I support the principle behind minimum pricing for a unit of alcohol, drinks promotions and the age verification policy. However, I do believe that increasing the age to 21 for the sale of alcohol will be counter-productive in the long term and that the focus should be on enforcing the provisions to ensure that young people particularly in the 13-18 year old bracket are not sold or supplied with alcohol.

I support the proposal regarding the location of drinks promotions in off-sales premises.

As far as the social responsibility levy for licence-holders is concerned, I feel that the Western Isles in particular are already subject to sufficient taxes and charges.

However, I do have concerns about the social impact of this legislation on children and families, communities, health services, social work services and police services. I say this because many many people who are dependent on alcohol on a daily basis will now spend even more of the family income on alcohol to satisfy their addiction or perhaps find other means of obtaining money to purchase alcohol and may in turn lead them into crime and other difficulties which both local authorities and health services would have to address. Although in principle I am not against the minimum pricing proposal, I would hope that appropriate funding would be made available by the Scottish Government to all relevant bodies to tackle the problems arising from the possible negative social impact of this legislation, which in the long term I would hope would not outweigh the positive impact that this would have on our local communities.

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