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Worcestershire Regulatory Services

6th February 2013

**RESPONSE TO THE CONSULTATION ON DELIVERING THE GOVERNMENT'S
POLICIES TO CUT ALCOHOL FUELLED CRIME AND ANTI SOCIAL
BEHAVIOUR**

Worcestershire Regulatory Services is a shared service for Environmental Health, Licensing and Trading Standards between Bromsgrove District Council, Malvern Hills District Council, Redditch Borough Council, Worcester City Council, Wychavon District Council, Wyre Forest District Council and Worcestershire County Council.

Working on behalf of all Licensing Authorities within Worcestershire we actively take part in all consultations; feeding into the I.O.L (Institute of Licensing), Neighbourhood Authority Working Group (NAWG) and Worcestershire Health Authority responses as we have done in this case.

General Comments

With the proposed increase in responsibility being placed on Local Authorities it is essential that funding is made available either through licence fees or by other means to enable effective enforcement of the new provisions. Without additional fees to enable better enforcement the new provisions may prove ineffective.

Minimum pricing – you must consider the effect on responsible drinkers as well as irresponsible drinkers. Furthermore, businesses by their very nature will always find a way around whatever restrictions are put in place. Imposing a minimum price will inevitably affect the pricing structure as a whole and not just those priced at a minimum (there is a possibility that all alcohol prices will increase).

Multi-buy promotions – It will need to be made very clear what constitutes a multi-buy promotion to avoid confusion and to enable enforcement. For instance, the general consensus is that buy one get one free is very similar to 50% off, or half price offers; again, businesses by their very nature will always find a way around whatever restrictions are put in place.

Health as an objective for cumulative impact – clear guidance to Local Authorities and Health bodies is essential. There should be greater legal status to cumulative impact policies

rather than leaving it to the Guidance, to avoid Licensing Authorities being challenged in the courts as to the legality of such policies.

Reducing burdens on businesses – very clear guidance on what is ‘ancillary sales’ is essential to assist Local Authorities in the implementation of any new proposals. This will ensure consistency nationally; safeguards must be built in to ensure that a review of an unlicensed premises can be administered quickly and that effective steps can be taken to address any concerns of interested parties.

It is clear that effective enforcement of any new provisions is essential; Local Authorities must be given the ability to legally include enforcement activities within any fee setting structure they administer.

We also wish to endorse the principle of decisions being taken locally rather than centrally as those on the ground are far better placed to know what is happening in their area and what solution might be appropriate.

