

LOCAL LICENSING FORUM

ABERDEEN, 11 February 2025. Minute of Meeting of the LOCAL LICENSING FORUM. Present:- Elaine Mottram, Chairperson; and Danuta Dobrzanska, Karen Gatherum, Artur Ghazaryan, Neil Grant, Steve McConnachie, JP McGivney, Sandy Munro, John Philip and Pete Turner.

WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

1. The Chairperson welcomed all those in attendance to the Local Licensing Forums Annual General Meeting.

The Clerk advised that apologies for absence had been intimated by Finlay Cran, Phil Mackie, William Rae, Barry Stephen and Stephen Stewart.

The Forum resolved:-
to note the apologies.

MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING OF 3 DECEMBER 2024

2. The Forum had before it the minute of the previous meeting of 3 December 2024.

The Forum resolved:-
to approve the minute.

DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT

3. The Chairperson reflected on the previous year's annual report, which was the first of its kind to be shared with the Licensing Board. Whilst unsure of its overall usefulness, the Chairperson acknowledged the value in summarising the Forum's activities over the past year, allowing members to assess their accomplishments or identify areas for improvement, which included the following:-

- members were invited to share their thoughts on the draft report, including its content and level of detail. The Chairperson noted that the length seemed appropriate, as overly lengthy documents may deter readers;
- the intention was to create a document that could inform new members or interested parties about the Forum's activities and impact;
- the Chairperson mentioned ongoing initiatives, such as JP McGivney's football survey and discussions with the Insights team, as well as ideas from Danuta Dobrzanska about integrating with other groups to enhance influence;
- members were encouraged to review the draft report and provide feedback to the Clerk by the following Friday, particularly regarding any omissions or areas needing more emphasis. The Chairperson highlighted the importance of ensuring the report reflects the collective input of the Forum rather than just individual contributions; and
- the finalised report would be shared with the Licensing Board during the next update, scheduled for 15 April 2025.

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The Chairperson concluded by reiterating the goal for 2025, which would be to better understand and measure the Forum's impact, ensuring that their efforts lead to meaningful outcomes.

The Forum resolved:-

- (i) to encourage members to review the draft report and provide feedback to the Clerk by 21 February 2025; and
- (ii) to note that the finalised report would be shared with the Licensing Board at their next meeting, scheduled for 15 April 2025.

THE APPOINTMENT OF OFFICE BEARERS

4. Nominations for the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson positions in the Local Licensing Forum were submitted to the Clerk, with Elaine Mottram nominated to continue as Chairperson and William Rae nominated to remain as Vice-Chairperson.

The Forum resolved:-

to approve the appointments of Elaine Mottram as Chairperson and William Rae as Vice-Chairperson for another term.

THE APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS

5. The Chairperson provided an update to the Forum regarding its membership status, which included that:-

- Phil Mackie would replace John Mooney as the NHS representative;
- Lucy Simpson, representative for the Alcohol and Drugs Partnership had left the Forum, with a replacement still being sought;
- Aberdeen University had informed the Forum that a replacement representative had still to be sought as there were none available at the moment; and
- Grant Wiseman and Barry Stephen, Adult Social Services had been members for a while but had yet to attend a meeting.

The Forum resolved:-

- (i) to note the membership update;
- (ii) to acknowledge that the Chairperson would continue to liaise with her contacts regarding the on-going appointment of replacement representatives; and
- (iii) to note that the Chairperson would contact Grant Wiseman and Barry Stephen to agree a way forward in terms of their attendance at meetings.

DRAFT CHANGES TO THE LOCAL LICENSING FORUM CONSTITUTION

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6. The Chairperson informed the Forum that she proposed to update the roles of Convener and Vice-Convener to Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson within the Constitution for consistency purposes.

The Forum resolved:-

- (i) to agree to the proposed changes;
- (ii) to note that the Clerk would update the Constitution to reflect the agreed changes; and
- (iii) to inform the Licensing Board of these changes at the next Joint Licensing Board and Local Licensing Forum meeting.

DATA INSIGHTS - UPDATE

7. The Chairperson reported on a recent meeting attended by herself and Pete Turner with Reyna Stewart from the Data Insights team, which occurred approximately three weeks ago.

Ms Stewart advised that where data was available relating to alcohol use, it focused primarily on the negative impact of alcohol, particularly from a Public Health perspective. Whilst this data included information on licensed trade off-sales, it lacked metrics such as footfall, revenue, and the number of establishments selling alcohol, which would illustrate benefits relating to the night time economy.

