

## ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL

### CENTRAL ABERDEENSHIRE LICENSING FORUM

COUNCIL CHAMBER, INVERURIE, 8<sup>th</sup> MARCH, 2017

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

**Officer:** Anna Ziarkowska (Paralegal), Aberdeenshire Council

**In presence of:** Darren Muir, Nicola Sedgwick, Keith Whyte.

#### 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Mr Paul MacLennan and Dawn Tuckwood.

#### 2. MINUTE OF MEETING OF 25<sup>th</sup> JANUARY, 2017

The Minute of the Meeting of 25<sup>th</sup> January, 2017 had been circulated and **approved**.

#### 3. MATTERS ARISING

The Vice - Chair welcomed the off trade representatives and introduced the Forum Members. Thereafter, he gave a brief overview of the Forum's operation and asked guests to introduce themselves and give reasons for their interest in the Forum.

#### 4. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING BUSINESS

There had been circulated a report dated 22<sup>nd</sup> February, 2017 by the Committee Officer which advised Members that this was the Annual General Meeting of the Central Aberdeenshire Licensing Forum and that the formal business to be transacted was to receive an annual report from the Vice-Convener and to appoint Office Bearers and Members.

In his report, the Vice-Convener thanked members for their ongoing support and input to the work of the Central Licensing Forum. The Vice-Convener briefly summarised the key areas of Forum's interest for the last year, namely the alarming statistics on the alcohol related deaths, increasing off-sale capacity and the problem of online availability of alcohol. He also outlined the key challenges of the Forum for the forthcoming year including ensuring the descent turnout, encouraging greater public involvement and reconsidering the role of the Forum with a view to be more effective.

In relation to membership, Members acknowledged a list appended to the report which set out the maximum possible and actual attendances of Members at Forum meetings. It was felt important to secure a new representative from the local community, off sale trade and general public on the Forum. In order to raise awareness of the Forum and encourage new applications for membership, Wayne Gault suggested that it would be worthwhile to contact press and Social Media.

After consideration, the Forum **agreed**:-

(1) to note the Vice-Convener's report 2016/17,

(2) to formally appoint William Duncan as Convener for 2017/18,

(3) to continue with Aberdeenshire Council's administrative support to the Forum in 2017/18, and

(4) the appointment of members for 2017/18

## 5. LICENSING BOARD UPDATE

There had been circulated a report dated 8<sup>th</sup> March 2017 by the Convener of the Central Aberdeenshire Licensing Board which advised Forum's Member on the progress of the Board operation. Cryle Shand informed that the Board had met on 8<sup>th</sup> February, 2017 and there were no hearings. Mr Shand also 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. He further reported that Board discussed the End of Aisle Alcohol Display in Off Sales Premises and Adult Entertainment Briefing Note. Forum Members were also reminded that the New Board will be chosen by the Aberdeenshire Council following the elections in May and all members elected (even those who have previously sat on the Board) will be required to undergo compulsory training and pass qualification to allow them to sit.

Mr Kenneth McGeough queried whether it is possible for Police Scotland to participate in the Board training. Committee Officer advised that Licensing Board training is done externally, but it would be possible to organise a separate session later on in the year to go through the policy with the Board with a view to kick starting the Licensing Policy Review process. It was suggested that Police and LSO's would be welcome to join that.

Mr Wayne Gault highlighted that Board should address the issue of the End of Aisle Alcohol Display issue by adopting specific provisions which allow Board to influence on the proposed layout of off sales premises. Mr Shand advised that one of the first tasks of the new Board will be to reviewing and preparing new Policy Statements which will last for 5 years. It was observed that this is a great opportunity for a Forum to put all areas of Forum's concern in writing and put them forward for Board consideration. It was also felt that Forum should be better informed about the Board's general discussions and want to see the minutes from the Board meetings.

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

## 6. 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 run the program of inspections of licensed premises in order to identify problems and discuss preventive measures at early stage. Members were advised that there will be a new post of the Civil LSO required under the statute which may potentially impact on the workload of LSOs. The exact functions of the new position are still unknown, but it is suspected that they will mirror current LSO responsibilities. 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

## 7. POLICE UPDATE

Mr Kenneth McGeough advised that licensing team adopted more operational strategy in its daily work and started visiting the licenced premises with a view to identify and deal with any issues arising in co-operation with Licensing Standards Officers. He stated that Police maintain the list of 'emerging premises' which causing some issues and increase a number of

Police inspections at such premises to undertake preventive actions if necessary. It was reported that this system operates for some time now and it seems to be successful in identifying the problems at early stage, helping licence holders to find a solutions and eliminating the issues. It was observed that Police would continue with the prevention and partnership working with Health and LSOs.

