

Corporate Scotland and Infrastructure Implementation Group

Tuesday 15 April 2008, 15:00 – 17:00, Victoria Quay

Present

Iain Herbert, Scottish Tourism Forum (Chair)
Mairi Caldwell, Scottish Government (Secretariat)
Richard Arnott, Tourism Unit, Scottish Government
John Brown, Head of Tourism Scottish Government
Janet Hood, BII
Bill Carcas, Scotland's Best B&Bs
Eva McDiarmid, ASVA
Fiona Wilson, Scottish Museums
Eddie Brogan, Scottish Enterprise
John Loudon, Lindsays

Alan Cameron, Scottish Government – Planning
Gary Cox – Scottish Government – Licensing
Tony Rednall – Scottish Government - Licensing

Apologies

David Smythe, ASSC
Iain Limond, JAC Travel
Maren Ebeling, SNH
Jeanette Wilson, BHHPA
Joanne Orr, Scottish Museums
Mandy Exley, Perth College
Marjory Rodger, CPT
Riddell Graham, VisitScotland

<p>1. <i>Welcome and Apologies</i></p> <p>Iain Herbert, asked attendees to introduce themselves. Apologies are listed above.</p>	
<p>2. <i>Planning Modernisation</i></p> <p>The group then heard a presentation from Alan Cameron of Planning Modernisation and Co-ordination Branch about forthcoming changes to planning legislation. Alan said that the main aims of the changes were: to simplify, give clarity and more speed to the process of applying for planning permission. He stressed that the main development management consultation and those on the hierarchy and enforcement have now closed.</p> <p>The consultation on Modernising Planning Appeals, which includes appeals, local reviews and schemes of delegation, is open until 9 May. The website link for those wishing to contribute is http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Built-Environment/planning/publications/consult</p> <p>Alan's slides and notes are attached separately. Q & A focussed on revocation, called-in applications, and the potential difficulties for local authority planning officers in dealing with their councillors, who may ultimately make the decision on an application.</p>	

3. *Minutes of last meeting*

The minutes were agreed as a true record of the last meeting. No joint workshops had taken place on licensing and fire safety issues as it had proved too difficult to co-ordinate dates. Bill Carcas mentioned that he was collecting evidence of variations in treatment of B & Bs by fire safety authorities. John Loudon said he was interested in hearing of such cases also. Iain was gathering some case studies on implementation of the Licensing Act – some positive, some less so.

4. *Licensing issues – Gary Cox and Tony Redhall, Scottish Government*

Iain introduced this topic by stating that he understood the reasons for introducing new licensing regulations and supported the ethos behind them. He mentioned that he would be meeting the Minister for Justice about licensing shortly, and was very interested in hearing what issues the group wished him to raise.

Gary Cox stated that applications for licences in the March round were down by about 20%, which was reflected in the Scottish Licensed Trade Journal statistics. Other issues which had been raised with his team were:

- level of fees
- licensing of petrol stations
- staff training
- layout plans
- different approaches by Licensing Boards (LBs)

He explained that revised Guidance for LBs would be completed by end April, taking account of some of these issues. The Minister would also commit to making changes to the regulations if absolutely necessary.

Iain asked the group for comments - the following issues/problems were raised:

- Boards not having websites set up, and non-compliance with 42 day rule
- Boards amending forms or not having website links to forms
- Boards asking for extra items, e.g. risk assessments
- Boards rejecting site plans because not required size
- Site notices having to be signed by licence applicant
- Licensing Boards forcing off-sales to have 8 p.m. as close of sales ?
- Difficulties for Visitor Attractions with whisky gift packs, tourists cannot take this in hand luggage. Some VAS would give up selling whisky miniatures.
- Single Display Area – issues for historic houses/castles, or larger VAs and golf shops.
- Gantry sizes for in-store sales
- Rural areas licensed premises not renewing licences
- Inconsistency in how caravan park retail units are included on Valuation Roll.

Licensing officials responded to say they had met with the trade body for caravan parks recently and that each LB should accept the way retail units were included on the Valuation Roll as a guide for licence applications. Alcohol at visitor attractions could be displayed on a single shelf, or dummy boxes used in a display with the alcohol available at the cash point. Another solution would be to apply to sell alcohol in the whole of a store, and then add in other items/gifts.

Gary admitted that a LB can restrict off-sales after 8 p.m. if it is in their policy,

<p>but premises can still apply for a later licence. On forms, Gary said they would issue a reminder to Boards not to amend forms – particularly an issue in N. Ayrshire and Perthshire. Licensing would also consider making the site notice able to be signed by the licence applicant or their agent.</p> <p>On rural filling stations, Gary said each LB could decide on a case-by-case basis. If a petrol station was the only off-sales premises over a large area then this may be reflected in a Board's policy statement. JL and JH agreed to provide a list of specific Boards which were not adhering to the regulations to the Licensing team. On training issues, Gary clarified that a trainer of staff selling alcohol had to be a Personal Licence-holder.</p> <p>He re-iterated that it was still a transition period for the Licensing Act implementation and that revised guidance for LBs would issue soon.</p>	
<p>5. <i>Update on targets and actions from TFFC</i></p> <p>There was not time for a full discussion of the Action Plan but one amendment was noted – changing 'Traffic Scotland' to 'Transport Scotland' in 11.29.</p> <p>6. <i>AOB</i></p> <p>Mairi Caldwell mentioned that the EU consultation paper on extending reduced VAT rates for certain services. The consultation provides a list of requests for other services including tourism-related businesses to be eligible for reduced VAT. The document is available at</p> <p>http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/common/consultations/tax/article_4850_en.htm</p> <p>The deadline for contributions is 12 May 2008</p> <p>Iain thanked everyone for their input and hoped there would be more contact on issues of common concern before the next meeting.</p>	
<p>7. <i>Date of Next Meeting</i></p> <p>The date of the next meeting will be 3rd September 2008 – venue to be decided.</p>	