

**INDEPENDENT LICENCE FEES REVIEW PANEL MEETING  
23 SEPTEMBER 2005, DCMS**

Present:	Sir Les Elton	(Chair)
	Clive Allen	Surrey-Heath Borough Council
	Duncan Bowdler	Co-Operative Group
	Francis Patton	Punch Taverns
	Brian Wilson	Commission for Rural Communities
	Paul Woods	Newcastle City Council
	Wendy Shales	Panel Secretariat
	Tim Crowhurst	Panel Secretariat

## **1. Interim Review Consultation Exercise**

1.1 There was a round-table discussion about the evidence gathering exercise for the interim review. Panel members agreed that they now had a good feel for the key issues and common themes occurring, both for local government and licensees/licence payers. There was however concern that despite the efforts of all concerned it was proving difficult for various reasons to assemble sufficient evidence of total costs and fee income (and breakdowns of each) upon which to base firm conclusions at this stage of the review process.

1.2 The Panel had a brief discussion about the Parliamentary process and timescale, should recommendations made by the Panel be agreed.

## **2. Local Government Issues**

2.1 The Panel discussed the importance of further, more comprehensive mapping of licensing authority activity across the country in order to establish as complete a picture as possible (e.g. income in total and broken down by category, start-up costs, transition period costs, premises per RV banding etc).

2.2 The Panel discussed the process and timing of local authority expenditure returns to ODPM (Revenue Outturn Form) and its relation/relevance to their evidence gathering and analysis.

**Action : Secretariat to pursue data for 2003-04, 2004-05 with ODPM.**

2.3 There was also a general discussion about :

- Local Government and licensee concerns about the 'associated costs' of the new licensing regime generally as well as the licensing fee itself. It was agreed that should be adequately reflected in the interim review report.
- Licensing authority best practice and efficiency.
- The need for the Panel to keep in step with the emerging implementation of the LABREG Concordat recommendations and local authority best- practice enforcement and inspection regimes.

2.4 The Panel proposed a further meeting with representatives of the Local Government Association/Association of London Government.  
*Action : Secretariat*

### **3. Agreement of key issues for Interim Review**

3.1 Following discussion, the Panel agreed the key issues for the interim report arising from the consultation exercise with c70 stakeholder organisations that had presented evidence. It was agreed that the report needed to record the strength of feeling about the views received.

### **4. Structure of Interim Review**

4.1 It was agreed the Review would :

- Acknowledge the tensions that stakeholders have had in coping generally with the new licensing regime.
- Acknowledge the difficulties for the Panel in obtaining firm and complete evidence on impact at this stage of the implementation process.
- Record the key issues emanating from the consultation exercise and conclusions to which the Panel had come.
- Record the areas for further work during the full review next year in order to obtain a clearer picture of activity and impact for 2004-05, 2005-06 and beyond.
- Recommend that the Panel gives further consideration, with interested parties, to the issues surrounding :
  - large events and the distinction between not-for-profit and profit-making events
  - fees for village halls, sports clubs and other community facilities and events (including the number of Temporary Event Notices, application costs, and RV banding).

### **5. Ministerial/Panel meetings**

5.1 It was agreed that :

- Sir Les would speak to James Purnell about progress of the Interim Review. That would be followed by a full Panel meeting with the Minister during October to discuss the emerging findings.

- There would be a further full Panel meeting in October to discuss the draft report prior to presenting the final paper to Ministers and then publication of the report.

## 6. AoB

- 6.1 It was agreed that the Panel would write to all the stakeholders that had taken part in the consultation exercise, thanking them for their contributions and informing them of progress of the Interim Review.  
**Action : Secretariat**