

Date: 4th November 2016

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Please note this letter refers to all twelve occasional licence applications for the Aberdeen Christmas Village.

Dear Sir / Madam

**Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005 – Application for the Grant of an Occasional Licence
Aberdeen Christmas Village – Ice Rink Viewing Marquee, Entertainment Marquee,
Walk up Bar 1 and Walk up Bar 2**

I refer to the above applications for occasional licences to be granted for the period 26th November 2015 – 3rd January 2016, and in terms of Section 58(1)(a) of the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005 wish to lodge an objection

The applications seek the grant of an occasional licence to cover the period Thursday, 26th November through to Sunday, 3rd January 2016 in respect of the Aberdeen Christmas Village which will be held on Union Terrace, Aberdeen at this time. The occasional licence relates to the sale of alcohol for consumption both on and off the premises as I understand that the local byelaw prohibiting street drinking has been suspended for Union Terrace for the duration of the event.

I make the following observations in relation to the application.

- **The close proximity** of the Christmas Village to the Belmont Street Locality
- The increased availability of alcohol through the four outlets detailed in the plan
- The potential harm to children and young people

The Aberdeen City Licensing Board Statement of Licensing Policy 2013 – 2016 identifies the Belmont Street Locality as an area of overprovision for the city of Aberdeen. Paragraph 9.3 states:

“The Belmont Street, Locality, which is that area of Belmont Street bordered by Union Street, Back Wynd and Schoolhill. It includes Belmont Street, Union Street, (north side), Back Wynd, Little Belmont Street, Gaelic Lane(both sides) and the south side of Schoolhill between Belmont Street and Back Wynd”

I would suggest that although Union Terrace is out with the overprovision area the proposed viewing marquee, entertainment marquee and two walk up bars represent a **substantial drinking footprint** within an area of the city that is already well provided for.

The Aberdeen Christmas Village is new to the city and would appear to be seeking a festive, family orientated audience with the inclusion of children's rides, ice skating rink and entertainment. I do not feel that the inclusion of an alcohol license provides any positive enhancement to this event.

I am particularly unhappy at the impact this event will have on children and young people through the following:

- Alcohol being served during children's shows in the entertainment marquee.
- The positioning of walk up bar 2 where it appears to be very close to fun fair rides for children and young people
- A bar area within the covered viewing area of the ice rink.

Once again I feel the need to state my concern that alcohol appears to be pervading every social gathering with an expectation that no event is complete without the inclusion of alcohol. Children and young people are growing up thinking that occasions are not complete without alcohol and that somehow an element of enjoyment is missing if it is not present. This sends the wrong message to our young people. If we are to succeed in changing cultural attitudes to alcohol it will be necessary to stop normalising its inclusion in so many aspects of life.

I have not been able to confirm that there will be toilet facilities provided for this event. I am sure you can appreciate the consequences of this which will potentially have an impact on public health and anti social behaviour.

Aberdeen City already has a higher incidence of wholly attributable alcohol related hospital admissions when compared to Aberdeenshire, Moray and the rest of Scotland. Alcohol related deaths are slightly lower than the Scottish average but are still higher than, Moray, Aberdeenshire or England & Wales. Even small reductions in the availability of alcohol can contribute to health gain and reduce violence and harm to the population generally, as well as to the drinker themselves. For these reasons I would request that the granting of a license for the Aberdeen Christmas Village is not granted.

For these reasons, and in terms of Section 58(1)(a) of the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005, NHS Grampian objects to the application specifically in relation to the grounds for refusal at section 59(6)(c) of the same Act, in that the granting of the application would be inconsistent with the Protecting and Improving Public Health and Protecting Children from Harm licensing objectives.

Yours faithfully

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Christopher Littlejohn
Consultant in Public Health

pp Heather Wilson
Health Improvement Officer