

Princes Street Sainsbury's off licence rejected

A Sainsbury's supermarket has been denied permission to sell alcohol off-licence, in what a councillor has said is the "right decision" for the neighbourhood.

The company has been planning to open a new shop at 18-19 Princes Street, opposite Waverley Steps, since mid 2024.

But the plans have hit a snag, as Edinburgh councillors have decided that there are already too many off licences in the area.

Claire Miller, a Green councillor for the city centre, said: "I'm glad this application was refused, and I want to thank the Licensing Board for making the right decision on this.

"The city centre is already well served by alcohol outlets, and suffers from very high levels of alcohol-related crime and an alcohol-induced public health crisis. The last thing that was needed was another off-licence.

"Another off-licence in close proximity to Princes Street Gardens could have an impact on how people use and enjoy those gardens, so this refusal is particularly welcome at this time."

Councillors on the Licensing Board decided by a vote of four to three to refuse the supermarket permission to sell alcohol off licence due to overprovision in the area.

A Sainsbury's store about 250 feet away, inside the Waverley Mall shopping centre, already has off-licence sales.

The company is seeking to open the new location to replace its store near St Andrews Square, which shut down early last year due to a new hotel being developed on the site.

Police Scotland, NHS Lothian and the city's licensing standards officer submitted responses to the licensing application.

A Sainsbury's spokesperson said: "We are disappointed with this decision and note that the board acknowledged our responsible approach to the sale of alcohol.

"We are now reviewing our options and remain committed to serving our customers in this part of the city."

By Joseph Sullivan Local Democracy Reporter