At a recent meeting of the North Aberdeenshire Licensing Forum, members discussed the consultation documents associated with the Alcohol etc (Scotland) Bill and made the following comments:

The advantages and disadvantages of establishing a minimum alcohol sales price based on a unit of alcohol was discussed by the Forum and are detailed below:

- It was suggested that a minimum alcohol sales price based on a unit of alcohol will affect off-sales more than on-sales and this may reduce the amount of alcohol purchased from off-sales establishments thus reducing the number of consumers who consume alcohol at home rather than in an on-sales environment.
- It was recognised that a minimum price may limit the number of young people who can afford to purchase alcohol. However, it was also recognised that if alcohol becomes unaffordable for some consumers other, cheaper drugs may be purchased as a substitute.

The Forum does not wish to recommend a value at which the minimum price should be set. It was suggested that this is a matter for the Scottish Government to determine.

The Forum recognised the minimum pricing is part of an effective strategy which will address all types of problem drinking.

The Forum commented that increased licence fees, determined by volume of alcohol sold, may reduce the ability of supermarkets to offer alcohol at a reduce rate.

The Forum does not agree with the introduction of a social responsibility levy on on-sales and off-sales licence holders. The Forum believe that the majority of establishments are managed responsibly and question how the levy would be controlled if it was to be applied only to those premises who breached the provisions of the 2005 Act.

The Forum does not support empowering licensing boards to raise the legal alcohol age in their area to 21.

The Forum agreed that promotional offers and promotional material encourage people to purchase more alcohol that they intend.

With regard to other aspects of the Bill, particularly the cost to individuals, the Forum suggested that a social responsibility levy could be associated with persons who are found to be breaking the law as a result of the over consumption of alcohol.