Licensing Act 2003: *Cumulative Impact Assessment Research*

July 2025

Introduction

At the Licensing Committee meeting of 18th September 2025, the Committee resolved to consult on the evidence contained in this CIA Research Report based on the following opinion:

That, subject to any relevant new information provided during the public consultation, the Council, as licensing authority, proposes to maintain the borough's three longstanding CIA Areas in Bedford Town Centre (with their existing boundaries) and proposed that they will apply to the following types of licensable activity (under the Licensing Act 2003):

•   **The High Street (on-sales, off-sales and late-night refreshment)**

•   **Midland Road (off-sales and late-night refreshment)**

•   **Tavistock Street (off-sales and late-night refreshment).**

Executive Summary

What is Cumulative Impact?

1.   This Cumulative Impact Assessment (CIA) research study was undertaken to support Bedford's Statement of Licensing Policy 2022-27.

2.   Cumulative impact is a proper matter that a Licensing Authority (in this case, Bedford Council) can consider under the Licensing Act 2003 and its accompanying Section 182 Guidance. The concept of 'cumulative impact' is best summarised as:

> *"An area where a concentration of licensed premises, however small in number or well managed individually, causes problems or 'cumulative impact' beyond their immediate premises. In doing so, their impact must compromise one or more of the four licensing objectives, which are: the prevention of crime and disorder, public safety, the prevention of nuisance and the protection of children from harm."*

3.   Under the Policing & Crime Act 2017, a new duty was placed on licensing authorities to undertake cumulative impact evidence gathering should an authority seek to publish or re-publish a Cumulative Impact Assessment(s).

4.   Any published CIA must be revisited at least every three years to examine if the evidence supporting it, it remains relevant.

5.   In simple terms, the effect of publishing a CIA is to raise the bar for the quality of licence applications. This means applicants must respond to the evidence in the CIA and demonstrate in their 'operating schedule' and proposed 'licensing conditions' how they will promote the four licensing objectives. This is often hard to do in an area where the CIA evidence shows there are problems linked to a concentration of licensed premises already exist.

6.   Regardless of whether a CIA has been published, the Licensing Authority must still treat each licence application on its own merits.

7.   In 2022, Bedford re-published CIAs for the following three areas: the High Street, Midland Road and Tavistock Street (see map overleaf). All three CIA Areas are within the Bedford Town Centre Alcohol Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) Area – a separate policy that aims to address local problems with street drinking.

8.   The aim of this CIA research report, which uses data drawn mostly from 2023 to 2025, is to provide an evidence base for members of the Licensing Committee to decide (after public consultation) whether to proceed with one (or, possibly, a combination) of the following:

   •   Retaining the three CIA Areas in the town centre as they are,

   •   Removing one or more of the CIA Areas,

   •   Changing the boundaries of one or more of the existing CIA Areas,

   •   Changing the type(s) of licences that the CIAs apply to, or

   •   Publishing any new CIA Areas.
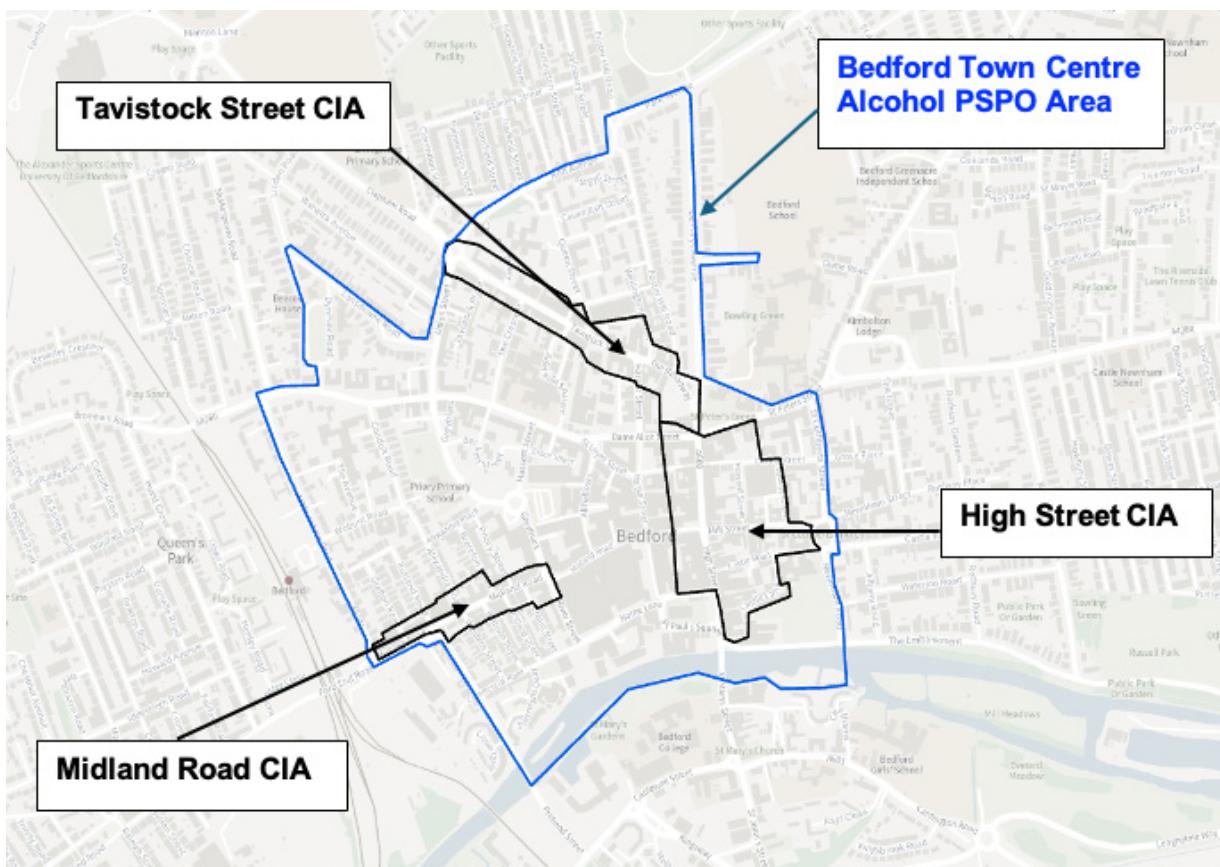
Licence Numbers and Changes over the last three years

9.   The total number of licences in Bedford Borough increased from 598 in 2022 to 681 in 2025 (+11.4%).

10.   Within the Town Centre PSPO Area there are now 176 licences.

11.   Of the three existing CIA Areas, the number of licences in High Street CIA Area rose by 11 licences (22%) - from 50 to 61 - over the three years. However, these additional licences were mostly not traditional night-time economy venues, e.g. pubs / bars / nightclubs, but rather they were predominantly arts / leisure venues and cafes / restaurants.

12. The two other existing CIA Areas (Midland Road and Tavistock Street) saw small falls in their number of licences (specifically pubs and off-licences).

13. Overall, the growth in town centre PSPO Area licence numbers reflects a move away from a homogenisation of alcohol-led venues to a more diverse centre.

Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour

14. 'All crime' (that may be relevant to licensed premises) across Bedford borough increased by +8.2% between 2023/24 and 2024/25. The increase was reflected across all categories of crime considered in this research.

15. In contrast, crime within the Town Centre PSPO Area declined by -6.4% between 2023/24 and 2024/25, and by -14.5% in the existing High Street CIA Area – the town's main night-time economy cluster. Tavistock Street CIA Area recorded the sharpest reduction in crime (-20.7%).

16. As with crime, between 2023/24 and 2024/25 anti-social behaviour (ASB) rose borough-wide, in this case by +6.3%, whilst it declined within all three existing CIA Areas.

17. Alcohol-related ASB declined significantly in the Town Centre PSPO Area (-56.1%) and by -77.8% in the existing Midland Road CIA Area.

18. However, despite these welcome declines in crime and ASB in the three existing CIA Areas (and the Town Centre PSPO Area more generally), these areas are overwhelming where the borough's main challenges are still focused.

19. What is different in this CIA research is the significant growth in the crime and ASB in those parts of the town centre PSPO Area that are not covered by the three existing CIA Areas. The maps in the report show clearly that the town's retail core is now a significant problem for many crimes and ASB (albeit not necessarily alcohol-related). This suggests that the town centre outside of the three CIAs is suffering from problems linked to sources other than alcohol and licensed premises.

CCTV Incidents

20. CCTV data from a sample 10-week period in summer 2024 identified 276 incidents within the PSPO and existing CIA Areas that were relevant to licensed premises, their customers and alcohol or drugs.

21. Peak activity recorded by CCTV operators was between 23:00hrs and 04:00hrs on Friday night / Saturday morning and Saturday night / Sunday morning.

22. Typical incidents were related to drunk customers of pubs / bars / clubs fighting each other or threatening / assaulting door staff. There was also notable number of criminal damage incidents where the perpetrators appeared intoxicated. There were some daytime incidents requiring police or ambulance attendance, linked to those who appeared to be street drinkers.

23.   A very significant proportion of the flagged CCTV incidents were concentrated within the existing High Street CIA Area and its immediate periphery.

24.   The CCTV findings support the view that the PSPO Area and the existing CIA Areas remain problematic.

Noise Complaints

25.   Noise complaints can be a useful data source for identifying where there is a public nuisance impact from a clustering of licences. A total of 36 commercial noise complaints linked to licensed premises, or their customers, were reviewed between January 2023 and March 2025. This is a small number and should be treated with caution.

26.   72% of these complaints were attributed to amplified music, predominantly within the existing High Street CIA Area.

27.   Patron noise accounted for 14% of the complaints, with a small number relating to mixed sources or non-music / sound system issues (e.g., fans, refuse collection).

28.   Noise incidents were highest over weekends, with a reporting spike on Mondays due to delayed complaints to the Environmental Health Team.

29.   No commercial noise complaints were recorded in either the existing Midland Road or Tavistock Street CIA Areas during the review period.

30.   The Council Environmental Health Team reported that the relationships were largely very positive with licence holders when a noise complaint was lodged, and that operators generally corrected the problem before any enforcement action was necessary.

Public Health Data

31.   Alcohol-related hospital admissions in Bedford have continued to rise and now exceed the England average. Hazardous drinking levels remain above national averages, despite an increase in the number of non-drinkers. Admissions have increased most sharply among the over-65 population.

32.   Public health data continues to highlight the health and community impact of alcohol misuse, especially in areas with high NTE activity.

33.   Bedfordshire Public Health has developed its own alcohol harm tool (using 10 metrics linked to licensing, alcohol and deprivation). It is used to assess and flag high-risk licence applications where they may add to problems being experienced in the three existing CIA Areas.

34.   When a selection of 41 licensed premises' postcodes from within the three existing CIA areas were inputted into the alcohol harm tool, these areas then showed either High or Very High risks for nearly all of ten metrics associated with alcohol harm.

Conclusion

35.   In summary, the situation is improving in the three existing CIA Areas, but they do remain problematic, particularly the High Street. The central part of the PSPO Area is also increasingly problematic but there are far fewer licences in this 'retail core' of the town centre.

36.   Whilst it is for the Licensing Committee to decide if it wishes to retain, modify or remove the existing CIA Areas (after consultation), there does not appear to be any evidence in this data that any new areas of concern are emerging where there is a strong correlation between high levels of crime and ASB and the clustering of licensed premises.

Contents

1.   Background

1.1   What is Cumulative Impact?

37.   'Cumulative impact', as defined by the Section 182 Guidance (and revised February 2025) issued under the Licensing Act 2003 is best summarised as follows:

"An area where a concentration of licensed venues, however small in number or well managed individually, causes problems or 'cumulative impact' beyond their immediate premises. In doing so, their impact must compromise one or more of the four licensing objectives, which are: the prevention of crime and disorder, public safety, the prevention of nuisance and the protection of children from harm."

38.   Examples of cumulative impact are varied but can include burdens on public transport, the police and cleansing teams, or increases in crime or nuisance that impacts upon other public space users, deters non-users or affects residents or businesses.

39.   The exact wording from the s.182 Guidance (revised 2025) is set out below.

"14.2   The concept of 'Cumulative impact' has been described within this guidance and used by licensing authorities within their statements of licensing policy since the commencement of the 2003 Act. 'Cumulative impact assessments' were introduced in the 2003 Act by the Policing and Crime Act 2017, with effect from 6 April 2018. Cumulative impact is the potential impact on the promotion of the licensing objectives of a number of licensed premises concentrated in one area.

14.21 In some areas where the number, type or density of licensed premises, such as those selling alcohol or providing late night refreshment, is high or exceptional, serious problems of nuisance and disorder may arise outside or some distance from those premises. Such problems generally occur as a result of large numbers of drinkers being concentrated in an area, for example when leaving premises at peak times or when queuing at fast food outlets or for public transport.

14.22 Queuing in itself may lead to conflict, disorder and anti-social behaviour. Moreover, large concentrations of people may also attract criminal activities such as drug dealing, pick pocketing and street robbery. Local services such as public transport, public lavatory provision and street cleaning may not be able to meet the demand posed by such concentrations of drinkers leading to issues such as street fouling, littering, traffic and public nuisance."

40.   If the Council (which is also the Licensing Authority) is satisfied that there is cumulative impact, i.e., problems that cannot be dealt with at the individual premises level, it may publish a Cumulative Impact Assessment (CIA) for an area with boundaries (what is called here a 'Cumulative Impact Assessment Area' or CIA Area).

41.   The CIA Area may apply to certain or all types of licences.

42.   The effect of a CIA is, in the words of the s.182 Guidance, as follows (emphasis added):

"14.40 In publishing a CIA a licensing authority is setting down a strong statement of intent about its approach to considering applications for the grant or variation of premises licences or club premises certificates in the area described."

43.   In the past, the s.182 Guidance set out that publishing a CIA created a 'rebuttal presumption', i.e. an automatic refusal for any licence within the CIA Area, unless there were exceptional circumstances (even within a CIA Area each application must still be 'treated on its own merits' – one of the core underpinnings of the Licensing Act 2003).

44.   However, despite continued confusion amongst many Licensing Authorities and Licensing Committees, the rebuttal presumption has not been included in the s.182 Guidance for some time. Rather, a CIA makes it incumbent on the licence applicant to address the issues raised in the published CIA in their licence application and its licensing conditions and operating schedule. In turn, it is for the Licensing Committee to ensure it is satisfied that any application will not add to the cumulative impact being experienced in the CIA Area and thus promote the four licensing objectives, before granting it.

45.   In simple terms, a CIA is an evidence base that raises the bar for both applications and their scrutiny.

46.   Since 2018 it has been a legal requirement for councils to review any published Cumulative Impact Assessment Areas at least every three years and to prepare a Cumulative Impact Assessment (CIA), i.e., an evidence base, to support any retained or expanded or new CIA area(s). This document fulfils that purpose.

47.   The Licensing Authority must then consult on its new / revised Cumulative Impact Assessment (with the list of consultees set out in the Licensing Act), review any consultation responses and only then may then (re)adopt and 'publish' the new / revised CIA.

1.2   What is a Cumulative Impact Assessment?

48.   Below is the wording from the Section 182 Guidance (revised 2025), which sets out what a cumulative impact assessment is:

"14.24 A cumulative impact assessment (CIA) may be published by a licensing authority to help it to limit the number or types of licence applications granted in areas where there is evidence to show that the number or density of licensed premises in the area is having a cumulative impact and leading to problems which are undermining the licensing objectives. CIAs relate to applications for new premises licences and club premises certificates and applications to vary existing premises licences and club premises certificates in a specified area.

14.25 Section 5A of the 2003 Act sets out what a licensing authority needs to do in order to publish a CIA and review it, including the requirement to consult with the persons listed in section 5(3) of the 2003 Act. The 2003 Act does not stipulate how the CIA should be used once published, because the requirements for determining applications for new licences or variations are the same in areas with a CIA as they are elsewhere, as set out in sections 18, 35, 72 and 85 of the Act.

However, any CIA published by a licensing authority must be summarised in its statement of licensing policy. Under section 5(6D) a licensing authority must also have regard to any CIA it has published when determining or revising its statement of licensing policy.

14.26 The CIA must include a statement saying that the licensing authority considers that the number of premises licences and/or club premises certificates in one or more parts of the area described is such that it is likely that granting further licences would be inconsistent with the authority's duty to promote the licensing objectives. As part of the publication a licensing authority must set out the evidential basis for its opinion. CIAs may relate to premises licensed to carry on any licensable activity, including the sale of alcohol for consumption on or off the premises, and the provision of late-night refreshment. This includes late night refreshment providers which are not licensed to sell alcohol.

14.27 A CIA may relate to all premises licences and club premises certificates in the area described in the assessment or parts thereof, or only to premises of a particular kind described in the assessment. For example, it may be appropriate for the licensing authority to only include off-licences or nightclubs within the scope of its assessment. The licensing authority must make clear, when publishing its CIA, which premises types it applies to. CIAs do not apply to TENs; however, it is open to the police and environmental health authority (as relevant persons) to refer to evidence published within a CIA when objecting to a TEN.

14.28 While the evidence underpinning the publication of a CIA should generally be suitable as the basis for a decision to refuse an application or impose conditions, it does not change the fundamental way that decisions are made under the 2003 Act. Each decision in an area subject to a CIA therefore still needs to be made on a case-by-case basis and with a view to what is appropriate for the promotion of the licensing objectives. Importantly, the publication of a CIA would not remove a licensing authority's discretion to grant applications for new licences or applications to vary existing licences, where the authority considers this to be appropriate in the light of the individual circumstances of the case."

1.3 About this CIA Study

49.   This study was undertaken by the specialists in licensing research, MAKE Associates, working with the in-house community safety and licensing teams at Bedford Borough Council. MAKE developed this type of cumulative impact research over 20 years ago, and it has been used to support licensing policy evidence for licensing authorities nationally.

50.   MAKE Associates remain impartial in the pursuance of the research. It is for the elected members of the Licensing Committee to decide whether to re-publish, rescind or modify a Cumulative Impact Assessment for one or more areas. This should be based on the evidence contained herein, as well as any additional local evidence, advice from officers and legal counsel, as well as the view of residents and stakeholders after consultation.

1.4 Existing CIA Areas

51. The map below shows the existing Bedford Town Centre Cumulative Impact Assessment Areas of The High Street, Midland Road and Tavistock Street. These all sit within the town centre alcohol PSPO Area.

Figure 1. Bedford Town Centre existing CIA Areas and Alcohol PSPO Area
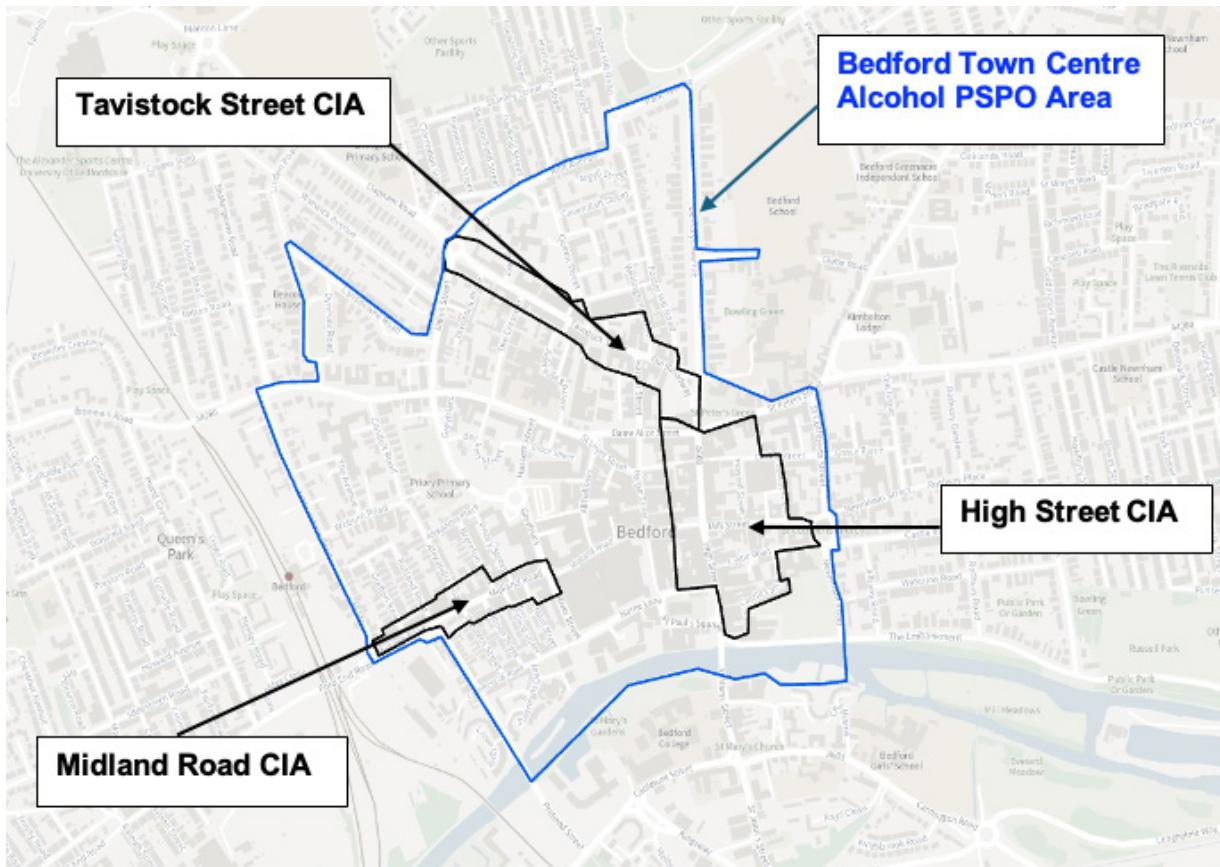
1.5 Objectives

52. The objectives of this study were to:

i. Provide Cumulative Impact Assessment (CIA) research, where possible using the methods suggested in the Section 182 guidance accompanying the Licensing Act 2003.

ii. Examine the three existing CIA Areas in Bedford Town Centre and examine any evidence as to whether cumulative impact still exists here.

iii. Examine the borough more widely for any evidence of what could be emerging cumulative impact, e.g. in areas with densities of licensed premises outside of the existing CIA Areas.

2.   Findings: Crime & ASB

2.1   Introduction

53.   This section of the Cumulative Impact Assessment (CIA) provides an analysis of crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB) within Bedford borough. It has a particular focus on areas currently subject to enhanced control measures, including the three existing Cumulative Impact Assessment Areas (CIA Areas) in the High Street, Midland Road and Tavistock Street.

54.   All three of these existing CIA Areas, whose perimeters are shown in black on the map below, also sit within the boundary of the council's Consumption of Alcohol and Anti-social Behaviour Public Space Protection Order (PSPO). This was introduced to address problems associated with street drinking. This boundary, shown in blue, is used as a proxy for the town centre for contextual analysis purposes.
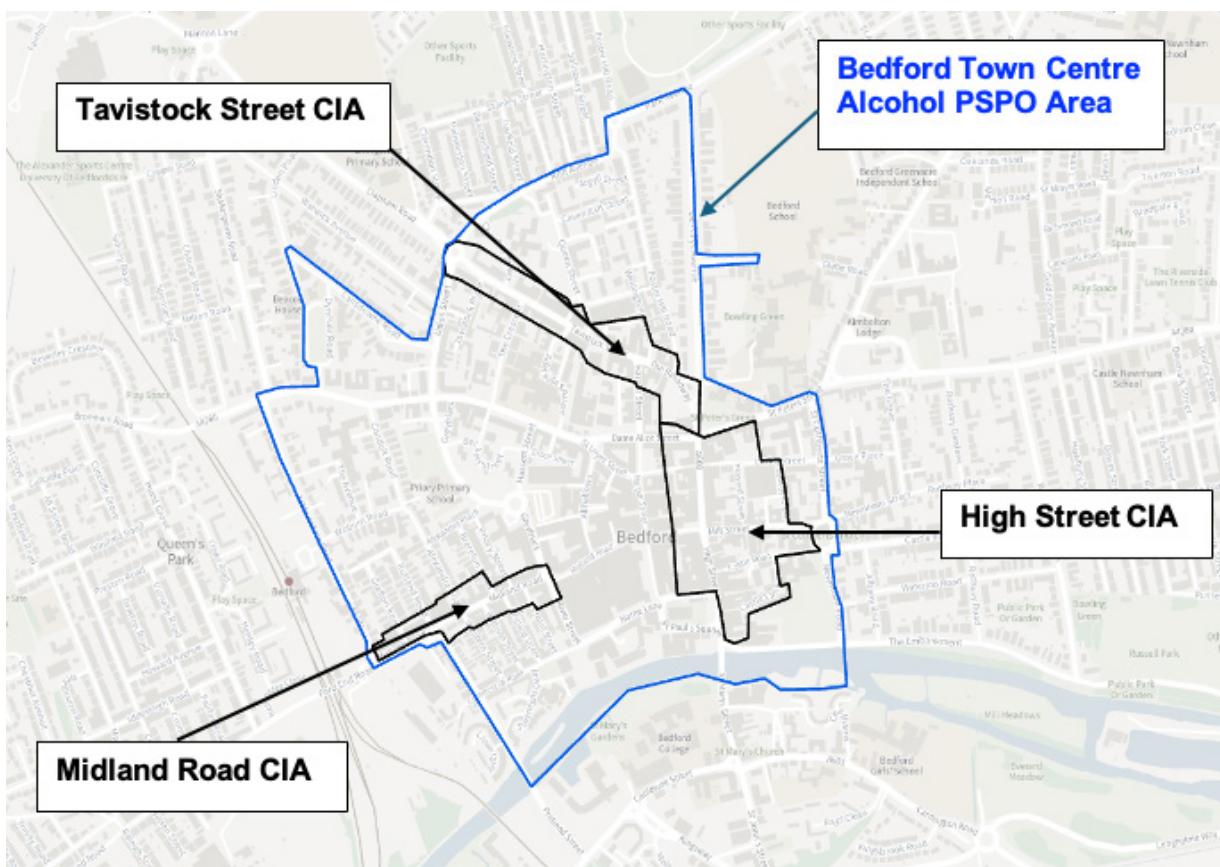
55.   A significant purpose of this section is to provide evidence for the Licensing Committee, should it decide to retain the existing CIA Areas, whether the current geographical scope of these areas remains justified or should be changed.

56.   The hotspot mapping can also help the Licensing Committee decide if any new CIA Areas may be warranted or any of the existing areas removed.

57.   This section examines the volumes and spatial concentrations (hotspot mapping) of key crime and ASB categories, incident densities per hectare and borough-wide trends.

58. Emphasis is placed on categories of crime and ASB that have the strongest association with the clustering of licensed premises and the potential negative impact on one or more of the four licensing objectives of the Licensing Act 2003:

   • The prevention of crime and disorder

   • Public safety

   • The prevention of public nuisance

   • The protection of children from harm.

59. The research draws on police recorded data from May to April for each of the 2023/24 and 2024/25 financial years.

60. It is important to note that the data shown is only that recorded by the police and not all the crime and ASB that is taking place in Bedford. It is impossible to be precise about the levels of under-recording - because by their nature, unreported crimes cannot be recorded. However, whilst the most serious crimes, such as murder, are known to have high levels of recording accuracy, those less serious incidents, such as ASB, are known to be under-reported (and thus under-recorded) by many degrees of magnitude.

61. Where possible, the report identifies potential displacement effects, emerging hotspots and areas where harm has either intensified or declined.

62. The borough crime analyst re-produced the following 'hotspot maps' as closely as possible to those used in the 2022 CIA report. However, because new GIS (geographical information systems) software has been used, like-for-like mapping has not been possible.

63. With the spatial analysis for this 2025 report, the presentation by the GIS software of hotspots is more diffuse. Areas marked with red are those areas of highest incident density. These are followed by orange, then yellow and green. Those areas with no colouring have negligible incident numbers.

64. The crime and disorder and ASB / public nuisance categories that are used in this analysis are those commonly associated with the night-time economy, licensed venues, street drinking and alcohol consumption. These are:

   • All cumulative impact-relevant crime

   • All cumulative impact-relevant ASB

   • Violence against the person (VAP) with injury

   • Violence against the person (VAP) without injury

   • Sexual offences

   • Robberies

   • Drug offences

   • Criminal Damage

   • Public order

65. This section then shows two categories of offence whose recorded incidents are already contained with those categories above, but where an alcohol flag has been appended by the police. Therefore, these are not new and additional crimes or ASB incidents, but existing recorded offences where, for example, an arresting officer, has noted that alcohol may have played a part in exacerbating an incident. These categories are:

- Alcohol-related crime
- Alcohol- related ASB.

66. These alcohol-related categories are known to seriously under-represent the role alcohol plays in crime and ASB, particularly around the night-time economy and street drinking. This is because the data is reliant on the officer recording the main offence (e.g. assault or criminal damage) to also tick an 'alcohol' box on the police crime recording system. There are several reasons why an officer may not do this. However, despite the partial recording of alcohol-rleated incidents, these remain useful measures of where alcohol may be making crime and ASB levels worse.

67. It is also important to note that not all crime and ASB incidents within these hotspots are related to the cumulative impact of the users of licensed premises. There may be people passing through who have not bought their alcohol from local premises, e.g. those coming home drunk on a train or bus and then causing problems.

68. The crime and ASB sections below are structured first with tables that show the volumes and percentages of incidents for the analysis years of 2023/24 and 2024/25, alongside the year-on-year percentage change. This is shown for the following geographies:

- Bedford Borough
- Bedford Town Centre Alcohol Public Space Protection Order boundary
- The existing High Street CIA
- The existing Midland Road CIA
- The existing Tavistock Street CIA.

69. The hotspot mapping then follows so that we can analyse any spatial patterns to the recorded offences.

70. There are some crimes where charts are also included to show when the incidents occur by day of the week and time of the day. This clarifies any potential impact of the night-time economy or street drinking may have on the recorded figures for crime and ASB.

2.2 Findings

2.2.1 Context

71. This year's Bedford CIA research shows a similar trend from several other CIA reports that the researchers have recently authored: that overall crime and ASB within CIA Areas has declined over the past few years, while wider borough crime has remained static or even increased.

72. This slight fall of crime and ASB within some CIA Areas across England and Wales may be due to less people going out at the weekend (a national trend), the declining alcohol consumption of 18–30-year-olds, the night-time economy seeing a greater proportion of 40- to 60-year-olds (due to their more resilient incomes relative to younger people), and a decline in the number of traditional nightclubs, pubs and late bars (which are often a locus of crime and ASB). None of these has been established as causal, but they are clear trends that are shaping night-time economies nationally.

2.2.2 All Cumulative Impact (CI) Relevant Crime

2.2.2.1 What is 'all crime'?

73. The maps and table below show the figures for 'all crime'. This refers to the total number of notifiable offences recorded by the police under the Home Office Counting Rules[1] that have an obvious association with cumulative impact of licensed premises and their customers. It includes major crime types such as violence, theft, drug offences, public order, sexual offences, robbery and criminal damage.

2.2.2.2 Findings

74. The table below shows the volume of cumulative impact-relevant incidents within each relevant geographical area of analysis for 2023/24 and 2024/25.

Figure 2. Volume / percentage change in ALL CI-RELEVANT CRIME, 2023/24 & 2024/25

Area	2023–24	2024–25	Change	% Change
Bedford Borough	14,294	15,472	+1,178	+8.2%
Bedford TC PSPO	3,125	2,924	-201	-6.4%
High Street CIA	747	639	-108	-14.5%
Midland Road CIA	149	146	-3	-2.0%
Tavistock Street CIA	174	138	-36	-20.7%

75. All CI-relevant crime increased by +8.2% across Bedford borough between the two analysed years of 2023/24 and 2024/25.

76. Inside the Bedford Town Centre PSPO Area there was a -6.4% fall in crime, with larger proportional decreases in the existing Tavistock Street CIA Area (-20.7%) and the existing High Street CIA Area (-14.4%).

