

ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL

SOUTH ABERDEENSHIRE LICENSING FORUM

TOWN HALL, INVERURIE, 25th JANUARY, 2017

Present: Ms Lisa Godini, Ms Lauren Eastwood, Mr William Duncan, Mr Wayne Gault, Mr Robin Philip, Mr Kenneth McGeough, Ms Dawn Tuckwood, Ms Carol Muir, Mr Cryle Shand.

Officer: Anna Ziarkowska (Paralegal), Aberdeenshire Council

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Mr Paul MacLennan (Convener).

2. MINUTE OF MEETING OF 28th OCTOBER, 2015

The Minute of the Meeting of 26th October, 2016 had been circulated and **approved**.

3. MATTERS ARISING

(1) Members were advised that at the last Forum's meeting it was proposed to write a letter to the Scottish Government asking about the objective data in respect of the off-sales capacity and propose to refresh the alcohol strategy with a view to standardise methodology for sale premises. Draft letter has been prepared and wording agreed. Thereafter, Members were keen to put this forward.

(2) Members considered to what extent the occasional licenses contribute to local alcohol consumption and how this does impact on the community as a whole. Following on from discussion, members were interested to see whether specific data as to the category/type of events for which occasional licences had been granted over the last year is available.

Thereafter, it was **agreed** that Licensing Standard Officers would:

- a) check feasibility of acquiring relevant data/information in respect of the categories of events covered by Occasional Licences (OL) and number of people attending the events,
- b) prepare demo of statistics for OL in selected month, and
- c) report back to the Forum at the next meeting.

4. ALCOHOL RELATED DEATHS

There had been circulated some information which provided headline figures on alcohol-related deaths and hospital admission performance.

It was observed that alcohol related death rate in Aberdeenshire has been steadily increasing since 2010 whilst the national situation in the rest of Scotland and council areas have improved. It was also reported that Aberdeenshire has the lowest rate of alcohol related hospital admissions in Scotland and this number has been declining over last years. Members discussed the statistics on alcohol-related deaths and hospital admissions in Aberdeenshire and potentials correlation between those two indicators. Members were particularly concerned

about the alarming increase in alcohol consumption in Aberdeenshire in recent years and then considered various options of how Forum could approach this problem. It was proposed:

- to launch community-wide discussion/consultation to make people aware of the problem,
- to engage with premises license holders to encourage people to shift away from home drinking,
- to invite off-sale trade representative to the next Forum meeting and consult with them possible solutions;
- to raise this matter to the Licensing Board's attention with a view to take certain precautions.

Following on from discussion, it was **agreed** that:

- a) Wayne Gault would continue to monitor this data and provide members with an update,
- b) Committee Officer would add an item to the agenda of the next meeting of the Forum to give further consideration to alcohol related deaths in Aberdeenshire area, and
- c) Committee Officer would prepare draft letter to the Central Licensing Board raising issue of the dramatic increase in Alcohol Related Deaths in Aberdeenshire.

5. CABINET SECRETARY LETTER REGARDING ON-LINE SALES

There had been circulated a letter from Alcohol Focus Scotland to Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport regarding on-line alcohol sales in Scotland. The letter expressed concerns regarding the ability of the local licensing system to respond to the challenges posed by on-line retailers. It was observed that there has been increase in a number of alcohol licence applications and enquiries being lodged concerning the on-line alcohol sales and set up of new alcohol - related business such as wine suppliers, whiskey auctions or hamper makers.

Members discussed that this is becoming a major issue across the whole Aberdeenshire and the Licensing Boards are lacking a mechanism of controlling/limiting the alcohol availability as the retailer operating in one board area could distribute alcohol to any part of Scotland and this could have implications for communities across the country. It was reported that this new type of business would undermine both local and national efforts to limit the availability of alcohol, and weaken the attempts to reduce alcohol-related harm. It was further discussed that there is lack of information available about business operation of online retailers in respect of the level of contribution to alcohol sales and availability, volume and type of alcohol they sell. Members were also concerned about the potential impact of on-line sales to children and young people in respect of the purchaser age verification. Following on from discussion, Members were keen to raise this matter to the Board's attention and initiate consultation on revisiting the licensing policy to address this problem.

