

THE FIFE COUNCIL - FIFE LICENSING FORUM – BLENDED MEETING

Fife House, North Street, Glenrothes

25 May, 2023

2.00pm – 3.15pm

PRESENT: Gregor Hannah (Convener), Neil Ewing, John Barclay, Steven Brown, Catherine Chudleigh, Jeff Ellis, Gillian Dewar and Paul Smith.

ATTENDING: Rebecca Shovlin, Policy Officer, Health and Social Care; Nicky Corletto, Licensing Standards Officer; Lindsay Thomson, Head of Legal and Democratic Services, Kimberley Langley, Solicitor and Elizabeth Mair, Committee Officer, Legal and Democratic Services.

ALSO ATTENDING: Garry Burns (AFS), Peter Reid, Scottish Government.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillors Tom Adams, Clare Campbell, Izzy Corbin and Douglas Hardaker

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Gregor Hannah welcomed everyone to the meeting and apologies were given.

2. MINUTE

The Forum considered the minute of meeting of Fife Licensing Forum of 9 March 2023.

Decision

The Forum agreed to approve the minute.

3. RESIGNATIONS - JIM BETT AND IAN DAVIDSON

The Forum was asked to note the resignation of Jim Bett and Ian Davidson, due to their recent retirements. It was advised that Jim had been a member of the Forum since its establishment in May 2007.

Decision

The Forum noted the resignations and expressed thanks to Jim and Ian for their contributions.

4. APPOINTMENT OF NEW MEMBERS

The Forum considered a report by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services regarding the appointment of new members to fill the three vacancies which had arisen following recent resignations. It was noted that there were currently 5 expressions of interest in joining the Forum and these persons would all bring valuable skills. Lindsay Thomson advised that one option would be to request that Fife Council increase the number of members on the Forum to allow all interested parties to be appointed. It could also give an opportunity to seek a young person as this category was not currently represented on the Forum. There was a general consensus that all 5 persons could be appointed, but this could not be confirmed until the Council approved the increase to membership.

Decision

The Forum agreed:-

- (1) to request that Fife Council increase the number of members on the Forum from fifteen to eighteen; and
- (2) to continue the consideration of appointments until the next meeting following the decision of Council.

5. UPDATES FROM FIFE LICENSING BOARD

The Forum considered the minutes of meetings of Fife Licensing Board of 3 and 17 April 2023.

Decision

The Forum noted the minutes of the meetings.

6. LICENSING STANDARDS OFFICERS UPDATE

The Forum considered a report by the Licensing Standards Lead Officer, providing an update on the work of Licensing Standards since the last meeting.

It was reported that some premises had reduced the amount of alcohol products for sale and were using some of the allocated space, as specified on the plan approved with their licence, to display other goods. There appeared to be an inconsistent approach to this by Licensing Standards Officers. It was advised that the space needed to be used for the display of alcohol, soft drinks or newspapers and that a minor variation was required if the amount of alcohol was reduced. Steven Brown advised that he would feed this back to the team and arrange for investigation of any specific premises reported.

In response to a query regarding any issues with the delivery of alcohol, it was noted that there had been no reports of problems and that delivery drivers appeared to be verifying the age of the recipients. Neil Ewing confirmed that conditions attached to licenses required that deliveries must be to business or residential premises and not to open spaces such as parks. It was also noted that Amazon did not have a license to deliver alcohol products from the Fife distribution centre so any Amazon deliveries originated outwith Fife.

Decision

The Forum noted the report.

7. POLICE REPORT

Neil Ewing gave an update on the work of the Police since the last meeting. He advised that joint visits had been carried out with the licensing standards officers and with the better weather coming in it was likely that the number of complaints regarding beer gardens and outdoor drinking would be increasing.

Paul Smith asked about the recent Pubwatch scheme relaunch in Kirkcaldy and if it had addressed the presence of police at outside events. Neil Ewing confirmed that the police would not routinely have a presence at such events but that they would respond to any calls. Premises also needed to ban problem customers and discourage others from causing problems. He advised that one of the current issues was the lack of night time taxis.

It was noted that there was an unofficial pubwatch scheme in St Andrews but the police had not been involved and that although one license holder in Burntisland would like to see the scheme introduced there, other licence holders did not appear willing to join at this time.

Decision

The Forum noted the report.

8. NHS PUBLIC HEALTH UPDATE

The Forum considered a report by Catherine Chudleigh, Public Health Consultant, NHS Fife, providing an update on the following:-

- impact of minimum unit pricing on deaths
- licensing policy review public health evidence pack
- learning from alcohol specific deaths
- Director of Public Health Report
- See Beyond Scotland

Catherine advised that she could bring the full minimum unit pricing report to the next meeting and that figures had been published on alcohol related hospital admissions. She confirmed that the Director of Public Health Report would be published later in the summer.

It was also noted that there were differences in the impact of alcohol on deaths in England.

Decision

The Forum:-

- (1) noted the report; and
- (2) agreed that the Minimum Unit Pricing report be considered at the next meeting.

9. ALCOHOL FOCUS SCOTLAND - EFOCUS NEWSLETTERS

The Forum noted that eFocus newsletters could be accessed directly through the Alcohol Focus Scotland Website and a link was provided.

10. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

New Member Induction Materials

The provision of induction materials for new members was raised. It was suggested that the Alcohol Focus Scotland Licensing Forum Member's Guide and the Licensing Standards Officers course materials might be useful. Garry Burns of Alcohol Focus Scotland was also in attendance and advised that he was happy to answer any questions on the guide.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Forum noted that the next meeting would be held on 24 August 2023 at 2.00pm.
