

20 February 2018

Convenor
Aberdeen City Licensing Board
Legal and Democratic Services
Corporate Governance
Aberdeen City Council
Business Hub 6 L1S
Marischal College, Broad Street
Aberdeen
AB10 1AB



North East Division
Queen Street
Aberdeen
AB10 1ZA

Dear Convenor to the Licensing Board

**LICENSING (SCOTLAND) ACT 2005 - ABERDEEN CITY LICENSING BOARD
STATEMENT OF LICENSING POLICY
ASSESSMENT OF OVERPROVISION OF 'OFF SALES' PREMISES**

I refer to the abovementioned assessment in respect of overprovision of 'off sales' licensed premises within Aberdeen city. Below are our responses to the consultation document and enclosed also is a report by a Community Safety Analyst, further to our letter of 16 June 2017 and the report attached thereto. The updated report seeks to demonstrate, in relation to the offences highlighted, where the consumption of alcohol has been a feature, by providing data in relation to the assessed sobriety status of offenders.

This data excludes crimes and offences committed on 'on sales' licensed premises and unfortunately I am unable to provide a breakdown of locus type, however, I am confident that you will understand that many of the crime types highlighted occurred within both public space and private space.

RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

1. Do you think the current provision of off-sale premises as shown as in the map is:
 - a) Too many?
 - b) About right?
 - c) Insufficient?

We are of the view that there is a sufficiency of off-sales premises within Aberdeen city.

NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED

2. If you feel there are too many do you think there are too many of:
 - a) Premises of a particular type?
 - b) Premises of a particular size?
 - c) Off-sales premises in general?

3. If the Licensing Board determine there is overprovision, do you think there should be any exceptions to this policy under the following licensing objectives:-
 - a) Preventing crime & disorder.
 - b) Securing public safety.
 - c) Preventing public nuisance.
 - d) Protecting and improving public health.
 - e) Protecting children and young persons from harm.

4. Do you have any other comments on off-sales overprovision?

North East Division of the Police Service of Scotland recognise that consumption of alcohol is a significant contributory factor in a considerable proportion of a wide variety of crimes and offences that are committed, particularly crimes of violence and disorder, to this end I include a report with crime statistics and the sobriety status of offenders, for your consideration.

We also recognise the role that the consumption of alcohol can play in instances of misadventure and individuals' experiences of personal crisis.

Setting aside statistics in relation to offences which are more readily linked to the consumption of alcohol on 'on sales' premises, Police Scotland cannot provide a body of evidence which links crimes and offences in which alcohol may have been a contributory factor to the sale of alcohol specifically from 'off sales' licensed premises in proximity of either location or time, to a crime or offence. This is however, not in any way intended to offer a position that there is no link, quite the contrary; we are of the view that the link is strong and well evidenced, and the link is that the consumption of alcohol, wherever purchased or consumed, is a significant contributory factor in the commission of many crimes and offences, and types of crimes and offences.

While it would be reasonable to assume that the majority of alcohol purchased from off sales premises within Aberdeen city is similarly consumed within the city, and most probably within private spaces, it likewise has to be acknowledged that a person who commits any offence while acting under the influence of alcohol, may have purchased that alcohol, or it may have been purchased by a third party, at a location and time with no bearing on the subsequent event.

It is therefore a question as to whether the consumption of the alcohol, rather than the regulated sale of same from an off sales premises, that connects the sale to the later criminality, adverse event or other harm.

We do not believe that there is simple numerical correlation between the number of off sales premises and the number of crimes and offences reported; it is not a

NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED

NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED

logical position to take that had there been half the amount of off sales premises, there would be half the amount of crimes committed.

It would be reasonable to assume that had alcohol not been available in a number of locations, that it is likely that the majority of purchases of alcohol may still have been made, but from a lesser number of off sales premises.

It is also possible that if alcohol was less widely available, a number of purchases of alcohol would not have taken place however it is impossible to measure, other than a small number of instances, which specific sales of alcohol (from an off sales licensed premises) led to which adverse events.

It is however reasonable to have the view that consumption of alcohol can affect a person's behaviour to the extent that they become the perpetrator of a crime or make decisions that lead to another adversity.

Our position is to be able to provide evidence of where alcohol consumption has been a significant contributory factor in the commission of crimes or offences. The question of whether less crimes would be committed if alcohol were less available is difficult to define; perhaps more simple is the position that less consumption of alcohol may lead to less crime, disorder and other harms.

There is a national multi-agency strategy which is committed to changing the Scottish population's relationship with alcohol. Licensing Boards' Statements of Licensing Policy could be considered one such strand and if Aberdeen City Licensing Board has sought or otherwise been provided with evidence which strongly suggests that less availability of alcohol from off sales premises is likely to lead to a reduction in alcohol related crime or health harm, we are supportive of any measure the Board may then choose to take.

I hope this information is of use to the Aberdeen City Licensing Board in the overall assessment of overprovision of 'off-sales' premises.

Please do not hesitate to contact our North East Division licensing team if we can be of further assistance.

Yours sincerely

Kenneth McGeough
Inspector
North East Division Licensing Team

NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED