

Evaluation of the Impact of the Licensing Act 2003

(Report by Head of Administration)

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Government undertook to review the implementation and impact of the Licensing Act 2003 after it came fully into force in November 2005. A programme of projects has been undertaken and a report published by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport that pulls together the overall findings from those projects.

2. The Evaluation Report

- 2.1 The report can be found in full at http://www.culture.gov.uk/reference_library/publications/3574.aspx. The elements of the evaluation programme were –

- Home Office evaluation of the impact on levels of crime and disorder
- Scrutiny Councils Initiative summarising the views of 10 local authorities on the Act
- Review of the Secretary of State's statutory guidance
- DCMS simplification plan including better regulation proposals
- Independent Fees Panel report on the licensing fee structure and licence fee levels
- Live Music Forum report on the impact of the Act on live music
- Live Music Research into the level of live music before and after the Act and the experience of small venues
- National Statistics licensing data bulletin on the number of licences issued, reviews undertaken and other information for 2006/07
- Work undertaken by CGA Strategy Ltd showing changes in actual closing times

The summary of findings and the key conclusions are attached as an appendix to this report.

3. Conclusion

- 3.1 Despite the concerns in some quarters prior to the Act and the transfer of licensing responsibilities from licensing justices to local authorities, the review has found that the Act has not led to widespread problems. The main conclusion is that the freedoms introduced by the Act are being used well but that the powers to tackle problems are not sufficiently well known and being taken advantage of.
- 3.2 This reflects the situation locally where the implementation and administration of the Act and its provisions has operated smoothly, despite the somewhat last minute issue of many of the required regulations. Isolated problems with specific premises are known to exist but reviews have been rare and

interested parties have been reluctant to trigger reviews of licences and certificates.

4. Recommendation

4.1 It is therefore

Recommended

That the report and evaluation exercise published by DCMS be noted.

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Background Papers:

Evaluation of the Impact of the Licensing Act 2003 and attachments published by DCMS dated March 2008.