

The Highland Licensing Board

Meeting – 31 March 2015

Agenda Item	6
Report No	HLB/021/15

Highland Licensing Forum Advice

Report by the Clerk to the Licensing Board

Summary

The Highland Licensing Forum has written to the Board with regard to the annual joint meeting and the start time for scheduled meetings of the Board.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Highland Licensing Forum functions are to keep the licensing system in the Highlands under regular review and to advise the Licensing Board in relation to matters of concern, other than licensing applications.
- 1.2 The Board must exercise its functions having regard to the advice given, or recommendations made, by the local licensing forum. If the Board decides to depart from such advice or recommendation, then it must provide reasons for doing so.

2.0 Joint Meeting

- 2.1 The Board must hold, at least once a year, a joint meeting with the Forum. The Forum has asked that the Board agree a date and definite start time for this year's meeting. The last two joint meetings in 2013 and 2014 were due to follow a scheduled Board meeting but on both occasions started considerably later than scheduled due to the Board meeting running late.

The Board did agree at the last joint meeting with the Forum that the next meeting would be held on a separate day. The Board are asked to set a date or range of dates for this year's joint meeting.

3.0 Commencement times of Board meetings

- 3.1 The Forum has expressed concern and frustration that:
 - around half of Board meetings seem to begin significantly later than the scheduled start time; and
 - applicants, objectors, officers, solicitors and members of the public are left waiting outside the Chamber without any information as to when the Board meeting will eventually begin. This causes considerable inconvenience to all concerned. It was reported at the Forum meeting

that often information about delays is only passed to people waiting outside when the Licensing Committee stops for a comfort break or for lunch. This is clearly unsatisfactory.

The Forum suggest that:

- (i) the Board meetings be given a definite start time possibly of 2 pm to minimise the likelihood of delays and to give an element of certainty to the people who have made an effort to attend and
- (ii) every effort be made, possibly utilising the display screens in the foyer, to give to the people waiting outside the Chamber information on any delay and of the likely commencement time of the meeting

3.2 All Board meetings are scheduled to start at **12.30 pm** (following the Highland Licensing Committee commencing 10.00 am).. However as the following table shows, the Board meetings seldom start at 12.30 pm due to the Licensing Committee business running late.

3.3 Date of meeting	Actual start time
4 February 2014	1415
1 April 2014	1230
13 May 2014	1240
17 June 2014	1330
12 August 2014	1350
7 October 2014	1310
4 November 2014	1230
11 December 2014	1425
6 January 2015	1240

3.4 Out of the last nine meetings only two started on time with another two starting within 10 minutes of the scheduled time.

3.5 The Board are asked to consider the start time of scheduled meetings.

4.0 Recommendation

4.1 It is recommended that the Board:

- (a) agree a date and time for the joint meeting with the Highland Licensing Forum; and
- (b) consider the Forum's suggestions regarding the start time of Board meetings

Designation: Clerk to the Licensing Board

Date: 11 March 2015

Author: Alasdair Mackenzie

Background papers: e-mail dated 10 March 2015 from the Clerk to the Highland Licensing Forum.