

REPORT TO ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL – 5th MARCH 2020

REVIEW OF LICENSING BOARD STRUCTURE IN ABERDEENSHIRE

1 Reason for Report / Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out the review of the Licensing Board structure in Aberdeenshire as undertaken by the Head of Legal and Governance and recommends that Council dissolve the current structure and establishes a new single Licensing Board for Aberdeenshire.

2 Recommendations

The Council is recommended to:

- 2.1 Consider the options presented in the report at Appendix 1A and the summary at Appendix 1B regarding the review of the Licensing Board structure as instructed by Council on 21st November 2019.
- 2.2 Consider the responses made to the public consultation on the structure of the Licensing Boards which ran from 20th December 2019 to 20th January 2020, details provided at Appendix 2 with analysis at section 4.7 – 4.14 of this report.
- 2.3 Consider the comments from the Divisional Licensing Boards at Appendix 3
- 2.4 Agree to reduce the current number of 3 Divisional Licensing Boards to one Single Board for Aberdeenshire.
- 2.5 In the event that Council agrees recommendation 2.4:-
- 2.5.1. to revoke the decision of Council on the 17th May 2007 to form three Divisional Boards, in North, Central and South Aberdeenshire under the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005 (“the Act”), and dissolve the Divisional Boards from midnight on the 28th April 2020 and
- 2.5.2 to establish a single Licensing Board for Aberdeenshire known as the Aberdeenshire Licensing Board from 29th April 2020.
- 2.5.3 to consider and determine how many members the new Aberdeenshire Licensing Board should have, with a statutory minimum of 5 and maximum of 10,
- 2.5.4 to elect members to the Aberdeenshire Licensing Board.

2.5.5 to agree the first date of meeting as 29th April 2020 in Woodhill House. The Licensing Board will then discuss and agree their schedule of meetings at that meeting.

2.5.6 to appoint the Head of Legal and Governance as Clerk to the Licensing Board and to allow her to delegate these functions to Depute Clerks.

3 Purpose and Decision Making Route

- 3.1 In accordance with the timeline agreed on the 21st November, all three Divisional Boards were consulted prior to public consultation. The public consultation was conducted between the 20th December 2019 and the 20th January 2020. Given that the consultation was carried out over the festive period, all current licence holders (over 600) were written to in order for them to be made aware of the consultation. The responses to the public consultation can be found at Appendix 2 of this report. This report combines all information previously presented to the Licensing Boards, analyses the information and consultation responses received and recommends a single Licensing Board is established for Aberdeenshire.
- 3.2 The views of the South and Central Boards following the public consultation are included in this report at Appendix 3 however the North Board met after the publication of this report and so the views of the North Board will be updated verbally.

4 Discussion

Legislative provisions and current structure

- 4.1 The Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005 (“the Act”) sets out the requirements for Licensing Boards. Each Council area must have a minimum of one licensing Board for their area and there is provision for divisional licensing boards. There are currently three Divisional Licensing Boards performing the statutory licensing function in North, Central and South Aberdeenshire. The three Licensing Boards were first established in 2007 to perform the Council’s obligations under the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005 (“the Act”) in relation to liquor licensing, and the Gambling Act 2005. The three Boards follow the areas of the old District Council boundaries.
- 4.2 Aberdeenshire is one of only three local authorities in Scotland which has more than one divisional licensing board (the others being Dumfries and Galloway and South Lanarkshire each having 4 Licensing Boards). Highland Council reduced in the 1990s from six to four, then ultimately to one.
- 4.3 The legislation provides that the Council can review the structure of Licensing Boards in their area. Should the Council wish to restructure, the original decision to divide must be revoked and a decision to establish a new structure must be made. Where this is the case, each of the divisional Licensing Boards is dissolved

and all licences granted by divisional boards still have effect under the new arrangements. For context, there are currently 659 premises licences granted across Aberdeenshire.

Board Area	Number of Premises
North	236
Central	218
South	205
Total	659

- 4.4 The Boards also administer in the region of 1,400 occasional licences per year and have issued 2,136 personal licences. The majority of these applications are dealt with under delegated powers and only a small percentage require a hearing by a Board where there are objections or adverse representations. The volume of business dealt with by each Board is detailed in Appendix 1 during the discussion of options.

Improvements to Date

- 4.5 The Boards have, since 2017, updated the format of the agendas to streamline and focus on the applications requiring a decision rather than using agendas to provide information for noting. Information is now provided to Board members by email on a quarterly basis. This has resulted in smaller, easier to navigate agendas and has reduced printing/paper/postage costs. The Scheme of Delegation for the Boards has been updated and business has been dealt with efficiently. There have been a number of technological advances such as the introduction of a new back office system which includes public access ensuring greater openness and transparency. Work is currently being undertaken with the ICT service to develop online forms to enable applicants to apply online which will be a significant improvement in terms of efficiency of the licensing administration team.

Options Analysis

- 4.6 Appendix 1A of this report details the options considered as part of the review. The review focused on the reduction from three Divisional Boards to a singular Board for Aberdeenshire. Data relating to the volume of business heard by each Board, length of agendas, time spent both preparing for and at Board Meetings, frequency of meetings, physical resources including printing, paper, room bookings etc has been gathered and examined. Appendix 1B provides a summary of the benefits of moving to a singular Licensing Board.

Analysis of Public Consultation

- 4.7 This section of the report will analyse the themes arising from the 35 responses given to the questions posed in the survey. The full responses along with a statistical analysis can be found in Appendix 2 to this report.

- 4.8 The first question asked whether the respondent thought that there are any positives about reducing the number of Boards to one. 77.78% responded yes. 22.22% responded no. There were 28 comments on this question.

The positives themes arising from the comments on reducing the number of Boards include:-

- Reduction will lead to a pragmatic, simplified and streamlined approach
- There will be less bureaucracy and greater alignment with all areas following the same guidelines.
- Consistency of approach across Aberdeenshire in applying policies and procedures will be much improved.
- Consistency in decision making between Licensing Boards
- A reduction could lead to lower costs and less travel
- A reduction will mean that there is more efficiency
- That it will be easier from the public point of view to deal with only one Board
- Cutting down the number of councilors required on Boards thus reducing expenses
- Representing the ethos of One Aberdeenshire
- That the reduction will mean a better use of resources

The concerns raised in the responses to this question include:-

- Local Boards are familiar with the area and that moving to one Board would dilute the local knowledge.
- Concerns that unless staff remains the same there will be added pressures.

- 4.9 Whilst acknowledging that some have concerns, the vast majority of those responding are supportive of a move to a single Licensing Board for the reasons given above.

- 4.10 The second question asked whether there were any concerns about moving to one Board. 33.33% said yes. 66.67% said no. 19 comments were received on this question.

The concerns raised include:-

- That there should be no reduction in service as currently the service is first rate
- That there would be an inability to respond to questions in a timeous manner.
- A perception that the staff number would reduce
- Lack of local knowledge

Comments included:-

- There is no justification for three Boards with different policies.
- The proposal to reduce to one Board makes sense
- Consistency is again mentioned.