77. The chart below shows the incident distribution by day of the week and time of the day.

1. Office for National Statistics (ONS) and Home Office Counting Rules (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/counting-rules-for-recorded-crime)

Figure 3. ALL CI-RELEVANT CRIME, 2023/24 – day of week / time of day
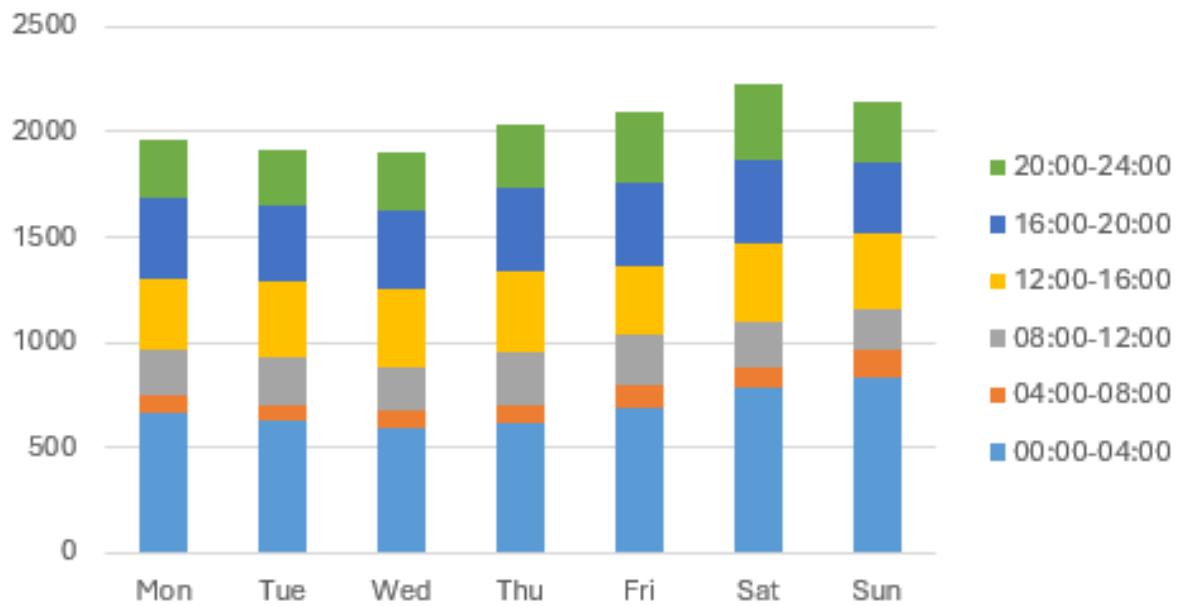
Figure 4. ALL CI-RELEVANT CRIME, 2024/25 – day of week / time of day
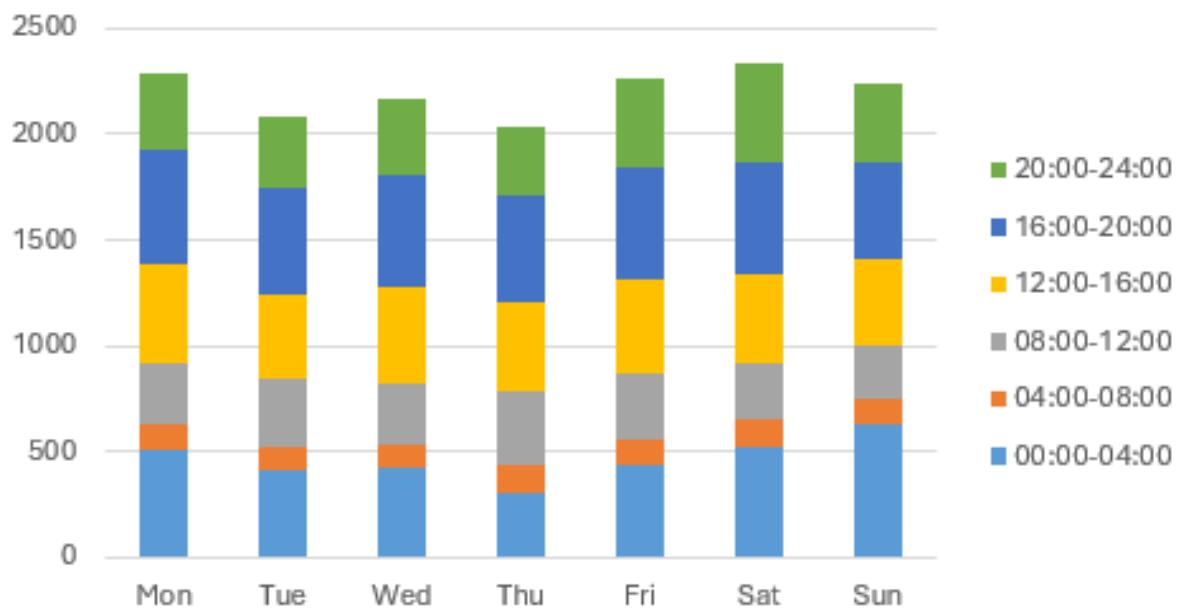
78.　The day of the week and time bar chart, for all CI-relevant crime shows that incidents are relatively evenly spread across days of the week and times. However, there are some distinct increases that correlate with the days and times of the traditional weekend night out, e.g. Friday evening & night / Saturday early hours and Saturday evening & night / Sunday early hours.

79.　This trend also correlates with the CCTV section of this report, where incidents linked to alcohol and licensed premises peak in the town centre during these periods.

80. The maps below highlight the spatial distribution of incidents for all CI-relevant crime in 2023/24 and 2024/25.

Figure 5. Central Bedford: spatial pattern of ALL CI-RELEVANT CRIME – 2023/24

Late Night Refreshments	Licensed Retail	Hotels
Pub/Bar/Club	Arts/Leisure	Other
Restaurants and Cafes		
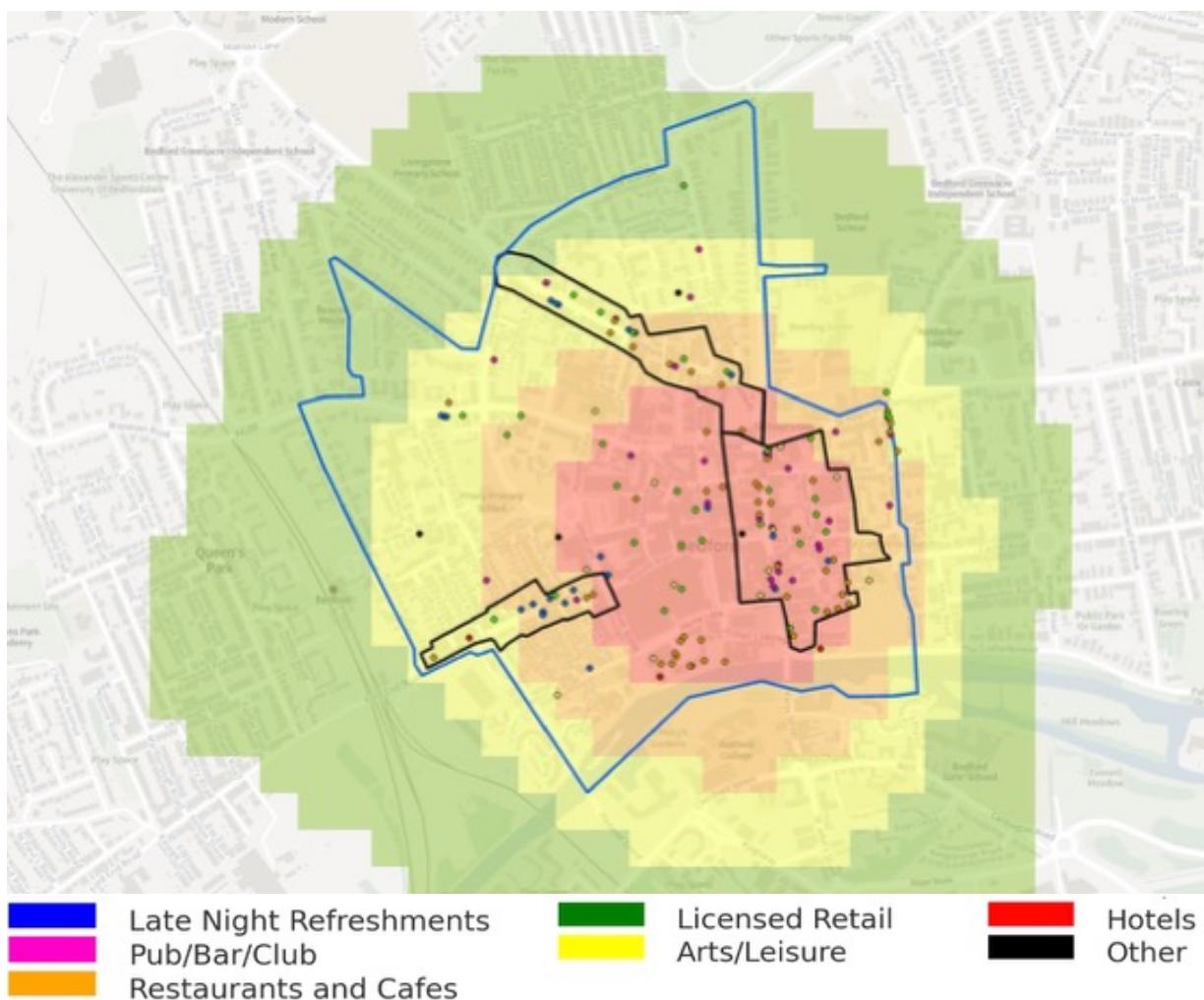
Figure 6. Central Bedford: spatial pattern of ALL CI-RELEVANT CRIME – 2024/25

Late Night Refreshments	Licensed Retail	Hotels
Pub/Bar/Club	Arts/Leisure	Other
Restaurants and Cafes		
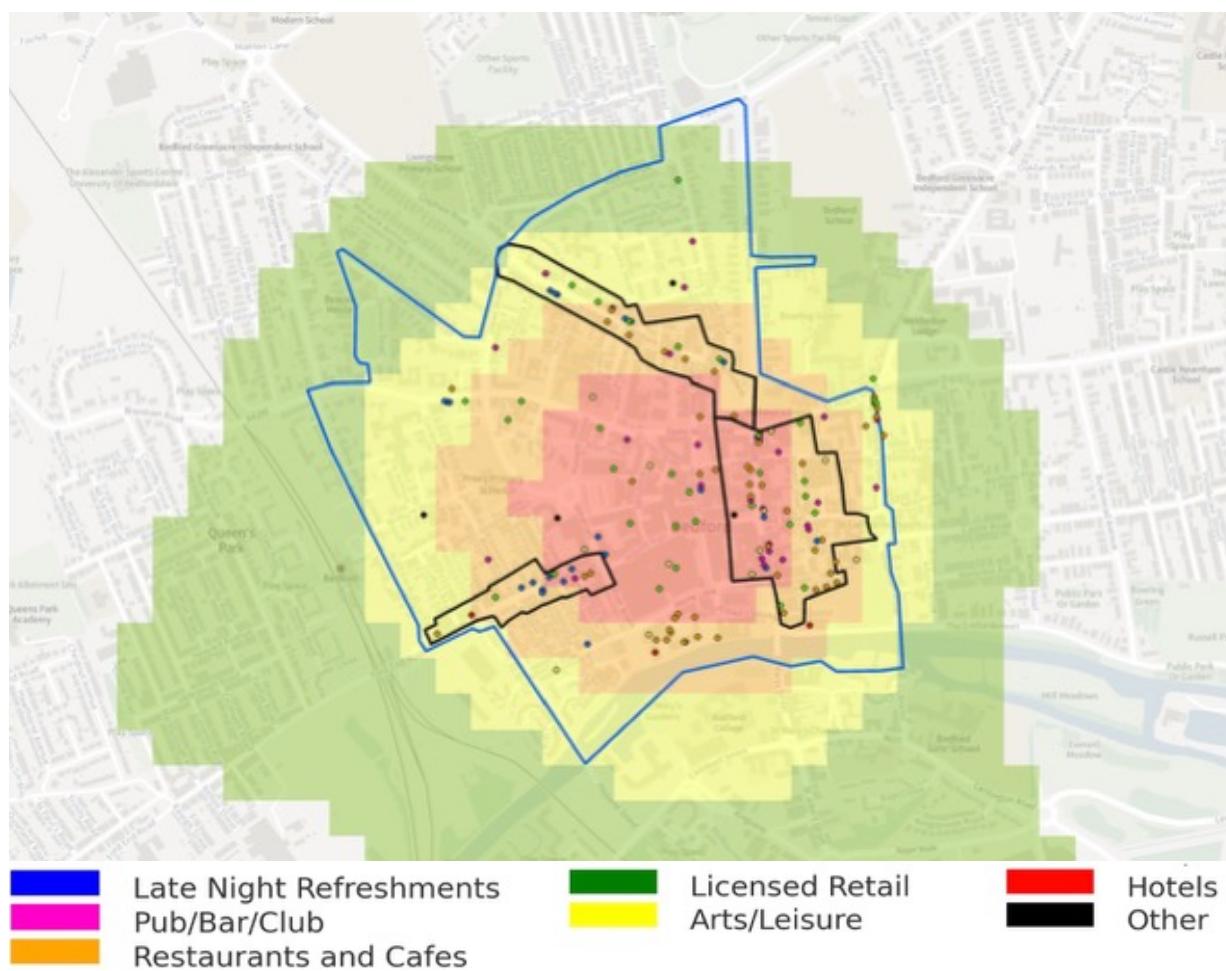
81. When examining the distribution of all CI-relevant crime, there have been limited spatial changes between 2023/24 and 2024/25, albeit there was some de-intensification of crime in the existing High Street CIA Area more recently (i.e. a change from red to orange in 2024/25).

82. These reduction of incident numbers in the three existing CIA Areas in the last year, may mean there has been displacement to other parts of the borough (which has seen rises).

83. While correlative, not necessarily causal, these reductions in all CI-relevant crime in the CIA Areas do coincide with improved camera coverage, new levels of police licensing and council trading standards joint working on enforcement and investigation, as well as active police night-time economy patrol patterns during weekends.

2.2.3 All Cumulative Impact-relevant ASB

2.2.3.1 Context

84.   Anti-social behaviour (ASB) is defined as conduct that has caused, or is likely to cause, harassment, alarm or distress to any person. The definition encompasses personal ASB (targeted at individuals), nuisance ASB (affecting communities), and environmental ASB (affecting the surroundings)[2].

85.   ASB includes a wide range of low-level disruptive acts that do not always amount to criminal offences but degrade public environments.

86.   In CIA Areas and NTE settings, high volumes of ASB incidents are often linked to licensed premises customers moving from one location to another not just inside venues themselves. Examples of NTE-relevant ASB include:

- Graffiti and minor vandalism near licensed premises.
- Loud music or street gatherings late at night.
- Loitering and intimidating behaviour near public transport hubs.
- Accumulated reports of nuisance behaviour in key town centre locations.

2.2.3.2 Findings

87.   The table below shows the volume of CI-relevant ASB incidents within each relevant geographical area of analysis for 2023/24 and 2024/25.

Figure 7. Volume of and percentage change ALL CI-RELEVANT ASB, 2023/24 & 2024/25

Area	2023–24	2024–25	Change	% Change
Bedford Borough	2,845	3,024	+179	+6.3%
Bedford TC PSPO	603	505	-98	-16.3%
High Street CIA	165	128	-37	-22.4%
Midland Road CIA	23	19	-4	-17.4%
Tavistock Street CIA	39	31	-8	-20.5%

88.   There was a +6.3% increase in recorded CI-relevant ASB across Bedford Borough between 2023-24 and 2024-25.

89.   In contrast, CI-relevant ASB levels in the PSPO fell by -16.3%, with notable reductions in the existing High Street CIA Area (-22.4%) and the existing Tavistock Street CIA Area (-20.5%). Midland Road CIA saw a more modest decline (-17.4%).

90.   It should be noted that Midland Road and Tavistock Street already have relatively low numbers of CI-relevant ASB incidents on an annual basis.

91.   These patterns may mean there has been a displacement effect, where improved focus, regulation and enforcement in the existing CIA areas pushes ASB behaviours outward.

2. https://www.college.police.uk/guidance/anti-social-behaviour-powers

92.   The charts below show the volume of incidents by day of the week and time of day.

Figure 8. ALL CI-RELEVANT ASB, 2023/24 – day of week / time of day
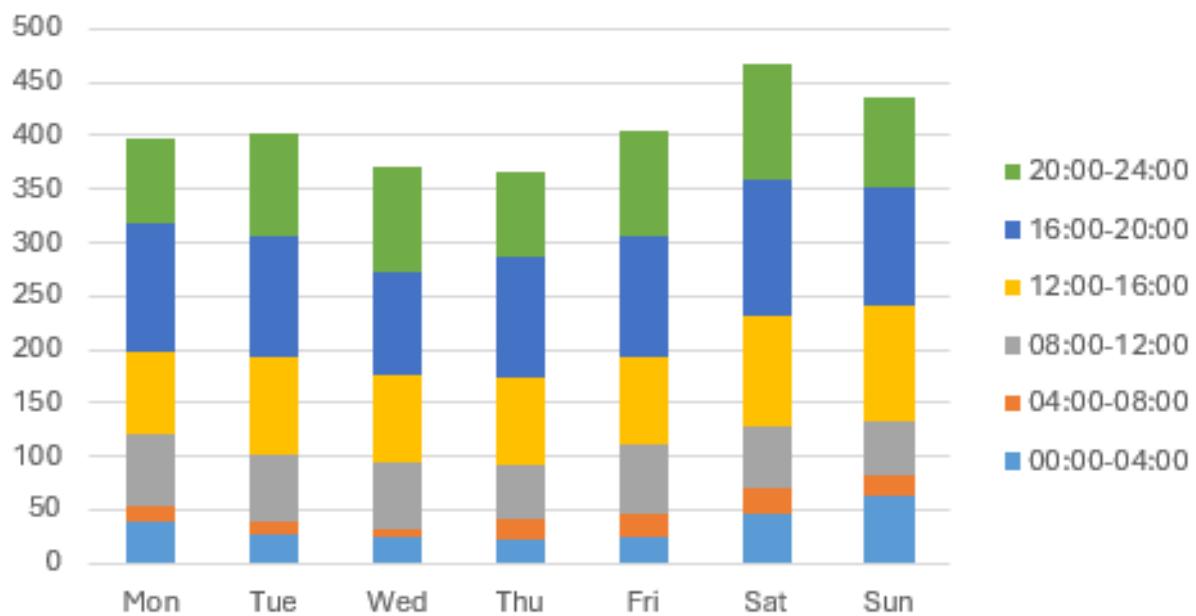
Figure 9. ALL CI-RELEVANT ASB, 2024/25 – day of week / time of day
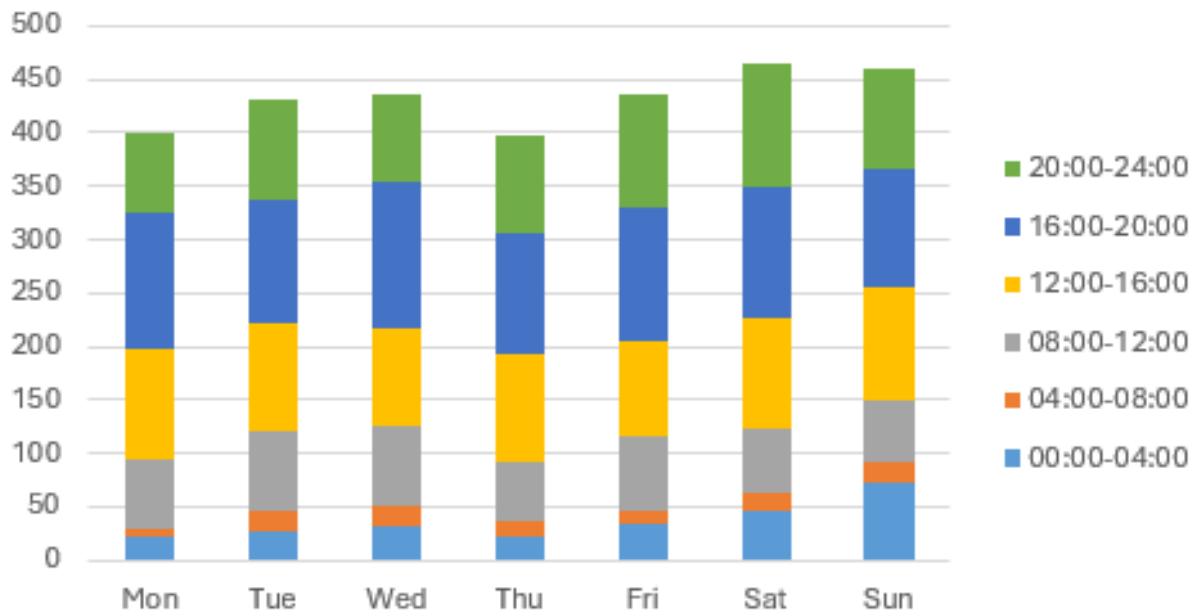
93.   These charts show that CI-relevant ASB, like CI-relevant crime, is relatively evenly spread across days of the week and time of the day.

94.   The four-hour time-periods when the highest number of incidents take place are between 12:00hrs and 16:00hrs, followed by 16:00hrs and 20:00hrs and only then 20:00hrs to 24:00hrs.

95.   This pattern only changes slightly during the traditional weekend night-time economy periods of 20:00hrs to 00:00hrs and 00:00hrs to 04:00hrs. This trend is also correlated with the findings of the CCTV section of the report when there is significant ASB around the existing High Street CIA Area.

96.   The maps below highlight the spatial distribution of CI-relevant ASB incidents for 2023/24 and 2024/25.

Figure 10. Central Bedford: spatial pattern of ALL CI-RELEVANT ASB – 2023/24

Blue	Late Night Refreshments	Green	Licensed Retail	Red	Hotels
Magenta	Pub/Bar/Club	Yellow	Arts/Leisure	Black	Other
Orange	Restaurants and Cafes				
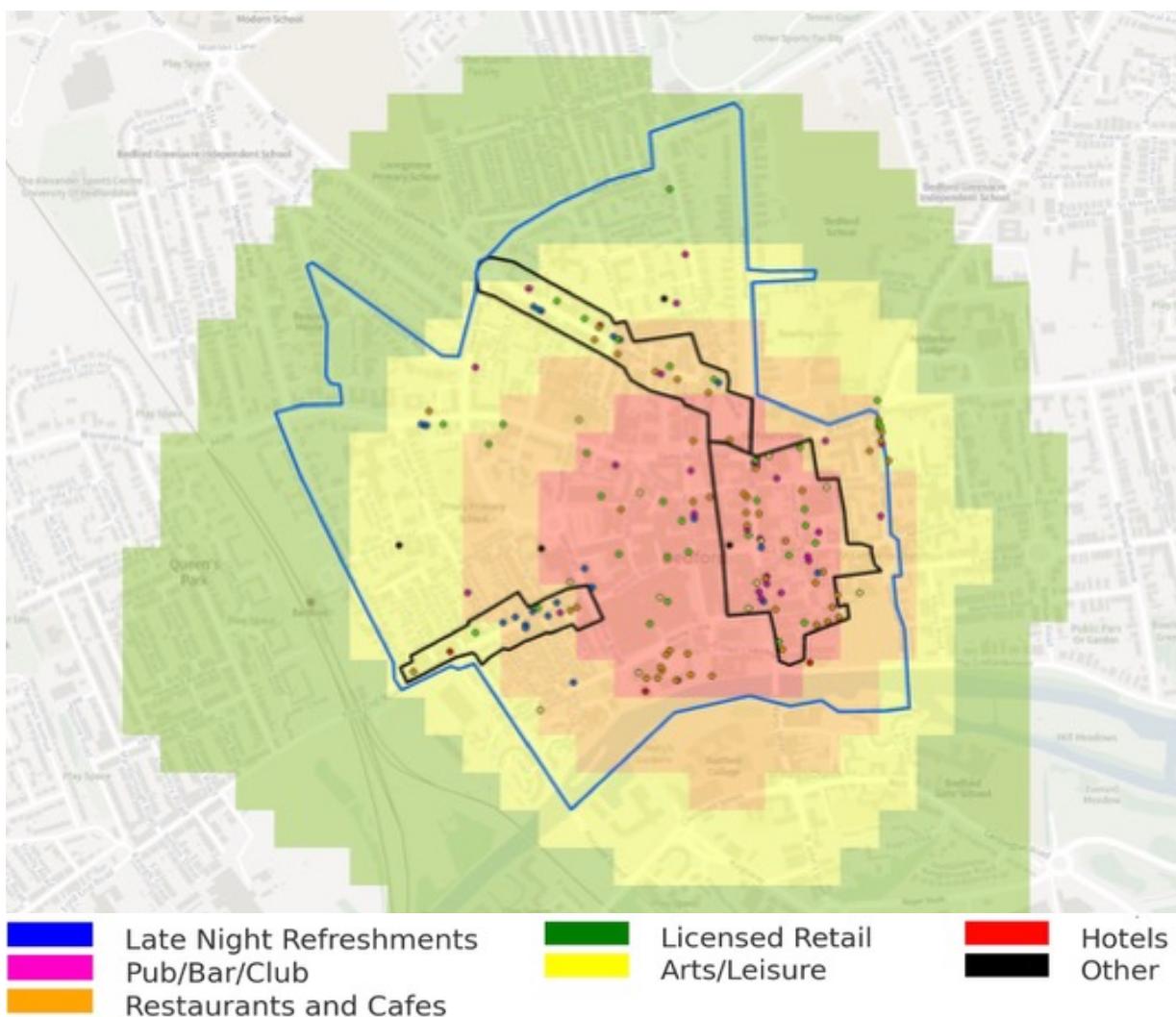
Figure 11. Central Bedford: spatial pattern of ALL CI-RELEVANT ASB – 2024/25

■ (blue) Late Night Refreshments	■ (green) Licensed Retail	■ (red) Hotels
■ (magenta) Pub/Bar/Club	■ (yellow) Arts/Leisure	■ (black) Other
■ (orange) Restaurants and Cafes		
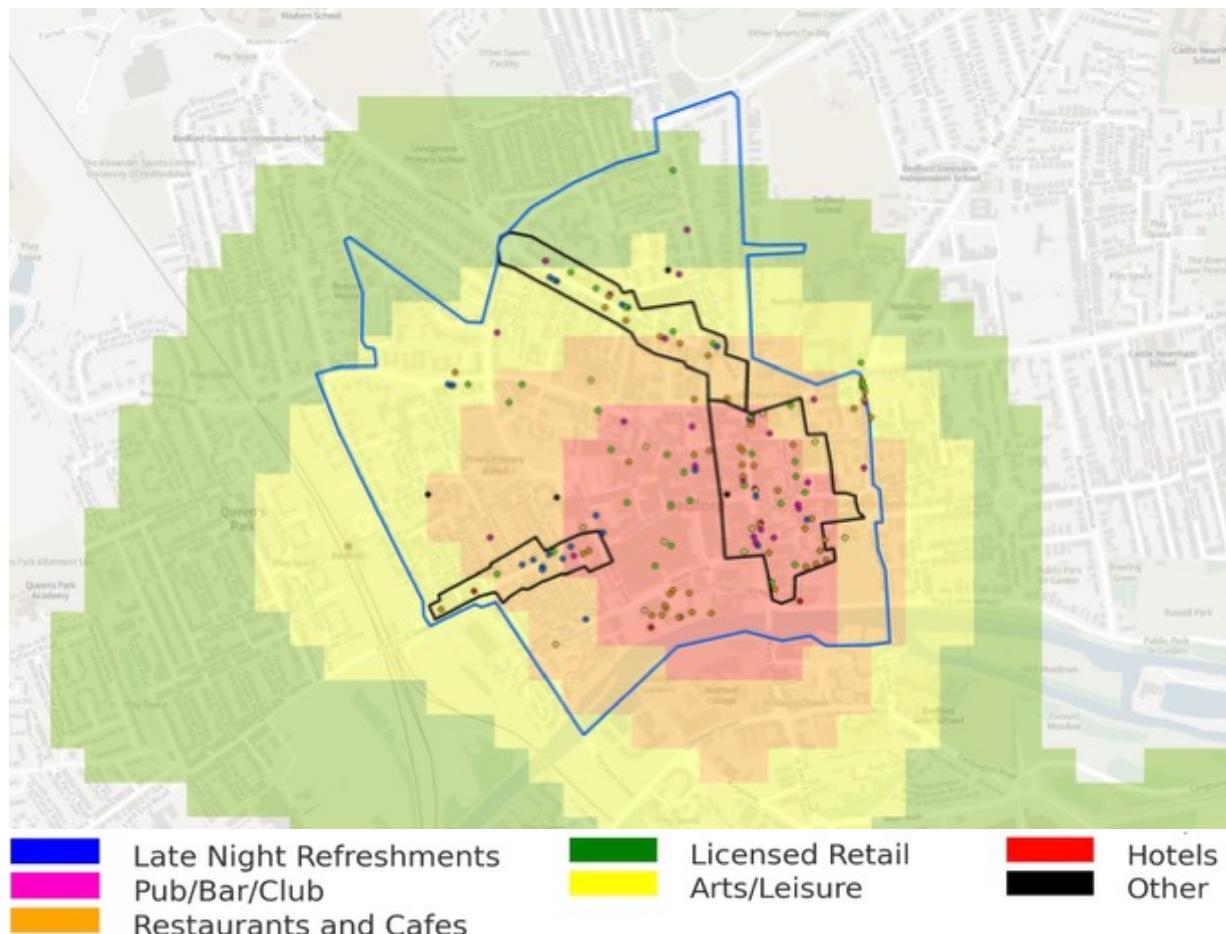
97. As with all CI-relevant crime, this category of all CI-relevant ASB shows some softening (red to orange) of incident numbers in the existing High Street CIA Area between 2023/24 and 2024/25. Otherwise, the spatial distribution of CI-relevant ASB stays relatively stable.

2.2.4 VAP With Injury

2.2.4.1 Context

98. Violence against the person (VAP) with injury includes incidents where a victim sustains visible harm or medical intervention is required. In the NTE, such offences often arise from confrontations in or around licensed premises and frequently involve alcohol and sometimes illegal drugs. They are considered serious not only due to physical harm to the victim, but also due to their impact on public perceptions of safety[3].

99. Examples of VAP with injury include:

   • A patron punched during a bar dispute resulting in facial injuries.

   • A fight outside a takeaway or taxi rank after club closing hours.

   • A doorman being assaulted while refusing entry or removing a patron.

   • Violence due to conflict between groups under the influence of alcohol.

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*3. Home Office Counting Rules – Violence Against the Person
(https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/counting-rules-for-recorded-crime)*

2.2.4.2 Findings

100. The table below shows the volume of incidents within each relevant area of analysis for 2023/24 and 2024/25.

Figure 12. Volume of and percentage change in VAP WITH INJURY, 2023/24 & 2024/25

Area	2023–24	2024–25	Change	% Change
Bedford Borough	1,517	1,416	-101	-6.7%
Bedford TC PSPO	400	363	-37	-9.3%
High Street CIA	118	113	-5	-4.2%
Midland Road CIA	19	23	+4	+21.1%
Tavistock Street CIA	30	22	-8	-26.7%

101. VAP with injury declined between 2023/24 and 2024/25 by -6.7% borough-wide and by -9.3% in the PSPO. Most of the existing CIA Areas improved, except Midland Road, which saw a +21.1% increase (albeit from a small base).

102. Reductions in VAP with injury may reflect stronger enforcement and early intervention policies.

103. The maps below highlight the spatial distribution of incidents for 2023/24 and 2024/25.

Figure 13. Central Bedford: spatial pattern of VAP WITH INJURY – 2023/24
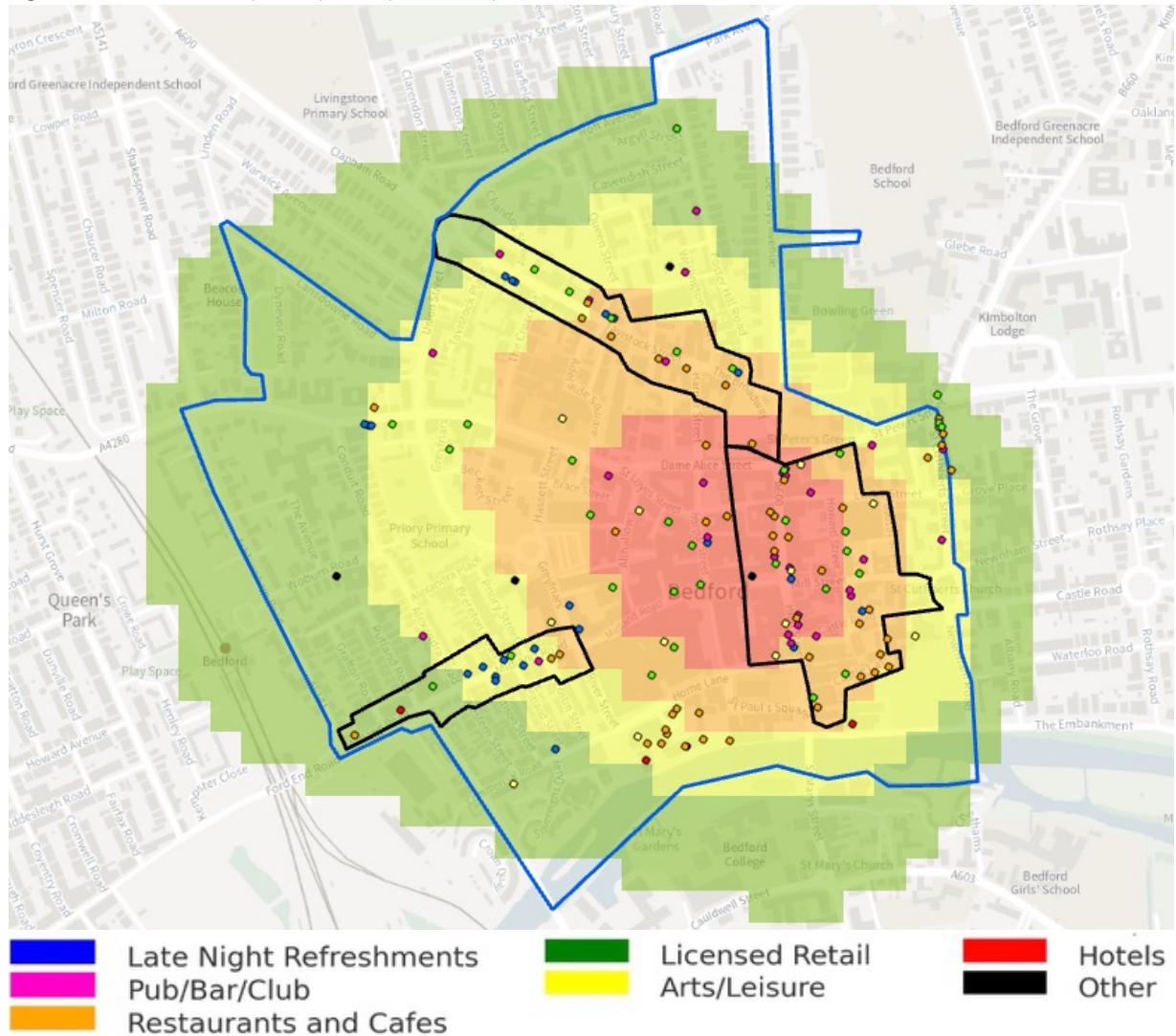
Figure 14. Central Bedford: spatial pattern of VAP WITH INJURY – 2024/25

Late Night Refreshments (blue)	**Licensed Retail** (green)	**Hotels** (red)
Pub/Bar/Club (magenta)	**Arts/Leisure** (yellow)	**Other** (black)
Restaurants and Cafes (orange)		
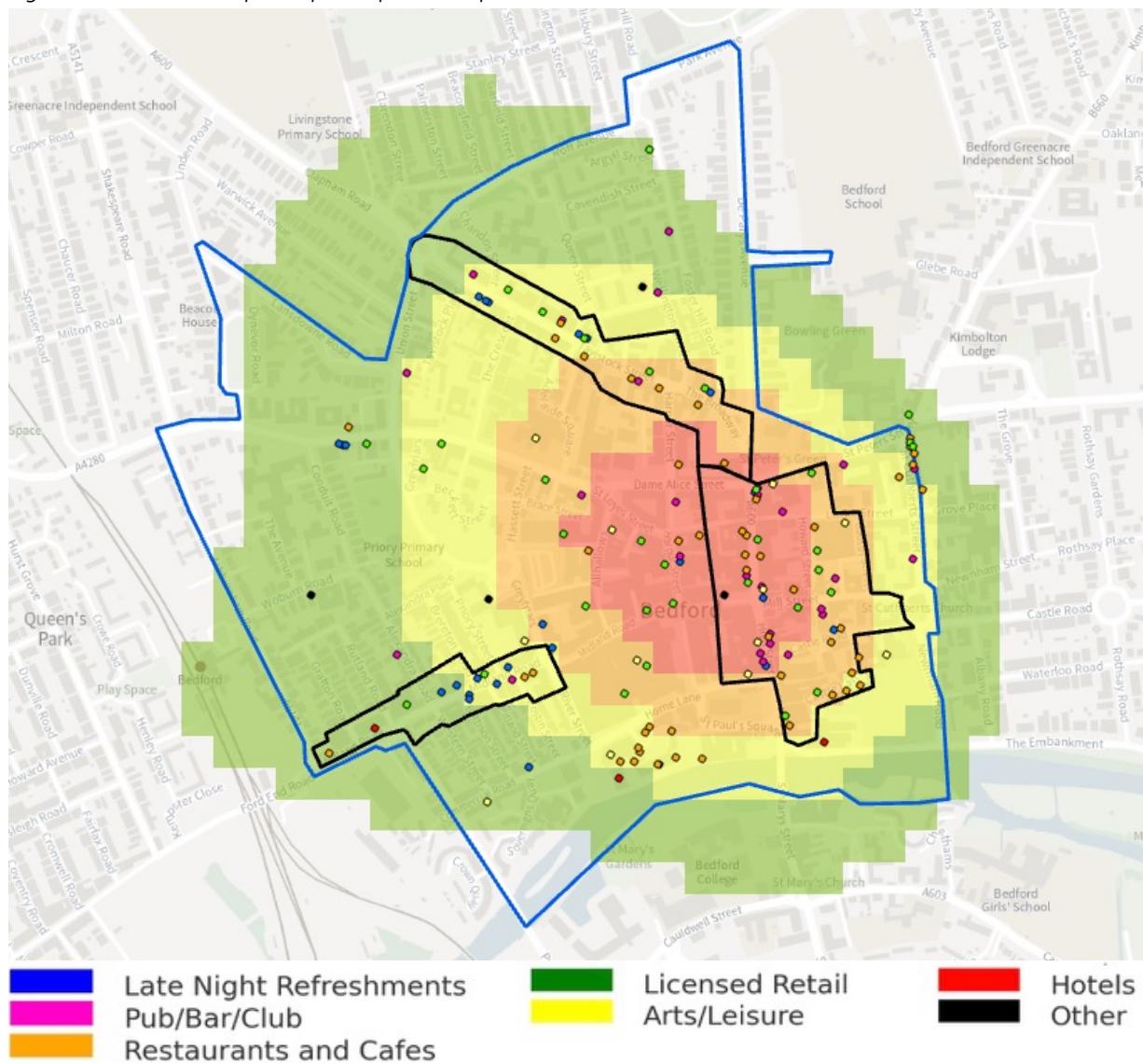
104. Overall, the spatial pattern of VAP with injury in the centre of Bedford has not changed hugely between the two years analysed.

