

LOCAL LICENSING FORUM

ABERDEEN LOCAL LICENSING FORUM

Thursday, 10 June, 2010

Present: Allan McIntosh, Convener; Craig Adams, Mary Crawford, Mark Donlevy, Ken Eddie, Sohail Faruqi, Councillor Martin Greig, Sandy Kelman, Audrey Kirkpatrick (as substitute for Gerard Rattray), Derek Murray, Diane Sande, Inspector John Soutar, Councillor John West, Dr. Lesley Wilkie, and George Wyatt.

Apologies: Ian Donaldson, Conor McKay, Gerard Rattray (Audrey Kirkpatrick substituting), Katherine Ross and Bob Westland.

1 WELCOME

Allan McIntosh welcomed everyone to the meeting, especially Audrey Kirkpatrick who was attending as a substitute for Gerard Rattray.

2 MINUTE

The Forum had before it the minute of the meeting held on 22 April 2010.

The Forum resolved:-
to approve the minute.

3 FEEDBACK FROM JOINT MEETING WITH THE LICENSING BOARD

The Forum had before it the minute of the joint meeting with the Licensing Board held on 23 April 2010.

The Forum resolved:-
to approve the minute.

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4 STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Inspector John Soutar advised that Grampian Police continued to work effectively with the licensed trade and the Licensing Standards Officer with regular liaison meetings taking place. Charges continued to be brought under the licensing legislation rather than the common law where appropriate. So far this year 245 licensing offences have been recorded compared to a total last year of 350. The Police and licensees are having some success in preventing would-be patrons already under the influence of alcohol from gaining entry to premises and ensuring that they are removed from the city centre rather than repeating attempts to gain entry to other licensed premises. On behalf of Unight, Mark Donlevy advised that members of the Unight Scheme have recently agreed joint initiatives with Grampian Police. For example, use of metal detectors and swab machines to try to eliminate knives and controlled substances being brought into club premises. If staff detect unknown uncontrolled substances they are under instructions to contact Grampian Police. To date 23 patrons have been banned from premises which are members of the Unight Scheme and details are shared in compliance with Data Protection legislation with Grampian Police, the City Council and Safer Aberdeen.

During the World Cup licensees are participating in social responsibility campaigns and the ID campaign to reduce underage drinking continues to be successful following the launch with school pupils. The campaign has now reached the stage of targeting older siblings pointing out the consequences for them of allowing their passports or other ID documents to be used for this purpose.

The Forum resolved:-

to thank Inspector Soutar and Mark Donlevy for their updates.

5 UPDATE FROM LICENSING STANDARDS OFFICER

Diane Sande advised the Forum that she continues to attend monthly liaison meetings with Grampian Police and has worked with Noise Pollution Officers to investigate 14 noise complaints received between 25th February and 25th May, 2010. Seven cases have been closed but can be re-opened at any time if there are further problems.

The Forum resolved:-

to note the update from the Licensing Standards Officer.

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6 LICENSING BOARD BUSINESS UPDATE

The Forum was concerned at the lack of statistical information from the Licensing Board, but accepted that the marked agendas provided some interim information on the volume of business transacted by the Board.

The Forum resolved:-

to request the Clerk to repeat the request for statistical information on a regular basis from the Licensing Board.

7 WORK PLAN

Inspector John Soutar and the Clerk advised the Forum of the limitations of the Forum's remit with specific reference to the review of the late hours catering guidelines by the Licensing Committee at its meeting on 2nd June, 2010. Inspector Soutar was of the opinion that the issue illustrates the need for a comprehensive approach and a wide-ranging debate involving input from the Forum and the Licensing Board. Provision of taxis would be another topic which could benefit from wider consultation as and when appropriate. Sandy Kelman advised that the Alcohol and Drugs Partnership found it could not participate fully in the consultation process in relation to late hours catering guidelines due to a lack of evidence on the impact of changes in opening hours for late night catering premises in other Scottish cities.

In relation to Action No. (13) in the Workplan, the Licensing Board was asked to ensure that any future consideration of measures to clarify legislation in relation to irresponsible promotions including the option of requiring submission of alcohol pricing plans should also apply to the off-sales trade as well as the on-sales trade. Mark Donlevy of Unight advised the Forum of progress by members in developing a Charter and that regardless of policy guidelines they have voluntarily agreed not to encourage entry to their premises by free drink promotions as part of their efforts to encourage responsible practices by licensees. Premises not eligible to join Unight should continue to be encouraged to abide by Best Bar None standards. Participants in the Best Bar None Scheme in Glasgow have developed best practice on a range of issues such as agreeing on a minimum number of supervisors and use of plastic and glassware as appropriate bearing in mind the quality of the product and the particular circumstances such as students' Fresher Weeks. Generally there is support for discretion to be exercised by licensees on the use of plastic containers given their own knowledge of their patrons and commercial considerations.