- 4.11 It is pleasing to see that the service provided by the Licensing Team is rated highly and that there is a concern for the staff. There are no plans to reduce the staffing complement solely as a result of any reduction in the number of Boards. However, aligned with other administrative developments, particularly the implementation of Online applications, there will be an ability to review resources in the future. The licensing staff would be better able to respond to queries timeously and there should be an improvement in service rather than a deterioration.
- 4.12 The comments regarding local knowledge is worth exploring. Whilst local knowledge can form part of the factual background that is taken into account when they determine applications, they will always have the benefit of the detailed local knowledge of the Licensing Standards Officer. Further information can be sought from the Licensing Standards Officer or any partner agency such as Police Scotland where required. A Board can also carry out site visits should it be thought necessary. Local knowledge, whilst important, does not form part of the legal test requirements and decisions must not be based on local knowledge, but on the application of the legal test to the circumstances before the Board. The legal test is clearly laid out in each report requiring a quasi-judicial decision the Licensing Boards consider. In acknowledging the importance and the concerns of the respondents, it is proposed that there is at least 1 member from each area, meaning from each Area Committee, in Aberdeenshire on a single Board. Local knowledge is important in setting the Licensing Board's Policy Statement. The Policy was last agreed in November 2018 following a wide consultation process which included Area Committees. All members have an opportunity through that process to assist the Board with their local knowledge in determining their policies.
- 4.13 The next few questions looked to ascertain whether or not any of the respondents had attended a Licensing Board meeting in the last 3 years. 16.67% said that they had, leaving 83.33% who had not. Of those attending, 50% attended the North Board, 16.67% attended the Central, and 33.33% attended the South. The majority of those attending did so as an applicant.
- 4.14 Participants were asked whether they would be willing to attend and participate at Board meetings via video link or other remote means. 61.11% said that they would. Comments on this topic are mixed with positives including that this would be a logical extension of modernising the delivery of local democracy and that it would reduce the carbon footprint of individuals and minimize unnecessary travel to concerns over availability of connection in rural locations. Should a new Board encounter issues over attendance due to distance, remote

participation can be investigated at that point. Participants were also asked whether they would use public transport to get to a meeting if this was possible. 55.56% said that they would whereas 38.89% said no.

- 4.15 The location of where a single Board should meet was the subject of the next few questions. 41.67% said that the Board should be at a fixed location, whereas 55.56% thought that it should rotate around various locations. Comments include that rotating is important given the geographic scale of Aberdeenshire, that a rotating board would be better to visit communities and meet local people and that it brings democracy to everyone. However other comments are that by rotating there could be additional costs and that Aberdeenshire “isn’t that big” and it shouldn’t make any difference where the meetings are held. Participants were asked for suggestions for where meetings could be held so that they are accessible across Aberdeenshire. Some suggestions were based on specific locations such as Aberdeen, Inverurie, anywhere that is easily accessible from the AWPR such as Stonehaven, Ellon or Banchory, Peterhead, with other suggestions being village halls, council building and hotels. Any single Board would be able to determine their own rota and location of meetings and to keep this under review. Given that a timetable of meetings and locations have been set for the current Board structure throughout 2020 it may be possible to use these dates and venues initially for a single Board rotating around Aberdeenshire. A list of potential dates and locations, for both fixed and rotating options, are presented at Appendix 4.
- 4.16 The last question was whether or not there should be local member representation on a new Board from all areas of Aberdeenshire. Overwhelmingly, 91.67% said yes, whilst 8.57% said no. Comments include:-
- That those on a single Board must be representative of the whole area currently covered by the 3 Boards.
 - That representation from all areas gives direct knowledge of the premises in their areas.
 - That it is democratic to have representation from all areas.
 - Some have commented that one policy should fit all areas.
- 4.17 The statutory maximum number of Board Members is 10. Aberdeenshire has six administrative areas and an option for consideration is that at least one member from each Area Committee should be elected to a single Board, and the balance of four being apportioned by number of premises in the area. For example, there are marginally more premises in the North Board area and so a single Board could comprise of 1 additional member from both what is currently the Central and South Board area and 2 from the North Board area and that decision lies with Council. Currently, for information, the Buchan Area Committee only has one representative within the Licensing Board structure. There are other similar bodies across the Council where there is one body dealing with applications from all over Aberdeenshire, such as the Local Review

Body, the Licensing Sub-Committee, the Community Empowerment Review Body and the Appeals Committee.

- 4.18 Overall, there is strong public support for the proposal to move to a single Licensing Board. The preference from the public is that any Licensing Board should rotate around Aberdeenshire and that there should be representation from all areas in Aberdeenshire.

4.19 Recommendation

Following the review, the Head of Legal and Governance recommends that there are clear benefits in establishing a single Board for Aberdeenshire in terms of efficiencies, resources and sustainability and that the three current Boards should be dissolved and that a single Board should be established. It is recommended that 10 members are elected to a single Board, at least 1 from each Area Committee, 1 additional member from the current South Board area, 1 additional member from the Central Board area and 2 additional members from the North Board Area as determined by Council today. Any new Board will determine their schedule of meetings including frequency and location and will keep this under review. It is recommended that those members elected to the Boards have already passed their examination to enable them to sit on the Licensing Board.

5 Council Priorities, Implications and Risk

- 5.1 The report helps deliver Council Priority 10 – Having the right people, in the right place, doing the right thing, at the right time.
- 5.2 This report dovetails with the delivery of the LOIP Priority – Changing Aberdeenshire’s Relationship with Alcohol.
- 5.3 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendation(s) is(are) agreed.

Subject	Yes	No	N/A
Financial	x		
Staffing		x	
Equalities	x		
Fairer Scotland Duty	x		
Town Centre First		x	
Sustainability	x		
Children and Young People’s Rights and Wellbeing		x	

- 5.4 An equality impact assessment is attached to this report as Appendix 6.

- 5.5 The financial impacts of a reduction to a single Licensing Board are not substantial, however there will be some small scale savings as a result of a reduction. No Equality or Fairer Scotland Duty issues have been raised during consultation, however, should there be any implications should a new Board be established, arrangements will be reviewed accordingly. There are positive benefits of moving to a single Board in terms of sustainability as set out in this report.
- 5.6 The following Risk has been identified as relevant to this matter on a Corporate Level:
- [ACORP004 – Business and Organisational Change](#)

6 Scheme of Governance

- 6.1 The Head of Finance and Monitoring Officer within Business Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report and their comments are incorporated within the report and are satisfied that the report complies with the Scheme of Governance and relevant legislation.
- 6.2 The Council is able to consider and take a decision on this item in terms of Section A.2.2 of the List of Committee Powers in Part 2A of the Scheme of Governance as the report seeks to review the distribution of the licensing function in Aberdeenshire.