105. It should be noted that the highest intensity of VAP with injury takes place in the western half of the existing High Street CIA Area and the town's retail core suggesting a strong link with the town's night-time economy, it's displacement into the retail core and there is also a possible links to street drinkers in the core.

106. As noted in the introduction to this section, not every VAP with injury incident can be attributed to alcohol bought in the town centre's pubs / bars / clubs and off-licences. There will be some incidents where violence takes place without the perpetrator having bought alcohol centrally. However, there would appears to be very few plausible reasons for this scenario to arise.

2.2.5 VAP Without Injury

2.2.5.1 Context

107. VAP without injury incidents involve either attempted or threatened violence without physical harm being caused, such as aggressive confrontations, common assault (where no injury is sustained), harassment. verbal abuse or intimidation.

108. In the context of cumulative impact and NTE areas, VAP without injury crimes often reflect low-level but persistent aggression, potentially affecting public perceptions of safety and public order. These offences are defined in law under the Criminal Justice Act 1988 and the Protection from Harassment Act 1997[4].

109. Specific NTE or licensed premises related examples of VAP without injury include:

- Shouting or threatening behaviour outside licensed venues.

- Individuals being verbally abused by groups while walking through town centres.

- Door staff receiving non-physical threats during altercations.

- Victims reporting intimidation from intoxicated persons.

2.2.5.2 Findings

110. The table below shows the volume of incidents within each relevant area of analysis for 2023/24 and 2024/25.

Figure 15. *Volume of and percentage change in VAP WITHOUT INJURY, 2023/24 & 2024/25*

Area	2023–24	2024–25	Change	% Change
Bedford Borough	3,849	3,945	+96	+2.5%
Bedford TC PSPO	756	733	-23	-3.0%
High Street CIA	181	164	-17	-9.4%
Midland Road CIA	36	36	+0	0.0%
Tavistock Street CIA	47	38	-9	-19.1%

111. VAP without injury rose slightly borough-wide (+2.5%) but declined in most of the other areas.

112. The existing Tavistock Street CIA Area saw the largest fall (-19.1%), but from a small base.

4. *Home Office Counting Rules – Violence Against the Person (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/counting-rules-for-recorded-crime)*

113. The maps below highlight the spatial distribution of incidents for 2023/24 and 2024/25.

*Figure 16. Central Bedford: spatial pattern of VAP WITHOUT INJURY – 2023/24*

Late Night Refreshments	Licensed Retail	Hotels	
Pub/Bar/Club	Arts/Leisure	Other	
Restaurants and Cafes			
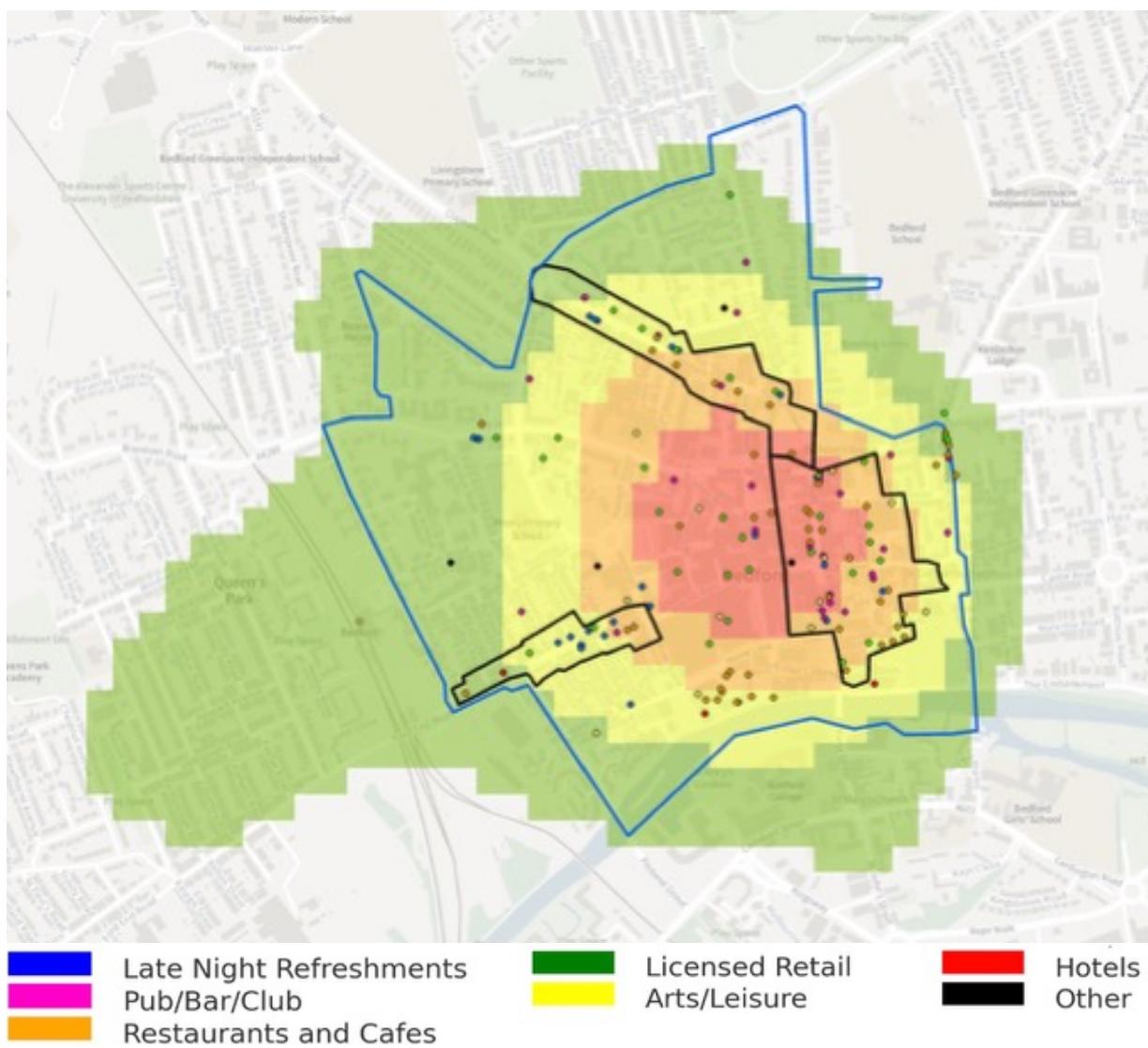
Figure 17. Central Bedford: spatial pattern of VAP WITHOUT INJURY – 2024/25

■ (blue)	Late Night Refreshments	■ (green)	Licensed Retail	■ (red) Hotels
■ (magenta)	Pub/Bar/Club	■ (yellow)	Arts/Leisure	■ (black) Other
■ (orange)	Restaurants and Cafes			
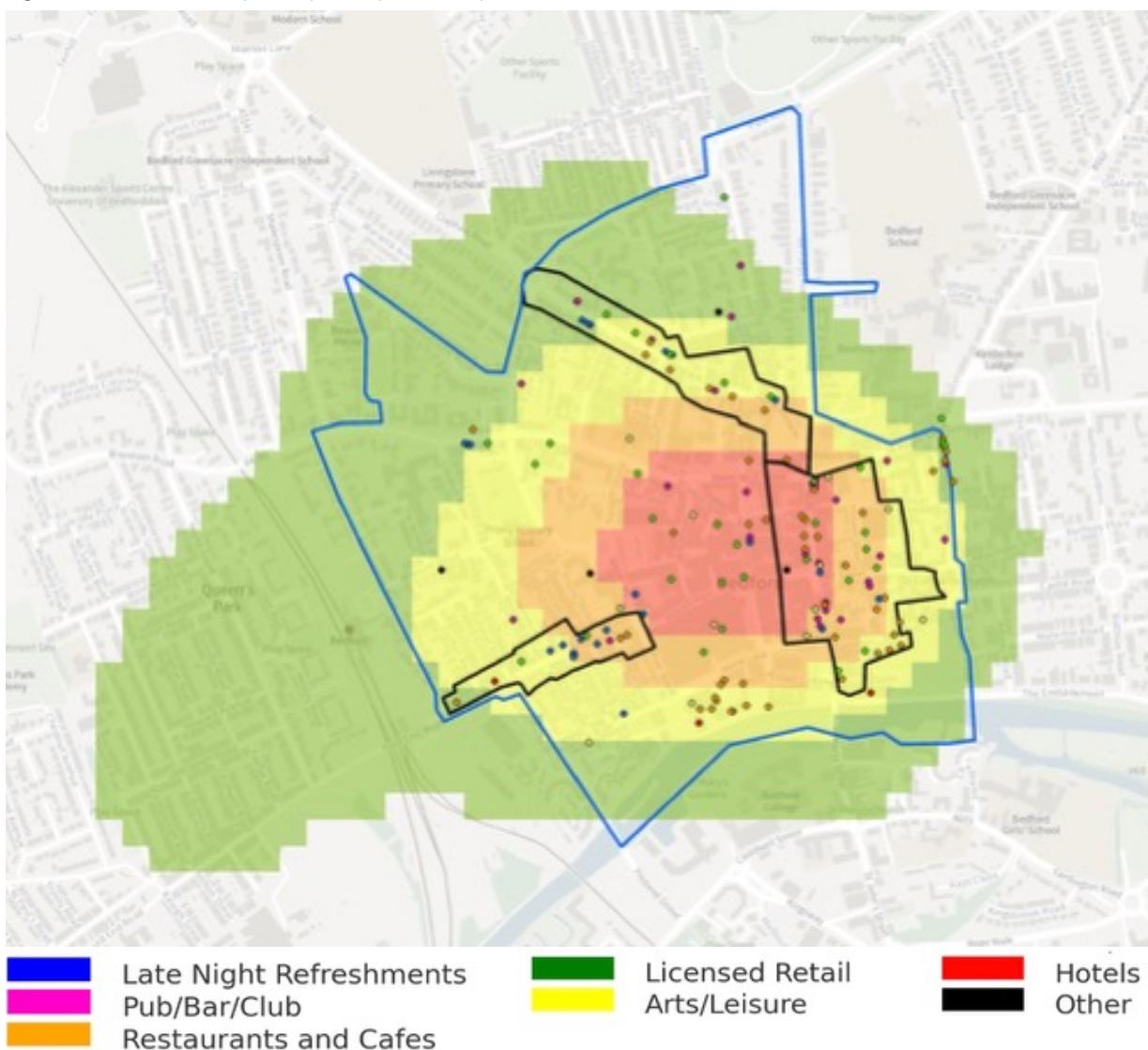
114. Overall, the spatial pattern in the centre of Bedford has not changed hugely between the two years analysed.

115. There has, however, been a small contraction of the incidents from the peripheries of the existing CIA Areas into the core of the town centre in 2024/25.

2.2.6 Sexual Offences

2.2.6.1 Context

116. Sexual offences include rape, sexual assault and causing a person to engage in sexual activity without consent. They are defined by the Sexual Offences Act 2003 and recorded under the Home Office Counting Rules (HOCR)[5].

117. These crimes are highly sensitive, typically under-reported and should be prioritised in policing due to their severity. In the context of a CIA area or NTE, they are particularly relevant where alcohol consumption, venue culture and late-night travel may increase vulnerability to such offences.

118. Examples of how sexual offences typically occur in the night-time economy or around licensed premises include:

   • An incident of sexual assault reported near a nightclub following alcohol-related disorder.

   • An increase in reports from door staff or street / taxi marshals where the victim has been groped or verbally harassed on a busy night.

   • Use of public realm CCTV in identifying sexual assault or rape suspect perpetrators fleeing town centre licensed venues.

   • Door teams or venue staff reporting suspected cases of intoxicated individuals being taken advantage of by sexual predators.

2.2.6.2 Findings

119. The table below shows the volume of incidents within each relevant area of analysis for 2023/24 and 2024/25.

Figure 18. Volume of and percentage change SEXUAL OFFENCES, 2023/24 & 2024/25

Area	2023–24	2024–25	Change	% Change
Bedford Borough	495	576	+81	+16.4%
Bedford TC PSPO	96	96	0	0.0%
High Street CIA	32	21	-11	-34.4%
Midland Road CIA	4	4	0	0.0%
Tavistock Street CIA	4	1	-3	-75.0%

120. Sexual offences statistics continue the trend of increasing offence numbers in the wider borough whilst the centre remains stable and some of the existing CIA Areas have fallen.

121. For example, Bedford borough saw a +16.4% increase in sexual offences, from 495 to 576 incidents between 2023/24 and 2024/25.

122. Whilst the number of sexual offences in the PSPO Area remained static between 2023/24 and 2024/2 (at 96 incidents across both years), the existing High Street CIA Area saw a significant reduction of 34.4%, falling from 32 to 21 incidents.

5. Home Office Counting Rules for Recorded Crime – Sexual Offences (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/counting-rules-for-recorded-crime)

123.   The existing Midland Road CIA Area reflected the PSPO area and remained stable with 4 incidents each year. The existing Tavistock Street CIA Area experienced the largest drop of 75%, declining from 4 to 1 incident. However, despite this fall being extremely welcome, it based on too small a base of incidents to have any rigorous significance.

124.   The maps below highlight the spatial distribution of incidents for 2023/24 & 2024/25.

Figure 19. Central Bedford: spatial pattern of SEXUAL OFFENCES – 2023/24

🟦	Late Night Refreshments	🟩	Licensed Retail	🟥	Hotels
🟪	Pub/Bar/Club	🟨	Arts/Leisure	⬛	Other
🟧	Restaurants and Cafes				
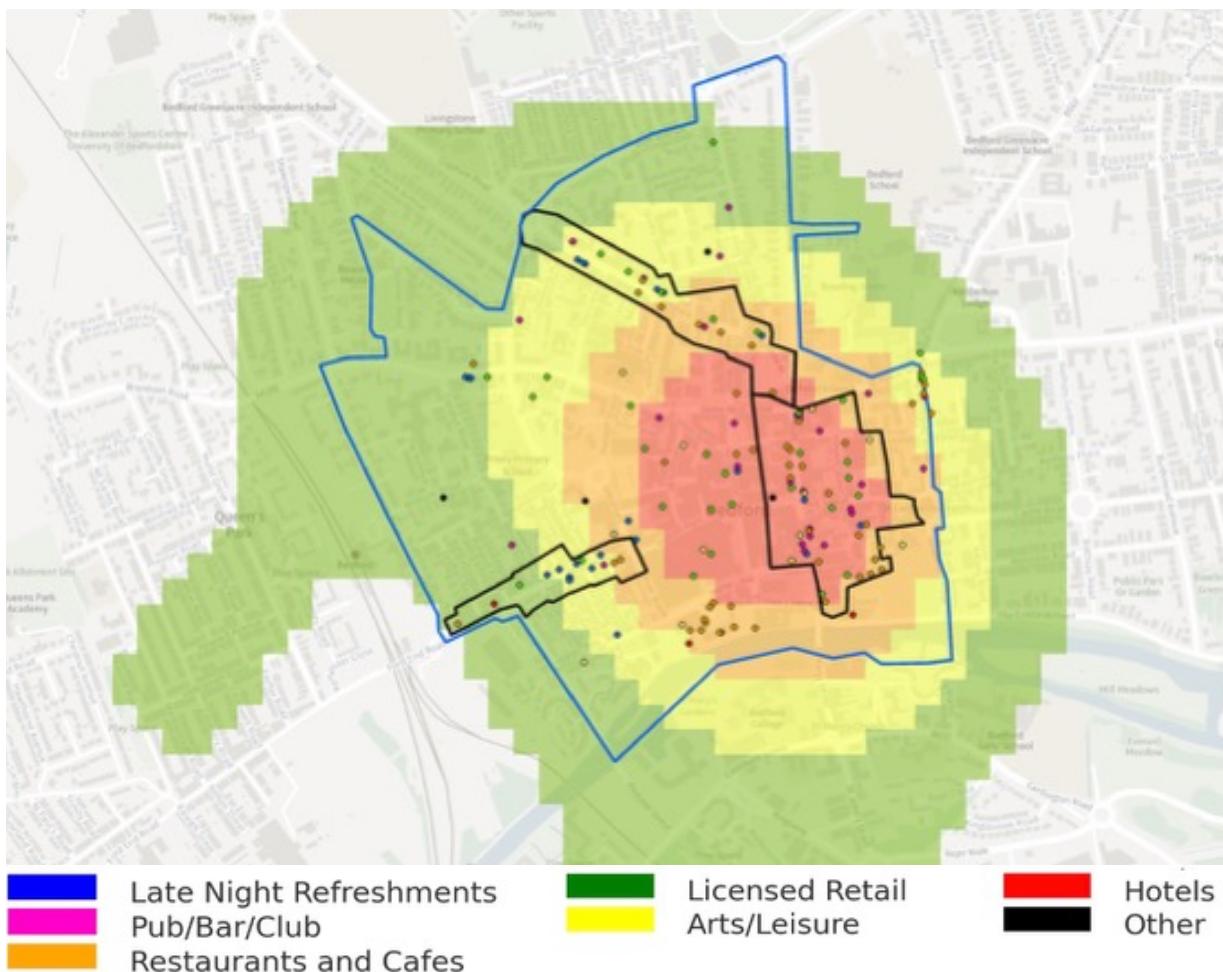
Figure 20. Central Bedford: spatial pattern of SEXUAL OFFENCES – 2024/25

🟦	Late Night Refreshments	🟩	Licensed Retail	🟥	Hotels
🟪	Pub/Bar/Club	🟨	Arts/Leisure	⬛	Other
🟧	Restaurants and Cafes				
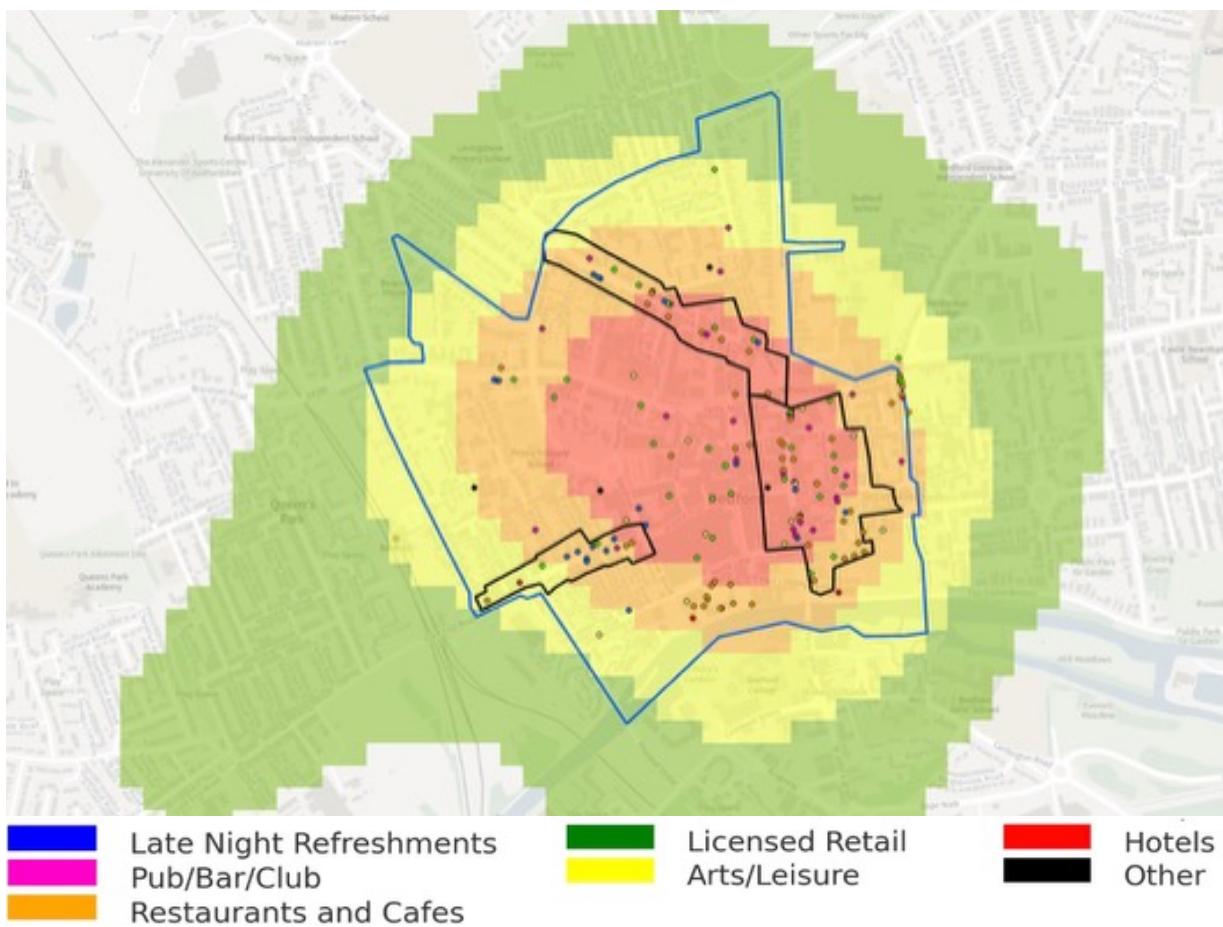
125. Overall, the spatial pattern in the centre of Bedford for sexual offences has not changed hugely between the two years analysed.

126. There has, however, been a moderate expansion in the spread of incidents into the west of the town centre PSPO Area in 2024/25.

2.2.7 Robbery

2.2.7.1 Context

127.   Robbery is defined as the theft of property using force or the threat of force. The legal basis comes from the Theft Act 1968, specifically Section 8. It is classified separately from 'burglary' or 'theft from the person' e.g. the theft of mobile phones or laptops in pubs or restaurants for example[6].

128.   Robbery includes street robberies ('muggings'), as well as attacks on individuals in public spaces or when leaving shops or nightlife venues. It is a relatively low-frequency but high-impact offence, and of particular concern in areas where footfall and intoxication increase vulnerability.

129.   Typical examples of robbery incidents in and around licensed premises and the night-time economy include:

- Individuals targeted while walking home late at night from pubs or clubs.
- The use of threats to obtain phones or wallets from intoxicated victims.
- Group-related robberies occurring near taxi ranks or alleyways behind venues.
- Youth-on-youth robbery near fast-food outlets or cash machines at night.

2.2.7.2 Findings

130.   The table below shows the volume of incidents within each relevant area of analysis for 2023/24 and 2024/25

Figure 21. Volume of and percentage change in ROBBERY, 2023/24 & 2024/25

Area	2023–24	2024–25	Change	% Change
Bedford Borough	164	136	-28	-17.1%
Bedford TC PSPO	53	55	+2	+3.8%
High Street CIA	9	7	-2	-22.2%
Midland Road CIA	3	5	+2	66.7%
Tavistock Street CIA	3	8	+5	166.7%

131.   Robbery incidents decreased -17.1% borough-wide but rose slightly in the PSPO Area (+3.8%) and Tavistock Street CIA (+167%), although the latter were from a low base.

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6. *Theft Act 1968, Section 8; Home Office Counting Rules – Robbery (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/counting-rules-for-recorded-crime)*

132.   The maps below highlight the spatial distribution of incidents for 2023/24 and 2024/25.

*Figure 22. Central Bedford: spatial pattern of ROBBERY - 2023/24*
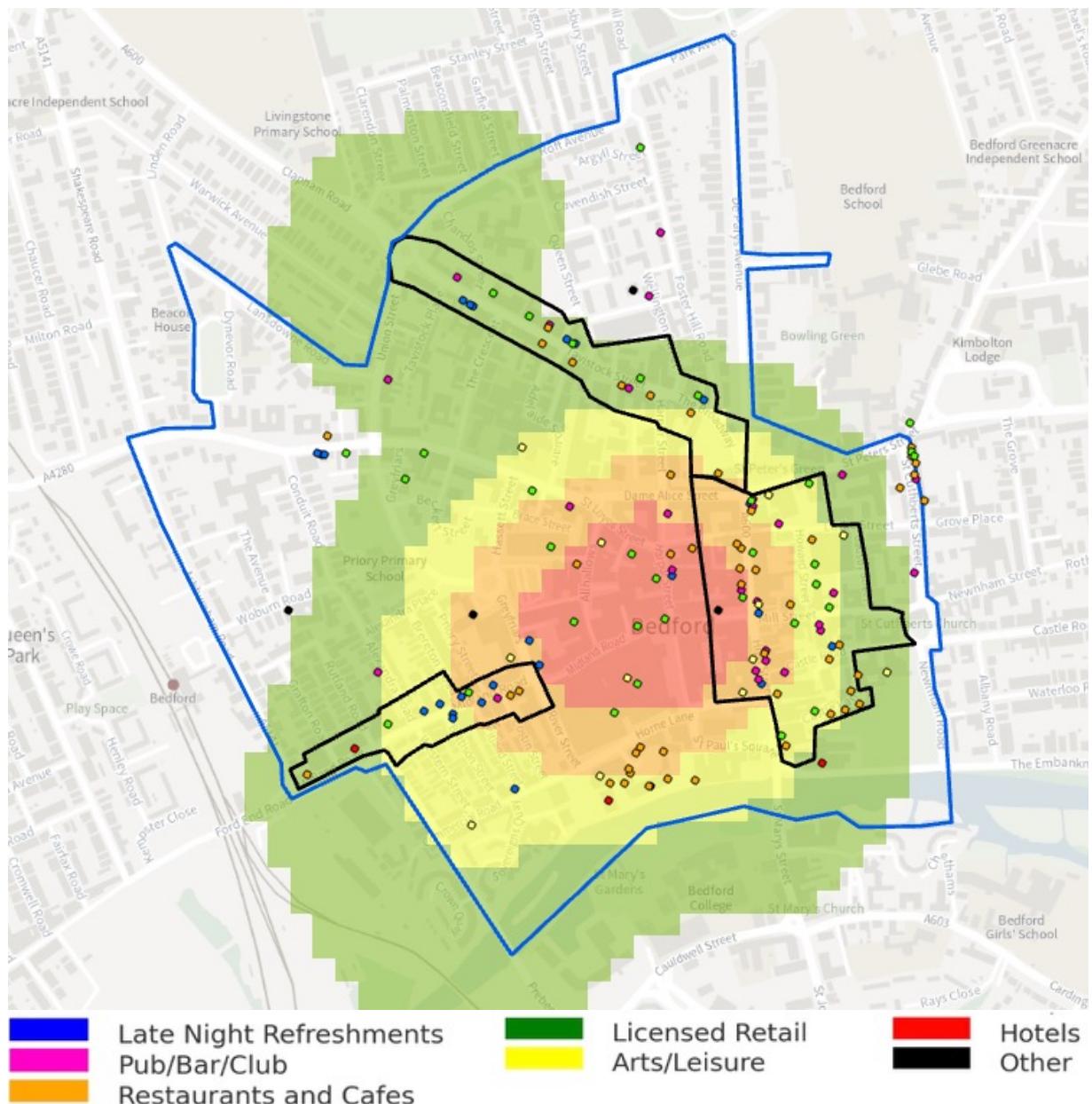
Figure 23. Central Bedford: spatial pattern of ROBBERY – 2024/25

Blue	Late Night Refreshments	Green	Licensed Retail	Red	Hotels
Magenta	Pub/Bar/Club	Yellow	Arts/Leisure	Black	Other
Orange	Restaurants and Cafes				
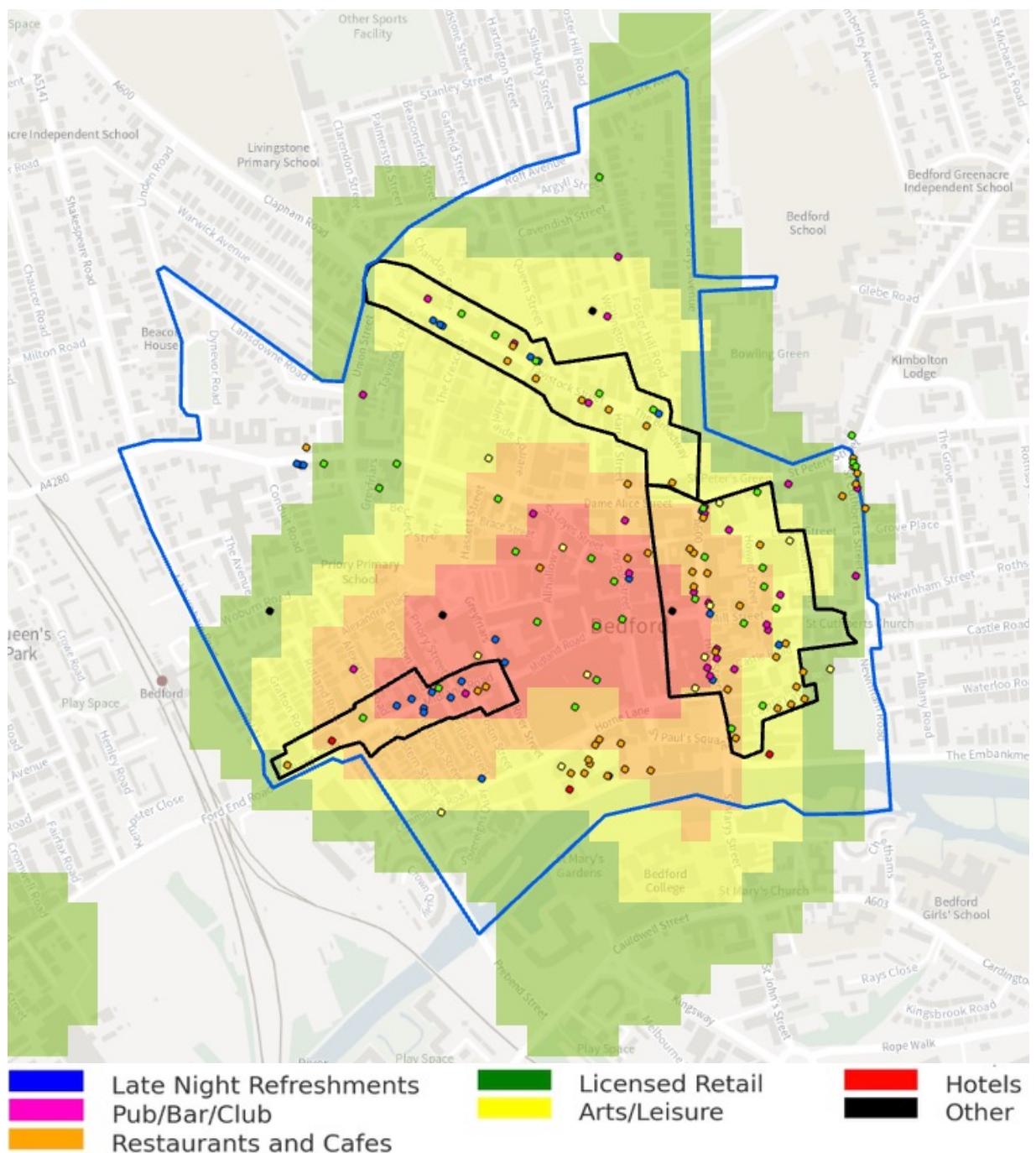
133. The maps show that the spatial distribution of robbery incidents within the existing High Street CIA remained relatively similar over the two analysed years.

