

## ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL

### CENTRAL ABERDEENSHIRE LICENSING FORUM

COUNCIL CHAMBER, GORDON HOUSE, INVERURIE, 7<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY, 2018

**Present:** Mr William Duncan (Chair), Ms Lisa Godini, Mr Kenneth McGeough, Mr Darren Moir, Ms Carol Muir, Mr Robin Philip, Ms Dawn Tuckwood and Mr Keith Whyte.

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

**In presence of:** John Foulkes (Echt & Skene Community Council representative)

#### 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Ms Lauren Eastwood, Mr Fergus Hood and Ms Nicola Sedgwick.

#### 2. MINUTE OF MEETING OF 22<sup>nd</sup> NOVEMBER, 2017 & 13<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER, 2017

The Minute of the Meeting of 22<sup>nd</sup> November, 2017 and 13<sup>th</sup> December, 2017 had been circulated and amendments were noted. The minutes were otherwise **approved** as a correct record.

#### 3. MATTERS ARISING

Committee Officer went through the action sheet from the last meeting to provide an update on progress in respect of each point. There were no further matters arising.

#### 4. LICENSING BOARD UPDATE

During the Licensing Board Convener absence, it was agreed that the update from Licensing Board would be provided to Members via email.

#### 5. LICENSING STANDARDS OFFICER UPDATE

Lisa Godini advised that there have been no issues around liquor licensing recently and most premises were operating well. It was observed that the total number of licensed premises is fairly balanced with few premises closing down and new applications coming in. It was further reported that LSOs successfully run their annual programme of inspection in partnership with the Police colleagues. Lisa continued that Minimum Unit Pricing regulation will come into force on 1<sup>st</sup> May, 2018 and LSOs work closely with all licenced premises to provide support to make sure that pricing is correct. Members were informed that LSOs delivered its presentation to all Aberdeenshire Licensing Boards as a part of consultation process for licensing policy review. It was also noted that LSOs undertaken a role of Civil Licensing Standard Officer and tried to maintain a fair balance in dealing with a licensing workload.

During discussion, Forum Members were interested to see exact figures on number of licensing premises operating across the Aberdeenshire area. It was noted that any enquires as to the licensing statistics should be send to LSOs.

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

## 6. POLICE UPDATE

Mr Kenneth McGeough advised that Police Licensing Team is really busy with visiting licensed premises and working with Licensing Standards Officers in order to identify problems and take preventive measures at early stage. He continued that Police Scotland delivered its presentation to all Aberdeenshire Licensing Boards as a part of consultation process for licensing policy review. It was reported that Licensing Matters Event in November, 2017 was really successful with a good attendance from Trade. Following a number of positive comments and feedback received, organisers plan to run a follow-up session in 2018. The work is in progress and stakeholders are now looking for external source of funding. Kenny also informed that similar event called 'Licensing Conference' is organised by Aberdeen City on 8<sup>th</sup> March, 2018 and everyone is welcome to attend upon prior registration. Members were advised that details of the event would be circulated via email.

During discussion, Members raised their concerns about the intoxication in licensed premises, rate of alcohol related violence in Aberdeenshire area and issue of duty of care and person's vulnerability.

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

**Action 1:** Committee Officer to circulate 'Licensing Conference' flyer round Forum Members.

## 7. STAKEHOLDERS' REPORTS AND ROUND TABLE ROUND-UP

The Group **noted** updates from the stakeholders and trade representatives in respect of their areas of responsibility, concern and interest.

## 8. PROPOSED ESTABLISHMENT OF A NATIONAL LICENSING FORUM

There had been circulated a letter from East Ayrshire Council addressed to all Licensing Forums in Scotland advising on proposed establishment of a National Licensing Forum. The letter summarising comments and views received from 22 Licensing Forums (representing 18 local authorities mostly from the West of Scotland) wishing to participate in a National Forum. The proposed draft of constitution was attached to the letter indicating the Forum's objectives, terms of reference, funding sources and schedule of meetings.

Following on from discussion, Members considered the potential benefits and drawbacks of having centralised Licensing Forum at the national level. Members were concerned that new body would not be influential enough to bring about changes to the legislation or to provide meaningful discussion as its main objective was described merely as to provide a forum for members and officers to meeting on a regular and constructive basis to discuss common issues. It was observed that it would be of a great benefit to have Scottish-wide Licensing Forum, however, with the precise powers and significant role in the formation of licensing legislation.

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

## 9. REVIEW OF LOCAL LICENSING FORUMS

There had been circulated a report on Review of Local Licensing Forums that was considered by the Aberdeenshire Council at its meeting 18<sup>th</sup> January, 2018. The report recommended to establish one new Licensing Forum for Aberdeenshire to take effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2018 and to agree terms of the revised constitution for the new Aberdeenshire Licensing Forum. Members were advised that following consideration, Full Council agreed to replace the North, Central and South Divisional Licensing Forums with Single Licensing Forum for Aberdeenshire.

Committee Officer briefly explained the implications of the decision for the Forum Members and outlines the way forward. It was noted that the existing Forums will cease to have effect from 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2018 and that their meetings in February 2018 are likely to be the last meetings of the existing Licensing Forums. Committee Officers advised there is work in progress and Council Officers will concentrate on getting the new Forums up and running over the next two months. It was further noted that a new recruitment campaign would be launched shortly to ensure that there is a fair representation of Members from across Aberdeenshire on the new Forum. Members were informed that their membership will not automatically transfer to the new Forum and that each individual is welcomed to apply to become a member of a new body. It was agreed that details of recruitment process along with application form would be provided to Members via email.

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

**Action 2:** Committee Officer to circulate 'Briefing note' explaining the decision along with application forms round Forum Members.

## **10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Chair expressed his deep gratitude and appreciation to all Forum Members for their considerable efforts in keeping the Forum discussions interesting and simulative. He similarly thanked all Members on the Committee for their work and valuable input during the Forum operation over last 11 years.

The Chair further informed that he would not continue with his membership and he wished all the best to the New Single Licensing Forum.

## **11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Committee Officer advised that a date of the first meeting of the Single Aberdeenshire Licensing Forum has not been agreed as yet, but Members will be provided with all required details in due course.