Ritchie Johnson
Director of Business Services

Report prepared by Lauren Cowie, Principal Solicitor (Governance)
Date February 2020

List of Appendices

[Appendix 1A – Options considered](#)

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[Appendix 5 – Comparison in other Areas of Scotland](#)

[Appendix 6 – Equalities Impact Assessment](#)

Appendix 1A

There are 2 options that have been considered as part of the review.

1. Reduction from three Boards to a Single Board
2. Retain the status quo with three Divisional Boards.

Any efficiency achieved by a reduction to two Divisional Boards would be minimal and so it is more appropriate to consider a reduction to one Board.

Option A - Establishing a Single Board

- A1 One of the options is to dissolve the three existing Licensing Boards and establish a new single Licensing Board for the whole of the area that Aberdeenshire Council covers. This appendix details the potential impacts of establishing a single Board and examines the variables within the option. The consultation with the Boards and the public will influence and develop this option further.

Membership

- A2. Schedule 1 of the Act sets out the provisions around membership for Licensing Boards. The minimum number of Board members is 5 and the maximum is 10 and members must be elected by the Council from their elected members. The current Divisional Boards all have 8 members. The quorum for a Licensing Board is half the membership with no less than 3. Case law has established that, in quasi-judicial proceedings, it is preferable to have at least 4 members in order that both a motion and amendment could be moved and seconded with the convenor having the casting vote.
- A3. In order to ensure that there is still an element of local knowledge regarding licensing applications and the formulation of policy, although this is not a statutory requirement nor a formal consideration in terms of the licensing objectives, it is proposed that any election to a single Board should ensure that there is at least 1 Board member from each administrative area, i.e. Banff and Buchan, Buchan, Formartine, Garioch, Marr and Kincardine and Mearns. It is proposed that should Council establish a single board that the membership of that Board should be 10 members.
- A4. Each member of a Licensing Board must formally sit a course and pass an examination to become accredited before being able to sit on any Board. Should there be a decision to move to one, officers recommend that elected members who are existing Board members be elected to a single Board for continuation of knowledge and skills as well as obtaining best value from the training already delivered. After the last election, the costs of training were £3,550. This included the trainer's travel costs. Each day cost £1,120 and two sessions were required due to the number of elected members who require to be trained and the restrictions on how many members can be trained at any one session. There were also additional costs for separate training for those appointed at a later date.

Practicalities

Anticipated Business at each Meeting

A5. The number of liquor applications made by those seeking to sell alcohol in Aberdeenshire will not change due to restructuring and will still require to be processed and determined. Officers have analysed the business presented to the Boards since January 2017. During this time, 415 reports have been presented to the 3 Licensing Boards. Some of these reports will have been duplicated for all of the Licensing Boards to consider. The following table shows the type and how many reports have been presented to the Boards. By way of explanation, the “admin” reports mean the items relating to any declarations of interest, the public sector equality duty as well as the Minutes. The “determinations” columns refer to the number of reports that have been required for both contentious applications which require a hearing and the non-contentious. There are certain types of application, i.e. new premises and major variations, that must be determined by a Licensing Board and not able to be delegated and these form the non-contentious reports. There have also been reports relating to specific issues for individual Boards and policy reports which have been circulated to all Boards.

Board	No. of Reports	Admin	Determinations		Board Specific	Policy Related (All Boards)
			Contentious (Hearings)	Non-Contentious		
North	156	37	29	31	21	38
Central	138	34	28	27	17	32
South	121	35	16	18	17	35
Total	415	106	73	76	55	105

A6. If the same business had been considered by one board, officers calculate that the number of reports that would have required consideration would have been 244 which is a reduction of 171 reports over the 3 years this is illustrated in the table below. This clearly demonstrates that overall there would be efficiencies in terms of both officer and member time spent both at and in preparation for Boards if the number of Boards is reduced to one. Figures shown in brackets denote a negative figure.

Board	No. of Reports	Admin	Determinations		Board Specific	Policy Related (All Boards)
			Contentious (Hearings)	Non-Contentious		
Aberdeenshire	244	38	73	76	21	36
Impact	(171)	(68)	0	0	(34)	(69)

It is recognised that some of the reports would require to be longer so that information for all areas are contained in the reports.

A7. It is important to look at the pattern over 3 years to form a strategic overview of how the business of the Licensing Boards is dealt with. It is also important to consider what impact moving to one Licensing Board would have for each meeting cycle. Taking into account the business conducted as narrated in the table above, the average meeting of each Board contains the following reports:-

Board	No. of Reports	Admin	Determinations		Board Specific	Policy Related (All Boards)
			Contentious (Hearings)	Non-Contentious		
North	9	2	1	2	2	2
Central	10	2	2	2	2	2
South	7	2	1	1	1	2
Per Cycle	26	6	4	5	5	6

A8. The impact that moving to one Licensing Board could therefore mean that the agenda could contain the following:-

Board	No. of Reports	Admin	Determinations		Board Specific	Policy Related (All Boards)
			Contentious (Hearings)	Non-Contentious		
Aberdeenshire	16	2	4	5	2	3
Comparison Per Cycle	(11)	(4)	0	0	(3)	(3)

A9. It is clear that the number of determinations likely to be required at one combined Board would be higher than the number of determinations at individual Boards. The average would be 4 contentious hearings per cycle. Given that the meetings could take longer, officers have looked at the average length of meetings to give an indication as to the impact of longer agendas.

A.10 The figures in the table below illustrate the average length of time spent physically at Board meetings. As members will appreciate, each application is dealt with on its own merits and some can be dealt with expediently whereas others require more consideration and evidence to be presented. The overall length of the meeting information is taken from time recording by officers attending the meetings. These figures are illustrative and should be read as being generous.

Board	No. of Reports	Admin	Determinations		Board Specific	Policy Related (All Boards)	Time
			Contentious (Hearings)	Non-Contentious			
North	9	2	1	2	2	2	3.02 hours
		<i>6 mins each</i>	<i>1 hour each</i>	<i>15 mins each</i>	<i>20 mins each</i>	<i>20 mins each</i>	
Central	10	2	2	2	2	2	4.02 hours
		6 mins each	1 hour each	15 mins each	20 mins each	20 mins each	
South	7	2	1	1	1	2	2.44 hours
		6 mins each	1 hour each	15 mins each	20 mins each	20 mins each	
Per Cycle	26	6	4	5	5	6	9.48 hours
		6 mins each	1 hour each	15 mins each	20 mins each	20 mins each	

A11. The table illustrates that the average cumulative length of meetings per cycle is almost 9.5 hours. If a single Board was to be established, the table below shows how long Boards could last.

Board	No. of Reports	Admin	Determinations		Board Specific	Policy Related (All Boards)	Time
			Contentious (Hearings)	Non-Contentious			
Aberdeenshire	15	2	4	4	2	3	7.15 hours
		7.5 mins each	1 hour each	15 mins each	27 mins each	20 mins each	
Comparison Per Cycle							(2.33)

A.12 This figure factors in multipliers to ensure that additional length of papers is considered given that a single Board requires to consider information for all areas of Aberdeenshire rather one particular area. These figures err on the side of caution and it would not be anticipated that all Board meetings would be an all day meeting though they would almost certainly be longer than the current board meetings. However, strategically, there would still be a reduction per cycle of at least 2 hours spent at Licensing Board Meetings.