134. The number of incidents in the existing Midland Road CIA Area are mostly concentrated at the city centre (eastern) end of the zone in 2024/25.

135. The largest concentration of robbery incidents in the borough take place outside the three existing CIA Areas: in the heart of the Town Centre's retail core.

136. There may be some link between these patterns and the presence of street drinking (which takes place routinely across the town centre - not just in the existing CIA Areas), when intoxicated street drinkers may become the victims of robbery. But this is hypothetical and would require further analysis.

2.2.8 Drug Offences

2.2.8.1 Context

137. Drug offences include the unlawful possession, production or supply of controlled substances. These are categorised under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971. The key categories include possession of a controlled drug, possession with intent to supply and trafficking[7].

138. In NTE areas, drug offences often include the following examples of incidents:

- Patrons caught with small quantities of cannabis or cocaine when searched by police or door staff.

- Intelligence-led policing identifying dealers targeting users leaving clubs.

- Venue licence reviews triggered by evidence of drug use or paraphernalia found on site.

- Reports of suspected dealing around night-time bus stops or alleyways.

2.2.8.2 Findings

139. The table below shows the volume of drug offences within each relevant area of analysis for 2023/24 and 2024/25.

Figure 24. *Volume of and percentage change in DRUG OFFENCES, 2023/24 & 2024/25*

Area	2023–24	2024–25	Change	% Change
Bedford Borough	546	485	-61	-11.2%
Bedford TC PSPO	179	154	-25	-14.0%
High Street CIA	38	39	+1	+2.6%
Midland Road CIA	6	6	0	0.0%
Tavistock Street CIA	9	6	-3	-33.3%

140. Drug offences fell -11.2% across the borough and by -14.0% in the PSPO Area between 2023/24 and 2024/25.

141. The numbers were very small within the existing CIA Areas and recorded stable or declining rates. The High Street CIA remained steady, suggesting moderate ongoing activity here.

7. *Misuse of Drugs Act 1971; Home Office Counting Rules – Drug Offences (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/counting-rules-for-recorded-crime)*

Figure 25. Central Bedford: spatial pattern of DRUG OFFENCES – 2023/24
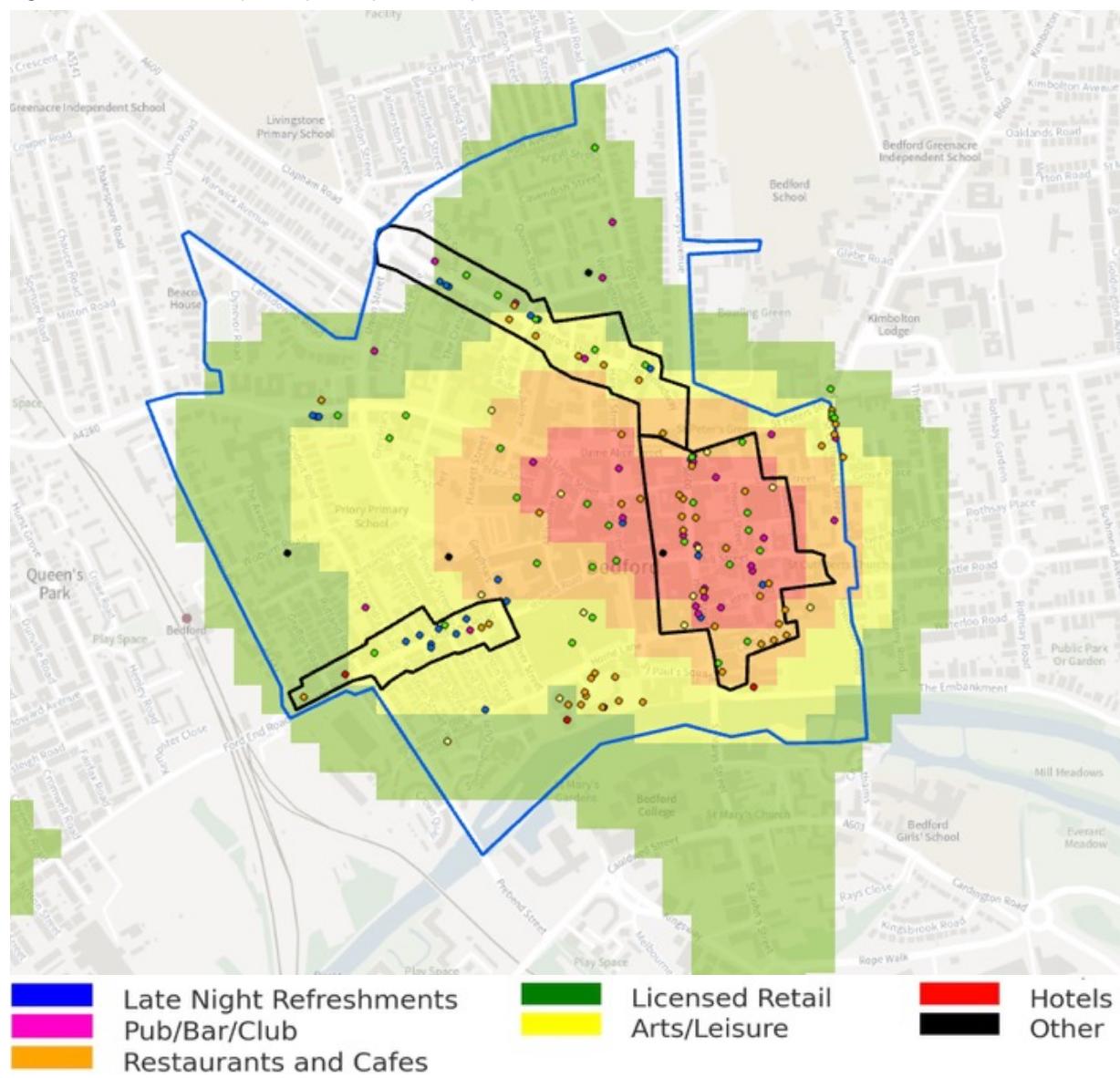
142. Figure 26. Central Bedford: spatial pattern of DRUG OFFENCES – 2024/25

Colour	Category
Blue	Late Night Refreshments
Magenta	Pub/Bar/Club
Orange	Restaurants and Cafes
Green	Licensed Retail
Yellow	Arts/Leisure
Red	Hotels
Black	Other
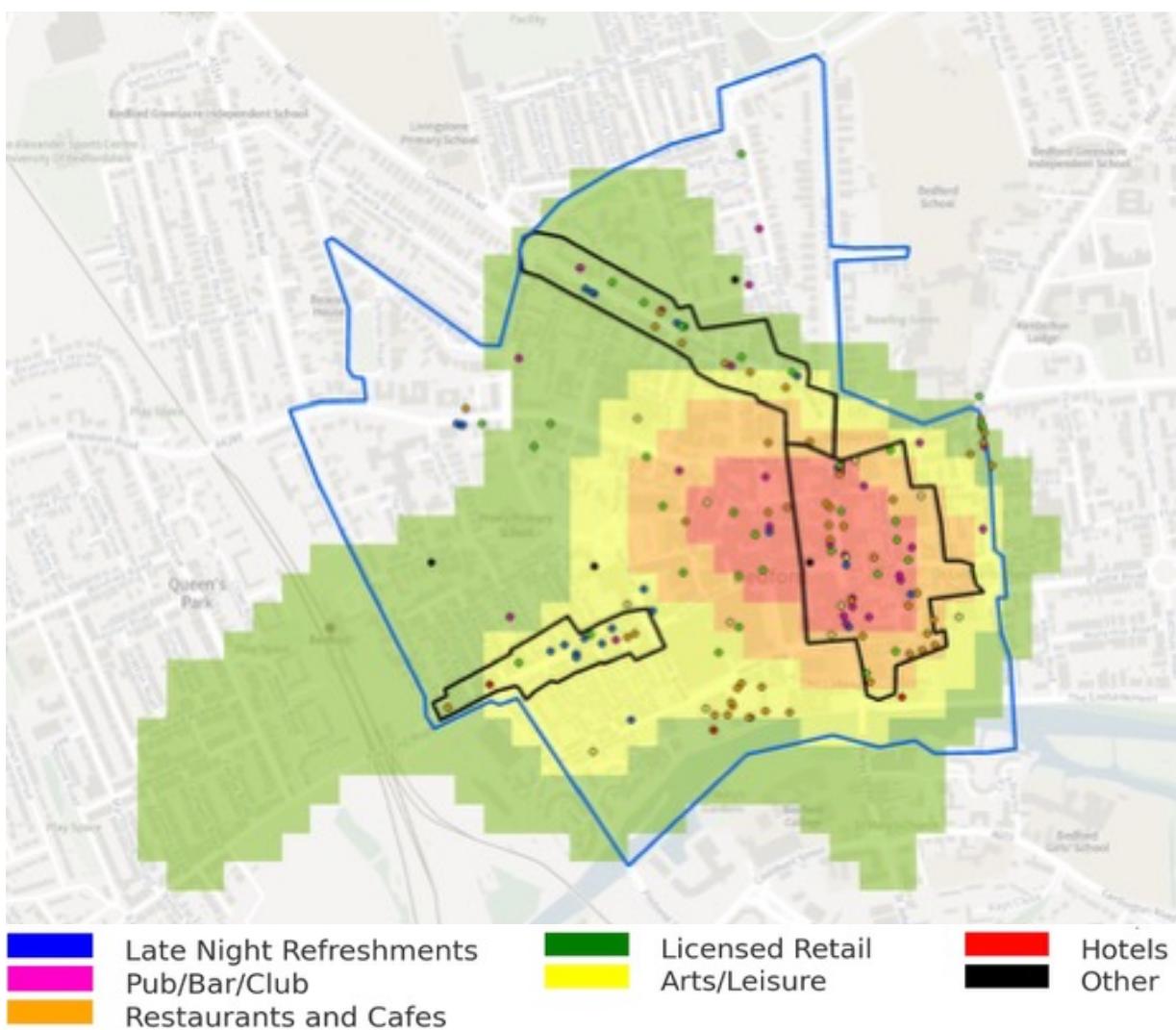
143. Of the three existing CIA areas, the highest concentration of drug offences is within the existing High Street CIA area, whether in 2023/24 or 2024/25.

144. However, there is a large concentration of drug offences in the retail core of the town centre to the west of the High Street CIA. This correlates with the CCTV report section that highlights that there is still a strong correlation of dealing and consumption within the NTE.

145. The existing Midland Road CIA and Tavistock Street CIA Areas retain some recorded incidents of drug offences, but in the most recent year (2024/25), these areas are less intense.

146. Essentially, the area where most recorded drug offences in the borough are taking place has shrunk into the core of the town centre.

2.2.9 Criminal Damage

2.2.9.1 Context

147. Criminal damage is defined under the Criminal Damage Act 1971 as the intentional or reckless destruction of or damage to property belonging to another. This includes a wide range of acts such as smashing windows, graffiti, arson, or vandalising vehicles and public amenities[8].

148. Criminal damage is typically associated with anti-social or opportunistic offending, and while not always violent in nature, it creates significant fear and cost for residents, businesses, and local authorities. It is also used as a marker of disorder in community safety assessments.

149. In licensing policy and NTE analysis, it is often associated with anti-social behaviour and can be linked to alcohol-related incidents, especially within the night-time economy (NTE). High-crime periods often coincide with weekends or events in town centres where footfall is high. It can be indicative of tension, alcohol-related disruption, or general degradation of space. Examples of crimes include:

    • Graffiti or scratching of bus stops, doors, and commercial premises during night-time hours.

    • Damage to bins, signage, or glass panels linked to intoxicated individuals.

    • Vandalism in car parks or alleys used as congregation points.

    • Frequent but low-level damages that trigger increased CCTV and enforcement in CIA Areas.

2.2.9.2 Findings

150. The table below shows the volume of incidents within each relevant area of analysis for 2023/24 and 2024/25.

Figure 27. Volume of and percentage change in CRIMINAL DAMAGE, 2023/24 & 2024/25

Area	2023–24	2024–25	Change	% Change
Bedford Borough	1285	1214	-71	-5.5%
Bedford TC PSPO	199	175	-24	-12.1%
High Street CIA	38	39	+1	-2.6%
Midland Road CIA	10	8	-2	-20.0%
Tavistock Street CIA	28	21	-7	-25.0%

151. Criminal damage fell by -5.5% across Bedford borough between 2023/24 and 2024/25.

152. In the PSPO Area criminal damage fell between 2023/24 and 2024/25 more than the borough average: by -12.1%.

153. In the three existing CIA Areas, criminal damage incident numbers also fell between 2023/24 and 2024/25, albeit some of the sample sizes were too small to be reliable.

8. Criminal Damage Act 1971 (https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1971/48)

154.   The maps below highlight the spatial distribution of incidents for 2023/24 and 2024/25.

*Figure 28. Central Bedford: spatial pattern of CRIMINAL DAMAGE – 2023/24*
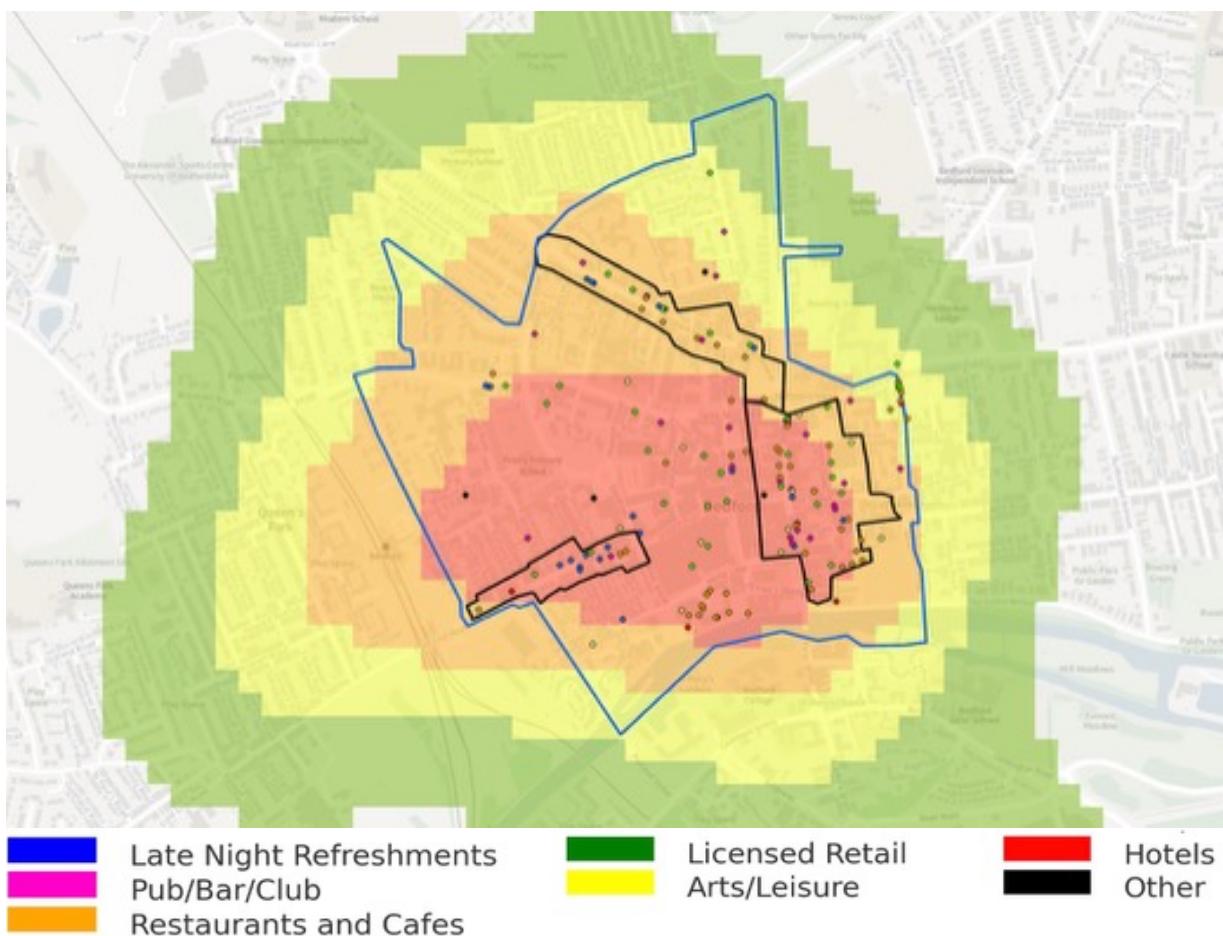
Figure 29. Central Bedford: spatial pattern of CRIMINAL DAMAGE – 2024/25
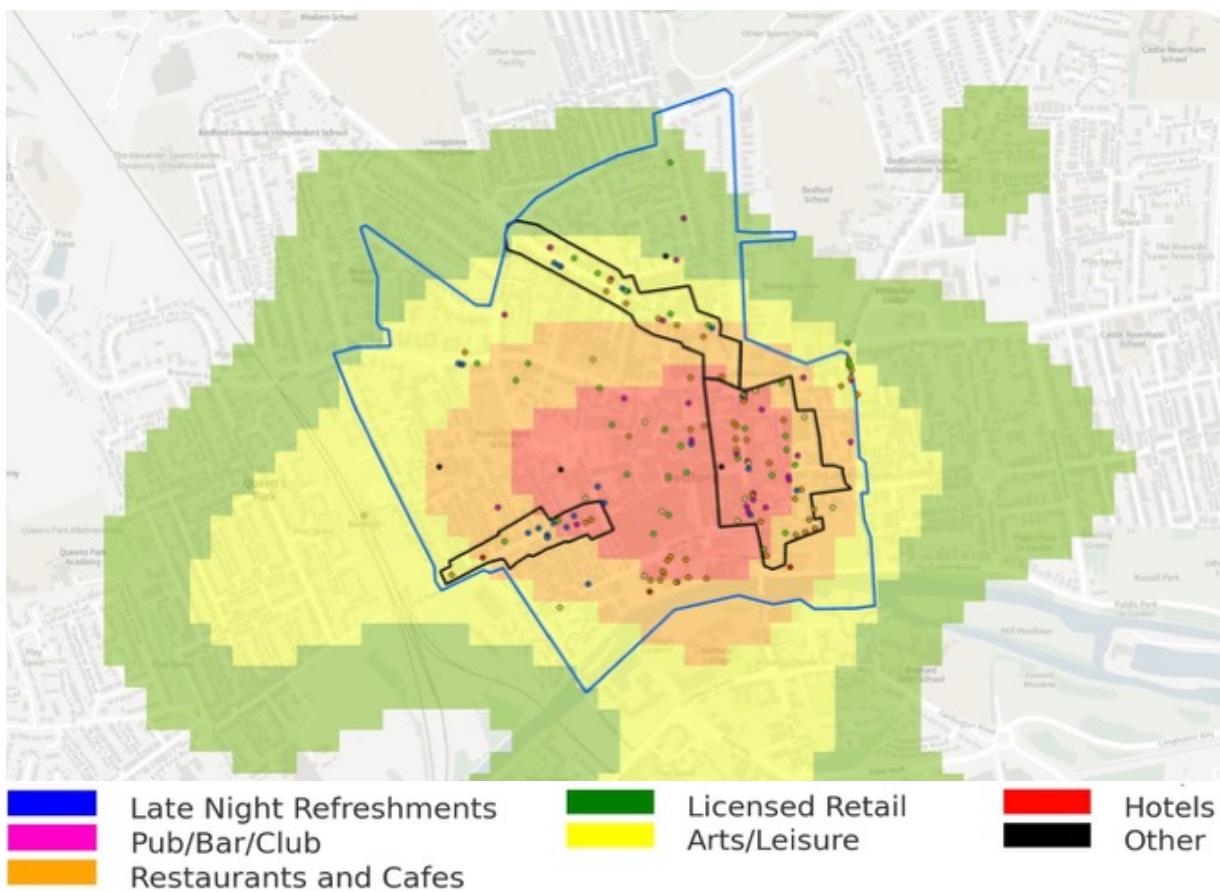
155.   Incidents of criminal damage remain highest in the town centre retail core for both years analysed.

156.   However, in 2023/24 almost the whole of the PSPO is red or orange (the highest levels of incidents). Whereas by 2024/25, there is much more yellow and even some green (i.e. moderate and low levels of incidents) in the PSPO Area.

157.   Of the three existing CIA Areas, in 2023/24 the Midland Road CIA Area is almost all red, indicating very high levels of criminal damage. But by 2024/25 it has mostly turned orange, except for its eastern end where it joins the town centre retail core.

158.   Tavistock Street was all orange (moderate/high incident numbers) in 2024 but the two thirds heading northwest out of the town centre have turned yellow in 2024/25 suggesting significant improvements here.

159.   The existing High Street CIA Area has changed little in its spatial distribution of criminal damage incidents over the two analysed years: it mostly remains red.

160.   In terms of the overall pattern of criminal damage incidents, the green area – indicating a lower number of recorded crimes – has grown eastwards and westwards.

2.2.10 Public Order

2.2.10.1 Context

161. Public order offences include behaviours that cause alarm, harassment, distress or provoke violence. These are defined under the Public Order Act 1986, and include offences such as affray, violent disorder, and causing intentional or racially aggravated harassment[9].

162. Public order offences relate to incidents where individuals or groups cause fear, intimidation or unrest in public spaces. In licensing and NTE contexts, this includes street arguments, offensive or threatening behaviour and group disturbances, especially during or after drinking hours. These offences are a key indicator of the broader impact of night-time activity on community safety.

163. Typical examples of public order incidents in and around licensed premises and the night-time economy include:

   • Groups shouting abuse in the street following closing time.

   • An individual using racially abusive language outside a bar.

   • Physical confrontation that escalates to involve multiple parties without resulting in injury.

   • Police intervening to disperse a disorderly crowd or pre-empt escalation.

2.2.10.2 Findings

164. The table below shows the volume of incidents within each relevant area of analysis for 2023/24 and 2024/25.

Figure 30. Volume of and percentage change: PUBLIC ORDER offences, 2023/24 & 2024/25

Area	2023–24	2024–25	Change	% Change
Bedford Borough	1,339	1,353	+14	1.0%
Bedford TC PSPO	323	288	-35	-10.8%
High Street CIA	75	74	-1	-1.3%
Midland Road CIA	25	19	-6	-24.0%
Tavistock Street CIA	21	12	-9	-42.9%

165. Overall, these offences remained broadly stable borough-wide (+1%) between 2023/24 and 2024/25. However, they fell -10.8% in the PSPO Area and significantly in all three of the existing CIA Areas.

166. Like other types of offence with strong linkages to the NTE and street drinking (apart from robbery), public order offences reflect this meta-pattern: of stable or increasing offence evels in the wider Bedford borough area but declining levels in 2024/25 within the PSPO Area and the three CIA Areas.

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9. Public Order Act 1986; Home Office Counting Rules – Public Order Offences (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/counting-rules-for-recorded-crime)

167. The maps below highlight the spatial distribution of incidents for 2023/24 and 2024/25.

Figure 31. Central Bedford: spatial pattern of PUBLIC ORDER offences – 2023/24
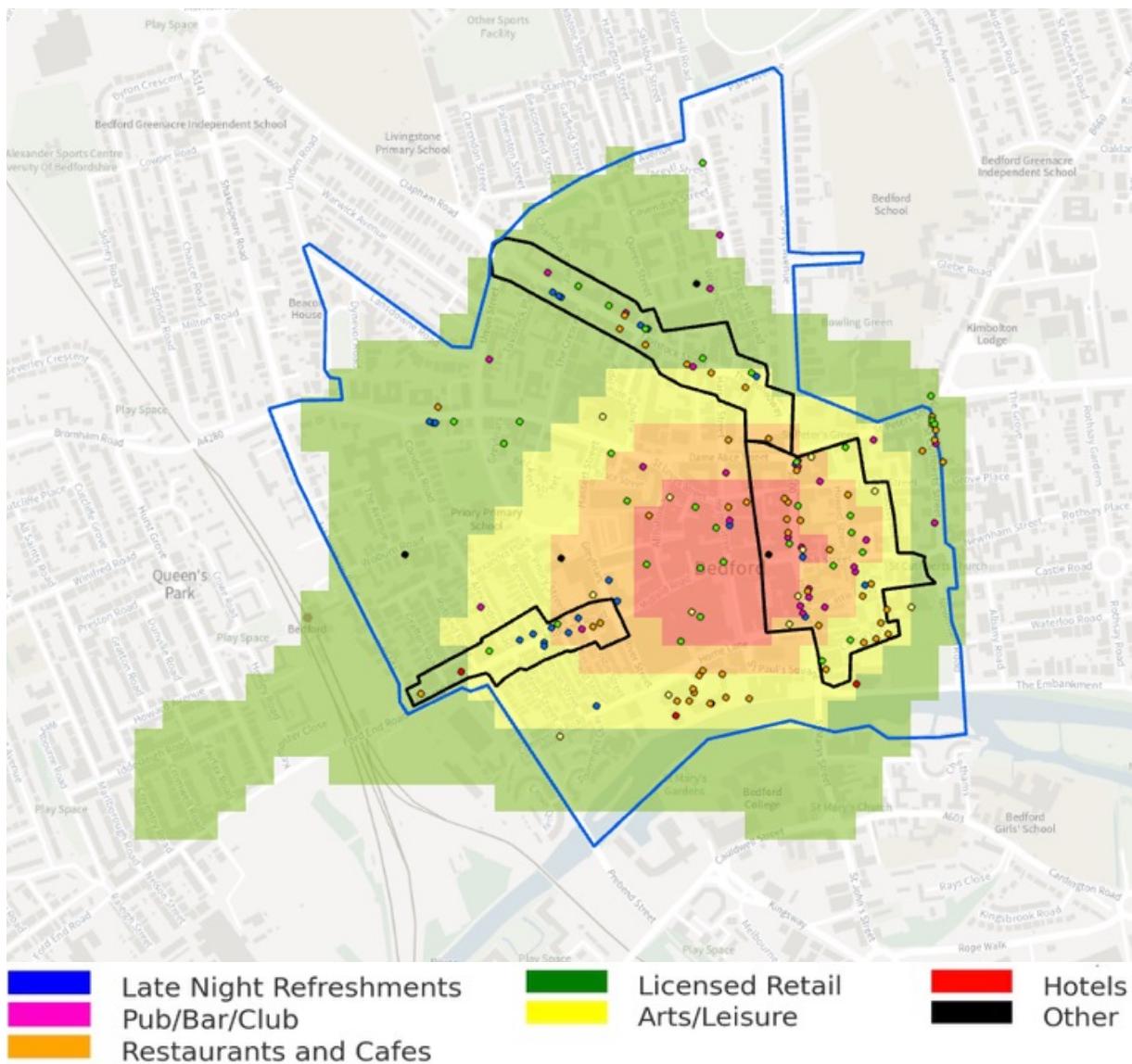
Figure 32. Central Bedford: spatial pattern of PUBLIC ORDER offences – 2024/25

▮ Late Night Refreshments	▮ Licensed Retail	▮ Hotels
▮ Pub/Bar/Club	▮ Arts/Leisure	▮ Other
▮ Restaurants and Cafes		
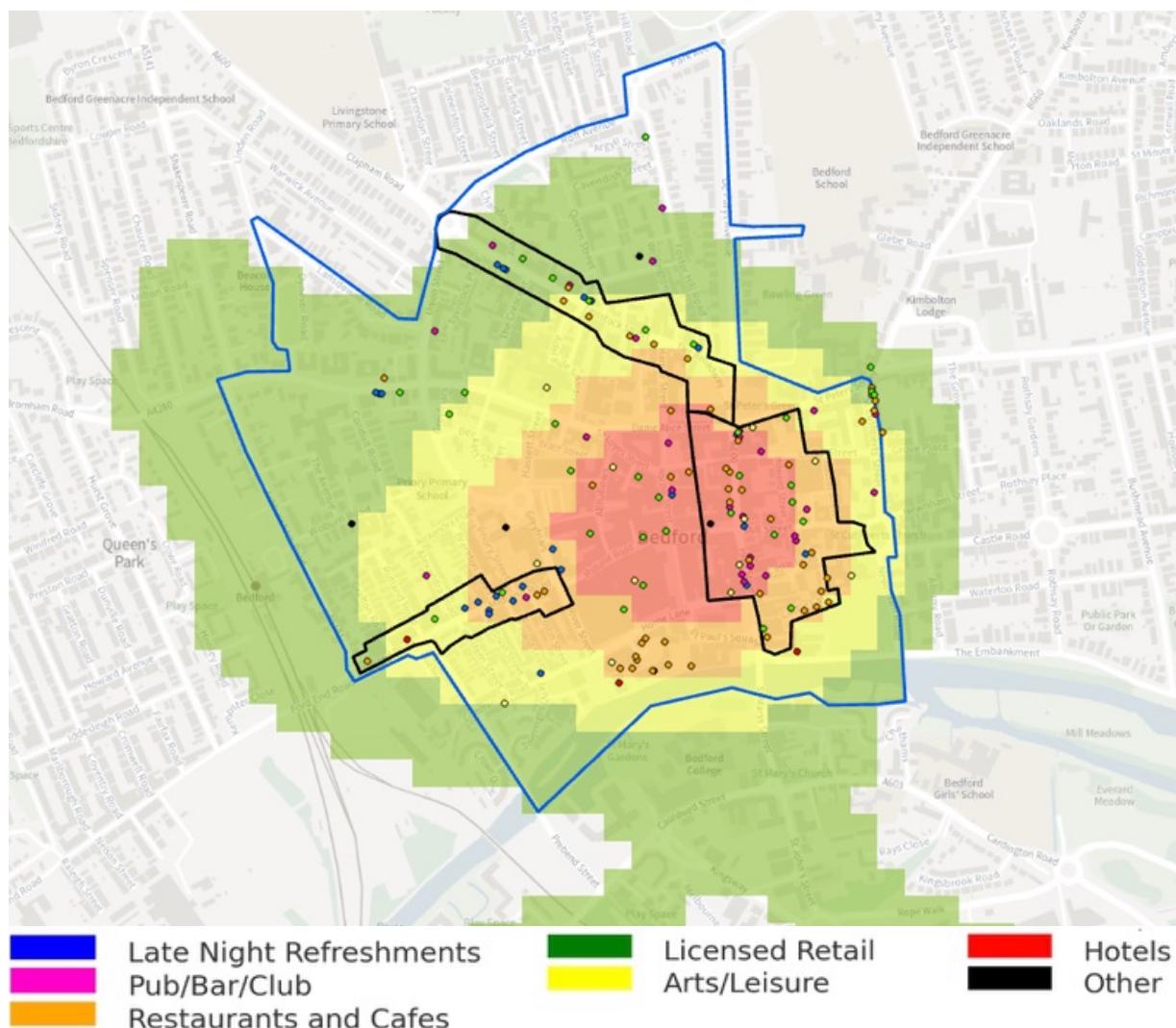
168. Of the three existing CIA areas, the highest concentration of public order offences is within the western half of the High Street existing, whether in 2023/24 or 2024/25.

169. However, in both years analysed, there is an even greater concentration of public order offences outside of the existing CIA areas but within the town centre retail core.

2.2.11 Alcohol-related Crime

2.2.11.1 Context

170. Alcohol-related crime refers to criminal acts where alcohol is considered a contributory factor. This includes offences ranging from violence and criminal damage to sexual assault and public disorder. The Home Office identifies alcohol as a driver of offending, particularly in the night-time economy context[10].

171. It is important to note that 'alcohol-related crime' is not a distinct reporting category, but a secondary definition applied to headline offence categories. For example, a crime would first be given a headline offence category, e.g. criminal damage, but it may have an alcohol tag applied to it if the recording officer feels that alcohol was associated with it in some way, e.g. the perpetrator was clearly drunk at the time of the act. Alcohol-related crime may also be recorded due to the vulnerability of the victim.

172. Alcohol-related crime includes violent incidents, criminal damage and other disruptive acts. In NTE environments, the concentration of alcohol consumption increases the likelihood of such events, making alcohol-related crime a useful metric in licensing and policy decisions within CIA Areas.

173. Specific examples may include:

   •   A fight occurring between patrons under the influence of alcohol.

   •   Criminal damage to property such as taxi ranks, bins, or shopfronts during rowdy post-club behaviour.

   •   Assaults committed by intoxicated individuals in queues or after ejection from venues.

   •   Reports of harassment or disorder involving alcohol-fuelled individuals.

2.2.11.2 Findings

174. The table below shows the volume and percentage distribution of alcohol-related crime within varying boundaries across the borough.

Figure 33. Volume of and percentage change in ALCOHOL CRIME, 2023/24 & 2024/25

Area	2023–24	2024–25	Change	% Change
Bedford Borough	1,145	964	-181	-15.8%
Bedford TC PSPO	401	334	-67	-16.7%
High Street CIA	151	143	-8	-5.3%
Midland Road CIA	27	12	-15	-55.6%
Tavistock Street CIA	26	20	-6	-23.1%

175. Recorded alcohol-related crime decreased by -15.8% borough-wide between 2023/24 and 2024/25.

176. Recorded alcohol-related crime fell in the wider PSPO Area (-16.7%, from 401 to 334) between 2023/24 and 2024/25.

10. Reference: Home Office Strategy on Alcohol-Related Crime; Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) guidance (https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/alcohol)

177. The largest drop in the existing CIA Areas over the same period was in the Midland Road CIA Area (-55.6%, from 27 to 12 incidents), followed by the Tavistock Street CIA Area (-23.1%, from 26 to 20 incidents).

178. Recorded alcohol-related crime fell only slightly in the existing High Street CIA Area between 2023/24 and 2024/25, and with a high number of incidents, this area - Bedford's NTE hub - remains the main hotspot for this type of crime.

