading. But I'm concerned about that massive increase. It's no reflection on the owners or what they are going to do. I've never seen an increase like this before.

"This is not just asking for an increase, this is asking for a massive increase. I really feel that to ask for this sort of large increase would not be acceptable."

But Cllr Gillian Gloyer praised the owners for investing in the premises and offering more products to customers.

She said: "I think it's great you are investing and upgrading the shop."

Mr McDonald agreed on behalf of his client to "take the alcohol display down to 81 square metres".

He added: "I don't think the percentage increase is fair because we are penalised for having a small areas to start off with. It's not an alcohol-dominated shop.

"There's a huge range of products. It's not giving up any

space for alcohol – it's a huge investment. Postponing this would be difficult because we want this to open in a month's time."

Councillors agreed to the compromise and the display have to be smaller than first planned.

David Bol is the Local Democracy Reporter covering Edinburgh. The Local Democracy Reporting Service (LDRS) is a public service news agency : funded by the BBC, provided by the local news sector, and used by qualifying partners. Local Democracy Reporters cover top-tier local authorities and other public service organisations.