

## **ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL**

### **SOUTH ABERDEENSHIRE LICENSING FORUM**

**VIEWMOUNT, STONEHAVEN, 17 JUNE, 2009**

**Present:** Mr John Kinsella, (Convener); Mr Chris Endersen; Mr Stephen Holt; Councillor Carl Nelson; Mr Keith Simpson; Inspector Andrew Todd, Grampian Police.

**Officers:** Alastair Nicol, (Principal Committee Officer); Arlene Kelday, (Assistant Committee Officer).

The Convener welcomed members to the Forum meeting and asked the Principal Committee Officer to introduce the Assistant Committee Officer to members. The Principal Committee Officer advised that the Assistant Committee Officer had been employed primarily to administer and provide support to the Local Licensing Forums.

#### **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Graham Donald, Mr Michael Holley, Mr Robert Lindsay and Mrs Caroline Tough, Senior Solicitor (Licensing).

#### **2. MINUTE OF MEETING OF 11 MARCH, 2009**

The Minute of Meeting of 11 March, 2009, had been circulated and was approved.

#### **3. MATTERS ARISING**

Applications for membership - Mr Simpson asked generally about the applications system and enquired whether this was a rolling process. The Principal Committee Officer advised that applications for membership was an ongoing process and that no new applications had been received.

#### **4. LICENSING STANDARDS OFFICER UPDATE – OVERPROVISION POLICY**

There had been circulated a copy of the draft Overprovision Policy, by Mr Keith Simpson, Senior Licensing Standards Officer. This report detailed the findings of the sub-group delegated with the task of compiling evidence and making recommendations as to the localities and areas where there might be overprovision. It was advised that the findings would be considered at a joint meeting of the Forum and Board on 24 June, 2009.

Mr Simpson spent some time detailing the findings of the sub-group and the information contained within the draft report. He explained that the sub-group had been tasked with collecting evidence which might be used to suggest that there is saturation of particular types of premises in particular areas or localities. In gathering such evidence the sub-group looked at the number of applications made under the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005 during the transition period and information on alcohol issues in various localities in South Aberdeenshire. The draft report contained statistical information on the trends associated with alcohol and children and young people in Aberdeenshire and a Public Performance Report from Grampian Police. The draft report also contained a general overview of the findings from the localities from which data was collected and an analysis of licensed premises per 10,000 of population. Mr Simpson advised that, with the exception of Aboyne and Upper Deeside, due to the number of licensed premises facilitating the tourism industry

in the area, the number of premises per 10,000 of population in South Aberdeenshire was below the national average.

Mr Simpson concluded by advising the Forum that the sub-group had found no causal link between the number of licensed premises and any alcohol related issues within South Aberdeenshire Licensing Board area, and as such found there to be no evidence of overprovision in South Aberdeenshire. Mr Simpson welcomed comments and questions on the content of the draft Overprovision Policy report.

There followed a general discussion about the draft report. Councillor Nelson commented that he was surprised at the statistics detailed in the report on the Children and Young People in Aberdeenshire and found the figures cause for concern. This related specifically to the age at which children and young people were first drinking alcohol and the volume of alcohol being actually being consumed.

Inspector Todd confirmed that there was an issue with proxy purchasing in the area and that young persons were obtaining and consuming alcohol outwith an on-sales environment. He continued by informing the group that underage drinking was a major issue and suggested that the availability of alcohol to young people needed to be reduced.

Mr Endersen commented that the number of people in Aberdeenshire with alcohol dependency and alcohol related illnesses was surprising, particularly as these conditions were now being found in middle aged people.

Councillor Nelson suggested that this might be an educational issue and the Convener suggested that this might be an area for the Forum to look at. Mr Simpson advised that he would contact Elaine Youngman, Alcohol and Drugs Development Officer regarding the education curriculum and alcohol awareness. The Principal Committee Officer also suggested making contact with Thelma Birnie, Head of Education, Learning and Leisure (Kincardine and Mearns) regarding alcohol and education. Councillor Nelson commented that the Forum should look to support the education of young people about alcohol awareness.

Thereafter, the Forum **approved** the draft Overprovision Policy report for submission to the Board.

## 5. WORK PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of 11 March, 2009 (Item 8), the Forum discussed areas of interest with the view to developing a work plan with specific aims and objectives.

The Convener suggested that an investigation of Occasional Licences could be undertaken. Inspector Todd commented that Occasional Licences could not be exempt from the conditions of the 2005 Act and that applicants for such licences required support and guidance.

Mr Simpson suggested that a condition be imposed which stipulated that Occasional Licences could only be applied for by Personal Licence holders. The Forum **agreed** to consider further the issues with regard to Occasional Licences at the next meeting of the Forum.

Further areas of interest were **noted**:-

- (a) Promotion of National Alcohol Awareness Week (October 2009),
- (b) Development of a website, and

(c) Raising public awareness of the Forum.

The Assistant Committee Officer agreed to write to the Forum members to gauge specific areas of interest with the view to creating work plans and establishing sub-groups to discuss these areas in further detail.

#### **6. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS**

The Principal Committee Officer reminded the Forum that the joint meeting of the Board and Forum would take place on Wednesday 24 June, 2009 at 10.00 a.m. in the Council Chamber, Viewmount, Stonehaven.

The Principal Committee Officer advised the Forum of an email he received from the Legal Manager (Central) which detailed a suggestion from the Central Forum Convener and the Central Board Convener for their consideration. The suggestion was that the three Forum Conveners and three Board Conveners from North, Central and South meet to discuss issues of common interest and exchange ideas of Forum practices. The Forum agreed that this meeting should go ahead, with the suggestion that it should be held in early autumn before the next Forum meeting in October.

#### **7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held in the Council Chamber, Viewmount, Stonehaven on Wednesday, 14 October, 2009 at 10.30 a.m.

**John Kinsella**  
**Convener**