179. The charts below show the volume of incidents by day of the week and time of day.

Figure 34. ALCOHOL-RELATED CRIME, 2023/24 – day of week / time of day
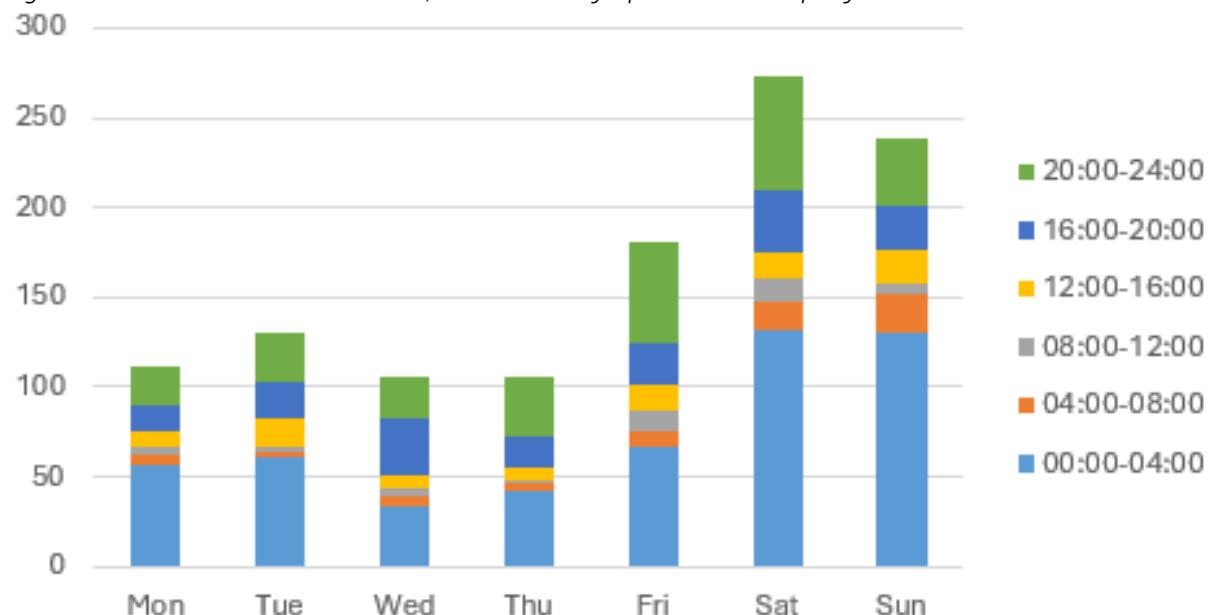
Figure 35. ALCOHOL-RELATED CRIME, 2024/25 – day of week / time of day
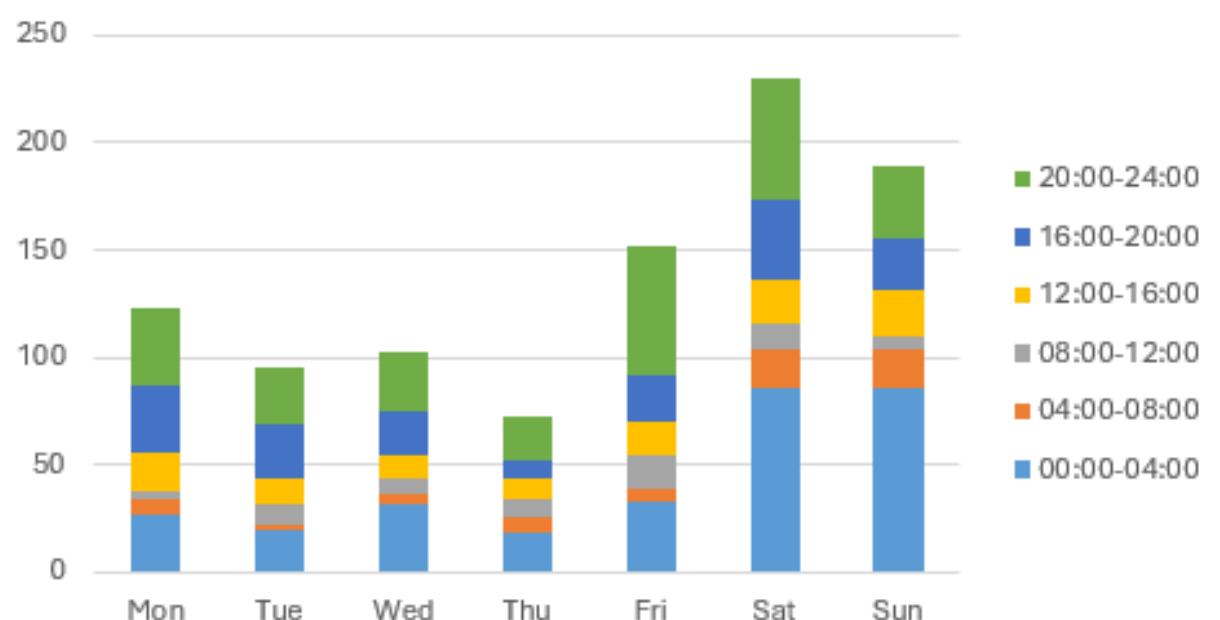
180. The day of the week and time of day/night bar charts show that with alcohol-related crime that the biggest impact is felt during the traditional weekend night out, with Friday night (from 20:00hrs to 00:00hrs), Saturday (00:00hrs to 04:00hrs) and early Sunday morning (00:00hrs to 04:00hrs) accounting for the highest number of incidents.

181.   The maps below highlight the spatial distribution of incidents for 2023/24 and 2024/25.

Figure 36. Central Bedford: spatial pattern of ALCOHOL-RELATED CRIME – 2023/24
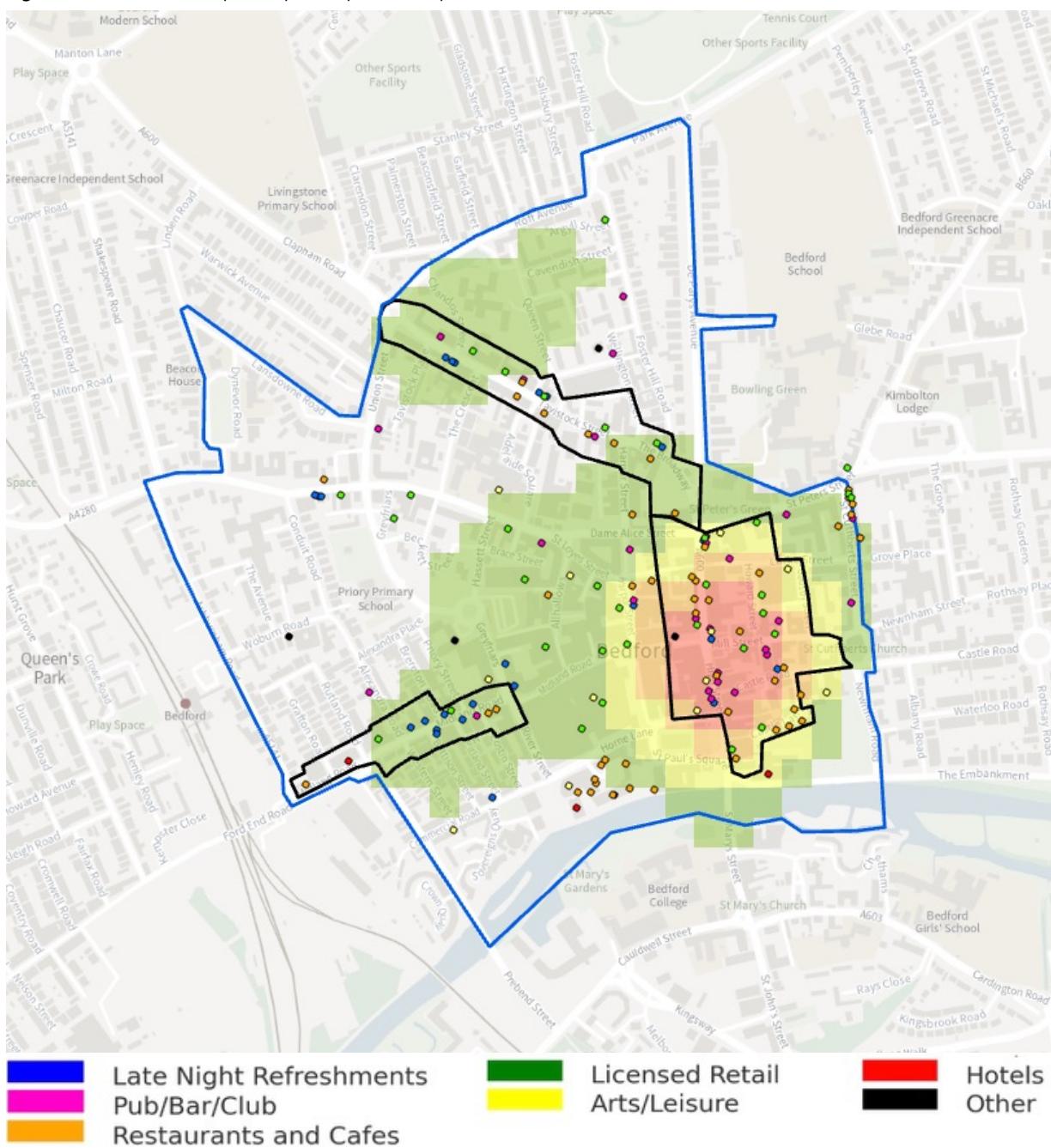
Figure 37. Central Bedford: spatial pattern of ALCOHOL-RELATED CRIME – 2024/25

Legend:
- Blue — Late Night Refreshments
- Magenta — Pub/Bar/Club
- Orange — Restaurants and Cafes
- Green — Licensed Retail
- Yellow — Arts/Leisure
- Red — Hotels
- Black — Other
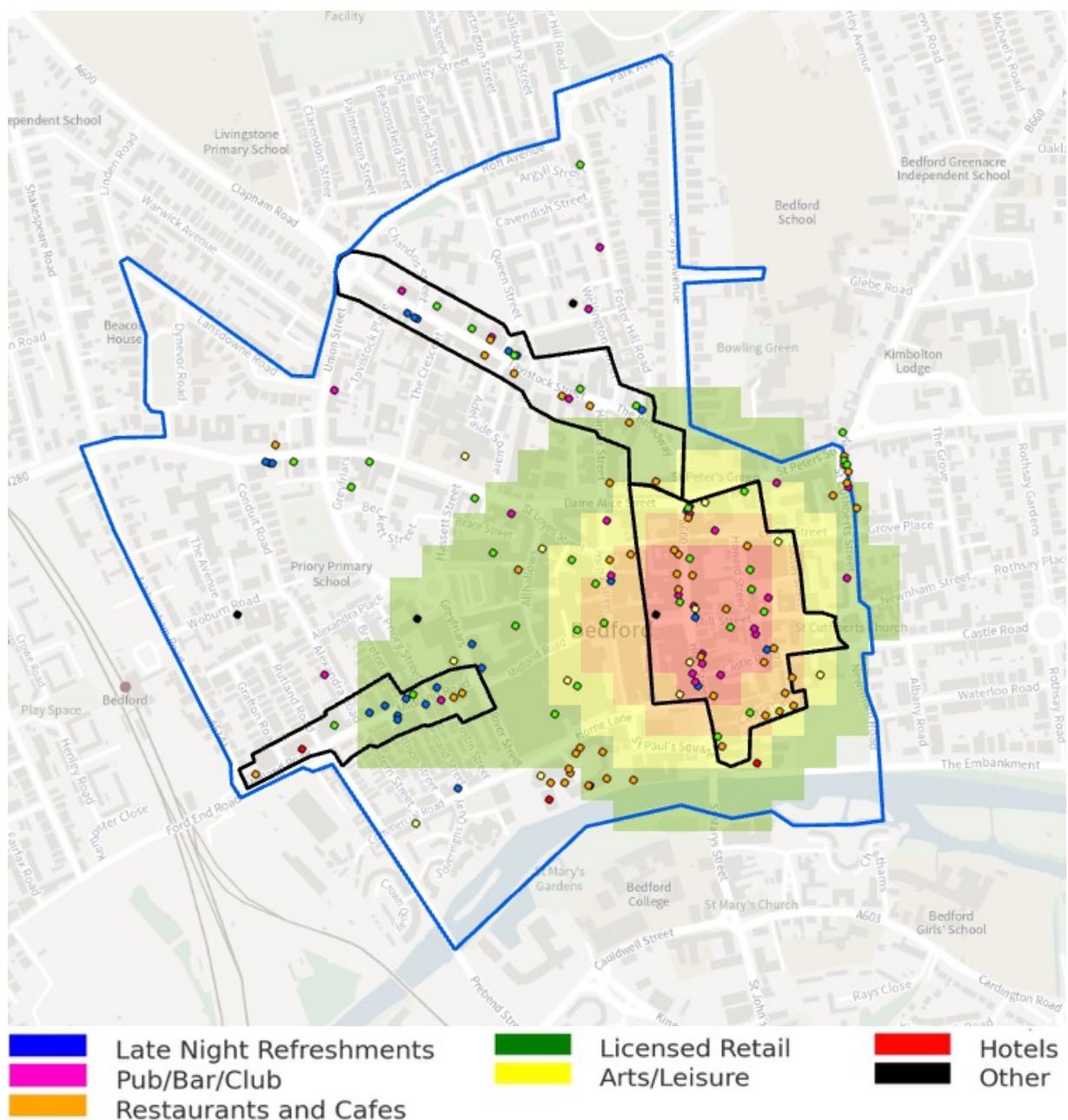
182. The maps show that the highest concentration of alcohol-related crime remains, as it was in 2022 in the last CIA report, within the existing High Street CIA Area - where the town's main night-time economy is located.

183. There is very limited alcohol-related crime in the two other existing CIA areas, whereas these areas do suffer from raised levels of alcohol-related ASB (see next section) and raised levels of many other crime types.

184. The category of alcohol-related crime is also the only crime type analysed in this report where the most intense hotspotting (red) is wholly within the existing High Street CIA Area.

185. There was no significant discernible change in the spatial pattern of alcohol-related crime between 2023/24 and 2024/25.

2.2.12 Alcohol-related ASB

2.2.12.1 Context

186. Anti-social behaviour (ASB) includes acting in a manner that causes or is likely to cause harassment, alarm, or distress to others. Alcohol-related ASB refers to such conduct influenced by intoxication, typically in public spaces. Relevant definitions are found in the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014[11].

187. Alcohol-related ASB includes nuisance behaviour linked to visible intoxication, rowdiness and disregard for social norms or public order. In NTE areas, this often involves groups engaging in loud, aggressive, or disruptive actions outside licensed venues. Such behaviour is a key concern in CIA Areas due to its link to perceptions of safety and increased demand on public services.

188. Examples of alcohol-related ASB that can be typically found in and around the NTE and licensed premises include:

  • Individuals urinating in public while intoxicated.

  • Groups shouting and disturbing residents late at night after leaving bars.

  • Arguments or nuisance behaviour outside takeaway outlets or taxi ranks.

  • Street drinking and associated public disturbance despite local restrictions.

2.2.12.2 Findings

189. The table below shows the volume and percentage distribution of alcohol-related ASB within varying boundaries across the borough.

Figure 38. Volume of and percentage change in ALCOHOL ASB, 2023/24 & 2024/25

Area	2023–24	2024–25	Change	% Change
Bedford Borough	137	84	–53	-38.7%
Bedford TC PSPO	82	36	–46	-56.1%
High Street CIA	24	14	–10	-41.7%
Midland Road CIA	9	2	–7	-77.8%
Tavistock Street CIA	7	4	–3	-42.9%

190. Before examining the figures, it should be noted that the number of incidents that have been recorded in each year are low.

191. The reason for this is that ASB is a huge volume incident type, and it is known to be under-reported on a large scale nationally (typically because residents and business feel it will not be addressed). When it is reported, either by the public or a police officer, it is usually after the incident has happened and there is no way of determining if alcohol was involved with the perpetrator(s).

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11. *Reference: Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014; Home Office Statutory Guidance (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/anti-social-behaviour-crime-and-policing-bill-anti-social-behaviour)*

192. Borough-wide alcohol-related ASB fell by -38.7% between 2023/24 and 2024/25. The PSPO Area saw a -56.1% fall.

193. In the existing Midland Road CIA Area, alcohol-related ASB fell -77.8%, and while smaller, the High Street and Tavistock Street CIA Areas also posted reductions.

194. The charts below show the volume of incidents by day of the week and time of day.

Figure 39. ALCOHOL-RELATED ASB, 2023/24 – day of week / time of day
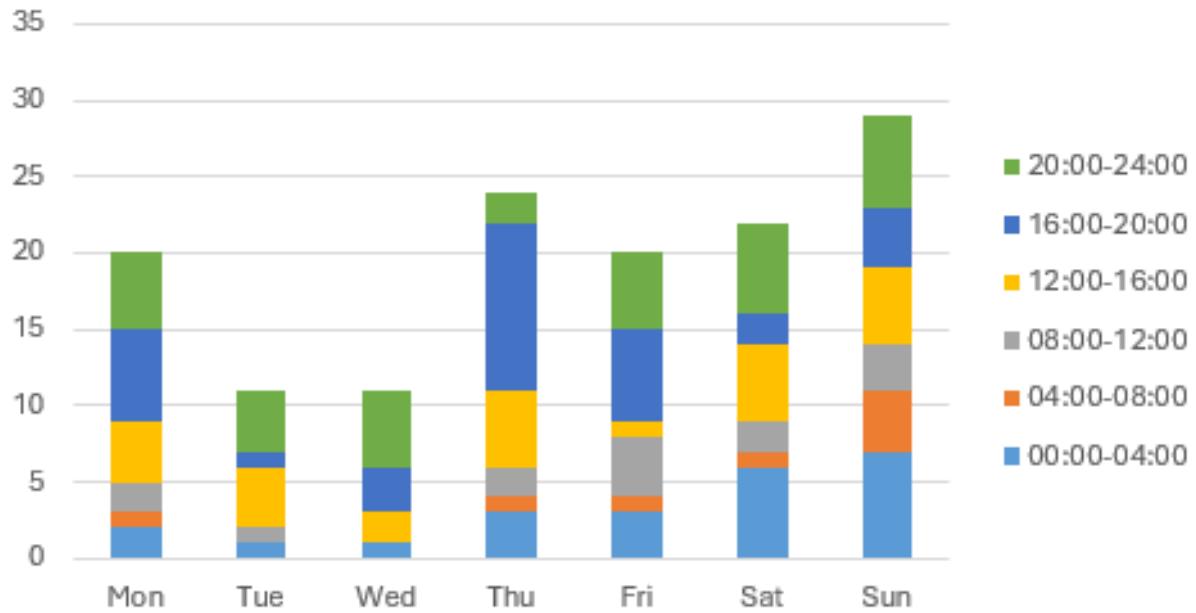
Figure 40. ALCOHOL-RELATED ASB, 2024/25 – day of week / time of day
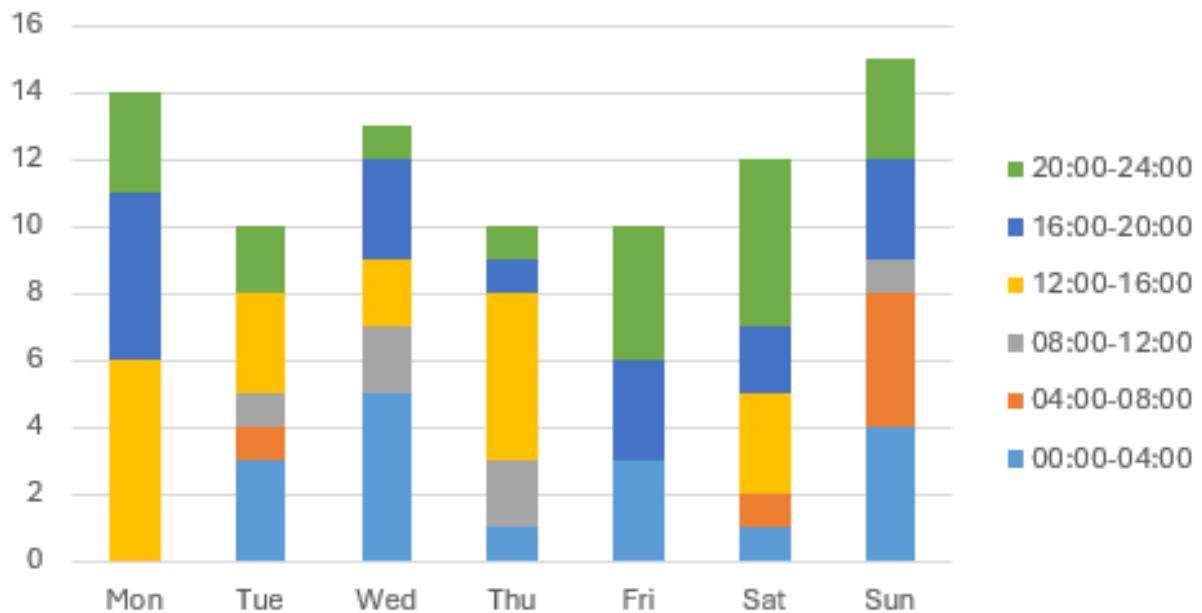
195. The small volumes of incidents that were recorded for alcohol-related ASB, are likely to have led to the significant variability shown above, when analysing by time of day / day of week / between years. However, the 12:00hrs to 16:00hrs (yellow) period is a significant source of alcohol-related ASB likely reflects ASB linked to street drinking, as is that in between 16:00hrs and 20:00hrs (dark blue).

196. The amount of alcohol-related ASB later at night tends be limited, except for the early hours of Sunday morning (the peak NTE operating period).

197. The maps below highlight the spatial distribution of incidents for 2023/24 and 2024/25.

Figure 41. Central Bedford: spatial pattern of ALCOHOL-RELATED ASB – 2023/24
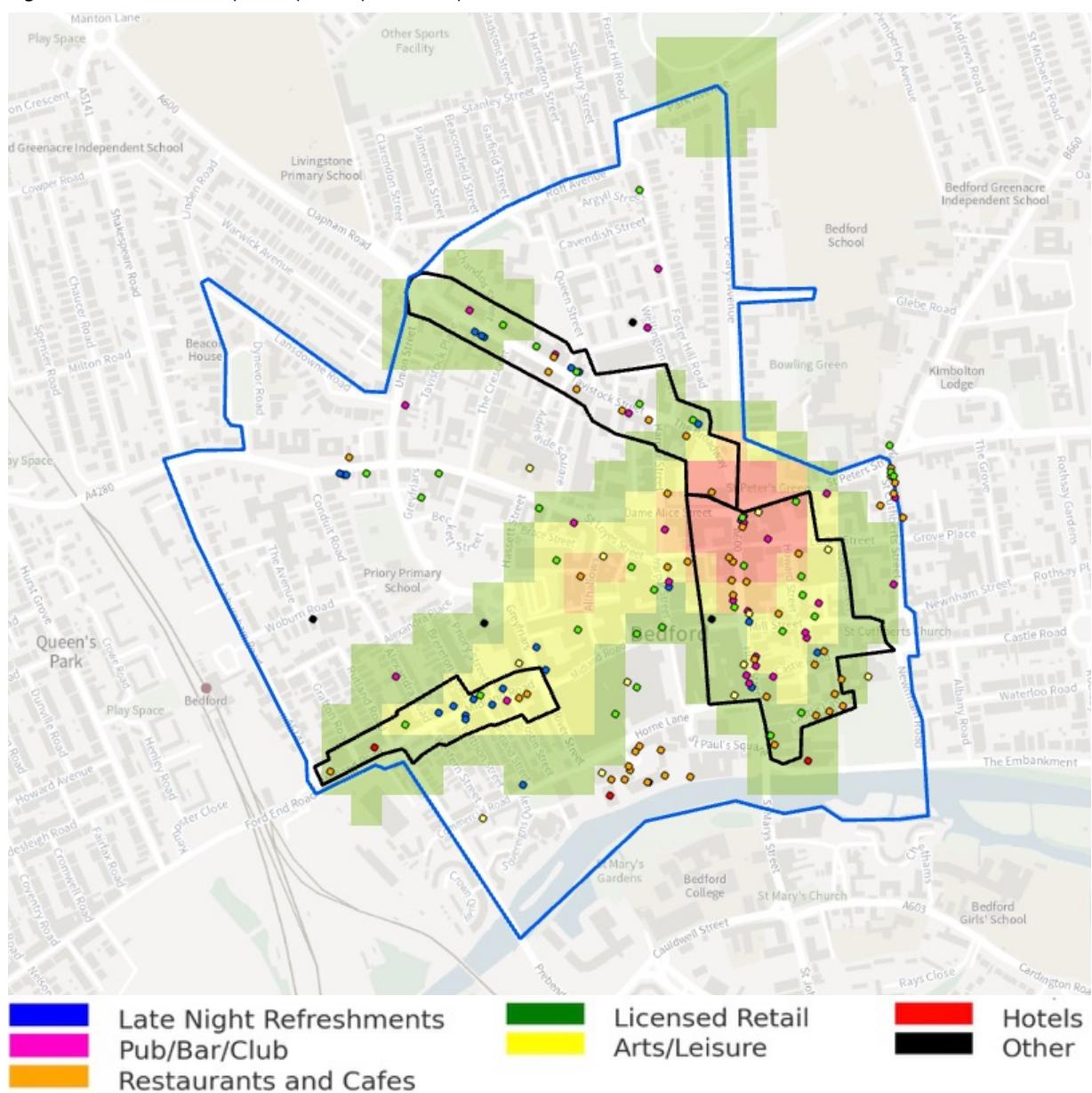
Figure 42. Central Bedford: spatial pattern of ALCOHOL-RELATED ASB – 2024/25

	Late Night Refreshments		Licensed Retail		Hotels
	Pub/Bar/Club		Arts/Leisure		Other
	Restaurants and Cafes				
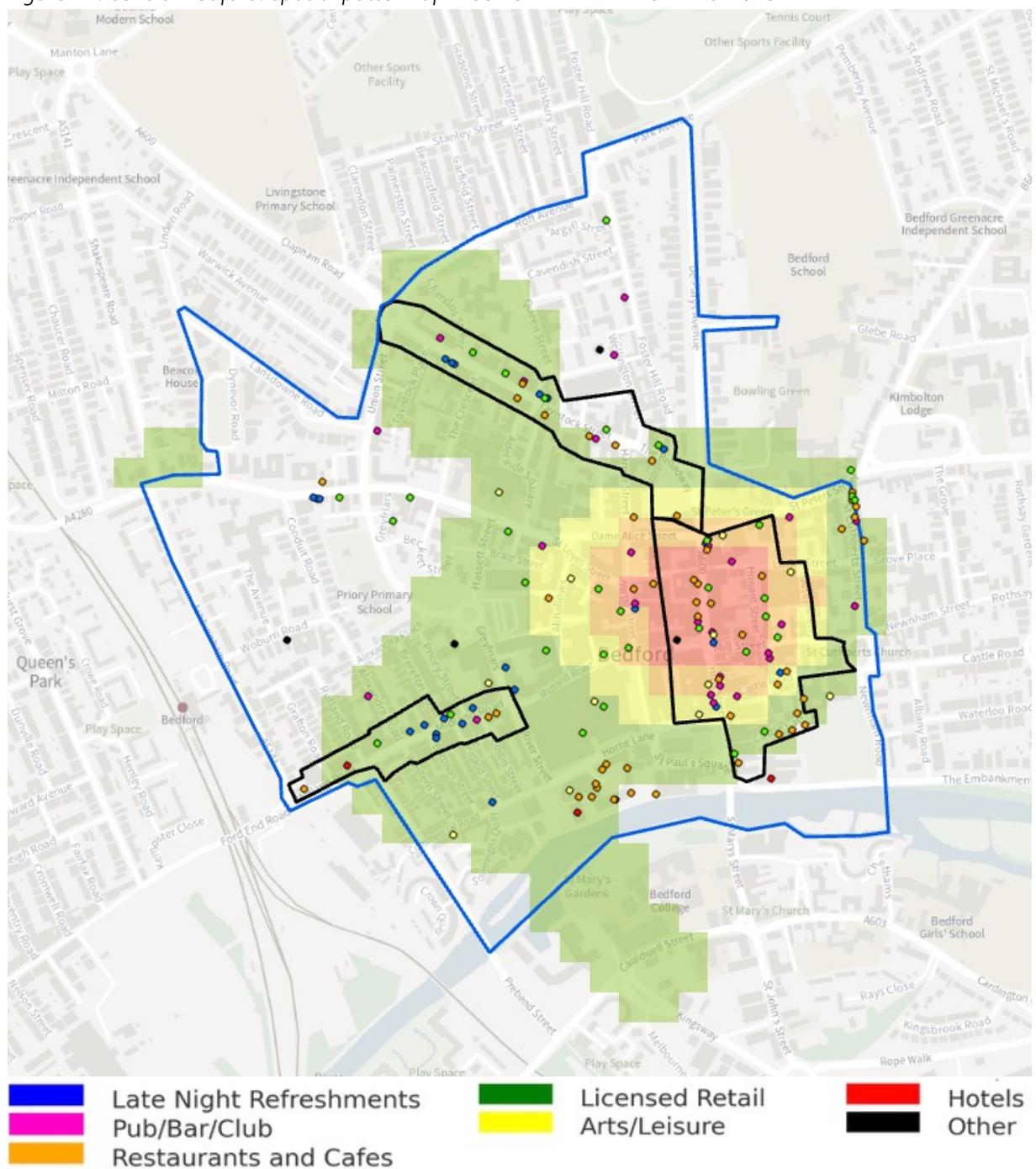
198. The maps show that alcohol-related ASB is still highly concentrated within the PSPO Area and particularly the existing High Street CIA Area.

199. However, there has been a reduction in intensity in the existing Midland Road CIA Area in the most recent year, and a shift in concentration from the junction area between Tavistock Street and the High Street CIA Areas into the centre of the High Street CIA.

2.3 Summary

200. The headline finding from comparing the basket of crime and ASB types from 2023/24 to 20204/25 is the significant reduction in incidents (except Robbery) within the Bedford town centre PSPO Area and all three existing CIA Areas. These changes contrast with the rising incident numbers across the borough.

201. These borough-wide increases may point to a potential displacement of issues to neighbourhoods surrounding the town centre.

202. The marked reductions in alcohol-related crime and ASB in all three existing CIA Areas may indicate the impact of strengthened licensing controls and late-night policing. However, they may also be due to improved management of licensed premises. They may also be due to other factors which are beyond the control of the authorities or licensed businesses.

203. One other factor (or suite of factors) that may be impacting crime and ASB, particularly in the existing High Street CIA Area – where the borough's main night-time economy is located - is the changing behaviours of patrons, For example, there has been a significant fall in the consumption of alcohol (particularly amongst younger generations) and the cost of living crisis has significantly impacted the number and frequency of nights out that young people can afford.

204. There is also a broader changing approach to what makes a good night out, with more 'experiential leisure' and food-led venues leading the expansion of what is on offer in the evening and night-time economy. This may also be leading to less crime associated with the existing High Street CIA Area.

205. Despite these suppositions it is impossible to say definitively what is driving the change using the research available here.

206. The existing Midland Road CIA Area has also showed positive change in the last year in terms of alcohol-related harm, albeit it did record a rise in violence with injury. This suggests that more serious interpersonal violence is persisting, despite overall improvements.

207. The existing Tavistock Street CIA Area recorded substantial declines across most categories yet still maintains a relatively high per-hectare crime and ASB rate.

208. The analysis showed that whilst incidents remain concentrated over both analysis years in the PSPO Area, there has been a growth of crime and ASB incidents in the retail core of the town centre where there are relatively few licences (and those licences here tend to be for cafes, restaurants and retailers - rather than traditional off-licences and pubs/bars/clubs).

209. This rise in incidents in Bedford's retail core may be linked to displacement from the other areas e.g. street drinkers buying alcohol in the off-licences in the existing CIAs and them coming to drink in the town centre. But this cannot be established definitively with the research available for this study.

210. Despite overall improvements in the three CIA Areas, the density of crime and ASB in these zones remains well above borough averages.

211.   Whilst it is for the Licensing Committee to decide if this data (and the other findings in the report) provides support for:

- Removal of one or more of the existing CIA Areas.

- The retention of the existing CIA Areas as they are.

- The retention but modification in the boundaries of one or more of the existing CIA Areas.

- The introduction of new CIA Area(s).

the evidence does suggest that policy tools such as licensing reviews, night-time patrols and effective community safety partnership working should continue.

212.   It is also recommended that the licensing authority monitors for any displacement beyond the PSPO Area and the three existing CIA Areas to identify any crime and ASB moving out of central Bedford because of the controls currently in place to address cumulative impact and alcohol misuse in the town centre.

3.   Findings: CCTV

3.1 Introduction

213.   CCTV incident data was drawn from a 10-week sample period in 2024, covering Bedford alcohol PSPO area (Town Centre) and adjacent areas. A total of 365 incidents were logged during this time by CCTV operators.

214.   This sample of 10 weeks was used as it was considered long enough to cover a range of different scenarios whilst being manageable in terms of analyst resources.

215.   Incidents were analysed across five spatial zones: the three existing Cumulative Impact Assessment Areas (i.e. High Street, Midland Road, Tavistock Street), the broader PSPO area, and wider Bedford Borough Council area and included cross zones incidents.

216.   For this CIA research the CCTV data used covered all 24-hours of each day. In the last 2022 CIA report the CCTV data used was from the night-time economy hours of 6pm till 6am. However, given Bedford continues to have significant issues with street drinking, which in turn is often linked to drug consumption, as well as other crime and ASB, it was decided to analyse the full 24hours as much of this activity takes place during the daytime.

3.2 Methodology

217.   There are approximately 292 council-operated CCTV cameras across Bedford borough. This is an increase of around 190 from the 2022 CIA report and reflects the significant investment in the system by the borough.