A13. Based on a meeting cycle of 6 meetings per year, a reduction to one Board could amount to resource savings per year of:

- Almost 14 hours, equivalent to almost 2 working days of time at Licensing Boards being released for use in other ways for members, officers and partners. 14 members would not need to prepare for, travel to, nor attend Boards which is a positive impact on already crowded schedules.
- Almost 3 working days (21.33 hours) hours of members time (as a whole) – based on the longest average meeting of 24 members attending a 4 hour meeting per cycle and 10 members attending a 7 hour meeting every cycle.
- Almost 100 hours of officer time (as a whole) including the time spent by administration staff in the preparation of agendas could be focused more on processing applications to reduce waiting times for applicants.

A14. The time savings are significant for members and the additional time would be put to good use by officers in terms of dealing with service delivery and focusing on licensing applicants as well as progressing policy matters. It would also create additional capacity in respect of the officer's other duties.

A18.It is estimated that reducing to one Board would lead to a reduction in the amount of paper that would be required per cycle.

Board	No. of Reports	Admin	Determinations		Board Specific	Policy Related (All Boards)	Time
			Contentious (Hearings)	Non-Contentious			
Aberdeenshire	15	2	4	4	2	3	318 pages
		11 pages (combined)	47 pages each	9 pages each	10 pages each	21 pages each	
Number of Copies Issued							11
Total Paper Usage							3498 pages
Comparison							(282)

Over the course of a year this would amount to 1,692 pages at an estimated cost of £152.28 which is a saving of 182kgCO₂e. Each agenda costs on average £3 to post. Currently the costs of postage per cycle is £72, and annually this increases to £423. Allowing for additional weight of longer agendas, the cost would decrease to £240 in postage for a single board.

Location of Meetings

A.19 It is considered that the location where a single board would meet is important. It must be easily accessible for those who would be invited to attend as well as the public, members and officers. This was one of the areas of focus of the consultation. It is acknowledged that those attending the meetings, including applicants, consultees and members may have to travel a further distance. Officers are investigating the potential for use of a “hub and spoke” model whereby applicants and their agents could go to a more local office for them to use a surface hub to enable them to join the meeting remotely to reduce travel time and costs. A single Board can keep its arrangements under review and should there be any issue with applicants attending meetings due to location, arrangements for remote participation can be established. It is inevitable that the distance to travel for a Board hearing may increase depending on the starting point and where a Board would be. It is difficult to quantify the impact of this on members, officers, partners and applicants until there is a clearer picture as to where one Board would meet.

Licensing Forum

A.20 The Act provides that the function of the forum is to keep under review the operation of the Act in the Forum’s area and also the exercise by the Boards of their decisions. The Forum can also make recommendations to the Board as necessary. The Act is silent on the mechanics of how this can be achieved however it is proposed that it would be more straightforward for the Forum to have oversight of the operation of the Act over the whole of Aberdeenshire enabling them a more strategic input. Arranging the statutory joint

meeting between the Board and the Forum, and ensuring that this is quorate, could be more simplistic should there be one Board.

Licensing Policy Statement and Scheme of Delegation

- A.21 Until November 2018 the three Divisional Boards maintained separate statements of Licensing policy however these were combined, whilst still ensuring that local circumstances are catered for, into one document and this has been welcomed by both the licensed trade and our statutory partners. If a new structure was agreed by Council, the existing policy document could be adopted to ensure consistency until such time as a review is required, either by statute or due to local issues. Likewise, the current Scheme of Delegation, which is already approved by each divisional licensing board, could be adopted by a single Board. There are other important documents such as the Publication Scheme that could be adopted by a single Board.

Impact on Decision Making

- A.22 It is also important to note that the requirements of the Act is to provide a licensing service for the whole of Aberdeenshire. There is a benefit in consistency of approach to certain matters, particularly fees to ensure that all applicants are charged the same price for the same service across Aberdeenshire. It is appropriate that, at the moment, officers present information to the Divisional Boards on matters such as fees or on consultation responses however there is potential that all of the Boards come to different and contradictory decisions. In order to address this, officers have sought a delegation so that if there are contradictory decisions that officers can liaise with the convenor to make a final determination. Officers have often had to ask for extensions to consultations so that all Boards could be consulted before submission.
- A.23. There is a comparison to be made to the Local Review Body which deals with planning application reviews for the whole of Aberdeenshire. The Local Review Body reviewed its structure in 2015 and concluded that one Local Review Body was the most efficient and effective mechanism to deal with applications for all of Aberdeenshire. There is an opportunity to increase consistency of decision making in quasi-judicial matters across Aberdeenshire by reducing to one Board as all decisions affecting alcohol licensing will be dealt with by the same members.

Impact on Partners

- A.24 It is important to recognise the impact of the structure of how alcohol licensing is dealt with on our partner organisations, such as Police Scotland and NHS Grampian. Police Scotland in particular, who attend each Board, are keen to support a move to one Board as this will have a direct impact on their resources.

Licensing Matters Event

- A.25 There are no foreseeable impacts on the Licensing Matters Event from reducing to a single Board.

Option B – Retention of Three Board Structure

- B1. Option B is to retain the three Divisional Licensing Board structure. Less detail is given in this option as this structure is well known to members.
- B2. This option would mean that the Council would agree that Aberdeenshire is best served by Divisional Boards in the North, Central and South areas. Each would continue with 8 members, meaning 24 members involved in alcohol licensing across Aberdeenshire. The Boards would continue to meet within their areas on an 8 weekly cycle in accordance with dates agreed by the Boards.
- B3. The review of the structure of the Boards in 2012 also involved a public consultation and reasons given for retaining a 3 Board structure at that time was that there was a perception of good local knowledge, the capacity to identify and address local issues and good working relationships with the trade. This was evidenced by the North Board initially instigating an annual meeting with the trade in the North area. The Central Board then initiated the Licensing Matters Event. This Event now caters to all applicants across Aberdeenshire.
- B4. The three Board structure allows for those attending to attend locally. However this may not always be the case as agents can travel from the Central belt. The current locations in which the Boards meet are Peterhead, Inverurie and Stonehaven. Due to renovations in Stonehaven other locations have been used recently including Banchory and Portlethen. It is difficult to quantify the distances that must be travelled to get to the current Board locations given the geographic spread of Aberdeenshire and the differential starting points of those travelling.