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An update was provided in relation to item (7) in the Plan on late night bus services and it was noted that a report on the outcome of the survey and work to improve the service will be reported to the Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure Committee on 9th November, 2010. A more detailed update report will be submitted to the September meeting of the Forum and consideration was given to the travel needs of staff working in licensed premises.

The Forum resolved:-

to approve the undernoted actions –

- (1) to request that the Licensing Board reconsider the liaison arrangements between Conveners of the Licensing Board, the Licensing Committee and the Licensing Forum and also discuss this issue as part of the follow-up meeting on the night time economy which the Board are hosting later this year;
- (2) to request the Clerk to invite all members of the Forum to submit questions to her on the late night bus services project so that the officers concerned can respond and to ask them to involve a licensed trade representative in the consultation process (please note following the meeting the officer leading this work has agreed to attend the Forum meeting in September to take part in a discussion and respond to any questions); and
- (3) to request the Licensing Board to support an approach to the Scottish Government seeking clarification of the legislation in relation to irresponsible promotions as discussed at the joint meeting with the Board on 23rd April, 2010.

8 REVIEW OF THE STATEMENT OF LICENSING POLICY

The Forum was advised that a discussion paper would be circulated shortly with a request that members submit any comments for inclusion in a final paper to be discussed at the Forum meeting on Thursday, 29th July, 2010. The aim is to agree on a response to the Depute Clerk to the Licensing Board during August, 2010, to assist in the review of the Statement of Licensing Policy as the new Statement requires to be approved by November, 2010.

The Forum resolved:-

to agree that the main item of business at the Forum meeting on 29th July, 2010, would be the contribution to the review of the Statement of Licensing Policy.

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9 DRINKING IN PUBLIC PLACES

The Forum considered the enforcement of the byelaw on the prohibition of drinking alcohol in public places. Members of the Forum reported members of the public in the vicinity of the Sheriff Court had been seen drinking alcohol in recent weeks. Inspector John Soutar thanked members of the Forum for the information and indicated he would make enquiries and involve his colleagues as required.

The Forum resolved:-

to thank Inspector Soutar for his assistance.

10 WEEKEND VISITS WITH GRAMPIAN POLICE

Councillor John West thanked Inspector John Soutar for arranging worthwhile and informative visits for members of the Forum and the Licensing Board to accompany police patrols to gain first hand knowledge of alcohol related issues in the city centre at the weekends.

11 MEMBERSHIP OF THE LICENSING FORUM

Dr. Lesley Wilkie advised that NHS Grampian had reviewed the representation on Licensing Forums in the North East. Dr. Wilkie advised that she would no longer be the health representative on the Aberdeen Local Licensing Forum and that she had arranged for Ms. Linda Smith, the Public Health Lead Officer with the Aberdeen Community Health Partnership to replace her.

The Forum resolved:-

to thank Dr. Lesley Wilkie for her attendance and contributions at meetings of the Aberdeen Local Licensing Forum and to accept Ms. Linda Smith of the Aberdeen Community Health Partnership as a member of the Forum.

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12 ABERDEEN ALCOHOL STRATEGY

Sandy Kelman reminded the Forum that although the Alcohol Strategy is a 10 year strategy, there is a need to monitor progress towards achieving its objectives. This is being undertaken by the Alcohol Task Group chaired by Dr Lesley Wilkie and champions are being identified to take forward actions to operationalise the strategy. The initiatives being taken by Unight and Grampian Police will be included in monitoring reports. Sandy suggested it would be of interest to the Forum to consider a presentation from his I.T. colleague who has developed a spreadsheet to capture updates on actions in the Action Plan.

The Forum resolved:-

to ask Sandy Kelman to arrange for a presentation on the Alcohol Strategy reporting mechanism at a future meeting.

13 DVD TRAINING RESOURCE

The Forum viewed part of a 30 minute training DVD produced by Alcohol Focus Scotland on the five licensing objectives.

The Forum resolved:-

to invite members of the Licensing Board to join them in an informal viewing and discussion of the DVD as some of the issues raised are relevant to both bodies.

14 ALCOHOL COMMISSION

George Wyatt, Vice-Convener of the Forum, advised members that two documents had recently been added to the Scottish Parliament's website which would be of interest in relation to the Alcohol Etc. (Scotland) Bill, namely the report by the Alcohol Commission chaired by Professor Sally Brown and a response to that report.

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15 NEXT MEETING

It was confirmed that the next meeting of the Forum would be held on Thursday, 29th July, 2010 at 2.00pm and not 5.00pm as previously advised.

- **ALLAN MCINTOSH, Convener**.