218.   Of these, 122 cameras (42%) are situated within the town's PSPO Area (roughly the same size as the Local Plan Town Centre boundary, which was used in the 2022 report). The chart

Figure 43. Number and location of CCTV cameras in Bedford borough
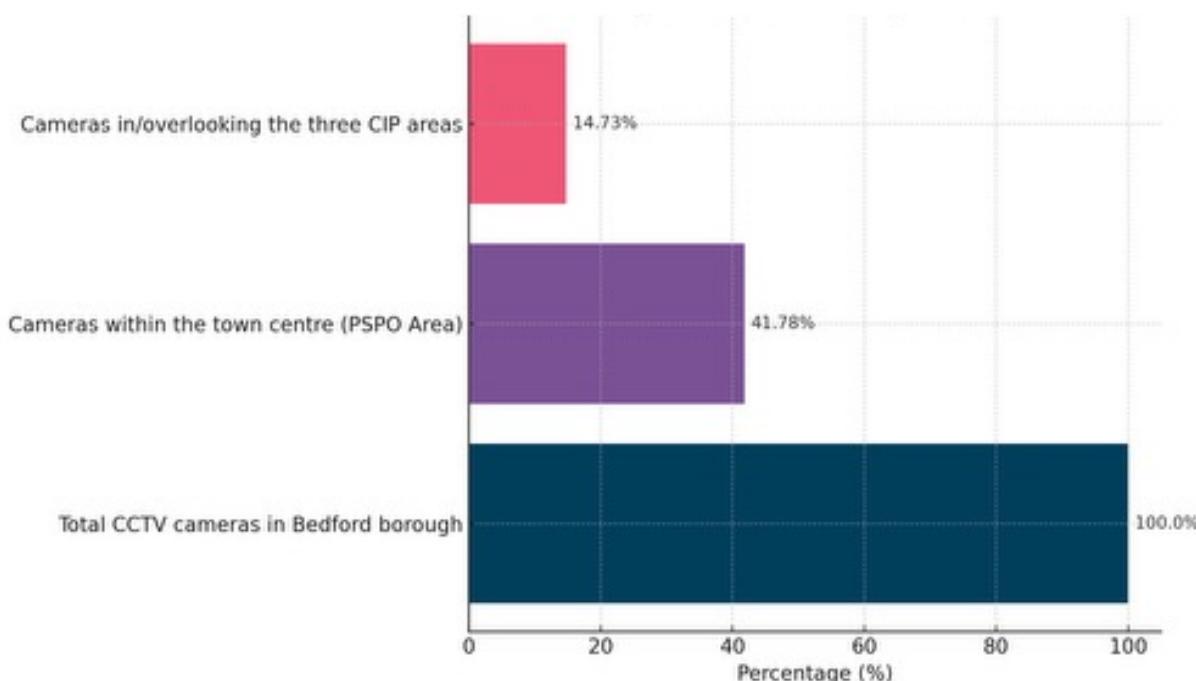
219. Despite this uplift in the CCTV system, these cameras cannot possibly cover every location and every simultaneous incident. There are limits on what one CCTV operator can record at any one time, and they must also prioritise when there may be multiple incidents happening.

220. Most serious incidents of violence, robbery and disorder will be seen or reported to the CCTV control room by either the police on patrol or the security at licensed and retail premises. However, a much larger number of low-level incidents that are taking place will either be missed by operators or not prioritised because the operator needs to focus on the most serious incident at any one time.

221. For this reason, CCTV data cannot be seen as a 'census' of all crime and disorder or public nuisance taking place in the town's PSPO area or the existing CIA Areas.

222. Experience in this kind of research tells us the number of incidents taking place will be significantly higher than the actual number recorded in the CCTV logs. It is also worth noting that CCTV cameras may not sometimes be operational or may be obscured due to trees or buildings.

223. It is also important to flag that noise incidents are not captured. Other cumulative impact studies, where field observation has taken place, show that noise is a major public nuisance issue for residents in and around the night-time economy and clusters of licensed premises.

224. As such, this element will be missing from the CCTV data. In short, it is reasonable to say that the CCTV data is a substantial underreporting of what is taking place in terms of crime and disorder and public nuisance.

225. However, the 10-week period of data collection does give a significant picture of the type of crime and disorder and public nuisance that is occurring in the town centre (PSPO area), and crucially, at what times of day and which days of the week it is taking place. The data for this purpose is therefore sufficiently robust.

226. In terms of how the data was analysed, the sample of 365 incidents from 2024 was manually reviewed and included or excluded based on whether they were night-time economy associated or had a reasonable correlation with the cumulative impact of licensed premises within the town centre.

227. The following basket of criteria was used as a proxy cumulative impact:

    • Was there a mention of somebody entering, leaving a licensed premises (this includes late night refreshment places as well as pubs, bars, restaurants etc.).

    • Was somebody demonstrably drunk or exhibiting intoxicated behavior (alcohol or drunk) in the town centre (POSPO area).

    • Was there a fight, altercation, theft or use of/dealing of drugs that could be reasonably linked to users to one of the four categories of Alcohol, Drugs, Licensed Premises or NTE.

    • Any other incident that has a reasonable connection to daytime street drinking or customers of the night- time economy and licensed premises, whether as a perpetrator or as a victim of crime.

228. It is important to note that in many instances it is not possible (by the very nature of CCTV data) to categorically prove that each incident is absolutely linked to a licensed premises in the town centre PSPO area or not.

229. The 'balance of probability' has been used based on the fine grain detail of the individual reports. For example, if someone is staggering around in the street, whether day or night, they will likely have been drinking alcohol. In the evening and at night this tends to be people who will have had most or all their alcohol in the town's pubs, bars and clubs (although they may have 'pre-loaded' at home or 'side-loaded' from off-licences while going from one venue to another).

230. It is also worth noting how cumulative impact is to be interpreted. Beyond the broad statement in the S182 Guidance, it is not prescribed in detail by law. If there is a negative externality from the cumulative presence of licences, then it does not matter whether or not it is a serious crime. If a series of actions from the patrons of licensed premises create a negative impact of any kind on one or more of the four licensing objectives, then it can legitimately be seen as cumulative impact.

231. So, for example, whilst an incident may take place inside a venue (and is thus in the first instance it is the responsibility of that licensee), nearly every one of these incidents has an impact beyond the venue. So, for example, an aggressive or violent incident inside a pub can become cumulative impact once they are ejected onto the street. If a police vehicle or ambulance is dispatched to bring someone out of a licensed venue, simply the presence of these vehicles is likely to have a significant impact on whether residents and visitors think their town centre is safe and pleasant or a place they want to go out in the evening (public safety).

232. To aid the reader, incidents have been placed into four categories. These are:

    i. Alcohol (was a reference to alcohol, drunkenness, street drinking etc. flagged in the description?).

    ii. Drugs (was a reference to drug consumption, selling etc. flagged in the description?).

    iii. Licensed premises (was this incident by or at a licensed venue?).

    iv. NTE (was this an incident that does not fit into any of the above but that can be directly associated with the presence of the town's NTE).

234. Incidents that are logged originating in one area or zone, but which either end in another or move through another have been categorised as 'cross-zone'.

235. Where drug dealing or drug use have been flagged during in the day, this is likely to be associated with individual with complex needs. They may also have associated alcohol use. Where it is flagged during the NTE it is likely that this is recreational use, rather than because of a dependence.

3.3 Findings

3.3.1 CCTV Log Patterns by Zone of Incident

236. The following table shows how these 365 incidents were distributed by zone during the 10-week sample period in 2024.

Figure 44. CCTV Incident count by zone, 2024 sample

Zone	CCTV Incident Count
PSPO Area (excluding CIA Areas)	133
High Street CIA Area	90
Outside the PSPO Area	78
Midland Road CIA Area	28
Cross-zone Incidents	19
Tavistock Road CIA Area	17
TOTAL	**365**

237. The data shows that the High Street CIA generates by far the most incidents captured by CCTV of the three existing CIA Areas.

238. However, the cameras outside the three existing CIA areas - but within the remainder of the PSPO Area - captured the largest number of incidents. This is likely in part because it is a larger area but also because there has been an increase in the concentration of crime and ASB in this retail core (see Crime & ASB chapter).

3.3.2 CCTV Log Patterns by Type and Zone of Incident

239. The table and chart below show the 365 CCTV logs by the four types of incident category.

*Figure 45. CCTV count by incident TYPE and ZONE – chart*
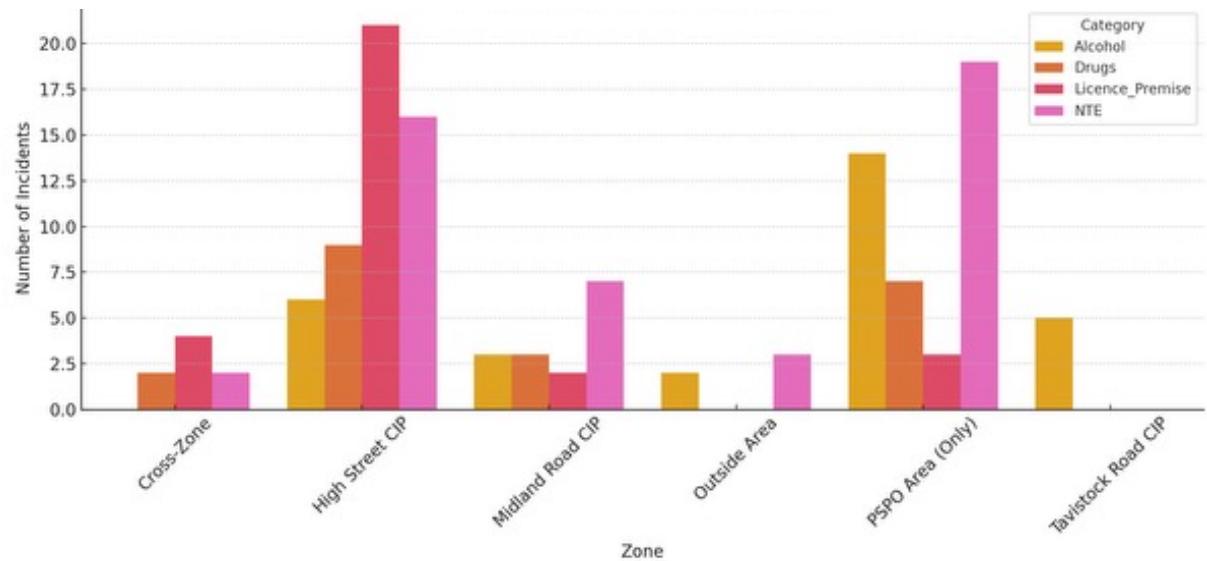
Figure 46. CCTV count by incident TYPE and ZONE - table

Zone	Total	%	Alcohol	Drugs	Premises	NTE
High Street CIA	90	24.6%	6	9	21	16
Midland Road CIA	28	7.7%	3	3	2	7
Tavistock Street CIA	17	4.6%	5	0	0	1
PSPO Area	133	36.3%	14	7	3	19
Outside PSPO Area	78	21.3%	2	0	0	3
Cross-zone	19	5.5%	0	2	4	2
TOTAL	**365**	**100%**	**30**	**21**	**30**	**48**

240. The analysis above shows that 36% of all incidents in the sample occurred within the PSPO Area (excluding the three existing CIA Areas). This reinforces what the crime and ASB analysis found: that there is a very significant number (and growing proportion) of recorded offences in the town's retail core, but outside of the three existing CIA Areas.

241. The existing High Street CIA Area accounted for around a quarter (24.6%) of all CCTV incidents recorded, highlighting its continued impact on safety, crime and nuisance due to its primary role in the town's night-time economy (NTE).

242. The existing Midland Road CIA Area (7.7%) and Tavistock Road CIA Area (4.6%) both show smaller numbers of incidents, albeit it can be seen from the sample log (see later) that some of these can still be very serious.

243. Cross-zone incidents - where behaviours were tracked across zone boundaries -accounted for 5.5% of the incidents in the sample period, evidencing the fluidity of some incidents.

244. Around a fifth (21.3%) of incidents were recorded in areas outside the town centre PSPO designation, showing that incidents continue to affect the whole of the town, not just its PSPO Area and CIA Areas.

245. It is not possible to understand if these incidents begin in areas outside the PSPO Area or if is people who have been drinking in the PSPO / CIA Areas who are walking home causing problems. The latter is a common occurrence in the researchers' CIA observations studies.

246. The existing High Street CIA Area, given its modest size, is still the part of the town centre with the most significant and serious incidents. Its NTE incident count is the second highest, with the highest recorded number of CCTV incidents related to drugs and licensed premises count.

247. The PSPO Area shows a low count (n.3) of incidents related to Licensed Premises. This makes sense given the lower number of licences within the area and the nature of them, i.e. mostly cafes, shops and restaurants.

248. The wider PSPO Area records the highest alcohol count and highest NTE count. This may be related to an increase in venues in areas int this area. It may also show movement from other CIA Areas into the PSPO Area, e.g. from the night-time economy in the High Street CIA; or from street drinkers who have purchased their alcohol in the numerous off -licences in the existing Midland Road or Tavistock Street CIA Areas and who then have proceeded to walk into and sit on benches in the town centre, from which conflict or nuisance may arise.

249.   It is also true that Bedford's NTE has not remained static over the past few years. As can been seen in the Licensed Premises section of the report, whilst the High Street CIA is the core of the NTE, existing pubs / bars / clubs and late-night refreshment premises (LNR) are spread diffusely across the whole of the PSPO Area (as well as new openings). Add in the location of taxis and bus stops, and this means customers move from one part of town to another, particularly Late-Night Refreshment premises, on their way home. This is often when CCTV picks up on them creating problems.

3.3.3 CCTV Log Patterns by Day of the Week

250.   The following table shows how the 365 incidents were distributed by day of the week.

Figure 47. CCTV Incident count by DAY of the week

Zone	Count
Monday	43
Tuesday	58
Wednesday	41
Thursday	43
Friday	48
Saturday	65
Sunday	67
TOTAL	**365**

251.   Incidents are more frequent on weekends, with peaks observed on Saturday and Sunday, particularly for alcohol and NTE-related categories. As the ASB and crime mapping chapter showed, Sunday is busy because of the peak four hours between 00:00hrs and 04:00hrs.

252.   The following heatmap shows how the logs break down by incident type and day of the week.

Figure 48. Incident heatmap by day of week and type of incident
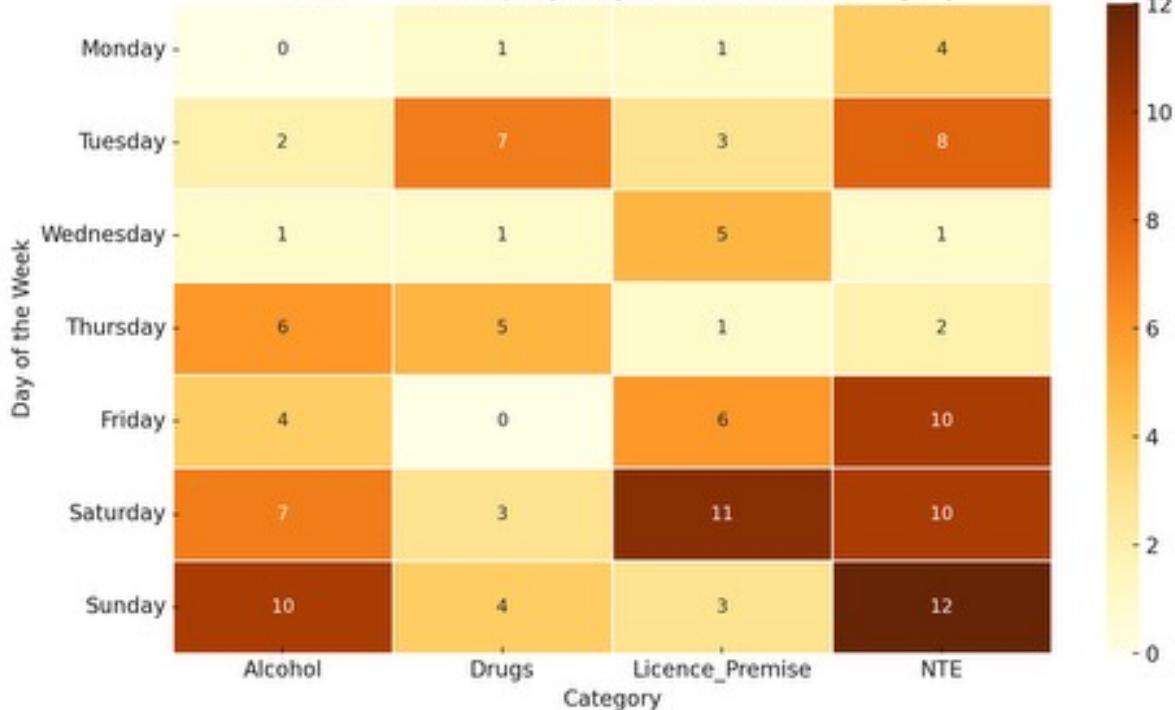
253. The highest concentration of CCTV recorded incidents is over the traditional weekend nights out, starting on Friday and continuing through till Sunday. The main types of issues being logged at this time are those linked to alcohol, NTE and licensed premises.

254. Logged drug incidents peak on Tuesday and Thursday, which likely reflects their role for those with street-based lifestyles and addiction issues.

3.3.4 CCTV Log Patterns by Hour

255. The heatmap below shows which hours of the day are when logged incidents peak.

Figure 49. Incident heatmap by HOUR of day and TYPE of incident

Hour of Day	Alcohol	Drugs	Licence_Premise	NTE
0	1	0	4	4
1	1	0	5	7
2	3	1	2	10
3	0	0	1	6
4	0	0	0	7
7	1	1	0	1
8	1	0	0	0
9	1	0	0	0
10	1	0	1	0
11	4	4	1	0
12	1	1	0	0
13	3	3	2	0
14	2	0	1	0
15	2	2	1	0
16	0	1	2	0
17	4	0	0	0
18	2	0	1	0
19	1	1	1	1
20	1	2	1	7
21	1	1	0	1
22	0	3	1	0
23	0	1	6	3
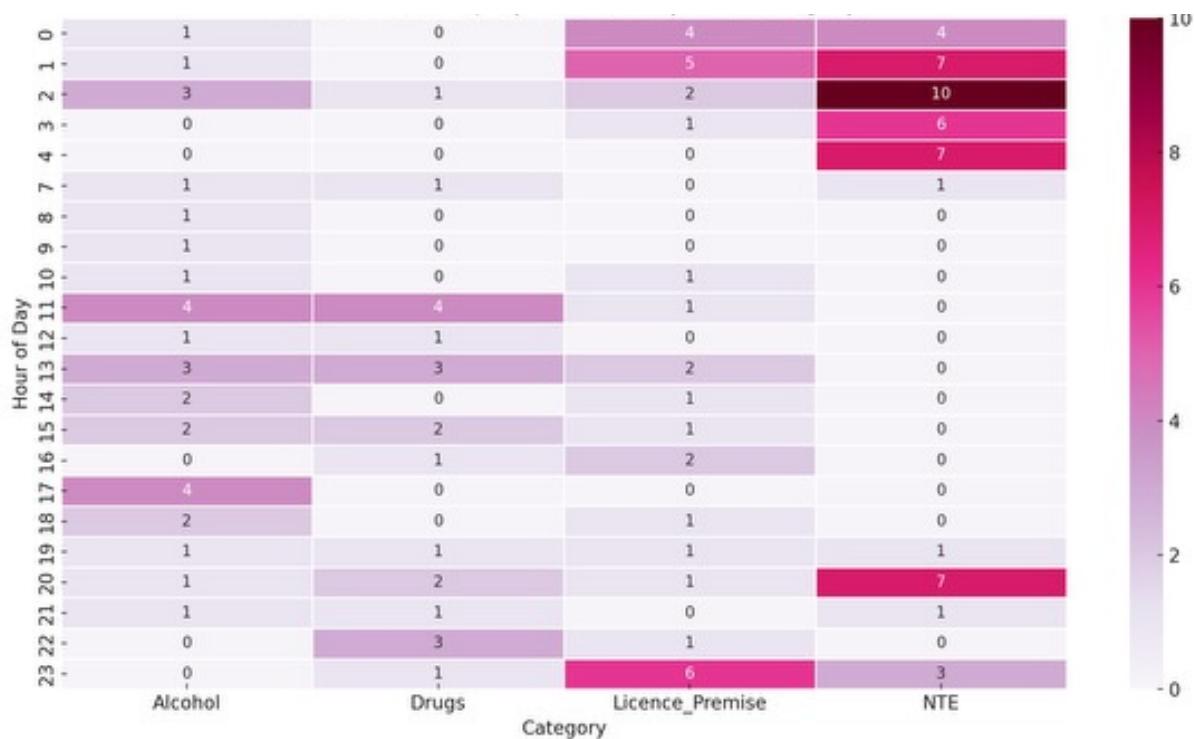
256. CCTV recorded incident volumes increase in the evening and peak between 22:00hrs and 03:00hrs, especially for NTE and alcohol-related activity. This corresponds with the day of the week analysis above, and the impact of the traditional night-time economy.

257. There is also a clustering of incidents between 11am to 5pm. This time frame is often associated with street drinking activity: where drinking often starts in the morning, but by mid-afternoon an individual or group can be highly intoxicated, often resulting in problems in the public realm.

3.4 Comparative Analysis: 2022 vs 2025

3.4.1 Background

258. Whilst there are several confounding factors (e.g. the number of CCTV cameras operating in each year), the following section seeks to make a broad comparative analysis of the CCTV incident capturing between the last CIA report in 2022 and this latest research in 2025.

259. To compare 2022 (which used two sets of 8-week CCTV incident logs), incident counts were 'equalised' by generating weekly averages and projecting the 10 weeks of 2024 data over a 16-week equivalent to match the earlier reporting period. This allows for a comparison, albeit imperfect, of incident trends across the two studies.

3.4.2 Total Incident Volume cCmparison

260. The following table shows the weekly CCTV incident average and total projected volume for the 2024 period, alongside the actual figures from the 2020/2021 dataset.

Figure 50.   Comparative incidents: 2020/21 vs 2024

	2020/21 (16-week sample)	2024 (10-week sample)
Total incidents	540	365
Weekly average	33.8	36.5
16 weeks equivalent	N/A	584

261. Adjusting for sample length difference between the two samples, the data remains remarkably similar - with around 35 relevant incidents a week (or about 5 incidents a day) - in both studies.

3.4.3 Temporal Analysis

262. The heatmaps below show the distribution of incidents across days of the week and hours of the day.

Figure 51. 2020/21 CCTV hourly incident heatmap:
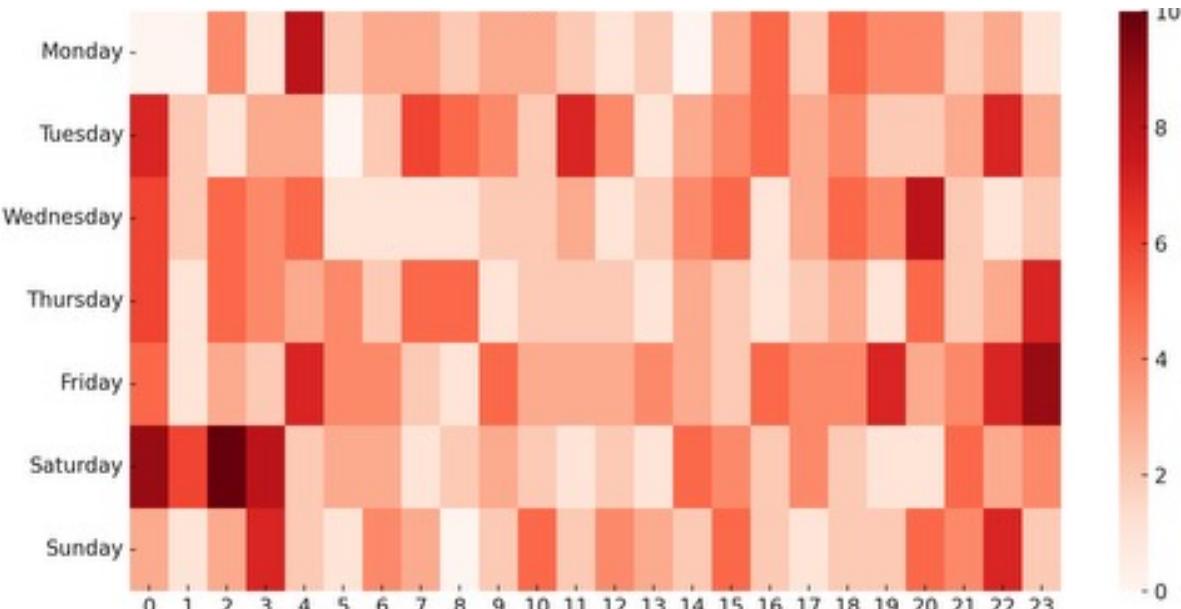
Figure 52. 2024 CCTV hourly incident heatmap:
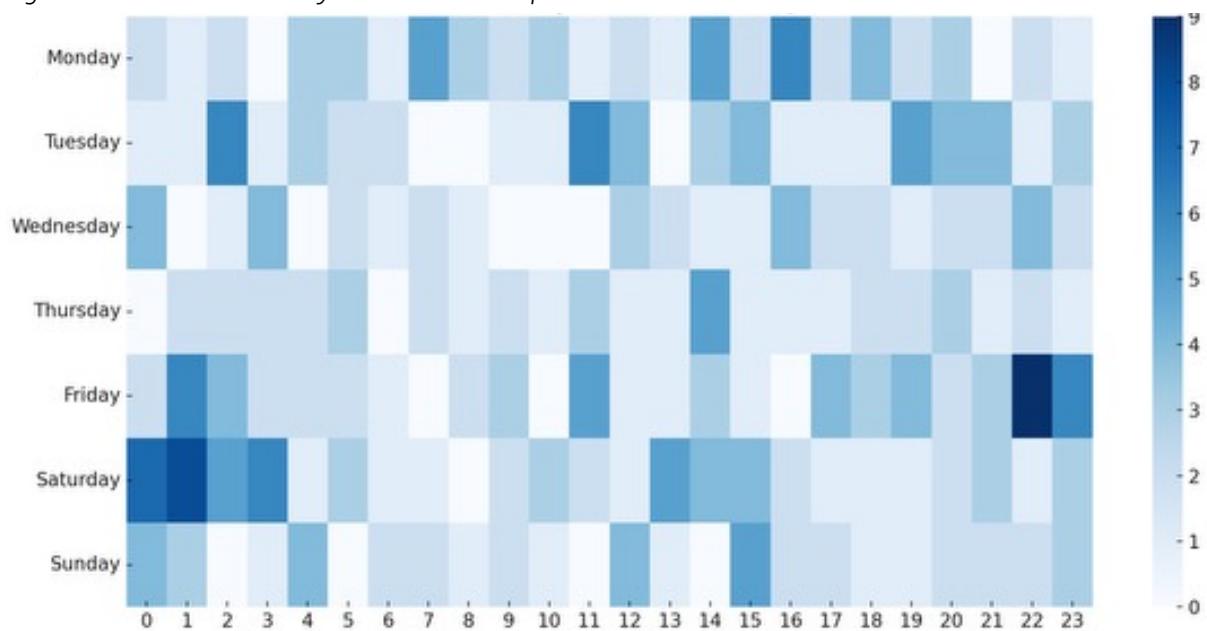

263. In summary, the heat maps show a high level of consistency in incidents between the 2020/21 and 2024 data. The key days of the week and the hours for the most concentrated CCTV incidents are consistent with the typical Friday and Saturday night out, with the peak hours for problems being between midnight and the early hours of those mornings, across both sets of data.

3.5 Summary

264. CCTV recorded incident volume per week / day / hour has increased slightly between the 2020/21 and 2024, but overall levels remain similar.

265. The operating nights of the town's night-time economy remain the key period for CCTV incident volumes: Friday night to early hours Sunday.

266. Most of the CCTV incidents that fall within the categories of alcohol, drugs, and licensed premises occur between 22:00hrs and 03:00hrs on weekends, reinforcing the role of the NTE in contributing to negative impact.

267. The spatial distribution of the CCTV incidents in the 2024 data reinforces the existing CIA boundaries. The High Street CIA Area continues to record high volumes of incidents across all categories, but particularly alcohol, drugs, licensed premises.

268. The PSPO Area, (excluding the CIA Areas) shows the highest alcohol-related incident count. Midland Road CIA Area, despite lower total incidents, does still have incidents captured in relation to the customers of its late-night refreshment premises.

269. Street drinking and daytime ASB incidents captured by the CCTV operators remains a concern, especially in the existing Midland Road and Tavistock Street CIA Areas. These patterns, alongside the crime and ASB data chapter, suggest that the negative impact linked to the customers of the town's licensed premises is not confined to the evening / night-time hours.

3.5.1 Sample CCTV Log Incidents

270. The following table gives a carefully selected and redacted extract of the incidents recorded in the 2024 data sample. A selection has been extracted for the purpose of representativeness but also brevity.

271. The reader can compare these 2024 incidents with the data from 2020/21- as shown in the 2022 CIA report. But in summary, there are strong similarities and negligible differences in the type of incidents being recorded by the CCTV operators over both periods.

Figure 53. Anonymised sample of CCTV incidents, May to August 2024

No.	Incident Description	Location
1	Picked up a male breaking into Shoe Repairs on Mill Street. Control inf & patched through. Units attend - 1 Arrested (*NAME*)	High Street CIA
2	Control reports two females breaking into XXXX, Allhallows. Playback shows *NAME* and *NAME* in the area. Females poss last seen in Brace Street. Control updated.	PSPO Area
3	JD reports intoxicated female asking people for money- *NAME* located. Control informed & patched through.	High Street CIA
4	Harpur Centre security reports youths in Harpur Square with a bottle of Vodka. Control informed & patched through. Unit attends - alcohol seized.	PSPO Area

No.	Incident Description	Location
5	Picked up male being assaulted on Lurke St-possible head injury. Control inf & patched through. Offender disappears on Lurke Street. IP followed on CCTV to Bus Station. Unit attends – ASNT.	High Street CIA Area
6	Picked up male behaving erratically on Harpur St. Followed to bus stop on Hassett St. Van Crew informed. Male spoken to - intoxicated but no concerns.	PSPO Area
7	XXXX reports male being aggressive towards taxi driver. Van crew inf. Unit attends. Male taken home.	High Street CIA Area
8	Picked up fight involving street drinkers in St. Peter's Gdns. Control informed & patched through. Unit attends. *NAME* aggressor and IP not engaging. Affray recorded.	Tavistock Road CIA Area
9	Control reports group of 14-year-olds with a Taser opposite Venue. Picked up group on the opposite side of the river. They are all adults & under the influence. Unit attends. 1 arrest for possession of an offensive weapon.	PSPO Area
10	Picked up a group of males fighting Midland Road/ Greyfriars-patched to control-units attends-male disperse	Midland Road CIA Area
11	Standard reports male had run into their venue reporting a male had held a knife up to his throat in Luddington Passage-picked up offender on the High Street-contacted control &image patched- officers stopped male on the High Street- 1 Arrested possession of an offensive weapon	High Street CIA Area
12	Picked up male drug dealing in Allhallows car park stairwell. Control inf & patched through. Officers attend. 1 arrest for PWITS.	PSPO Area
13	*BUSINESS NAME* and control call about the same incident. Male with MH issues has entered the ARC on Howard St. Talking about drugs & approaching females. Male leaves loc at 14:01. Unit attends. Details taken. No offences. Friend takes him into Pinewood House.	High Street CIA Area
14	Picked up street drinkers on St. Peters St. Gdns. Control inf & patched through. Unit attends. Alcohol removed.	Tavistock Road CIA Area
15	Venue reports concern for 2 females near the Barclays. one of the females is very intoxicated and 2 males with them leading them away, unknown if they know the males. Control informed and image patched, police attended, the female and males did know each other, and they were getting her home. No further action.	High Street CIA Area
16	Picked *NAME* & *NAME* on the High Street-*NAME* is wanted re; drug dealing TC officers info-units stop the males Commercial Road-*NAME* made off-officers detained the male Kempston Road-male taken to station for search	High Street CIA Area

No.	Incident Description	Location
17	Control reports concern for a regular misper in the town centre. Picked up female on Lime Street with 3 other (2 males, one female) image patched control informed. 4 other males then approach them and one of the males seen with a large machete, control updated. Both groups part ways, the misper and her group get into a vehicle on Greyfriars (red BMW, *REG NO.*). Female later went home.	High Street CIA Area
18	Venue on Greenhill Street report of two IC1 males stealing two bottles of wine and several beers-patched through to control males stop on Church Square-no units available NFA	PSPO Area
19	Venue request police at rear of location a car has gone into several parked cars-control info-details exchanged.	High Street CIA Area
20	Control reports alarm activated at Tesco, Midland Rd. Male seen smashing window and gaining entry at 03:03. Traced on playback to Brace St. poss sleeping rough. Control inf & patched through. Unit attends. 1 arrest for burglary	Midland Road CIA Area
21	Parking request police for 2 males drinking on level 7 River Street C/P-control info and patched-no units.	PSPO Area
22	Venue reports fighting with sticks outside Lidls-Van Crew informed-group disperse-officers speak to main offenders-details taken of one male-other refuse to engage.	High Street CIA Area
23	Officers over airwaves report male making off on foot London Road bridge out town-image patched -male detained.	Outside Area
24	ARV reports a motorbike making off on Tavistock St – vehicle is stopped on De Parys Ave – no MOT or Tax – details taken. 12:30HRS – Picked up a female exposing herself on Chethams whilst a male takes pictures – control inf – unit attends advice given	Outside Area
25	Control reports domestic on Foster Hill Rd/Cavendish St – images patched – unit attends - 1x arrested for domestic assault	PSPO Area
26	Picked up males fighting on Rutland Rd – one using a spanner as a weapon – images patched and control inf – a 3rd male then gets involved – unit attends – 2 detained. Third male last seen on Queens Walk. 2x arrested for affray and robbery.	PSPO Area
27	Pc XXXX asks CCTV to monitor a Jaguar currently XXXX-drug markers-images patched-last seen Cardington Road.	High Street CIA Area