Appendix 1B – Summary of Potential Impacts

Consideration	Current Structure (combined)	Single Board	Impact of Moving to One Board
Membership			
Number of Members	24	10 with at least one nominated from each Area	14 less members attending meetings with the corresponding time savings for those members.
Accreditation of Members	Cost £3,550 approx	£1,120 approx	Saving of £2,230 approx after every local government election
Impact on Members and Officers			
Average number of reports presented for consideration over 3 years.	415	244	171 less reports to be considered.
Average report number presented per cycle	26	15	11 Reports less per cycle to be prepared and considered.
Average number of reports presented per Board per cycle	9	16	7 more items per agenda would lead to longer meetings however impact in less members being needed to attend.
Time spent attending Boards (average)	72 hours (3 hours on average per meeting per cycle x 24 members)	70 hours	2 hours of saving overall per cycle. Some members would be excused from memberships of Boards and have much more time free however others could have a longer meeting.
Impact on Officers only			
Preparation for Board Meetings including agenda preparation	360 hours per year	260 hours per year	These figures are based on admin officers requiring 5 hours per Board Meeting to prepare

			the agenda and time spent by solicitors on applications.
<i>Impact on Physical Resources</i>			
Rooms	6 rooms per cycle, 36 room bookings per year	2 rooms per cycle, 12 room bookings per year	More rooms available for use, impact on energy use by the Boards.
Paper	3780 pages per cycle	3498 pages per cycle	Saving of almost 1700 pieces of paper per year with an estimated cost of £152.28 with a saving of 182kgCO ₂ e.
Postage Costs	£423 p.a.	£240 p.a.	£183 of saving approximately

Appendix 2 – Public Consultation Responses

Number of respondents: 36

This appendix provides the full details of the responses received to the consultation.

Do you think there is any positives about reducing the number of Boards to one?

Yes	%	No	%
28	77.78	8	22.22

Do you have any concerns about moving to one Board?

Yes	%	No	%
12	33.33	24	66.67

Have you attended a Board meeting in the last 3 years?

Yes	%	No	%
6	16.67	30	83.33

Breakdown by Board attended:

North	%	Central	%	South	%
3	50.00	1	16.67	2	33.33

Breakdown by Attendee:

Applicant	%	Consultee	%	Not Stated	%
3	50.00	2	33.33	1	16.67

If it were possible to attend and participate at Board meetings via video link or similar remote means would you consider this?

Yes	%	No	%
22	61.11	14	38.89

Would you use public transport to get to a meeting if this was possible?

Yes	%	No	%	No Answer	%
20	55.56	14	38.89	2	5.56

Do you think that the Board location should be fixed or rotate around other locations?

Fixed	%	Rotating	%	No Answer	%
15	41.67	20	55.56	1	2.78

Do you have any suggestions for where meetings could be held so that they are accessible for all across Aberdeenshire?

Overall suggestions made: 18

Breakdown:

Suggestions specifying place names: 15

Named Place	Number	%
Aberdeen	3	20.00
Inverurie	6	40.00

Peterhead	2	13.33
Various	4	26.67

Suggestions specifying type of building: 8

Type of Building	Number	%
Council Owned	4	50.00
Other	4	50.00

Do you think that there should be member representation on a new Board from all areas within Aberdeenshire?

Yes	%	No	%
33	91.67	3	8.33

Responses

Do you think there is any positives about reducing the number of Boards to one?

#	Yes	No	Comments Made
1	x		<i>Better use of resources.</i>
2	x		<i>Consistent policy across Aberdeenshire, should also have savings in expenditure and expenses.</i>
3	x		<i>As a Director and past president of the AB&K LTA we requested this takes place as the 2005 Act was being implemented but the Board wasn't interested. Maybe it's good to listen sometimes and save money as well.</i>
4	x		<i>A consistent approach through the whole of Aberdeenshire.</i>
5		x	<i>It is basically done as one Board in Stonehaven now. Everything has to be sent to Stonehaven.</i>
6	x		<i>Simplified approach for all.</i>
7	x		<i>It could be streamlines as far as paperwork etc. goes.</i>
8	x		<i>My business attends Highland Games within two boards, and it would be easier to apply to only one and have one point of contact.</i>
9	x		<i>No inconsistencies between Boards.</i>
10	x		<i>Consistency across the whole Aberdeenshire area in approach and decision making by the Board; One Statement of Licensing Policy which will again provide consistency across a whole Board area. Ease of communication with the Board.</i>
11	x		<i>More potential for consistent decision making and potential for less travel for council officers attending boards.</i>
12		x	<i>Aberdeenshire is a massive area with distinct communities that differ from one another, this needs local knowledge. Plenty of people from Aberdeen have never set foot in Peterhead or Banff and do not know the local environment to be able to judge what is suitable or not.</i>
13	X		

14	x		<i>Same policies throughout. Dealing with one team rather than three.</i>
15	x		<i>Reduced potential for "rogue" decisions to be made in a particular area. Whilst local decisions and accountability are important, the principle of One Aberdeenshire should also stand. One Board would make economical sense, and potentially bring savings to the Council.</i>
16	x		<i>Cost savings and consistency of decision making.</i>
17	x		<i>Consistency of decision making.</i>
18	x		
19		x	<i>Lack of local focus. No clear cost savings due to travel to a central location. Overburdened in admin at single location.</i>
20	x		<i>It would seem sensible to streamline the whole system for Aberdeenshire thus reducing costs.</i>
21		x	
22	x		<i>Represent the ethos of One Aberdeenshire and also providing consistency to applying policy and procedures.</i>
23	x		<i>Less travel, less messing about.</i>
24		x	
25	x		
26	x		<i>Cut down amount of councillors required on Licensing Board reducing expenses. One board, one set of rules.</i>
27		x	
28	x		<i>Easier to deal with 1 Board.</i>
29	x		<i>Cost and efficiency.</i>
30		x	<i>Unless the number of staff remains the same, there will be added pressure.</i>
31	x		
32		x	<i>Local services are familiar with the area, a board that sits and combines all areas can't possibly be fair and unbiased to all parties. Local area boards know their own patch as it were some situations may be unique to one area. The rules apply to all areas however local knowledge is ultimately helpful in making final decisions.</i>
33	x		<i>All areas following same guidelines.</i>
34	x		<i>Less bureaucracy. Greater alignment.</i>
35	x		<i>A pragmatic and streamlined approach.</i>
36	x		<i>So, all areas are making same decisions.</i>

Do you have any concerns about moving to one Board?

