

ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL

SOUTH ABERDEENSHIRE LICENSING FORUM

COMMUNITY CENTRE, STONEHAVEN, 7th JUNE, 2017

Present: Mr Alistair Black, Mr Chris Endersen, Mr Wayne Gault, Sgt Gavin Jardine and Mr Keith Simpson.

Officer: Anna Ziarkowska (Assistant Committee Officer), Aberdeenshire Council

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Mr Kenneth McGeough and Mr Peter Argyle.

2. MINUTE OF MEETING OF 1st MARCH, 2017

There was circulated and **approved** the Minute of Meeting of 1st March, 2017.

3. MATTERS ARISING

Members were advised that the Education Service attempts to revise its policy in respect of the lease of school buildings to the public and this is a chance for Forum to contribute and incorporate their concerns about the alcohol consumption during the children-oriented events.

Wayne Gault informed Members about the Community Councils Licensing Workshop organised by the Aberdeen City Council with a view to consult Community Councils and discuss with them the licensing issues. It was proposed to organise similar type of event in South division of Aberdeenshire to improve the level of engagement with local communities and to raise the general understanding/awareness of licensing processes.

After consideration, Members **agreed** to fix a date and revise the programme for workshop.

4. SINGLE LICENSING FORUM FOR ABERDEENSHIRE – VOTING ON PROPOSAL

Members were informed that at the joint meeting of all three Licensing Forums on 24th March 2017, the potentials for introducing the changes to the Forums structure within the Aberdeenshire Council were discussed. It was proposed to abolish the system of three Licensing Forums for each area and create a single Forum for the Council. Members were reminded that according to the section 12 of the Forum's Constitution, each Forum has the power to alter the Constitution and to make or amend rules relating to the conduct and administration of the Forum at any of its meetings. All such alterations require to be approved by a two - thirds majority of those present and voting. Members were also advised that any changes to the Forum's membership or organisation need to be approved by the Business Services Committee for the Council. During discussion, it was also proposed to write to the Convener of the Licensing Board and to the Head of Legal & Governance for Aberdeenshire Council with a proposal to restructure the Licensing Board Divisions.

After consideration, Mr Gavin Jardine, seconded by Mr Wayne Gault moved that the Forum agree to support the proposal for removal of three Licensing Forums and to create a single Licensing Forum for the Aberdeenshire Council. Thereafter, the Forum unanimously **agreed** to support the proposal.

5. LICENSING BOARD POLICY STATEMENT REVIEW

There had been circulated the current Statement of the Licensing Policy for Central Division. Members were advised that Board has 18 months from the date of the election to reconsider and agree a new policy for licensing. It was reported that consultation process will be initiated shortly and Licensing Forum should take advantage of this opportunity to share their views with the Board and influence the licensing policy change. Reference was made to the case law in respect of licensing, equality duties legislation, public health objectives, increasing violence at private space due to the alcohol consumption, online alcohol sales, and greater regulation of off-sale environment. Members also identified a need for separate session of the Forum for the purpose of revising the current licensing policy to highlight the areas where changes are required and to discuss the ongoing issues. During discussion, it was felt necessary to contact the Convener of the Board with a view to request a comprehensive guidance on what type of information/evidence the Board is looking for and to obtain assurance that any submission made by the Forum would not be dismissed without sufficient justification.

Wayne Gault also advised that the outcome of the Citizens Viewpoint Survey was published recently with 800 responses received from the public. It was suggested that this type of data might also be influential for the purpose of the licensing review.

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

- 1/ contact Peter Robertson to obtain a summary of the key cases in respect of licensing,
- 2/ ask the Board for guidance on what type of information is required in respect of the Licensing Policy Review,
- 3/ circulate materials and Forum's response to the previous Licensing Policy Review Consultation,
- 4/ organise informal get together session for the Forum members in order to discuss and review the Licensing Policy Statement,
- 5/ circulate a report with the outcome of Citizens Viewpoint Survey.

6. SCOTTISH STUDY FINDS POOR ARE HIT HARDEST BY HEAVY DRINKING

There had been circulated an article by Janice Burns providing a summary of recently published research paper demonstrating that poorest people in society are hit hardest by heavy drinking. According to the new medical study, drinking heavily is more harmful to the socio-economically disadvantaged communities, who are at greater risk of illness or death because of alcohol consumption. During the discussion, Members were keen to take the research findings into consideration in the Licensing Policy Review Process.

Following on from the discussion, the Forum **agreed** to note the information provided.

7. LICENSING BOARD UPDATE

During Mr Peter Argyle absence, Members were advised that following on from the election, the new Board Members have been appointed and all gone through the mandatory training. It was reported that Mr Peter Argyle would continue chairing the South Division and attending the future Forum meetings.

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

8. LICENSING STANDARDS OFFICER UPDATE

Keith Simpson advised that there were generally very few issues in respect of the liquor licensing in the area and that most premises were operating well. He reported that there is ongoing uncertainty over the process for renewing personal licences after the initial 10 year period and the level of training that is required. Members were informed about difficulties in obtaining guidance and information from the Government on training requirements: whether personal licence holders need to undertake a full licence training or refresher training before the licence expiry date. It was reported that Fiona Stewart would confirm the training requirements and Mr Simpson will report back to Forum at the next meeting.

Mr Simpson also indicated that new post of Civil Licensing Standard Officer has been introduced by statute to ensure compliance with conditions of civic licensing which may potentially impact on the LSOs' workload. Despite the fact that a lot of work is required around taking on the new role, Members were assured that LSOs will remain equally focus on alcohol issues.

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

9. POLICE UPDATE

Mr Gavin Jardine advised that South area remains quiet and does not cause any issues from the Police perspective. It was reported that Police introduced new, more operational approach to licensing by having dedicated team of officers visiting licensed premises and dealing with any issues arising at early stage. Members were also advised that Police experience significant pressure on the workload around licensing matters as officers are heavily involved and split between civic and liquor licensing. It was further observed that Police would continue with prevention work and collaboration with Health Sector and LSOs.

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

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

No items were reported.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Forum would take place on Wednesday, 27th September, 2017 at 10.30 a.m. in Stonehaven.