No.	Incident Description	Location
28	B&M reports intoxicated male leaving loc with *NAME*has assaulted a member of staff. He has pushed him into the door frame. Control inf & patched through. No action taken by control. Male last seen entering Poulter Close. Advised B&M to report on 101.	PSPO Area
29	Picked up IC3male believed to be dealing on Alexander Road-contacted officers on petrol-officers attended, male made off-officers detain male on Midland Road/western Street- 1 arrested conspiracy to class A-male was defused custody due to his age.	Midland Road CIA Area
30	Picked up 2 males on Allhallows. One looked like he was following the other. At the same time police inf us of a robbery on Allhallows. Patched image - lost sight on suspect & IP going into Duke St. car park.	PSPO Area
31	Control reports male spraying people with an unknown substance on Mill Meadows. Picked up male on the town bridge. Control inf & patched through. Unit stops D&D male on Midland Rd. Pump spray full of water and a bottle of alcohol seized. Details taken – NFA	Midland Road CIA Area
32	Picked up drug deal in Mayes Yard. Male seen dealing to *NAME* Control inf & patched through. No units available	High Street CIA Area
33	Picked up a female looking intoxicated getting into a car on Duke St. and driving the vehicle erratically to Mayes Yard. She walks into town and Into Venue. Image patched and control informed. No units available.	High Street CIA Area
34	Unit reports male has collapsed on St Pauls Square. Located & patched through. Male intoxicated. Ambo attends at 13:57	PSPO Area
35	Standard reports male on High Street-has dropped a large knife & concealed it in his trousers-picked up male outside The Standard-contacted control & image patched-ARV stopped the males in Lurke Street C/P- male was in possession of bolt cutters and bladed article-male will be taken home to parents due to his age	High Street CIA Area
36	24/7 Cars request police - aggressive male refusing to leave taxi. Control informed & image patched. Van crew attended – W.O.A given.	High Street CIA Area
37	Fight seen on St Paul's Square outside 24/7 Cars. Female seen punching another female. Image patched & control informed. The fight ends and all parties leave the area before control passed the information to van crew. Van crew attend. No one involved left on scene. NFA.	PSPO Area

No.	Incident Description	Location
38	Picked up 5 males arguing on Alexandra Rd. Control inf & images patched. Males then start fighting - 4 against 1. Units stop all of the males outside the train station – no complaints. Details taken – NFA.	PSPO Area
39	Control reports aggressive male at XXXX, Maitland St. Picked male up on Midland Rd – patched through. Unit attends – male detained for public order offences – taken home.	Midland Road CIA Area
40	Picked up IC3 male drug dealing on Duke St, dealer seen getting into a Grey Mecedes *REG NO.* – Contacted the van crew – vehicle last seen Elstow Road	High Street CIA Area
41	Picked up a fight outside the Venue on Duke Street – Patched to control – van crew informed – Officers attended – 2 arrested for ABH	High Street CIA Area
42	Picked up 2 males play fighting on St Paul's Sq. They walk towards McDonald's and briefly go off camera. The 2 males are then seen being chased by a 3rd male. One of the males gets assaulted – [suspected perpetrator] runs off towards Sovereigns Quay. Images patched & control inf. Units attend and speak with 3rd male o/s McDs – details taken.	PSPO Area
43	Control reports male stealing pushbike in Allhallows. Theft not captured but picked up a male in Allhallows walking with a bike. Control inf – unit tries to stop male on Bromham Rd. Male makes off on foot but is detained at the bus station – 1 arrested for possession of offensive weapon and susp. of theft.	PSPO Area
44	Picked up an IC1 male drug dealing on the High Street-contacted control and image patched-no units available	High Street CIA Area
45	Control reports male with a knife in Venue, Midland Rd. Obs on loc – patched through. Unit attends – IP refuses to give any details. NFA.	Midland Road CIA Area
46	Picked up *NAME* on Midland Rd. Wanted for supply of class B. Control inf & patched through - no units.	Midland Road CIA Area
47	Unit requests back-up – Greenhill St. male has poss swallowed drugs when approached by officers. Located & patched through. Ambo attends. Taken to A&E. 1 arrest for PWITS	PSPO Area
48	Picked up *NAME* entering Morrisons. No reply on radio. Male leaves with items up his coat. Control inf & patched through. Male enters Venue, Midland Rd and comes out with cash. PCSO attends. 2 bottles of wine seized from loc. Morrisons confirm theft of wine. 1 arrest & CBO issued	Midland Road CIA Area

No.	Incident Description	Location
49	Picked up two females possibly taking heroin in Mayes Yard. Control inf & patched through - no units available	High Street CIA Area
50	PCSO passes on *NAME* on Lurke St. Located & patched through. Wanted for supply of Class B. Followed on CCTV to Alexander Rd. 1 arrest.	High Street CIA Area
51	PCSO reports he is with *NAME* on Harpur Sq - wanted. Located & patched through. Unit attends. 1 arrest - FTA possession of Class A	High Street CIA Area
52	Unit reports RTC Prebend St. Bike v car. Patched through. Bike has hit wing mirror. Minor injuries. Cyclist seems intoxicated. Details taken. Refuses ambo. NFA	PSPO Area
53	Picked up 2 males fighting on High St – control inf. Unit attends – details taken – no complaints	High Street CIA Area
54	Picked up street drinkers in St. Peter's St Gdns. Control inf & patched through. No units available	Tavistock Road CIA Area
55	Picked up *NAME* smoking a crack pipe in Hassett St stairwell, Allhallows. Control inf & patched through. Attention to msg put out	PSPO Area
56	Control reports intoxicated male fighting staff at barbers on Lime St. Picked up male already with unit – patched through. No fight has occurred but male very erratic. Back-up requested to restrain male. Ambo attends at 14:31. Taken to A&E. 1 arrest – 136	PSPO Area
57	Control reports male threatening staff with crutches at Venue, Midland Road – Monitored location & patched to control – officers attend and deal	Midland Road CIA Area
58	Picked up street drinkers in St. Peter's St. Gdns. Control inf & patched through. Attention to msg put out.	Tavistock Road CIA Area
59	Control reports male on the High St says he was attacked by a group of males on Midland Rd. One had a knife. Group seen on playback near Costa/Primark at 20:09HRS. Unable to locate - no units available.	High Street CIA Area
60	Picked up *NAME* punching a male on High St – images patched and control inf – units attend – 1x arrested for public order as victim not supporting.	High Street CIA Area
61	Control reports aggressive male outside Venue. Van Crew attends. Male resisting arrest. Officer assaulted (not captured). Patched to control - 1 arrested – Assault on emg worker.	High Street CIA Area
62	Control reports concern for welfare. Intoxicated female with large group of males on Howard St. Picked up *NAME* with *NAME*. He is in breach of court order not to associate with female. Control inf & patched through. They leave area before unit attends. Last seen on Lime St.	High Street CIA Area

No.	Incident Description	Location
63	Picked up 3 males begging outside Venue, Op Highgate inf. Spoken to & moved on	High Street CIA Area
64	Picked up different male begging in same spot on Lurke St. Op Highgate inf. Spoken to & moved on	High Street CIA Area
65	Picked up female smoking a crack pipe in Hassett St stairwell, Allhallows. Op Highgate inf. Female leaves before officers attend.	PSPO Area
66	Picked up a male pushing another male to the floor on Mill St – images patched and control inf – unit attends – IP refuses to support – offenders details taken.	High Street CIA Area
67	Venue, Midland Rd reports male in hospital gown has just assaulted security. Male located – Control inf & patched through. Male enters Venue– advised staff not to approach him. Male leaves with clothes. Followed to Lidl. Enters store – no reply from security. Unit attends – male detained leaving loc. Male assaults PC – 1 arrest for assault & assault on emg worker. Section 2 hospital patient. Taken back to hospital.	High Street CIA Area
68	Picked up male begging outside Lurke St. car park. Control inf & patched through. Attention to msg put out.	High Street CIA Area
69	Control reports fight Midland Rd – Picked up male throwing punches towards another male on playback. Units attend – ASNT.	Midland Road CIA Area
70	Venue requests police – male refusing to leave and becoming aggressive towards staff – Contacted control & image patched – units attend – male spoken to and moved on.	High Street CIA Area
71	Picked up *NAME* smoking drugs in the phone box on Midland Road – Contacted control & image patched – No units.	Midland Road CIA Area
72	Venue, High St, requests DEFIB code-Code given.	High Street CIA Area
73	Control reports an aggressive male on Tavistock St trying to force the doors at the XXXX. Picked up male and patched to control – No units available to attend.	Tavistock Road CIA Area
74	Control reports beggar outside Venue. Located & patched through. Unit attends – male moved on.	High Street CIA Area
75	Venue reports male has left with wine. Picked up *NAME* handing wine to male sat on bench in Church Sq. PCSO inf. 3 bottles of wine recovered.	PSPO Area
76	Picked up a couple on the corner of Alexander Rd engaging in sexual act-patched image to control. Officers attend - male taken home.	PSPO Area

No.	Incident Description	Location
77	Savers reports IC1 male has kicked the windows of Poundstretcher causing damage. Picked up the male on Thurlow St – Contacted control & image patched. Officers stop male on Greenhill St. 1 arrested for Criminal Damage.	PSPO Area
78	Control reports male exposing himself on St Paul's Sq near traffic lights. Located male near P3 bus stop. Male staring and trousers falling down-unit attends, Male spoken. Details taken. Male moved on as not exposing himself.	PSPO Area
79	Picked up male under the influence hanging onto the pillar outside Church Arcade, Harpur St. Group of youths 'helping' him, but are also intoxicated. Van crew informed. Group disappear up Paradine Court. Male found collapsed – taken to A&E.	PSPO Area
80	Control reports four males on e-bikes riding at people on Riverside Square. Picked up group on Horne Lane. Patched through. Unit attends. Group constantly making off – NFA.	PSPO Area
81	Picked up males being aggressive with each other outside Venue-no reply from van crew. Control informed. One male takes his belt off. The other male picks it up. Unit attends-male holding the belt is spoken to - details taken. The other male walks away - NFA.	High Street CIA Area
82	Male from 03:22HRS starts affray with females on Mill St. Van crew attends - 1 arrested for affray.	High Street CIA Area
83	Picked up *NAME* collecting money from known drug users in Mayes Yard. Followed male to known drug house on Hurst Grove. Male returns to group - UP informed - too far from River Festival to attend.	High Street CIA Area
84	Obs on arrest of male in Russell Park for sexual assault and offensive weapon (screwdriver) - patched through.	PSPO Area
85	Control reports female assaulted near Castle Garage. Picked up offender on High St coming out Luddington Passageway-IP last seen River Street. Male stopped on Greyfriars. Unable to locate IP. NFA.	PSPO Area
86	BID reports unconscious male on Riverside – they have called ambo. Located – obs. Ambo attends at 10:00. Taken to A&E.	PSPO Area
87	Picked up intoxicated female on Harpur Sq just as control reports concern for welfare on Riverside Square. Same female. Control inf & patched through. Followed to College Green. Unit attends. Female taken home.	PSPO Area
88	Picked up *NAME* sitting outside Venue. Male wanted. Control inf & patched through. 1 arrest - FTA - common assault x 2.	PSPO Area

No.	Incident Description	Location
89	Venue reports female shouting and swearing outside loc. Picked up *NAME* under the influence. Control inf & patched through. Female gets into vehicle. Last seen on Tavistock St.	Cross Zone
90	Unit reports *NAME* begging outside Venue, High St in breach of court order - 1 Arrest.	High Street CIA Area
91	Control reports male assaulted on Midland Rd. Picked up male near Venue. Incident seen on playback at 01:29HRS. Offender last seen on Alexander Rd. Control updated - unit attends.	Midland Road CIA Area
92	XXXX reports fight outside location - control informed & patched through. Unit attends - 1 arrest for assault.	High Street CIA Area
93	Picked up male and female engaging in sexual acts in the corner of Mayes Yard. Control informed and patched through. Units attend - spoken to - no concerns.	High Street CIA Area
94	Picked up male and female on Harpur Sq. Male exposing himself. Female is *NAME* - underage misper. Control informed and patched through. Unit attends - Details taken. Male also under 18. Female taken home.	PSPO Area
95	Control reports suicidal male on Kempston Road bridge -location changed to Riverside Bridge. Picked up male with friends on bench Riverside Sq. Playback shows male climbing over the side of the bridge at 03:45HRS. Friends had to restrain him. Control updated-group stopped by unit on Horne Lane - male spoken to.	PSPO Area
96	Picked up *NAME* trying to sell wine from a large bag on the High St. Male seen entering & leaving Morrisons on playback at 11:03. PCSO inf. Male stopped on Church Sq. Goods recovered.	High Street CIA Area
97	Picked up 2 males arguing on Harpur St – one male has the other male up against a wall – images patched and control inf – unit attends – no complaints males go separate ways.	PSPO Area
98	Venue reports males fighting on Mill St – images patched males go down alleyway towards Howard St – followed males running towards A Venue one male has 3 stab wounds to his back – control inf – stabbing happened in alleyway off camera – IP refusing to engage but taken to hospital.	High Street CIA Area
99	Call from control – males fighting on Midland Rd – picked up male being aggressive towards another male on bike – unit attends – IP does not wish to give details – NFA.	Midland Road CIA Area

No.	Incident Description	Location
100	Picked up *NAME* laying on the pavement outside a property on Costin St. Not moving. Male friend is with her. Control inf & patched through. Ambo attends. Female is asleep. Woken up ambo. Heath concerns but refusing to engage. Male and female walk off together - NFA.	Outside areas
101	Picked up *NAME* & *NAME* assaulting each other on Harpur St. Control inf & patched through. Male & female enter Church Arcade then Dane St. Unit attends. Male & female arrested for assault. Male further arrested for assault on emg worker.	PSPO Area
102	Control reports male in dressing gown on Priory St/Midland Rd. Located & patched through. Male running at people and blocking their path. Unit attends. Male struggles with officers. 1 arrest – 136.	Midland Road CIA Area
103	Picked up *NAME* on St Peters St-Female wanted x7. Control and images patched. Units attend - 1 arrested.	Midland Road CIA Area
104	Control reports of an assault at Bedford Trian Station – offender seen outside briefly before going back in to train station – images patched – unit attends – 1x arrested for assault	PSPO Area
105	Control reports of intoxicated female in walking in front of cars on Brittania Rd – picked up and images patched - unit attends and female taken home	Outside areas
106	Picked up a white Audi parked on Mill St – all occupants including driver seen doing balloons – images patched and control inf	High Street CIZ Area
107	Fight seen on Mill St between 2 females – images patched – unit attends – females spoken to separately – details taken of main offender – IP not engaging	High Street CIA Area
108	Picked up 2 IC3 males drug dealing under the Town Bridge – Contacted control & image patched – Attention to put over airwaves – No response	PSPO Area
109	Picked up *NAME* drug dealing in Allhallows Car Park stairwell – Contacted control – Attention to put over airwaves – No response	PSPO Area
110	Picked up *NAME* who is currently wanted for drug supply in Allhallows car park – control inf – male then leaves - last seen Beckett St	PSPO Area
111	Control reports male smashing cars up in Saffron Close. Male located – under the influence. Collapses on the ground. Ambo attends at 11:40. Take to A&E. No damage to vehicles.	PSPO Area

No.	Incident Description	Location
112a	Venue request police assistance for aggressive male refusing to leave – male seen trying to initiate a fight with another male – images patched and control inf – IP eventually kicks out at the male and fight breaks out – unit attends – 1x arrested for assault x2 High Street CIA	PSPO Area
112b	Picked up an IC3 male drug dealing under the Bridge – Contacted control & image patched – No units available	High Street CIA Area
113	Picked up 2 males fighting on the High St outside Venue – Contacted the van crew – Officers attend. Spoken to – no complaints NFA.	High Street CIA Area
114	Venue requests police. Picked up door staff restraining a male on the floor. Contacted van crew – no response. Control inf – Officers attend – 1 arrested.	High Street CIA Area
115	Venue requests police to remove an aggressive male from their front door. Picked up the male trying to assault door staff. Contacted van crew – male is also the offender for an assault earlier on Silver St – Van Crew attend – 1 arrested.	High Street CIA Area
116	Picked up a large fight on the High St outside Venue – Contacted van crew. Officers attend – 2 arrested for affray. (During the scuffle 1 of the males dropped his phone which was picked up by *NAME*, who is outstanding wanted - recall to prison.) Van crew inf.	High Street CIA Area
117	Picked up the start of a scuffle on the High St under Debenhams canopy – Van crew info and patched to control – Group spills onto Mill St – 3 arrested (2 for assault PC & 1 D&D).	High Street CIA Area
118	Picked up females fighting in Mill Street – Contacted control & image patched. No units available – cont. obs on group who continued to fight. 1 female has facial injuries. Contacted control again. Still no units to assist.	High Street CIA Area
119	Control reports male harassing females on St Pauls Sq – Picked up & patched to control – Officers attended – 1 arrested D&D.	PSPO Area
120	Control reports male has thrown a bottle at people on Conduit Rd. male located. Last seen on Woburn Rd. ASNT.	PSPO Area
121	Picked up street drinkers in several locations. Harpur Sq, Greenhill St & St Peter's Gdns. Control inf. Attention to msg put out.	Cross-Zone
122	Picked up *NAME* walking in traffic, shouting at passerby on Midland Road. Control informed and image patched, no unit free to attend.	Midland Road CIA Area

No.	Incident Description	Location
123	Picked up *NAME* on Hurst Grove- he is currently wanted for racially aggravated common assault. Image patched and control informed. Police attended and arrested male on Midland Rd.	Outside areas
124	Venue reporting male kicking their doors-contacted Van Crew-officers attended-1 Arrested	High Street CIA Area
125	Monitored police airwaves 2 males had broken into vehicle Appledore Road-1 of the offenders is on a bike. Picked up 2 males Castle Road matching the description-contacted control & image patched-1 of the males seen trying car doors handles on Castle Road-officers attended-male on the bike made off (*NAME*)-2nd male was detained 1 Arrested.	Outside areas
126	Venue called in of a male IC3 leaving the establishment with a plastic cup filled with what seems to be Alcohol and sits in the car, *REG No* TNO Silver Aris Toyota in Mill Street-patched through to control-units attend-NFA.	High Street CIA Area
127	Called to Van Crew of a female IC1 exposing herself in Midland Road-patched to control-units attend-word of advice given.	Midland Road CIA Area
128	Control reports break in progress at XXXX, 2 males seen leaving the location at 01:55. Picked up 2 males on Mill Street at 02:00- one of the males appears to be *NAME*, a known burglar. Control informed and image patched police attended and detained the males 2 arrested under suspicion of burglary.	High Street CIA Area
129	Venue reports a male on crutches has assaulted a female o/s another Venue – incident not captured but picked up the offender on Silver St – control inf – unit stops male on High St – 1x arrested for assault.	High Street CIA Area

4.   Findings: Noise

4.1   Introduction

272.   This section of the 2025 Cumulative Impact Assessment research provides a detailed analysis of noise complaints associated with licensed premises and their customers, using data collected between January 2023 and March 2025: a 26-month period.

4.2   Method

273.   The findings draw upon commercial noise complaints received by the Council's Environmental Health Service from within Bedford's PSPO Area (excluding the three existing CIA Areas) and the High Street CIA Area boundaries and which were linked to licensed premises or their customers.

274.   No commercial noise complaints were logged by the council for either the Midland Road or Tavistock Road CIA Areas over this 26-month period.

4.3   Findings

4.3.1   Noise Complaints by Day of Week

275.   Overall, between January 2023 and March 2025, there were only 36 commercial noise complaints about licensed premises within central Bedford. This is just over one per month.

276.   The chart below shows the number of complaints by day of the week.

Figure 54. Commercial noise complaints about licensed premises by DAY of the week 2023-25
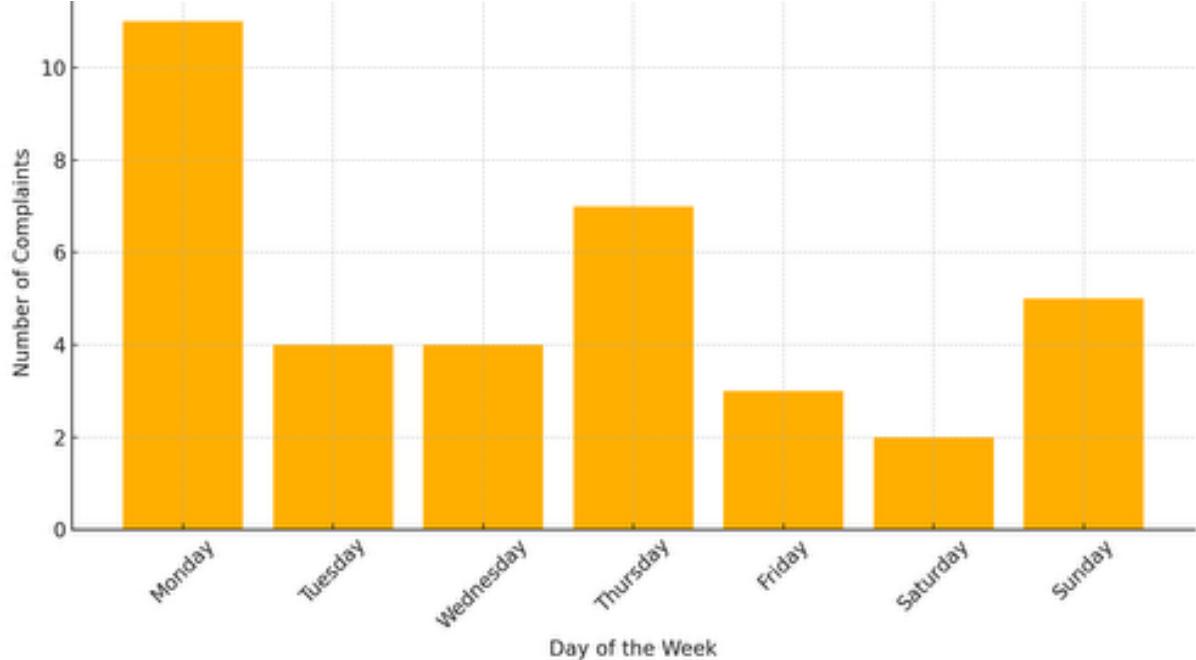
277.   The distribution of complaints across the week shows a pronounced reporting peak on Mondays. The Environmental Health Team explain that this does not indicate increased numbers of noise incidents on Mondays themselves. Rather, it reflects a delay in reporting of disturbances that occurred over the weekend, particularly on Friday and Saturday nights.

278.   This is typically due to council offices reopening or online complaint submissions being made after the event. Friday and Saturday continue to be the key days of concern for the Environmental Health Team to deal with complaints linked to late-night noise associated with licensed night-time activity.

### 4.3.2 Noise Complaints by Time of Day

279.   Complaint narratives were reviewed to infer the time of occurrence. The results are shown below.

Figure 55. Commercial noise complaints about licensed premises by TIME OF DAY 2023-25
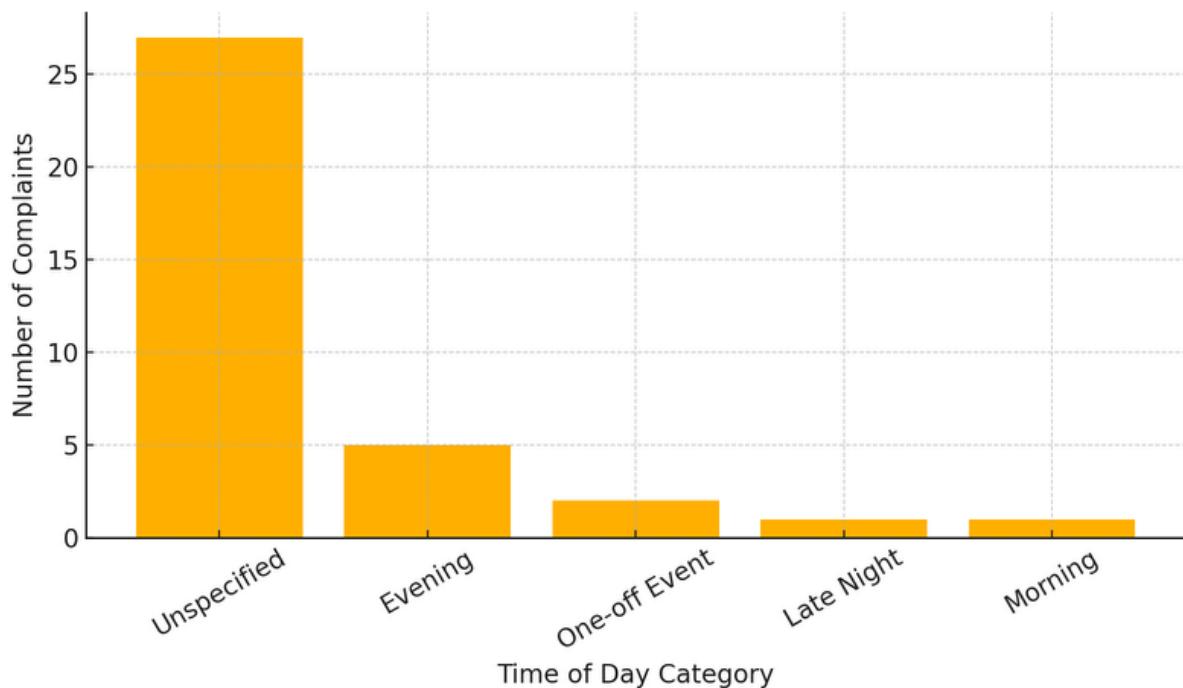
280.   Whilst most entries lacked precise timing, qualitative categorisation revealed that most complaints referenced the 'late night' period (i.e. after midnight), followed by general 'evening' disturbance.

281.   Complaints relating to one-off events or morning disruption were far less frequent. This confirms that the most significant public nuisance concerns continue to be tied to post-midnight trading and activity within the town centre.

4.3.3 Noise Complaints by Zone

282.   Complaints remain most heavily concentrated within the High Street CIA Area. Most of these complaints reference music amplification and the presence of large groups of revellers.

283.   The wider PSPO Area has a smaller number of complaints, including some linked to events and late-night refreshment.

284.   Midland Road and Tavistock Road CIA Areas recorded no recent complaints of a commercial nature, suggesting a relatively stable nuisance profile in those zones.

4.3.4 Noise Complaints by Source

285.   The chart below illustrates the distribution of noise complaints by their source.

Figure 56. Commercial noise complaints about licensed premises by NOISE SOURCE 2023-25
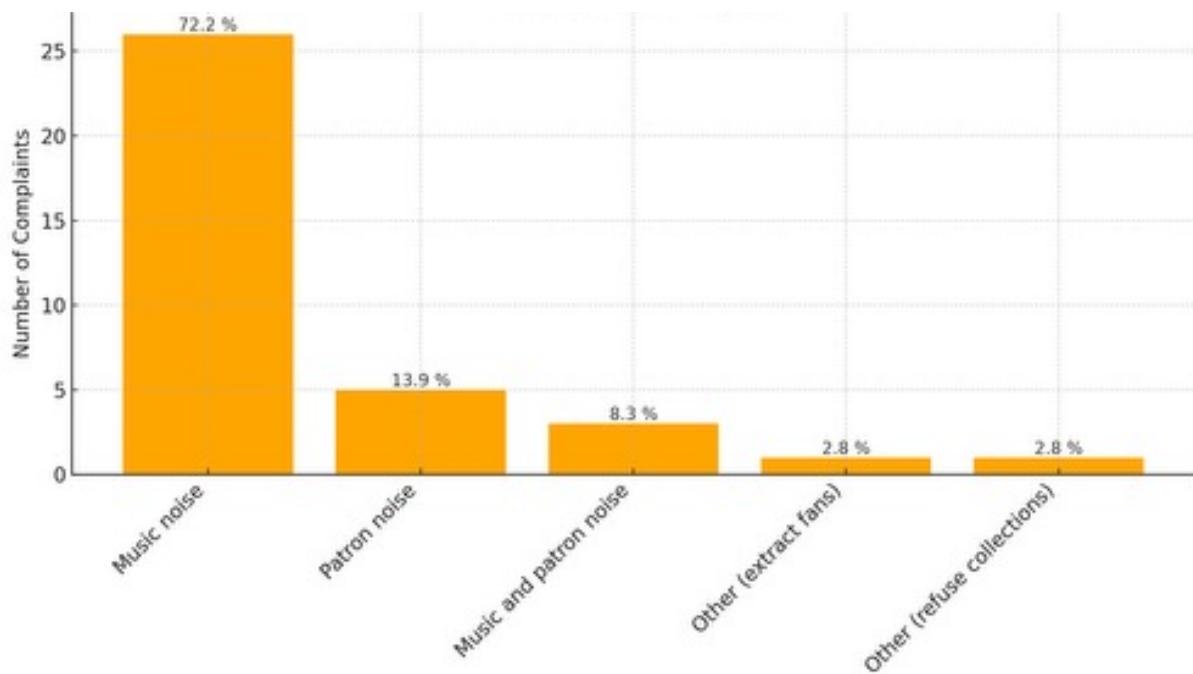
286.   A review of the 36 commercial noise complaints linked to licensed premises was conducted to identify the main sources late-night disturbances. The analysis found that music sound system noise was the overwhelming issue, making up 72.2% of all complaints.

287.   Patron noise accounted for a further 13.9%, and a small number of complaints involved a combination of music and patron noise (8.3%).

288.   Only two complaints related to non-music / patron sources: one from an extractor fan and one from early morning refuse / bottle collections.

289.   Of the sound system and patron noise complaints, outdoor areas such as beer gardens were commonly cited as sources locations for the disturbance.

290.   Of the 36 noise complaints, for 22 of them no further action was needed. 10 were further investigated and then resolved. One complainant moved away from the area and the remainder were still under investigation at the time of research.

291.   In the researchers' experience, this demonstrates an excellent working relationship between the Environmental Health Team and the premises within the High Street CIA Area, where licensees are proactive in addressing noise complaints.

4.4 Summary

292. The commercial premises noise complaint data for licensed premises shows a very small number of incidents over an analysis period of approximately two years.

293. The noise and public nuisance complaints that are linked to licensed premises are mostly limited to the existing High Street CIA Area, and to a lesser extent, the PSPO Area. There have been no problems with the existing Midland Road and Tavistock Street CIA Areas. existing

294. Of the limited number of commercial noise complaints linked to licensed premises that were made, most were resolved without any significant further action being required.

295. There does not appear to be a significant public nuisance noise impact from licensed premises in Bedford. If there had been more complaints relating to street noise and / or wider night-time disturbances from patrons walking between one venue and another, this would be the normal indicator of cumulative impact.

5. Findings: Public Health

5.1 Introduction

296. Public Health is a statutory consultee under the Licensing Act 2003. Because 'public health' is not one of the four licensing objectives in England and Wales (unlike Scotland), the Director of Public Health cannot make representations on health grounds alone. Any representation must link directly to one or more of the licensing objectives, using public health evidence where relevant. In practice, this includes issues such as alcohol-related violence (crime and disorder), acute alcohol intoxication and related ambulance call-outs (public safety and public nuisance), and risks to young people (protection of children from harm). These are areas where Public Health can reasonably contribute insight to the licensing process.

5.2 Methodology

297. Locally, the Bedfordshire Population Health Evidence and Intelligence Team have developed its own 'Licensing Data Matrix Tool'. This tool utilises data from health, police and community sources to provide a risk score based on a licensed premises' postcode.

298. Whilst the tool cannot alone be used to refuse the granting of a licence, it is used to encourage appropriate additional licensing conditions where a licence application presents a high risk to the licensing objectives. It can also be used to support public health representations to a licence review. When responding to licensing applications, public health highlights the overall risk and summary score from the Licensing Data Matrix Tool to the licensing team at Bedford Borough Council.

299. The Licensing Data Matrix Tool is most relevant to following three of the four licensing objectives:

    • Crime and disorder (i.e., alcohol-related violence requiring hospital admissions),

    • Public safety (fear of those who have consumed too much alcohol, for example in the street or in a domestic setting), and

    • Protection of children from harm (underage alcohol consumption and its negative individual health, crime and societal outcomes).

300. Currently the Licensing Data Matrix Tool is based on multi-year data (primarily 2020–2022) sourced from health, police and community sources and is analysed at the smallest statistical unit of Census / Office for National Statistics geography: Lower Super Output Area (LSOA).

301. Each LSOA is given a 'RAG rating': Red (high / very high risk), Amber (medium risk), or Green (low risk). This RAG rating is based on a composite score of ten metrics covering crime, ASB, alcohol-specific hospital admissions, treatment referrals, deprivation and licensed premises density.

302. A red LSOA would be an area where high harm (i.e. crime, ASB, alcohol-related hospital admissions) is found alongside metrics such as elevated levels of poverty and a proliferation of licensed premises and high alcohol availability, e.g., a cluster of off-licences.

5.3 Findings

5.3.1 RAG Rating of the Three Existing CIA Areas

303. In practice, the tool is not routinely used to generate borough-wide or PSPO-wide risk summaries, as its strength lies in its granularity - assessing individual LSOAs, rather than aggregated zones. However, for the purposes of this Cumulative Impact Assessment research, the tool was used to assess levels of alcohol-related harm in the three existing CIA Areas: High Street, Tavistock Street, and Midland Road. The table below shows the RAG rating for these areas.

Figure 57. Licensing Data Matrix Tool RAG Ratings for the three existing Bedford CIA Areas

CIA Area	Overall rating	Alcohol related crimes	Alcohol related anti-social behaviour	Alcohol specific hospital admissions	Index of multiple deprivation	Looked after children	Off-licence density	Pub/bar/club density	Referrals for alcohol treatment	Schools with 13+ year olds	Unemployment
Midland Road	High	V high	V high	V high	V high	Low	V high	High	V high	Low	Med
Tavistock Street	High	High	V high	V high	V high	Low	V high	V high	High	Low	High
High Street	High	V high	V high	High	Low	Med	V high	V high	V high	Low	Med

304. What is immediately clear is the high (red) harm ranking for all three existing CIAs and the high or very high ratings for crime and ASB linked to alcohol and the density of licensed premises for each of them.

305. While the tool does not provide a single composite score for the wider PSPO Area, its use within the existing CIA Area boundaries offers a reliable proxy for identifying sustained, place-based alcohol-related harm. Its application in this report therefore remains appropriate and valid for assessing cumulative impact in the town centre

5.3.2 Narrow Definition of Alcohol Admissions

306. Below are two figures showing statistics for Bedford and England for the 'Narrow Definition of Alcohol Admissions'. The narrow definition covers admissions to hospital where the primary diagnosis is an alcohol-attributable one (as opposed to 'broad' – see below – where alcohol is only associated with the admission).