During discussion Members highlighted that all licenced premises should be treated fairly in respect of the number of control visits. Kenneth McGeough advised that public feedback on how Police carries out the inspections would be greatly appreciated as this would allow him to identify positive and negative aspects of the Police work and introduce further improvements.

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

## **8. SCOTTISH SCHOOLS ADOLESCENT LIFESTYLE AND SUBSTANCE USE SURVEY – ABERDEENSHIRE**

There had been circulated some research paper which provided a summary of initial findings from the Aberdeenshire Scottish Schools Adolescent Lifestyle and Substance Use Survey. It was reported that the proportion of 13 year old pupils who had ever has an alcoholic drink was higher in Aberdeenshire than Scotland overall (37% in Aberdeenshire compared with 28% in Scotland). It was also observed that pupils in Aberdeenshire were less likely than those across Scotland overall to source their alcohol from an off-licence (0% of pupils in Aberdeenshire compared with 4% in Scotland) and were more likely to get their alcohol from home (with or without permission) (41% in Aberdeenshire, compared with 29% across Scotland). Wayne Gault advised that there was no drastic change in the trend and the key message being an ongoing decline in the number of licensed premises where young people can get alcohol from.

During the discussion Members raised their concern about the increased proportion of youngsters consuming the alcohol with easier access to drinks at home. It was observed that too much focus is given to drugs whereas alcohol become a socially accepted product and normal part of the daily life of the communities. Although statistics showed that proportion of youngsters who agree that they get enough support has increased between 2013 and 2015 (83% in 2015, compared with 72% in 2013), Members identified that there is no sufficient education in respect of alcohol. Members also highlighted the need to consider and examine those factors by the Board when reviewing the licensing policy statements.

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

## **9. CONSIDERATIONS HOW TO BEST ESTABLISH AND MAINTAIN RELATIONSHIPS WITH BOARD AFTER THE ELECTION**

Mr Cryle Shand advised that the New Board will be chosen by the Aberdeenshire Council following the elections in May. Members were invited to attend the Board meetings in order to improve the collaboration between bodies. Forum Members were also reminded that one of the first tasks of the new Board will be to reviewing and preparing new Policy Statements which will last for 5 years. It was observed that this is a great opportunity for a Forum to put all areas of Forum's concern in writing and put them forward for Board consideration.

## **10. CONSIDERATIONS HOW TO ENCOURAGE GREATER COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN FORUM'S OPERATION.**

Members acknowledged decreasing number of Forum's Members. It was felt important to secure a new representative from the local community, off sale trade and general public on the Forum. During the discussion Members suggested that it would be worthwhile to contact press, Social Media and Community Councils in order to raise awareness of the Forum and

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

#### **11. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION AT THE JOINT MEETING OF LICENSING FORUMS AND THE JOINT MEETNIG WITH THE BOARD.**

Forum Members were advised that there will be a joint session of three Licensing Forums on 24<sup>th</sup> March, 2017 to consider potentials of having single Licensing Forum for Aberdeenshire and exchange the views on common problems. Thereafter, Members identified potential topics for discussion at the Joint Meeting of three Licensing Forums including the need for a joint training session with new Boards and options for encouraging greater community involvement in Forums' operation.

#### **12. CONSIDERATION TO THE SUBJECT OF OCCASIONAL LICENCES**

Members were advised that at the last meeting Forum considered to what extent the occasional licenses contribute to local alcohol consumption and how this impact on the community as a whole. There had been circulated some research paper prepared by LSOs which provided a summary of specific data as to the category and type of events for which occasional licences had been granted over the last year. It was observed that presented statistics provided reassurance that Occasional Licences do not cause issues and are not a substantial contributor to the overall consumption of alcohol. During discussion Members acknowledged that the major concern is still 'bring your own' and 'bus run' events where there is no control over the volume of the alcohol consumed and the age of participants.

It was also reported that significant proportion of events applying for OL involve young people and school fairs. Members indicated that this is worrying trend and school-related or children oriented events should not be allowed to have alcohol available on site. It was suggested to put this forward to the Board attention with a view to reflect those observations in new Licensing Policy Statements.

Following on from discussion, Forum **agreed** to write to the Board after Election with the intention to highlight the problematic areas in respect of the alcohol consumption that should be reflected in the policy review and to encourage Board to take the above observations into account when reviewing the Licensing Policy Statements.

#### **13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

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, 14<sup>th</sup> June 2017 at 13.00 pm straight after the Board Meeting at Council Chamber, Gordon House, Inverurie.