After consideration, the Forum **agreed** to note the information provided.

6. SCOTTISH SCHOOLS ADOLESCENT LIFESTYLE AND SUBSTANCE USE SURVEY – ABERDEENSHIRE

It was **agreed** to refer this item for the discussion at the next meeting of the Forum.

7. PROPOSED ESTABLISHMENT OF A NATIONAL LICENSING FORUM

There had been circulated a letter from East Ayrshire Council addressed to all Licensing Forums in Scotland regarding the proposed establishment of a National Licensing Forum. The letter was seeking the comments and views from other Councils as to the proposed establishment of a National Licensing Forum its terms of reference, remit, funding and timetable of meetings. Following on from discussion, Members considered the potential benefits and drawbacks of having centralised Licensing Forum at the national level.

After consideration, it was **agreed** that the Committee Officer would complete the attached questionnaire and provide response to the consultation paper.

8. CONSIDERATION TO THE SUBJECT OF OCCASIONAL LICENSES

After consideration, the Forum **agreed** to refer this item for the discussion at the next meeting of the Forum.

9. LICENSING BOARD UPDATE

Cryle Shand advised that the Board had met on 14th December, 2016 where they had considered a review hearings. There were two new Premises Licence applications and Board has been informed that five Premises Licences have ceased to operate since the last Board meeting in October, 2016. Mr Shand presented the statistics on number of different types of licences granted by the Board recently and informed that Licensing Policy Statement would be reviewed shortly. Mr Shand also advised that there will be one more meeting of the Board in February, before the Local Authority Election in May where new Board Members will be selected and appointed. A copy of notes providing the update on work of the Central Licensing Board to be circulated among Members.

After consideration, it was **agreed** to note the information provided in the update.

10. LICENSING STANDARDS OFFICER UPDATE

Lisa Godini and Lauren Eastwood advised that the regulation side of things remained quiet and stable with no trends or worries to highlight. They stated that Licensing Officers working successfully alongside with Police Officers and visiting licensed premises. Members were reminded about the ongoing issues with the 'bring you own alcohol' type of event and online alcohol sales and assured that Licensing Officers monitor the situation in a partnership with Police.

After consideration, the Forum **agreed** to note the information provided in the update

11. POLICE UPDATE

Kenneth McGeough advised that licensing team adopted more operational strategy in their daily work and started visiting the licenced premises with a view to identify and deal with any issues arising in cooperation with Licensing Standards Officers.

He stated that Police maintain the list of 'TOP 5' licenced premises which causing some issues and increase a number of Police inspections at such premises to undertake preventive actions if necessary. He also advised that there will be Police-led alcohol licensing events in May in Elgin, Fraserburgh and Peterhead. Depending on its success, Police will run similar events across other divisions.

After consideration, the Forum **agreed** to note the information provided in the update.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(1) Members were keen to look for opportunity to arrange a joint meeting of Central Licensing Forum & Central Licensing Board to discuss ongoing issues and consult possible measures. It was **agreed** that, Committee Officer would progress this further.

(2) Members considered how to best establish and maintain relationships with the Central Licensing Board after the Election. It was **agreed** to add an item to the agenda of the next meeting of the Forum to consider this matter further.

(3) Members were keen to arrange a joint meeting of all three Licensing Forums to discuss common issues/challenges and strategies for future. It was **agreed** that, Committee Officer would progress this further.

(4) Members were keen to invite off-sale trade representative to come along to the next meeting of the Forum. It was **agreed** that, Committee Officer would progress this further.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was **agreed** that the next meeting of the Forum would take place on Wednesday, 14th June 2017 at 10.00 a.m. Council Chamber, Gordon House, Inverurie.