

ABERDEEN CITY LOCAL LICENSING FORUM

UPDATE FOR LICENSING BOARD 1st July 2025

Introduction

This paper provides an update to the Licensing Board of the main topics discussed by the Local Licensing Forum since submission of our Annual Report to the Licensing Board meeting on 15th April 2025.

The role of the Forum is to provide feedback and recommendations to the Board in relation to the safe use of alcohol and the upholding of the licensing objectives.

1. Update on Forum Membership

New members

- NHS Grampian – Phil Mackie
- Trade – Scott Forrest
- Aberdeen Youth Parliament members – Pelumi Otitoju and Mariah Ichakpa

No longer members

- John Mooney (NHS Grampian)
- Lucy Simpson (ADP, awaiting replacement)
- Grant Wiseman (Trade)
- Diane Sande (LSO, retired)

2. Meeting held on 22nd April 2025

a) City Centre Footfall Survey

JP McGivney undertook a Footfall Survey to gather data about footfall in city centre venues. There had been a limited response but a number of issues emerged during discussion.

- A significant decline in attendance at a key venue, the Tunnels, with only 70 to 100 attendees. Previous numbers would have been 600-700.
- Closure of “Car Wash Tuesdays” which had operated for 12 years.
- Reduction in opening days for many venues to 3 or 4 days per week.
- Issues faced in Aberdeen are not experienced to the same degree in Glasgow according to a Forum member who manages a number of Glasow venues.
- Violence associated with licensed premises is much decreased but street drinkers and youth disturbances have a major impact on public perceptions regarding city centre safety.
- Recognition of the need for licensed premises to adapt to respond to the changes resulting from easy access to alcohol from online ordering and supermarkets.

b) Night time transport issues

Forum Member, Scott Forrest, provided an overview of a survey of his customers which he had undertaken. The survey revealed significant numbers reporting

- They had experienced difficulties taking a taxi into the city centre.
- They had experienced difficulties taking a taxi home.
- They felt unsafe walking due to the lack of taxis.
- They were more likely to visit the city centre if a company which connected passengers with drivers through a mobile app were to be introduced.

The Chair and Forum member Artur Ghazaryan recently took up the offer made by Cllr Al-Samarai to meet and discuss transport issues. A useful discussion took place and Cllr Al-Samarai advised that should the Forum wish to comment on transport and the impact it has on perceptions of City Centre safety, we should contribute to the review of the Taxi and Private Hire Consultation Group Policy at the appropriate time.

3. Development session held on 17th June 2025

The planned agenda topic for the LLF Development Day, Exploration of Relevant Alcohol Harm Data as provided by the City Council Data Insights Team, required to be changed at very short notice. Phil Mackie, NHS Grampian, stepped in and delivered his presentation on gambling harms which he had recently shared with the Licensing Board.

It was highlighted that while the numbers of problem gamblers are relatively low, there are huge numbers at risk of developing problems. The wider costs to public services and wider society of problem gambling are also significant. Phil provided an opportunity to explore connections between gambling and alcohol and a very useful discussion took place.

Key areas explored regarding the links between alcohol and gambling in relation were

- Online gambling and alcohol consumption in the home
- Large events associated with both alcohol and gambling eg horse racing
- The presence of gambling in most licensed premises

4. ELEPHANT STUDY update

The last ELEPHANT Study update outlined how each of the streams of work in the study would be publicised ie at a Conference and through publications. Both the Licensing Board and the Local Licensing Forum wished to be reassured that a specific report covering all streams of work would be made available and discussed with stakeholders in Aberdeen. The Chair of the Forum contacted Professor Fitzgerald who led the study and has received a commitment that there will be an easily accessible report on the findings. Professor Fitzgerald reported that there are significant findings for Aberdeen. However they must go through the peer review process before they can be shared. Stakeholder events will be planned when that process is complete.

**Elaine Mottram, Chair of the Local Licensing Forum
June 2025**