#	Yes	No	Comments Made
1		x	<i>Makes sense.</i>
2		x	<i>No comments.</i>

3		x	<i>There is no justification in having three, with I might add differing policies. Policy should be standard in the whole of Scotland let alone Aberdeenshire.</i>
4		x	
5	x		<i>If moving to one board means less people working on the processing of licences, then I do have concerns. Licences take a long time to process as it is.</i>
6		x	
7	x		<i>Aberdeenshire is a very large area and I would worry that personnel would be lost.</i>
8		x	<i>No comments.</i>
9	x		<i>We have first rate service and help currently would this decrease?</i>
10		x	<i>Should result in greater consistency.</i>
11		x	
12	x		<i>As before these decisions should be taken locally by people living in and with the knowledge of the immediate area and what is suitable for it.</i>
13		X	
14		x	
15		x	
16		x	<i>Providing the Board is made up of elected members from across Aberdeenshire.</i>
17		x	<i>The checks & balances will still be there as the board's work is governed by statute.</i>
18	x		
19	x		<i>Lack of local knowledge and accountability. Lack of proper oversight. System becomes a rubber stamp exercise. The current use of a pro forma "plan" already leads to a tick box process by the applicants. They tick all the boxes whether relevant to the actual facility or not (see for example Hampton by Hilton in Elrick). Applications filled out by lawyers rather than actual managers of facilities.</i>
20		x	<i>Centralisation would cut costs.</i>
21		x	
22		x	<i>As per the reasons provided in question 1.</i>
23		x	
24	x		<i>Aberdeenshire is such a vast area, better to have councillors that know the area make decisions locally.</i>
25		x	
26		x	
27	x		<i>Different regulations for areas.</i>
28		x	
29		x	<i>Centralisation is good.</i>
30	x		<i>Too much pressure on remaining staff.</i>
31		x	

32	x		<i>Inability to respond adequately to questions complaints queries etc. in a timely manner. Also, as previous question.</i>
33	x		<i>This may reduce some aspect permitted.</i>
34	x		<i>There should be no redaction in service. This includes the need for the forum to be representative of the whole of Aberdeenshire, and not just those based within South, Central or North. All needs to be represented.</i>
35		x	
36		x	

If it were possible to attend and participate at Board meetings via video link or similar remote means would you consider this?

#	Yes	No	Comments Made
1	x		<i>It is quite common nowadays to use these methods.</i>
2		x	
3		x	<i>I somehow don't think some of the remoter sites would agree to this e.g. internet connection is still poor.</i>
4	x		
5	x		
6	x		
7	x		
8	x		
9		x	
10	x		
11	x		
12		x	
13	x		
14	x		
15		x	N/A
16	x		
17	x		<i>It is a logical extension of modernising delivery of local democracy.</i>
18	x		
19	x		
20	x		<i>If it were necessary for me to attend the meeting, then this would be an option.</i>
21		x	
22	x		<i>Reduce the individual carbon footprints and to minimise unnecessary travel.</i>
23		x	
24		x	
25	x		
26	x		
27		x	
28		x	
29		x	
30		x	
31	x		

32		x	
33	x		<i>Depending on availability.</i>
34	x		
35		x	
36	x		

Would you use public transport to get to a meeting if this was possible?

#	Yes	No	Comments Made
1		x	
2			<i>No answer specified.</i>
3	x		
4			<i>No answer specified.</i>
5		x	
6		x	
7		x	
8		x	
9		x	
10	x		
11	x		
12	x		
13		x	
14	x		
15	x		
16	x		
17	x		
18	x		
19	x		
20		x	
21		x	
22		x	
23	x		
24		x	
25		x	
26	x		
27		x	
28	x		
29	x		
30	x		
31	x		
32	x		
33		x	
34		x	
35	x		
36		x	

Do you think that the Board location should be fixed or rotate around other locations?

#	Fixed	Rotating	Comments Made
1	x		<i>It shouldn't make any difference once formed as one group.</i>

2		x	
3	x		<i>By rotating you are just introducing extra cost. Aberdeenshire isn't that big!</i>
4	x		
5		x	
6	x		
7		x	
8	x		<i>In a central area would be great.</i>
9			<i>Unsure.</i>
10	x		
11	X		
12		x	
13		x	
14	x		
15	x		
16		x	
17		x	<i>Again, helps bring "democracy" to everyone, particularly if only one board is the result of the consultation.</i>
18		x	
19		x	<i>Needs to get round the communities and see the lie of the land. Must meet locals.</i>
20	x		<i>A central could be agreed and fixed.</i>
21		x	
22		x	<i>This would then support the one licensing board but have local member representation.</i>
23		x	
24	x		
25		x	
26	x		
27		x	
28	x		
29	x		
30		x	
31		x	
32		x	
33		x	
34		x	
35		x	<i>Rotating is especially important to allow all those within Aberdeenshire to attend, as this is a massive area to cover.</i>
36	x		

Do you have any suggestions for where meetings could be held so that they are accessible for all across Aberdeenshire?

#	Yes	No	Comments Made
1		x	
2	x		<i>Perhaps rotating between a central point in each of the three previous areas covered?</i>
3	x		<i>Probably Inverurie is as central as anywhere.</i>
4	x		<i>Inverurie.</i>

5	x		<i>Inverurie.</i>
6		x	
7		x	
8	x		<i>Council offices in Aberdeen.</i>
9		x	
10		x	
11		X	
12		x	
13		x	
14	x		<i>Peterhead.</i>
15	x		<i>Woodhill.</i>
16	x		<i>Various locations across Aberdeenshire that are easily accessible by public transport.</i>
17		x	<i>I only have limited knowledge of the facilities available in your premises, particularly if they need to have modern IT connectivity.</i>
18		x	
19		x	<i>Local hotels, village halls, scout halls.</i>
20	x		<i>Possibly Inverurie - good public transport links.</i>
21		x	
22	x		<i>At various corporate offices within Aberdeenshire.</i>
23	x		<i>Village halls where there is public transport.</i>
24	x		<i>Local Council buildings e.g. Town Halls</i>
25	x		<i>Peterhead.</i>
26	x		<i>Aberdeen.</i>
27		x	
28		x	
29	x		<i>Should be held at Inverurie.</i>
30		x	
31		x	
32		x	
33	x		<i>Inverurie - any council building.</i>
34	x		<i>Community Centres, Libraries, Stonehaven, Ellon, Banchory. All locations easily accessible on the AWPR.</i>
35	x		<i>Aberdeen.</i>
36		x	

Do you think that there should be member representation on a new Board from all areas within Aberdeenshire?

#	Yes	No	Comments Made
1	x		<i>Better democracy.</i>
2		x	
3		x	<i>One policy should fit all.</i>
4	x		
5	x		
6	x		
7	x		
8	x		
9	x		

10	x		
11	X		
12	x		
13	x		
14	x		
15	x		<i>It is important to ensure all areas are represented.</i>
16	x		<i>These should be elected representatives, not political appointees.</i>
17	x		<i>Again, to help ensure consistency and "democracy" being seen to being done.</i>
18	x		
19	x		<i>Need knowledge of local issues from everywhere.</i>
20	x		<i>They would have knowledge of the premises in their area.</i>
21	x		
22	x		<i>As mentioned above.</i>
23	x		
24	x		
25	x		
26	x		
27	x		
28	x		
29	x		
30	x		
31	x		
32	x		<i>Most definitely this is imperative.</i>
33	x		
34	x		<i>Yes, must be representative of the whole area, across all three of the previous boards.</i>
35		x	
36	x		

Appendix 3 Comments from Licensing Boards following Public Consultation

South Board – 5th February 2020

The South Board unanimously support a move to one Licensing Board.