*Figure 58. Hospital NARROW alcohol admissions in Bedford vs England 2016/17 to 2023/24*
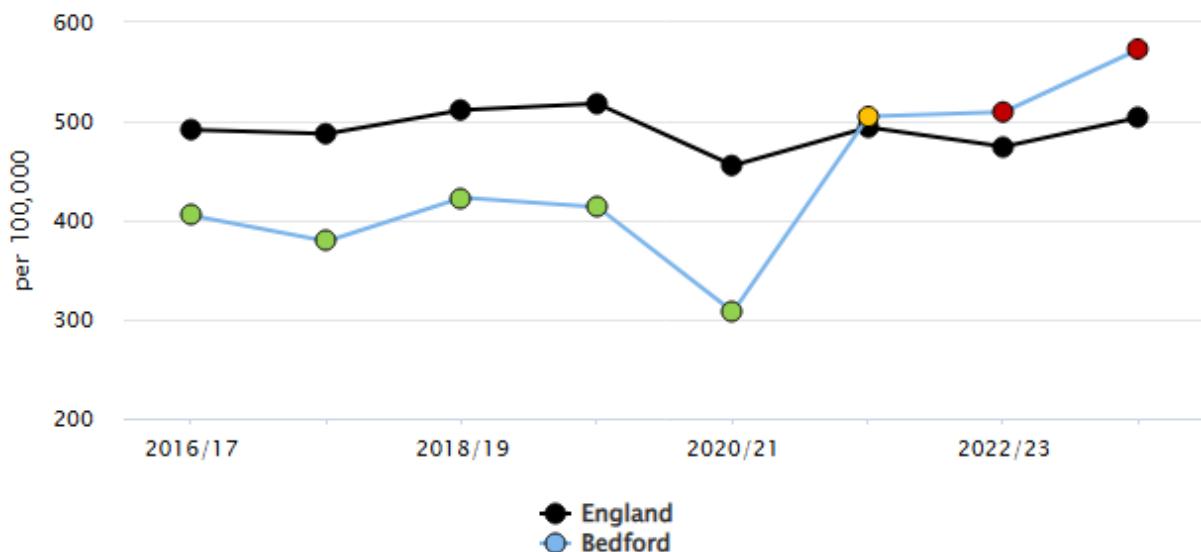
Figure 59. Hospital NARROW definition alcohol admissions in Bedford vs England 2016/17 to 2023/24 – annual totals[12]

Recent trend: ⬆ Increasing & getting worse

Period		Count	Value	95% Lower CI	95% Upper CI	England
		Bedford				
2016/17	○	658	405	375	438	492
2017/18	○	626	379	350	410	488
2018/19	○	712	423	392	455	512
2019/20	○	704	414	383	445	518
2020/21	○	530	308	282	335	456
2021/22	○	879	505	472	540	494
2022/23	●	896	509	477	544	475
2023/24	●	1,035	573	539	609	504

Source: OHID, based on NHS England and Office for National Statistics data

307. Overall, the statistics above show that narrowly defined alcohol hospital admissions in Bedford grew faster than the England average. The year of 2021/22 saw the largest jump in admissions in recent years, and they are now above the national average for the first time.

12. *Local Alcohol Profiles, PHE Fingertips Admissions (Directly age standardised rate per 100,000 population. Standardised to the European standard population) (https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/local-alcohol-profiles/data#page/4/gid/1938132984/pat/15/par/E92000001/ati/502/are/E06000055/iid/93764/age/1/sex/4/cat/-1/ctp/-1/yrr/1/cid/4/tbm/1)*

5.3.3 Broad Definition of Alcohol Admissions

308. Below are two figures showing statistics for Bedford and England for the 'Broad Definition of Alcohol Admissions'[13]. The broad definition covers admissions to hospital where the primary diagnosis or any of the secondary diagnoses are alcohol-attributable.

Figure 60. Hospital BROAD definition alcohol admissions in Bedford vs England 2016/17 to 2023/24
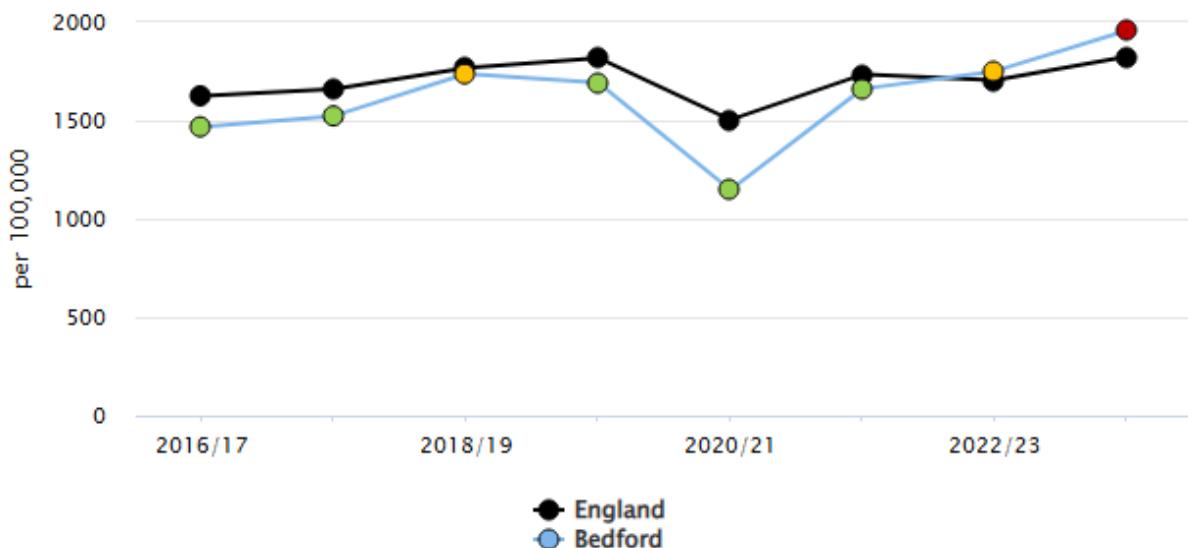
Figure 61. Hospital BROAD definition alcohol admissions in Bedford 2016/17 to 2023/24 – annual

Recent trend: ↑ Increasing & getting worse

Period		Count	Value	95% Lower CI	95% Upper CI	England
				Bedford		
2016/17	●	2,319	1,468	1,409	1,529	1,625
2017/18	●	2,433	1,524	1,463	1,586	1,659
2018/19	●	2,835	1,737	1,674	1,803	1,768
2019/20	●	2,810	1,693	1,630	1,757	1,818
2020/21	●	1,940	1,148	1,097	1,200	1,504
2021/22	●	2,849	1,661	1,601	1,724	1,734
2022/23	●	3,036	1,751	1,689	1,815	1,705
2023/24	●	3,462	1,957	1,892	2,023	1,824

Source: OHID, based on NHS England and Office for National Statistics data

309. Overall, as with narrow definition admissions, the trend for broad definition admissions has seen alcohol hospital admissions in Bedford grow faster than the England average. The year of 2021/22 saw the largest jump in admissions and admissions overtook the England average in 2022/23.

13. https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/local-alcohol-profiles/data#page/4/gid/1938132984/pat/15/par/E92000001/ati/502/are/E06000055/iid/93764/age/1/sex/4/cat/-1/ctp/-1/yrr/1/cid/4/tbm/1

5.3.4 Alcohol-related Hospital Admissions by Age

310. As additional context, in the past few years there has been a rise in alcohol-related hospital admissions in individuals over 65 years old in Bedford, whilst rates in those under 40 have remained stable. The chart below shows alcohol-related hospital admissions by age in the borough and for England.

Figure 62. Alcohol-related admissions in over 65-year-old population in Bedford vs England (per 100,000)
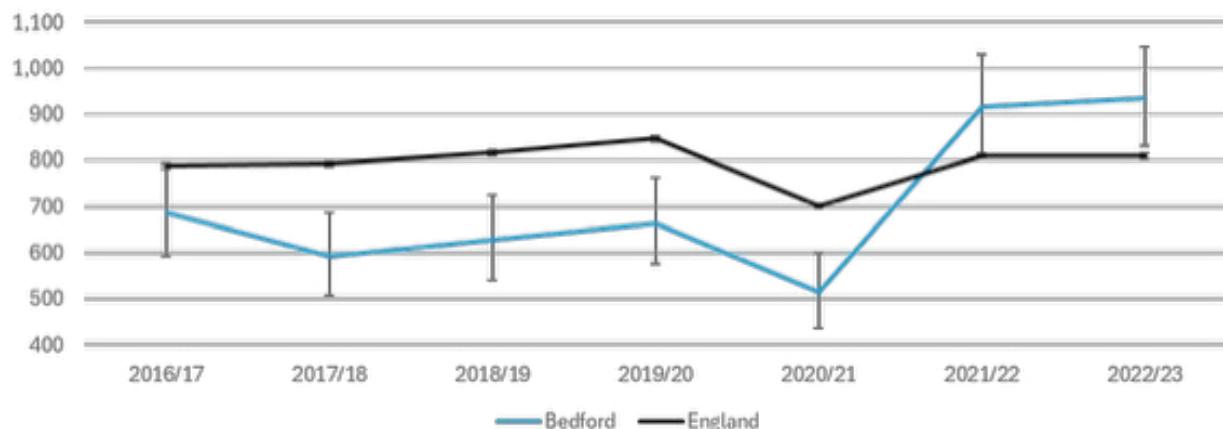
311. It is likely that this rise in admissions amongst the over 65's has contributed to the overall increase seen in the previous figures for both narrow and broad alcohol-related hospital admissions. In turn this may reflect national trends that have seen younger age bands drinking less and a significant minority of those in middle and older age groups continuing (or starting) to drink at harmful levels.

312. The following table shows levels of alcohol consumption by units per week in adults in both Bedford borough and for England.

313. This table is useful from a licensing perspective because those drinking at hazardous levels are more likely to suffer from alcohol related illness or be involved in alcohol related negative externalities, such as crime and disorder (e.g., violence in the night-time economy or domestic violence).

Figure 63. Health data showing levels of abstainers and hazardous / binge drinkers 2015-2018 combined data.

Indicator	Local (%)	England (%)
Proportion of adults who abstain from drinking alcohol	13.0	16.2
Proportion of adults drinking over 14 units of alcohol a week	18.3	22.8
Proportion of adults binge drinking on heaviest drinking day	18.0	15.4

314. In Bedford, binge drinking levels are higher than the national average (18.0% vs 15.4% for England). However, those drinking more than the recommended maximum (14 units of alcohol per week, and who are classed as hazardous drinkers) is lower in Bedford than the national level (18.3% vs 22.8%).

315. Since the previous data* (from 2014 – not shown in the table), the proportion of adults drinking over 14 units of alcohol per week, and the proportion of adults binge drinking, have decreased, both in Bedford and nationally.

316. In historic terms (not shown in table), the proportion of adults who abstain from drinking alcohol has increased in Bedford from 5.4% in 2014 to 13.0% in the most recent data.*

317. Whilst there are some welcome improvements in some of these metrics, there is also likely to be a link between the rising levels Bedford has seen in other alcohol health harms over the past few years – as shown in the previous figures, as well as historically above average number of hazardous (14+ units a week) drinkers in the borough.

318. Below is a table showing details of those in alcohol treatment[14] in the borough and provides a breakdown of those individuals receiving support for alcohol-related health harms by age and gender.

Figure 64. Total number of adults accessing treatment for alcohol issues from 2020 to 2024

		% in treat		18-29 M %		30-49 M %		50+ M %		18-29 F %		30-49 F %		50+ F %	
Year	No.	Bed	Eng	Bed	Eng	Bed	Eng	Bed	Eng	Bed	Eng	Bed	Eng	Bed	Eng
2013	225	23	26	15	12	62	57	23	31	16	12	60	57	24	31
2014	155	19	27	9	11	61	55	30	34	12	11	72	56	16	33
2015	186	22	27	17	10	58	54	25	36	12	10	69	55	19	34
2016	176	20	26	10	9	56	54	35	37	10	10	61	54	29	36
2017	300	29	25	13	9	53	53	34	38	13	10	54	53	33	37
2018	283	28	25	8	8	59	53	33	39	9	10	55	53	36	37
2019	314	30	24	6	8	60	52	35	40	15	10	53	52	32	38
2020	307	29	24	11	8	62	52	27	40	18	9	53	52	28	38
2021	278	27	24	13	9	58	52	29	39	10	10	61	53	29	38
2022	295	28	25	14	9	54	52	32	40	13	9	56	51	31	40
2023	296	27	26	10	8	56	51	34	41	12	9	56	50	32	41
2024	282	25	27	5	8	57	50	38	42	8	9	64	50	28	41

319. Over the past five years, men aged 30 to 49, have consistently been the largest cohort in treatment. A significant number of men aged 50 and over are also in contact with treatment services, often reflecting long-term patterns of alcohol misuse and dependency.

* Note: The data from Public Health England on alcohol consumption and drinking behaviours is considerably out of date. This is a challenge for all local public health teams.

14. Drug and alcohol treatment is provided by the East London Foundation Trust; Path 2 Recovery.

320. Among women, the most treated age groups are 30-49 and 50+. However, the overall numbers are lower compared to men. This gender split is consistent with national findings from the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID), which show that women typically only make up around 30% of alcohol-only treatment clients (OHID, 2023).[15]

321. The 30-49 age group is more commonly associated with binge drinking and increasing-risk consumption, sometimes including those who partake in street-based drinking in public spaces (Drinkaware, 2023)[16]. This may result in negative impacts on the licensing objectives, particularly public nuisance.

322. The 50+ group includes those with entrenched drinking patterns, who may experience more chronic health issues such as liver disease or alcohol-related mental health disorders (OHID Fingertips, 2024[17]; PHE, 2018[18]). Again, the exacerbating role of alcohol may result in behaviour that is harmful to the drinker and others, such as violence (crime and disorder) and public nuisance.

5.3.5 The Vulnerable Street Drinker Panel

323. In 2023 A Vulnerable Street Drinker Panel was established by Bedfordshire Public Health team and the Bedford Borough Council Community Safety. The panel aims to address the underlying causes of street drinking at an individual level. The panel have developed a process to identify individuals who are persistently street drinking and are also deemed to be vulnerable due to their complex needs.

324. In addition to improving the lives of the individuals, it should also mean that anti-social behaviour (ASB) linked to some street drinking individuals is tackled in a holistic manner, making the best use of resources and partnership.

325. Alongside community safety and public health, representatives from Bedfordshire Police, P2R (the local drug and alcohol treatment service), mental health, SMART (homelessness support) and Community Led Initiatives (local recovery support) make up the core membership of the panel. Referrals to the panel are made by Bedfordshire Police and members of the panel provide any contextual information about individuals on a tracking document; for instance, whether an individual is known to adult safeguarding, or to any of the treatment services listed above.

326. On a monthly basis, the tracking document is updated, and the panel meet to discuss specific cases, to determine any specific support that may be needed for individuals.

327. Since the pilot began, a cohort of individuals have been referred to the panel by the police and have been supported through the panel's partners. The Vulnerable Street Drinker Panel is currently undergoing an evaluation after completion of a trial period.

15. *Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (2023) 'Substance misuse treatment for adults: statistics 2022 to 2023'.*
https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/substance-misuse-treatment-for-adults-statistics-2022-to-2023

16. *Drinkaware (2023) 'What is binge drinking?'*
https://www.drinkaware.co.uk/facts/health-effects-of-alcohol/binge-drinking

17. *OHID Fingertips (2024) 'Local Alcohol Profiles for England'.*
https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/local-alcohol-profiles

18. *Public Health England (2018) 'Alcohol and drug prevention, treatment and recovery: why invest?'*
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/alcohol-and-drug-prevention-treatment-and-recovery-why-invest

6.   Findings: Licensed Premises

6.1 Introduction

328. This section provides an updated analysis of licensed premises in Bedford Borough, with a focus on the Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) Area as a proxy for the town centre, and the three existing Cumulative Impact Assessment (CIA) Areas: High Street, Midland Road, and Tavistock Street.

6.2 Methodology

329. The data presented in this section draws from the council's public register of new and current premises licences 2025.

330. As in the 2022 CIA research, duplicates, suspended or lapsed licences have been removed to ensure accuracy. It is important to note that new licences can be issued for the same physical premises as previous ones; therefore, the rise does not absolutely equate to an increase in the total of unique venues.

331. Premises that are no longer licensed may still be operating legally, for example, as alcohol-free restaurants that close before 11pm, or they may be venues that will seek re-licensing in the future.

332. Licences included in this total are for premises authorised to sell alcohol, provide entertainment or offer late-night refreshment. Gambling premises are excluded, unless they also hold alcohol or entertainment licences. Food premises are similarly excluded unless they are licensed to sell alcohol. Takeaways are only included if they have a Late-Night Refreshment (LNR) licence to sell hot food and / or hot drink between 11pm and 5am.

333. There are many restaurants and takeaways in Bedford that offer take away hot food but cease trading before 11pm. Whilst these do not require a licence for LNR, problems may still occur around their takeaway service.

334. A pub, restaurant or bar that is licensed to provide off-sales (i.e. takeout beer, wine etc.) in addition to its main 'on-premises' licence, is not counted a second time.

335. The classification of licensed premises type uses the same main categories as the 2022 CIA report. These are:

- Arts / leisure venues (e.g. theatre, cinema, museums and galleries)
- Hotel (inc. B&Bs, aparthotels etc.)
- Late Night Refreshment (i.e. takeaways)
- Licensed retail (e.g. off-licences, supermarkets, any shop that sells alcohol as ancillary to its main business)
- Pub / bar / club
- Restaurants and cafes.

336. For 2025, an 'Other' category has been added to cover a small number of venues that do not fit well within the main premises categories, e.g. faith buildings, community centres and village halls etc.

6.3 Findings

6.3.1 Number and Type of Premises

337. As of 2025, there are 681 licences in force across Bedford borough. This represents an increase of 83 from the 598 in force in the 2022 CIA research.

338. Within the Bedford Town Centre PSPO Area, there were a total of 176 licensed premises in 2025. This figure includes all premises authorised for alcohol sales, regulated entertainment or late-night refreshment. This figure includes the licences within the three existing CIA Areas, all of which sit fully within the PSPO Area.

339. The table below breaks down the total number of licences within the PSPO Area and CIA Areas within it and shows them by licence type.

Figure 65. Licences type within the PSPO Areas and existing CIA Areas

Licence Type	Total premises in PSPO No.	%	High Street CIA No.	%	Midland Road CIA No.	%	Tavistock Street CIA No.	%	Remainder of PSPO No.	%
Restaurants / Cafes	57	32%	23	38%	3	19%	9	36%	22	30%
Licensed Retail	36	20%	9	15%	4	25%	5	20%	18	24%
Pub / Bar / Club	36	20%	19	31%	1	6%	4	16%	12	16%
LNR	26	15%	5	8%	7	44%	7	28%	7	9%
Arts / Leisure	12	7%	5	8%	0	0%	0	0%	7	9%
Hotel	4	2%	0	0%	1	6%	0	0%	3	4%
Other	5	3%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	5	7%
TOTAL	176	100%	61	100%	16	100%	25	100%	74	100

Some column totals may not equal 100% due to rounding

340. 'Restaurant and cafe' is the most common licence type within the PSPO Area, with 57 premises and accounting for 32% of all licences within the PSPO Area.

341. 'Licensed retail' and 'Pub / bar / club' premises follow, each comprising 36 premises (20%) of the total licences within the PSO area.

342. Of the three existing CIA Areas, the High Street Area has the most premises (61 or 35% of all those in the PSPO Area). Midland Road CIA Area contains 16 premises (9%of total in PSPO Area. Tavistock Street CIA Area has 25 premises (14% of the total in the PSPO Area).

343. The remaining 74 premises (42% of the total in the PSPO Area) are located within the PSPO but outside of the three existing CIA Areas.

344. Within the non-CIA parts of the PSPO Area there are larger numbers of 'Restaurants and cafes' (22 premises) 'Licensed retail' (18 premises); Pub / Bar / Club' (12 premises).

345. 'Arts / Leisure venue' premises total 12 (or 7% of the total), with 5 in the High Street CIA and 7 in the non-CIA part of the PSPO Area. There are no arts / leisure licences in the Midland Road or Tavistock Road CIAs.

346. There are very few 'hotel' licences in the town centre PSPO Area (4).

6.3.2 Changes since 2022

347. The presence of licensed premises remains highly concentrated within the existing CIA Areas, but there has been some growth observed in the surrounding PSPO Area - particularly in categories associated with a mixed day and night-time economy offer, such as cafes, restaurants and leisure venues.

348. The existing High Street CIA Area continues to serve as the centre of Bedford's night-time economy. In 2025, restaurants account for 38% of premises in this area, followed by pubs/ bars/clubs (31%) and a growing share of arts and leisure venues (8%).

349. The existing Midland Road CIA Area has experienced a decline in total premises, from 21 in 2022 to 16 in 2025 (-24%). This area remains a focal point for off-sales and late-night refreshment. It is an area that the quantitative and qualitative evidence shows is still strongly associated with street drinking and anti-social behaviour.

350. The existing Tavistock Street CIA Area has seen a modest decline in total premises (-17%), notably in restaurants (-6). It maintains a significant presence of LNR licences (28%) and licensed retail (i.e. off-licences) (20%).

351. The number of licences in the Town Centre PSPO Area (excluding the CIAs) has grown by 19%, reflecting increasing diversification. This area now has a broad offer with some licence types increasing between 2022 and 2025, such as 'restaurants and cafes' accounting for 30% of the licences here, and 'licensed retail' accounting for 24 % with 'pub / bar / club' at 16%, showing that the PSPO Area has both a strong evening and night-time economy offer as well as broad daytime provision.

352. Below is a map showing all the licensed premises within the Town Centre PSPO Area and the three existing CIA Areas within it.

Figure 66. Map of licences premises in Bedford PSPO and CIA Areas 20205 by type

🟦	Late Night Refreshments	🟩	Licensed Retail	🟥	Hotels
🟪	Pub/Bar/Club	🟨	Arts/Leisure	⬛	Other
🟧	Restaurants and Cafes				
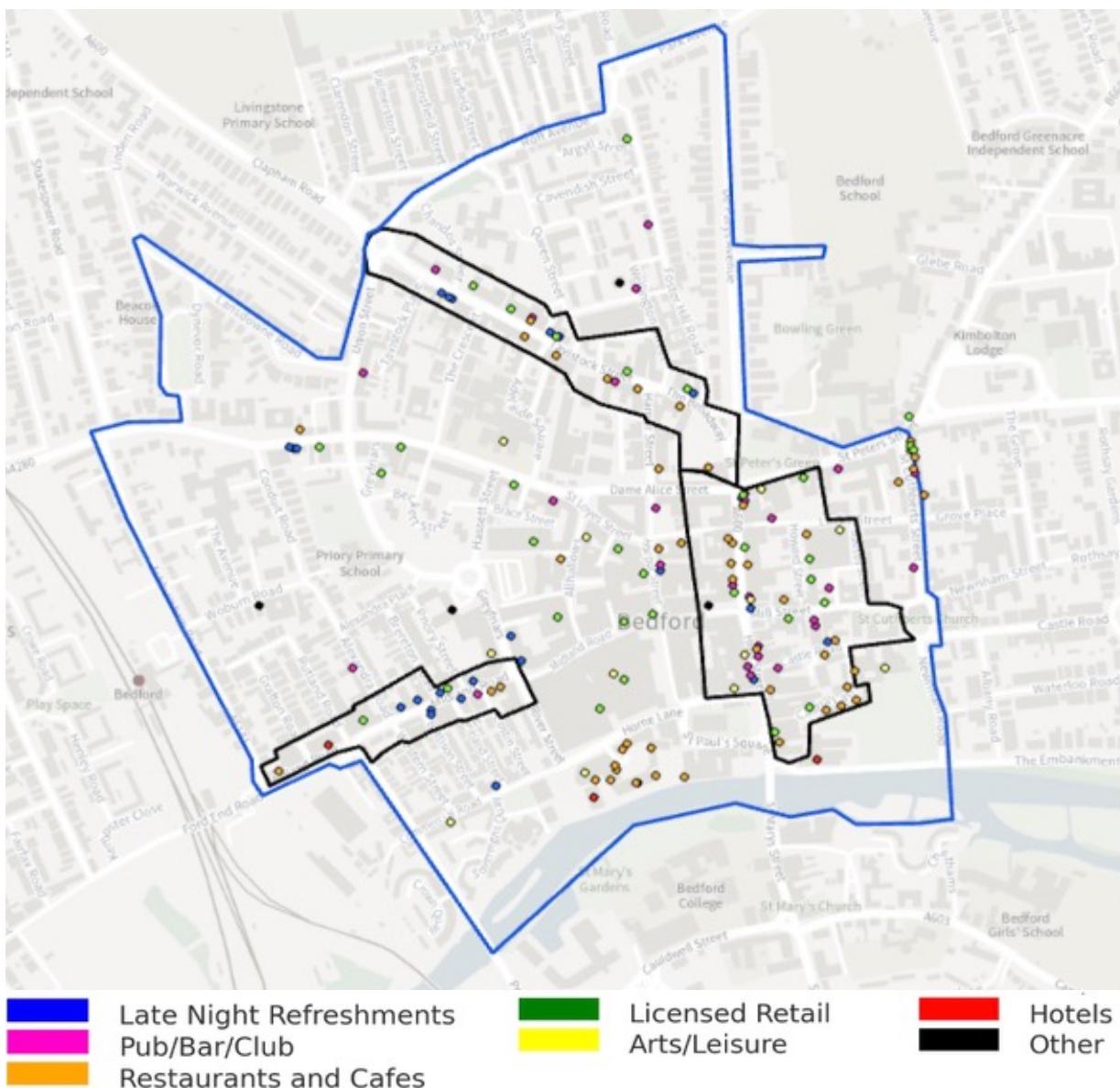
353. The map makes immediately apparent the concentration of premises within the existing CIA Areas, and the boundaries provide a natural fit with those premises.

354. Outside of the existing CIA Areas, the number and density of premises drops off rapidly. However, it also highlights the increasing number of premises around the Riverside area and in St Cuthberts Street.

6.3.3 Change in Licence Numbers and Premises Types: 2022-2025

355. The changing numbers of licences and the composition of premises types between 2022 and 2025 is highlighted below for each existing CIA Area and the wider PSPO Area.

Figure 67. Total licences in the Bedford Town Centre PSPO Area and CIA Areas, 2022 vs 2025

Area	Licences 2022	Licences 2025	Change in licences	Change in licences (%)
High Street	50	61	+11	+22%
Midland Road	21	16	-5	-24%
Tavistock Street	30	25	-5	-17%
PSPO Area	62	74	+12	+19%
TOTAL	**163**	**176**	**+13**	**+8%**

356. The table shows the rise in the High Street CIA licence number from 50 to 61 (+11) whilst, the existing Miland Road and Tavistock Street CIA have both lost licences. This is due to a mixture of closures (and surrendering of licences) but also a small number of licence revocations following enforcement action by the Licensing Authority and partners.

357. The figure below shows the statistics noted above for the High Street CIA Area broken down by licence type.

Figure 68.Total licences and licence type in the HIGH STREET CIA Areas 2022 vs 2025

Licence Type	2022	2022 %	2025	2025 %	Change
Restaurants & cafes	19	38%	23	38%	+4
Pub / bar / club	20	40%	19	31%	-1
Late night refreshment	3	6%	5	8%	+2
Licensed retail	7	14%	9	15%	+2
Arts / Leisure venue	1	2%	5	8%	+4
TOTAL	**50**	**100%**	**61**	**100%**	**+11**

358. Since 2022, there has been some growth (+4 licences) in arts and leisure venues (e.g. experimental leisure, escape rooms) and restaurants (+4 licences) within the existing High Street CIA Area. There is one less pub/bar/nightclub in the area.

359. The figure below shows the statistics above for the existing Midland Road CIA Area broken down by licence type.

Figure 69. Total licences and licence type in the MIDLAND ROAD CIA Area, 2022 vs 2025

Licence Type	2022	2022 %	2025	2025 %	Change
Restaurants & cafes	3	14%	3	19%	0
Pub / bar / club	3	14%	1	6%	-2
Late night refreshment	8	38%	7	44%	-1
Licensed retail	7	33%	4	25%	-3
Hotel / Other	0	0%	1	6%	+1
TOTAL	**21**	**100%**	**16**	**100%**	**-5**

360. There has been a contraction across most licence types in the past three years in the existing Midland Road CIA Area.

361. The figure below shows the statistics above for the Tavistock Street CIA Area broken down by licence type.

Figure 70. Total licences and licence type in the TAVISTOCK STREET CIA Area, 2022 vs 2025

Licence Type	2022	2022 %	2025	2025 %	Change
Restaurants & cafes	15	50%	9	36%	-6
Pub / bar / club	3	10%	4	16%	+1
Late night refreshment	8	27%	7	28%	-1
Licensed retail	4	13%	5	20%	+1
Arts / Leisure venue	0	0%	0	0%	0
TOTAL	30	100%	25	100%	-5

362. The existing Tavistock Street CIA Area has seen a significant drop in restaurants (-6), whilst the other licence types have remained relatively stable over the past three years.

363. The figure below shows the statistics above for the remainder of the non-CIA part of the Bedford Town Centre PSPO Area, broken down by licence type.

Figure 71. Total licences and licence type in the Town Centre PSPO Area, 2022 vs 2025

Licence Type	2022	2022 %	2025	2025 %	Change
Restaurants & cafes	21	34%	22	30%	+1
Pub / bar / club	19	31%	12	16%	-7
Late night refreshment	4	6%	7	9%	+3
Licensed retail	17	27%	18	24%	+1
Arts / Leisure venue	1	2%	7	9%	+6
Other	0	0%	5	7%	+5
Hotel	0	0%	3	4%	+3
TOTAL	62	100%	74	100%	+12

364. There has been a reduction in pubs / bars / clubs (down by 7 venues) in the part of the PSPO Area that is not covered by the three existing CIA Areas.

365. However, overall, there has been an expansion of licences in the PSPO Area, with diversification into hotels (+3), arts and leisure venues (+6) and late-night refreshment (+3). There has also been an expansion in other licences (+5). These include faith and community venues and public realm spaces.

6.4 Summary

366. The number of licences in Bedford borough has increased in the past three years.

367. A significant part of the increase has taken place within the PSPO Area and the existing High Street CIA Area. There being a slight decline in licence numbers in the existing Midland Road and Tavistock Street CIA Areas. These remain areas of the town centre with a high density of crime, ASB and public nuisance incidents as reported in the CCTV and crime and ASB data.

368. However, there is a shift within the CIA Areas away from traditional night-time economy licences, i.e. pubs, bars and nightclubs, towards more restaurants and experiential arts and leisure, as well as late night refreshment licences for fast food business cashing in on the surge in home food delivery. All these changes in Bedford follow national trends in the hospitality and leisure industry.

369. Overall, the main density of licenced premises in Bedford Town Centre remains within the three CIA areas, but there is an increased use of other parts of Bedford town centre for licensed premises. For example, as well as the riverside there is now a growing cluster of new types of wine bar and restaurant in the 'St Cuthbert's Street Quarter', with venues here more targeted towards a slightly older age group from 30-60+.

370. This also corresponds with another national trend of the past three years: where older customers are focusing on food and quality evenings out, whilst the cost-of-living crisis has limited young people's ability to afford as many traditional night-time economy nights out, i.e. those focused on alcohol and dancing.

7.   Conclusions

7.1   Headline Conclusion

371.   In summary, the situation is improving in the three existing CIA Areas, but they do remain problematic, particularly the High Street. The central part of the PSPO Area is also increasingly problematic but here there are far fewer licences in this 'retail core' of the town centre.

372.   Whilst it is for the Licensing Committee to decide if it wishes to retain, modify or remove the existing CIA Areas, there does not appear to be any evidence in this data that there are any new areas of concern where there is a strong correlation between high levels of crime and ASB and the clustering of licensed premises.

7.2   Detailed Conclusions

373.   Overall, there is still a strong association between the high-density clustering of licences in the three existing CIA Areas of the High Street, Midland Road and Tavistock Street, and the presence of higher-than-average levels of crime and disorder and public nuisance. These levels are much higher than average in the High Street CIA Area where the town's main night-time economy is located.

374.   However, crime types that are associated with the clustering of licensed premises declined between 2023/24 and 2024/25 in the three CIA Areas. At the same time, crime types reviewed for this study had increased over the same period across the rest of the borough.

375.   Noise complaints are very low in number and the majority of these are from within the High Street CIA Area. They are resolved quickly because of the excellent working relationship between Environmental Health and venues, meaning that nearly all noise issues are dealt with without enforcement action.

376.   There does not appear to have been any significant expansion of existing problems linked to licensed premise sand their customers beyond the three existing CIA Areas.

377.   There is a slight increase in the last three years in the number of venues in the St Cuthbert's Street area, but the crime and ASB figures do not pose any concerns at this stage.

378.   CCTV incidents continue to be highest within the High Street CIA Area, albeit issues are being captured across the whole PSPO Area including the Midland Road and Tavistock Street CIA Areas. The type of problems linked to the consumption of alcohol and licensed premises captured by CCTV tend to be violence against the person or threatening behaviour - between users of the night-time economy and against door staff, alongside issues of criminal damage linked to both the night-time economy and street drinkers.

379.   The number of licences in the Town Centre PSPO Area has increased over the past three years, with the more cafes and restaurants and leisure venues, and to a lesser extent late night refreshment licensed retail, opening. There has been a small decline in pubs / bars / nightclubs in the town over this period. The High Street and PSPO Area has seen an increase in the number of licences, whilst Midland Road and Tavistock Street have seen decreases in premises.

380. This shift in the type of licensed economy that is emerging in central Bedford may be linked to the changing behaviour of patrons and the decrease in crime and ASB within the PSPO Area and three CIA Areas.

381. Street drinking remains a problem in 2025, particularly in Midland Road CIA Area, but also to some extent in the Tavistock Street CIA Area. The council has developed an innovative pilot Rough Sleeper Panel, bringing together a range of stakeholder to look at a multi-agency approach to support individuals with complex needs who have street-based lifestyles.

382. In summary, the situation is improving in the three CIA Areas, but they do remain problematic, particularly the High Street. The central part of the PSPO Area is also increasingly problematic but here there are far fewer licences in this 'retail core' of the town centre. Whilst it is for the Licensing Committee to decide if it wishes to retain, modify or remove the existing CIA Areas, there does not appear to be any evidence in this data that there are any new areas of concern where there is a strong correlation between high levels of crime and ASB and the clustering of licensed premises.

Finding out more

If you would like further information about us and our services, please telephone, email or write to us at our address below.

Për Informacion

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Informacja

برای اطلاع

Za Informacije

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