

ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL

CENTRAL ABERDEENSHIRE LICENSING FORUM

SMALL HALL, TOWN HALL, INVERURIE, 22ND NOVEMBER, 2017

Present: Ms Lisa Godini, Mr Fergus Hood, Mr Kenneth McGeough, Mr Darren Moir, Ms Carol Muir, Mr Robin Philip and Ms Nicola Sedgwick.

Officer: Anna Ziarkowska (Paralegal), Aberdeenshire Council

1. APPOINTMENT OF A CHAIR FOR THE MEETING

Due to the apologies for absence received from the Convener prior to the meeting, Members were advised to appoint a Chair for the meeting to take things through to the agenda business.

After consideration, it was **agreed** that Kenneth McGeough would chair the meeting.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Mr William Duncan, Ms Lauren Eastwood and Ms Dawn Tuckwood and Mr Keith Whyte.

3. MINUTE OF MEETING OF 14TH JUNE, 2017

The Minute of the Meeting of 14th June, 2017 had been circulated and **approved** as a correct record.

4. MATTERS ARISING

Members requested to send 'Best wishes' card to Bill Duncan (Chair of CALF). No other items were reported.

5. LICENSING BOARD UPDATE

Mr Fergus Hood advised that he was appointed as a Convener of the Licensing Board for Central Division. He reported that following the election in May a newly elected Members were appointed to sit on a Board. All Members went through the mandatory training sessions and passed the exam positively. Cllr Hood also informed that Central Board introduce a practice of having a pre-meeting before the Board meeting to go through the agenda items and discuss the requirements for the meeting. Mr Hood highlighted a need to work closely with stakeholders and his 'open door policy' for everyone who does wish to comment on current processes or input as to how to do things differently.

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

6. LICENSING STANDARDS OFFICER UPDATE

Lisa Godini advised that there have been no issues around alcohol licensing recently and that most premises were operating well. Ms Godini informed that LSOs are chasing last people for the outstanding licensing fees and hope to finalise the process by the end of this year. It was reported that on a day-to-day operation LSOs work successfully in partnership with the Police colleagues and run the program of inspections of licenses premises in order to identify problems and take preventive measures at early stage. Members were also advised that it has been six months since LSOs undertaken a new role of Civil Licensing Standard Officer and Officers maintained a good balance of dealing with a licensing workload.

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

7. POLICE UPDATE

Mr Kenneth McGeough advised that Police Licensing Team is working closely with Licensing Standards Officers with a view to identify and deal with any potential issues arising at licensed premises. Mr McGeough briefly outlined the issues with intoxication in licensed premises and alcohol related violence and vulnerabilities which became a major focus for Police recently. It was also reported that officers visiting premises have been given a detailed guidance and questionnaire for conducting interviews with license holders in order to streamline the procedure. Mr McGeough informed that Aberdeenshire Licensing Boards have already initiated the process for statutory consultation with stakeholders in respect of the licensing policy review. Members were also advised that a number of operations and initiatives were planned to be undertaken over the festive period.

During discussion, Members raised concerns about numerous LSO/Police control visits to licensed premises and asked to write to the Board with a request to review the process of visiting and licensing private clubs.

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

- 1/ send formal request to the Central Licensing Board to review the process of visiting and licensing private clubs,
- 2/ invite Depute Clerk to the Central Licensing Board to the next meeting of the Forum, and
- 3/ note the information provided in the update.

8. 'LICENSING MATTERS EVENT' – NOVEMBER 2017

Mr Hood advised that South and Central Licensing Board in cooperation with Police Scotland and NHS will organise a 'Licensing Matters' event on 24th November, 2017 in Inverurie with a view to raise public awareness of licensing process and explains how it works in Scotland. The intended format for the event included a number of short presentations by major stakeholders with opportunities for discussion and face to face engagement. The session is expected to be well attended and will focus on management of incidents within licensed premises, drug issues in licensed premises, alcohol related violence and vulnerabilities, managing nuisance, children and young person access to alcohol. It was reported that participants would also have an opportunity to comment on and feed into a consultation process in respect of the licensing policy review. Mr Hood concluded by inviting everyone to come along to the event and to get involved in discussions.

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

9. LICENSING BOARD REVIEW OF POLICY STATEMENT

There had been circulated email on behalf of the Aberdeenshire Licensing Boards containing the indicative plan for the review of the Policy Statement. The lead officer for the review of the Policy Statement is Fiona Stewart; the lead officer for Overprovision element of the Policy is Peter Robertson.

Forum Members were informed that the review of Licensing Policy Statement has been initiated and online survey including consultation questions would be issued to all stakeholders shortly. It was reported that Licensing Boards wish to engage face to face with partners and wish to organise a joint session between Board and Forum in order to fully discussed issues

arising out of the Licensing Policy Review and to work together to find practical solutions. Details of the meeting would be forwarded to the Forum Members in due course.

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

10. COMMONUTY COUNCILS LICENSING WORKSHOP

Members acknowledged that 'Licensing Matter' event would cover all aspects of the proposed workshop with Community Councils and thereafter **agreed** not to progress the proposal any further. During discussion, members highlighted a need to raise awareness of the Forum operation and encourage new applications for membership.

After consideration, the Forum **agreed** to invite Community Council representatives to the next meeting of the Forum.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Members expressed their concerns about inequalities in licensing fees and call for a review of Alcohol Licensing Fees. Members were interested to find out the statutory requirements for licensing fees and basic principles which guide the setting and application of licensing charge.

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

1/ contact the Board with a request to review the level of licensing fee payable by different operators and to provide statistics on the running costs of Board and any surplus budget maintained by Council from licensing fee,

2/ request a briefing note on Licensing Fees from Depute Clerk to the Central Licensing Board, and

3/ add a standard item to the agenda for future meetings: 'Stakeholders' Reports and Round Table Round-Up'

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was **agreed** that the next meeting of the Forum would take place on Wednesday, 7th February, 2018 at 10.00am in Council Chamber, Gordon House, Inverurie.