Alcohol etc. (Scotland) Bill

North Lanarkshire Council

The submission content has been prepared by NLC Learning and Leisure Services on behalf of the Council, and focuses on the impact of the proposals largely in respect of Sport provision.

The responses are aligned to each of the questions posed by the Committee.

Advantages/disadvantages of minimum sales price based on a unit of alcohol

This may have an impact in respect of potentially more people going to sports clubs and venues that have bars rather than purchasing from other outlets and consuming at home. This could result in increased revenue for voluntary sports clubs and indeed provide opportunities for clubs to target new sports participants and volunteers.

The level at which a minimum price should be set and justification for that level

Although it may be more likely that countries having significantly higher sports participation levels is due to more effective gender equality policies, these countries are mostly in Scandinavia, which also has much higher alcohol unit prices and restricted sales outlets in some cases.

Rationale behind use of minimum pricing as an effective tool to address all types of problem drinking / Possible alternatives to minimum pricing as an effective means of addressing public health issues surrounding alcohol consumption in Scotland

Various academic studies and the majority view of public health professionals appear to support the proposed approach as the one with greatest potential impact.

Advantages and disadvantages of introducing a social responsibility levy on pubs and clubs

Consideration should be given to whether a social responsibility levy would negate any potential benefits gained by encouraging people to attend licensed clubs in terms of increased revenues, particularly in the case of voluntary sports clubs. These types of organisations are in real need of sustainable income streams, and should be considered for exemption or perhaps a sports development levy rather than a social responsibility levy. This approach could see an element of any increased revenue being specifically directed towards the positive development of sport.
Justification for empowering licensing boards to raise the legal alcohol purchase age in their area to 21

This aspect of the proposals is in line with the spirit of Concordat between Scottish Government and Local Authorities, in that more decisions are taken at local level.

Role of promotional offers and material in encouraging people to purchase more alcohol than they intended

This is a complex issue involving the responsibilities of the state and those of individual citizens and where the balance should lie. It also has implications for both public health and civil liberties.

Any other aspects of the Bill

There is a possible issue around alcohol sponsorship in sport. Although this is restricted to adult sport and in particular high performance sport with Football and Rugby most prominently featured, the affect upon children is largely unknown. For example, Scotland’s national Football and Rugby teams are sponsored by beer and whisky firms respectively, and therefore a powerful alcohol endorsement message is communicated to spectators and viewers. Whilst this in itself may not be necessarily negative, does anyone currently know whether any related messages around responsible drinking make the required positive impact on children? The recent situation in Football now known as ‘Boozegate’ involving high profile role models brings all these interconnected topics into sharp focus.

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