

Our Ref: NALF/2/2016 VM

To: Adam Sinclair
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15 March, 2016

Dear Mr Sinclair,

At the last meeting of the North Aberdeenshire Licensing Forum, which took place on Wednesday 27 January, 2016, members raised concerns at the profile of Local Licensing Forums. It was felt that it was increasingly difficult to attract people to join the Forums and that the general public were largely unaware of their existence.

Is there anything that the Scottish Government are planning, or would be willing to do, in order to strengthen the position of the Local Licensing Forums? As bodies established to ensure that Licensing Boards are operating effectively, it is essential that they have representative memberships and can operate from position of strength.

I would welcome any information or comments which you may have on this matter.

Yours sincerely

Norma Thomson
Convener, North Aberdeenshire Licensing Forum

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Ms Norma Thomson
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30 March 2016

Dear Ms Thomson

Thank you for your letter of 15 March regarding the profile of licensing forums.

As you will be aware, the Scottish Government is responsible for the overarching legislation in relation to licensing, but responsibility for individual decisions and the local operation of liquor licensing rest with Licensing Boards.

Concerns have been raised in the past about the operation of licensing forums. For example, by the MESAS evaluation of the operation of the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005: <http://www.scotcen.org.uk/media/40774/evaluation-of-the-licensing-scotland-act-2005-final-report.pdf>

We are also aware that stakeholders such as Alcohol Focus Scotland are undertaking work to encourage public engagement in the licensing system. For example, by the publication of a guide for members of the public: <http://www.alcohol-focus-scotland.org.uk/media/133477/Community-licensing-toolkit.pdf>

With regards to what the Scottish Government can do to raise the profile of licensing forums, it will be for the next Government to determine its priorities going forward. However the immediate focus is likely to be on the commencement and implementation of the provisions within the recent Air Weapons and Licensing (Scotland) Act 2015.

I trust that this information is of interest to North Aberdeenshire Licensing Forum.

Yours sincerely

By e-mail

Adam Sinclair
Licensing team