Pete Turner showed some slides which provided examples of the kind of data available to us as well as to the general public. It was agreed that Pete Turner and Danuta Dobrzanska would explore various sources of data and lead the Forum Development session in June. The aim would be to identify data which would relate to the Success Criteria work already undertaken.

Other key discussion points included that:-

- the current data emphasised negative aspects of alcohol consumption without offering a balanced perspective on the nighttime economy or the positive contributions of the alcohol trade;
- the importance of aligning the Forums efforts with the Aberdeen City Council's Local Outcomes Improvement Plan was discussed, which focused on enhancing various outcomes for residents, including those related to alcohol;
- the Forum aimed to make incremental improvements over the coming years which would allow them to benefit from integrating their metrics on alcohol-related harms with the Council's initiatives; and
- by connecting their work to the Council's goals, the Forum would generate greater interest from the Licensing Board and the Council, which would enhance the relevance and impact of their efforts.

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The Chairperson emphasised the necessity for a comprehensive approach that incorporated both negative and positive aspects of alcohol-related data to better inform their strategies and initiatives.

Steve McConnachie advised that he had shared some National Records for Scotland data in the meeting chat for reference.

The Forum resolved:-

- (i) to note the update provided; and
- (ii) to note that the Clerk would circulate the National Records for Scotland statistics shared by Steve McConnachie in due course.

FOOTFALL SURVEY UPDATE (JP MCGIVNEY)

8. JP McGivney provided an update on the Footfall Survey, detailing the current status and activities related to the project. The Key Points included that:-

- eleven late-night venues signed up to participate in the survey, providing data on footfall, which referred to the number of people entering their establishments, rather than financial metrics like cash taken or profit;
- a clicker system was used to record footfall, ensuring transparency and anonymity. Participants' individual data would not be disclosed until all responses were collected to maintain confidentiality;
- the survey covered two timeframes:-
 - comparing 23 December 2024 to 6 January 2025 with the same period 2023/24 - six venues reported a total footfall increase of 19%; and
 - comparing December 2019 and December 2024 - six venues reported a decrease of 36% in footfall;
- reflecting on data from 2009, the survey examined footfall between 10pm and 4.30am, coinciding with late-night bus service hours;
- whilst the data was rich with figures, it currently lacked statistical analysis, focusing instead on year-on-year comparisons. Notably, common assault incidents showed a dip in 2023 but remained consistent with 2022 figures; and
- the data was collected from 23 December 2023 to 6 January 2024, aligning with the operation of late-night buses.

The update highlighted the ongoing efforts to understand footfall trends in late-night venues and their implications for public safety and the nighttime economy.

The significant impact of perception on public safety and behaviour was highlighted, particularly regarding the City Centre. The Key Points included that:-

- footfall numbers from fifteen to twenty years ago would have been much higher, indicating a shift in public perception of safety that did not necessarily align with actual crime statistics;
- members agreed that perception of safety significantly influenced people's behaviour, regardless of the actual safety data. Individuals may avoid the City

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Centre due to feelings of insecurity, which could persist despite evidence to the contrary;

- the Chairperson shared a personal anecdote about avoiding Union Terrace Gardens prior to the masterplan completion, due to fear of assault, despite low crime rates in that area;
- concerns were raised about social media narratives regarding asylum seekers and crime, which could exacerbate public fears. Police data did not support claims of increased criminality among asylum seekers in the City Centre;
- the perception that increasing the number of taxi drivers would enhance safety was discussed. However, examples from Glasgow indicated that simply having more taxis did not necessarily correlate with improved safety or accessibility;
- plans were made to include the footfall survey in the next meeting, along with data insights from NHS Grampian and Scottish health data. Phil Mackie, the new NHS Grampian representative, was tasked with gathering this information; and
- the Chairperson suggested that future discussions could explore the timing of late-night opening hours and their potential impact on safety and footfall, aiming to connect various data points for a comprehensive understanding.

The Forum resolved:-

- (i) to note that JP McGivney would provide details of the outcome of the Footfall Survey at the next Forum meeting; and
- (ii) to continue the data collection and analysis to inform strategies and initiatives, due to the complexity of addressing public perception and safety.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING - 22 APRIL 2025

9. The Forum were advised that the next meeting would be held on 22 April 2025.

The Forum resolved:-

to note the date of the next meeting.