Alcohol etc. (Scotland) Bill

Western Isles Licensing Board

The terms of the above Bill were considered at a joint meeting held on Tuesday 19 January 2010 of the Western Isles Licensing Board and Western Isles Licensing Forum. The views expressed below are those agreed by the Board and the Forum.

The Board and the Forum are supportive of the principle behind the Bill and stated that legislation was one of the tools available in addressing the issue of alcohol abuse in Scotland. A suggestion was made that consideration be given to having an increased focus in the very successful educational programme choices for life on alcohol as well as drugs and considering its extension to a younger set of children. I understand it is currently aimed at children in P7/S1. The importance of parental support in any such initiative was also stressed.

Turning now to the provisions of the Bill the response of the Board and Forum was as follows:

Pricing of Alcohol

There was unanimous support for introducing a minimum price for a unit of alcohol.

Drinks Promotions

There was support for the provisions of the Bill in relation to drinks promotions and the proposal to standardise the law as it affected on and off-sales.

Age Verification Policy

The Board was supportive of the requirement to have an age verification policy. Generally speaking the principal concern of both Forum and Board was to ensure that alcohol was not sold or supplied to young persons under the age of 18.

Sale of Alcohol to Under 21s

The view expressed was that persons between the age of 18 and 21 was not generally considered to be a child except in very limited legal circumstances and the inclusion of a provision in relation to prohibiting the sale of alcohol to persons under the age of 21 could be counter productive. It was considered that the focus should be on enforcing the provisions to ensure that young people particularly in the 13-18 year old bracket were not sold or supplied with alcohol and that in conjunction with education programmes young people between the ages of 18 and 21 were encouraged to use alcohol sensibly.
Location of Drinks Promotions in Off-sales Premises

The proposal to restrict the location of such promotions was supported.

Social Responsibility Levy

This was the provision that provoked most discussion at the joint meeting and the conclusion reached was that licensed premises and their operators particularly in an area such as the Western Isles were already subject to sufficient taxes and charges.

Lesley McDonald
Clerk
Western Isles Licensing Board
20 January 2010