

Rudi's personal view on the subject of the national licensing forum work group template is that it is a generic template used in most major project designs and is perfectly satisfactory as a guide to working through any piece of research / work.

- In respect of formulating a work plan on under age drinking, I would urge caution on trying to take on this age old problem with a view to solving it. I would suggest that the Forum concentrate on a number of important issues such as:
- Looking at ways that the new Act will be introduced/implemented on 1st September to ensure that the five objectives are met.
- How will the mandatory training of staff be gauged as having been done and done properly. It will be all too easy for licensees to copy training records and sign them off as having been done without doing the actual training.
- How should the police, LSO and others (i.e. Community Wardens) deal with the issue of drunks on licensed premises.
- Should licensed premises accused of alleged breaches of the Act be closed until dealt with by the Licensing Board.
- Looking at the Board's Statement of Licensing Policy and consider what additions, changes require to be made in respect of its update due in 2010.
- If the problem of underage drinking is considered as something that the Forum thinks requires consideration then looking at the problem as a whole will quickly be seen as an immense and exceptionally difficult piece of work, since no one/ organisation / partnership has cracked this problem in however long it has been ongoing. This problem needs to be broken down into smaller issues and work done on them. Such as:
- What initiatives have been done in the past and by who. How effective were they. What worked and what didn't. Did the work continue. Why did the work not continue/fail - was it due to the lack of funds or resources.
- What work is currently being done and by whom? Is there a register of ongoing work. If not, should this be a priority before any new work is considered. Should this record be made publicly available, where and updated by whom, who will provide the resources.
- Should the problem of underage drinking simply be highlighted to the Licensing Board and asked to make it one of their priorities, by using the powers of suspension of licence for offending premises; making a statement of intent in the new 2010 Licensing Board Policy, that dealing with underage drinking will be a priority and outline the means of how the Board will tackle the problem and deal with offenders.
- The Forum could also look at the issue of 'over provision' and make recommendations to the Board on the subject, which Local Licensing Boards are duty bound to make a statement on by September.
- The Scottish Executive recently published their views on the ' Action Plan' for the future. The Forum should look at this in detail and make early representation to the local Licensing Board on the points raised. Do we agree with them; do we think they are sufficient or not enough. What would address local problems and what measures require to be highlighted that would improve local business and quality of life.
- Should the Forum have an interactive web site to promote its workings; promote and recruit membership; gather public opinion on local needs and problems; publicise good news and work done. Is marketing of our work a priority.
- For the future, is the Board being effective in operating the Licensing Scotland Act 2005? Are the aims of the Act being met? If not what is not being done right; What improvements would assist keep the five objectives on track.

The foregoing is only a few of the things the Forum could work on, using sub groups to consider worthwhile issues and maintain operational momentum between quarterly meetings.

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