The Board discussed the report and raised the following points:-

- That clear guidance should be developed for the use of remote access to meetings particularly relating to the quorum of members who must be physically present. Consideration must also be given to the experience and perception of any applicant or member of the public attending the meeting.
- There was discussion about whether appointments to a single Board should be made on the basis of political proportionality. There was not consensus on this point and the majority stated that a wide geographic coverage and an interest in licensing should be the main considerations for appointments.
- The majority of the Board agreed that rotating the location for meetings could be complicated and could mean further travel for some applicants and so thought it was better to have one Board in a central location with consideration being given to Woodhill House. Consideration should also be given to the time that the meetings are due to begin to allow those invited to attend time to travel.
- The Board acknowledged that should Council agree to reduce the number of Boards, that the South Board would no longer meet. Thanks were passed to officers for their support.

Central Board – 12th February 2020

The Central Board had mixed views.

- Some members expressed the view that the current system works well and that to reduce would reduce the representation of different areas on the Boards. Views were expressed against the centralisation of the liquor function.
- Some members could see the value in terms of efficiencies that could be created by reducing the number of Boards to one to improve the customer experience.
- Discussion initially focused on the issue of membership and that 12 members would have been better for Aberdeenshire as it would have allowed 2 members from each Area Committee. The statutory maximum is 10 members on a Licensing Board and so the view was expressed that if Council agree to reduce the number of Boards to one, that there should be a commitment from officers to engage with Area Committees on policy issues to ensure that all councilors have an opportunity to input.
- The Central Board acknowledged that there had been a low response rate.
- The view of the Central Board was that the location of the meetings should be fixed and not rotate to give stability and consistency.

Appendix 4 – Potential Dates for Meetings

The North, South, and Central Boards determined dates for the year ahead prior to the review of the structure. Should Council agree to retain the 3 Boards, these dates and venues will be used. In the event that Council wishes to reduce to one Board, the new Board will determine its schedule of meetings for the year ahead. As an indication, the tables in this appendix provide options for the Board and are included for Council's views regarding fixed or rotating venues. A date of 29th April 2020 has been identified for the first Board meeting in Woodhill House so that the new Board can establish its own identity. Thereafter suggestions are as follows:-

Dates for Woodhill

29th April 2020 – Committee Room 2
3rd June 2020 – Committee Room 5
12th August 2020 – Committee Room 5 (last week of School holidays) – or
alternatively 19th August in Gordon House, Inverurie
28th October 2020 – Committee Room 1
16th December 2020 – Committee Room 5
10th February 2021 – Committee Room 5

Dates for a fixed Central Location

Should a fixed Central location be sought, the following dates are available in Gordon House, Inverurie. These dates reflect those agreed by the Central Board.

22nd April 2020
10th June 2020
19th August 2020
28th October 2020
9th December 2020
10th February 2021
28th April 2021

Dates for Rotating Venues (using bookings agreed by existing Boards)

Wednesday 3rd June 2020 – Viewmount, Stonehaven
Wednesday 19th August 2020 – Gordon House, Inverurie
Friday 23rd October 2020 – Buchan House, Peterhead
Wednesday 2nd December 2020 – Viewmount, Stonehaven
Wednesday 10th February 2021 – Gordon House, Inverurie
Friday 23rd April 2021 – Buchan House, Peterhead

Appendix 5 – Comparison in other Areas in Scotland

Scottish Licensing Board Arrangements				
Authority	No. of Boards	No. of Members	Meeting Cycle (Approx)	Meeting Location
Aberdeenshire	3	8 in each	Each x 6 = 18	Fixed – Board Area
Aberdeen	1	9	8 weekly cycle	Fixed
Angus	1	10	9-13 meetings a year	Fixed
Argyll & Bute	1	10	5 meetings a year	Fixed
Clackmannanshire	1	9	12 meetings a year	Fixed
Comhairle	1	10	-	-
Dumfries & Galloway	4	5-6 in each	-	-
Dundee	1	10	-	Fixed
East Ayrshire	1	10	10 meetings a year	Fixed
East Dunbartonshire	1	-	7-9 meetings a year	Fixed
East Lothian	1	6	9-11 meetings a year	Fixed
East Renfrewshire	1	5	11 meetings a year	Fixed
Edinburgh	1	10	11 meetings a year	Fixed
Falkirk	1	8	11 meetings a year	Fixed
Fife	1	10	monthly	Fixed
Glasgow	1	8	monthly	Fixed
Highland	1	10	9 meetings a year	-
Inverclyde	1	8	4 meetings a year	Fixed
Midlothian	1	10	7-9 meetings a year	Fixed
Moray	1	9	8 weekly cycle	Fixed
North Ayrshire	1	10	5 meetings a year	Fixed
North Lanarkshire	1	10	-	Fixed
Orkney	1	8	-	Fixed
Perth & Kinross	1	10	9-11 meetings a year	Fixed
Renfrewshire	1	10	5 meetings a year	Fixed
Scottish Borders	1	9	12 meetings a year	Fixed

Shetland	1	8	9-12 meetings a year	Fixed
South Ayrshire	1	9	10 meetings a year	Fixed
South Lanarkshire	4	10 in each	Each x 4-5 = 16-20	Fixed – Board Area
Stirling	1	8	6 meetings a year	Fixed
West Dunbartonshire	1	8	11-12 meetings a year	Fixed
West Lothian	1	8	14-15 meetings a year	Fixed

Appendix 6 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

EIA Version	Date	Author	Changes
1	23.1.2020	L. Cowie	

Stage 1: Title and aims of the activity (“activity” is an umbrella term covering policies, procedures, guidance and decisions including those that affect services the council delivers).	
Service	Business Services
Section	Legal and Governance, Licensing
Title of the activity etc.	Review of the Structure of the Licensing Boards in Aberdeenshire
Aims and desired outcomes of the activity	Considering a restructure of the Aberdeenshire Licensing Board Structure and potential reduction to a single Licensing Board.
Author(s) & Title(s)	Lauren Cowie, Principal Solicitor (Governance)

Stage 2: List the evidence that has been used in this assessment and explain what it means in relation to the activity you are assessing.		
Evidence	What does it say?	What does it mean?
Internal data (customer satisfaction surveys; equality monitoring data; customer complaints).	Data has been gathered regarding the number of hearings, volume of paper, time spent at Licensing Boards by officers and members.	The data gathering means that reviewing the structure is worthwhile and that there are potential time savings and sustainability savings along with small financial savings.
External consultation (partner organisations, community groups, and councils).	An external survey was published and 36 responses.	That there is public and partner support for a move to one Licensing Board

External data (census, available statistics).	Comparison across Scotland shows that the vast majority of local authorities have one Licensing Board	That it is possible that one Board can represent a whole area.
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Stage 3: Evidence Gaps.	
Are there any gaps in the information you currently hold?	No

Stage 4: Measures to fill the evidence gaps.		
What measures will be taken to fill the information gaps before the activity is implemented? These should be included in the action plan at the back of this form.	Measures:	Timescale:

Stage 5: What steps can be taken to promote good relations between various groups/areas?	
These should be included in the action plan.	The Licensing Boards are bound by the Equalities duties in the same way that the Council are. The Boards take their equalities duties seriously and contribute to the Council's mainstreaming reports. Boards must take decisions on the basis of the licensing objectives however they are also subject to the public sector equality duty. Having one Licensing Board will allow engagement to be looked at on a wider basis than currently and makes engagement easier for partners in terms of dealing with one Board rather than three.

