Appendix 7

RESTRICTED (when complete)

MG 11

WITNESS STATEMENT

(Criminal Procedure Rules, r. 16.2; Criminal Justice Act 1967, s. 9)

URN

Statement of Steve Robson .....

Age if under 18 Over 18 .... (If over 18 insert "over 18") Occupation: Police Sergeant 2567 .....

This statement (consisting of 3 page(s) each signed by me) is true to the best of my knowledge and belief and I make it knowing that, if it is tendered in evidence, I shall be liable to prosecution if I have wilfully stated in it, anything which I know to be false, or do not believe to be true.

Signature [redacted] (witness) Date: 12.10.2026 ..

Tick if witness evidence is visually recorded ☐ *(supply witness details on rear)*

I am Police Sergeant 2567 stationed at Riverside House, on the Rotherham Central Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT).

I joined the team in October 2025, and on joining the team, I immediately became aware of a public house that was frequently being highlighted as a pub where there were problems occurring. That property was Sports Box, Imperial Buildings, Rotherham.

I had been contacted by other DPS' in the town centre and colleagues from within South Yorkshire Police reporting that the Sports Box is the pub where most of the issues in the town is occurring.

Initially, I had passed my concerns on to the South Yorkshire Police (SYP) Licensing officer Jo Belton, who began engaging with the licensees at the pub.

I became aware and began to monitor what was happening at the location.

In early November 2025, I attended a pubwatch meeting and all the pubs in town decided to enforce a dress code, with a view of attracting "a better type of clientele". I am aware that this matter is totally civil, but I fully agreed with, and supported this decision by the DPS'. Sports Box was the only pub to refuse to enforce a dress code and said they would continue to allow anyone in. I raised my concerns, but again, the decision remained.

On 20th February 2026, a call was made into SYP to state that there was a large-scale fight at the pub between 7 / 8 people. This occurred at approximately 22.30hrs, and on officer attendance, the bouncers stated that they did not see anything and no staff were able to support any investigation into any crime or disorder that occurred.

On 22nd March 2026, a further call to the police was called in stating that 3 people had been assaulted, and it was suspected that the bouncer had been one of those involved.
On 27th March 2026, there had been a further assault inside the pub which then spilled out on to the street, where the fight then continued up the road.

On 17th April 2026, an assault had occurred between x2 males within the pub, which then continued later on in the evening, in a separate part of Rotherham. It is believed that the injuries sustained were a broken nose.

Signature: Sgt 2567 Robson ..... Signature Witnessed by: .....

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On 29th May 2026, a call received that at 01.45hrs reports of 30+ people had been fighting. The bar should have closed at 0200hrs, and when officers arrive, there was several people inside still drinking. There was no door staff present at the time of officer's attendance.

On 24th June 2026, a call was received by a female who stated that she had been spiked by an unknown person within Sports Box, resulting in her feeling unwell, dizzy and confused.
On 4th July 2026, there had been a group of males inside the Sports Box, when they came out, a group of males that were stood in the doorway attacked them and received injuries. This was investigated by CID given the level of injuries. I contacted Jo BELTON, who advised that she was having real difficulty in obtaining the CCTV and good quality CCTV from the pub.

On 12th July 2026, a crime was recorded where there had been a glassing whilst inside the pub. The victim, had named the suspect, as being that of one of the doormen who occasionally works at the Sports Box. This was not substantiated with any PACE compliant ID so that could not be progressed, and the investigation had been filed. The officers that were investigating this stated that staff were not very helpful in supporting the police investigation, given the level of injuries, CID investigated this offence.

I became aware that in late August 2026, the environmental health team at Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council (RMBC) had began gathering evidence for breaches in noise regulations. The complaints had been made by local residents and businesses reporting excessively loud music coming from the pub. In August, I was made aware that the pub is frequently remaining open past its opening hours and this is leading to disorder that occurs associated to the Sports Box and its clients.

On 13th September 2026, a call was received to state that there had been an assault whereby approximately 15 people had attacked a lone male. The disturbance initially began inside and then continued outside. Again, given the level of injuries being a broken jaw, CID investigated this offence also. I observed the CCTV and again, the pub had only 1 member of door staff on, who appeared to do absolutely nothing to stop this offence. After the assault, all of the offenders were then allowed entry back into the Sports Box. The DPS, Dane, was stood at the door. Given the volume in reports that SYP were receiving, and the information that was being given to me, I'd arranged with Jo BELTON, to go down to obtain the CCTV for the assault that occurred on the 13.09.2026. Upon attendance, I had a discussion with Dane (the DPS) and 2 members of staff and discussed that the pub is frequently coming up with reports of disorder, and it is not good enough. I advised them that the clientele that is being allowed in the pub which was resulting in disorder. All the staff denied seeing anything, even though they were in full view of the fight, which I found hard to comprehend that they did not see anything. In the end, we had to call our CCTV technical team to attend and secure the CCTV as it was not possible to successfully recover it or be provided it there and then.

On 19th September 2026, a crime of a threat to kill had been reported, whereby the victim was inside the Sports Box, and the offender entered the pub, and punched him resulting in the victim going unconscious.
On 02.10.2026, a large-scale fight broke out in the pub, involving 15-20 people. Several of the males involved picked up a metal scaffolding poles and were using them as weapons. On officers' arrival, x2 of those involved were arrested for affray, and at the time of writing this statement, there is still an active police investigation.

On 10th October 2026, a female had been removed from the Sports Box, due to her intoxication and she was later arrested for being drunk and disorderly.

Throughout my time being back on Central NPT, I have been aware of some untested intelligence reports that had been logged reporting that there frequently was drug dealing openly occurring from within the pub.

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As part of my responsibility, The Sports Box is one of a number of pubs that I engage with in the town centre, and this is the only pub that results in repeated calls to SYP and Ambulance service. The primary issue, appears to be fighting and disorder that occurs within a pub. I am not aware of any escalating issues or fighting that occur within any other pubs in the town centre. Rotherham town centre, has an historical legacy of being a town that is plagued by deprivation and all of the other DPS's at the other pubs, all work closely together to ensure that the clientele that the town centre needs and wants are allowed in their premises. By the other DPS' working together to make sure that there is no trouble in their premises is very positive for the town centre. I feel that the Sports Box owners, have had ample opportunities to turn things around and to work with key stakeholders, such as RMBC, SYP and other DPS' in the town centre.
There are some really exciting business opportunities that are occurring and I feel that unfortunately, given the fact that the operation at the Sports Box and the crime and disorder associated to it, this will hinder the regeneration of the night life at Rotherham town centre.