Stage 6: How does the policy/activity create opportunities for advancing equality of opportunity?	
Licensing Boards are in place to regulate the sale and supply of alcohol and to oversee Gambling. The impact of reducing to one Board has a neutral impact in terms of the opportunities awarded to applicants for a licence to enable them to take advantage of commercial opportunities, or to fundraise. Reducing to one Board ensures that there is consistent decision making and approaches to issues across Aberdeenshire so that different decisions are not reached based on where you live/work.	

Stage 7a:

Are there potential impacts on protected groups?

The protected groups covered by the equality duty are: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

Who is affected by the activity or who is intended to benefit from the proposed activity and how?

Complete the table below for each protected group by inserting “yes” in the applicable box/boxes below.

	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Unknown
Age – Younger/Older			No identifiable impact	
Age - Older			No identifiable impact	
Disability			No identifiable impact	
Race – (includes Gypsy Travellers)			No identifiable impact	
Religion or Belief			No identifiable impact	
Sex			No identifiable impact	
Pregnancy and maternity			No identifiable impact	
Sexual orientation – (includes Lesbian/ Gay/Bisexual)			No identifiable impact	
Gender reassignment – (includes Transgender)			No identifiable impact	
Marriage and Civil Partnership			No identifiable impact	

Stage 7b: Do you have evidence or reason to believe that this policy, activity etc. will or may impact on socio-economic inequalities?

This is about trying to be fair to everyone. Part of that is realising that not everyone may be starting at the same place. Some individuals and families may have low income, may have very little or no savings which means they are living from month to month therefore changes to council policies/services may have a greater adverse impact on them.

On this basis you should consider potential impacts on individuals/families by:

- Place: on specific vulnerable areas or communities (SIMD, regeneration, rural) e.g. housing, transport.
- Pockets: household resources, (Income, benefits, outgoings) ability to access a service
- Prospects: peoples life chances e.g.access to, or ability to access: employment, training, services (such as council or health) or support.

Groups of people who may be impacted include, but not limited to:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unemployed • Single parents and vulnerable families • People on benefits • Those involved in the criminal justice system • People in the most deprived communities • People who live in rural areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pensioners • Looked after children • Carers including young carers • Veterans • Students • Single adult households • People who have experienced the asylum system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those leaving the care setting including children and young people and those with illness • Homeless people • People with low literacy/numeracy • People with lower educational qualifications • People I low paid work • People with one or more protected characteristic
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Please complete by inserting "yes" in the applicable box/boxes below.

Socio-economic disadvantage	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Unknown
Pockets: Low income/income poverty – cannot afford to maintain regular payments such as bills, food, clothing				Yes

Pockets: Low and/or no wealth – enough money to meet basic living costs and pay bills but have no savings to deal with any unexpected spends and no provision for the future				Yes
Pockets: Material deprivation – being unable to access basic goods and services i.e. financial products like life insurance, repair/replace broken electrical goods, warm home, leisure and hobbies				Yes
Place: Area deprivation – where you live, where you work			Yes	
Prospects: Socioeconomic background – social class i.e. parents education, employment and income , educational achievement.			Yes	

Stage 8: What are the positive and negative impacts?		
Impacts.	Positive (describe the impact for each of the protected characteristics affected)	Negative (describe the impact for each of the protected characteristics affected)
Please detail the potential positive and/or negative impacts you have highlighted above. Detail the impacts and	Consistent Policies and implementation across Aberdeenshire	Perceived lack of local knowledge
	Better use of Council resources	

describe those affected.		

Stage 9: Have any of the affected groups/areas been involved, engaged with or consulted?

<p>If yes, please give details of how this was done and what the results were. If no, how have you ensured that you can make an informed decision about mitigating steps?</p>	<p>There was a public consultation and no discernible negative nor positive impact was evidenced during the consultation on any issue which would cause any concern under the Fairer Scotland duty.</p>
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Stage 10: What mitigating steps will be taken to remove or reduce negative impacts?

<p>These should be included in any action plan at the back of this form.</p>	Mitigating Steps	Timescale
	<p>If there is an impact on applicants, which at the moment is unknown until a decision is made as to whether there will be one board, and if so whether it will be fixed or rotating, requiring to travel a further distance and this is made known to the Boards, arrangements could be put in place to accommodate remote participation from a local Council office. This will be further mitigated by ensuring that any venue is accessible by public transport.</p>	<p>As and when there are issues.</p>
	<p>Consideration will require to be given to the location and start time of meetings. If those will be travelling further, this should be considered.</p>	

Stage 11: What monitoring arrangements will be put in place? How the EIA will be used to monitor the proposal	
These should be included in any action plan (for example customer satisfaction questionnaires).	Any single Board will be able to keep their own arrangements under review. It is suggested that there is a review of their arrangements after one year of operation however that if there are issues arising that the Board will deal with this as appropriate.

Stage 12: What is the outcome of the Assessment?	
Please complete the appropriate box/boxes	1 No negative impacts have been identified –please explain.
	No negative impacts have been identified by the move to a single Board. As identified above, should any negative impacts on applicants be identified, the Board will review the arrangements accordingly.
	2 Negative Impacts have been identified, these can be mitigated - please explain. * Please fill in Stage 13 if this option is chosen.
	3 The activity will have negative impacts which cannot be mitigated fully – please explain. * Please fill in Stage 13 if this option is chosen

* Stage 13: Set out the justification that the activity can and should go ahead despite the negative impact.

Stage 14: Sign off and authorisation.				
Sign off and authorisation.	1) Service and Team	Business Services, Legal and Governance		
	2) Title of Policy/Activity	Review of Licensing Board Structure in Aberdeenshire (if appropriate)		
	3) Authors: I/We have completed the equality impact assessment for this policy/activity.	Name: Lauren Cowie Position: Principal Solicitor (Governance) Date: Signature:	Name: Position: Date: Signature:	
		Name: Position: Date: Signature:	Name: Position: Date: Signature:	
	4) Consultation with Service Manager	Name: Laura Bremner Date:		
	5) Authorisation by Director or Head of Service	Name: Karen Wiles Position: Head of Legal and Governance Date:	Name: Position: Date:	
	6) If the EIA relates to a matter that has to go before a Committee, Committee report author sends the Committee Report and this form, and any supporting assessment documents, to the Officers responsible for monitoring and the Committee Officer of the relevant Committee.			Date:
	7) EIA author sends a copy of the finalised form to: equalities@aberdeenshire.gov.uk			Date: