

Draft Alcohol and licensing strategy for Jersey: Consultation summary

April 2014

The Council of Ministers released their draft Alcohol and Licensing strategy for comment between 8 January 2014 to 24 March 2014.

This report summarises the comments received.

Background

The Council of Ministers published their draft Alcohol and Licensing Strategy in January 2014 and invited Islanders and stakeholders to comment on that strategy.

Comments could be submitted:

	No. people submitting comments in their capacity as an individual member of the public	No. of respondents representing groups or organisations
In writing/email	9	9
Via an online comments facility	45	-

The Economic Development Department ran three consultation sessions for representatives of the licensed trade:

	Numbers attending
Thursday 6 February	11
Thursday 13 February	10
Thursday 20 February	10

In addition, the Parish of St Helier arranged a Public Meeting on Tuesday, 18 March. This was attended by 8 people (excluding States of Jersey reps attending in an official capacity)

Summary of responses from individuals

In total 53 individual people submitted comments to the draft strategy. 45 via the on-line comments facility and 8 via email.

Issues raised included¹:

ISSUE	No raising issue
Extend opening hours:	
Individuals stating that opening hours should not be extended	2

¹ In addition, there were a number issues that were raised only by one individual respondent, for example introducing a total ban on the consumption of alcohol. Issues raised by only one individual have not been included in this report.

Individuals saying closing times should be staggered for serving of food and non-alcohol drinks only	5
Individuals stating that opening hours should be extend to 4am	37
Drink drive limits	
Support reduction in drink drive limits	5
Do not support reduction in drink drive limits	2
Alcohol prices	
Do not increase price (to expensive already)	4
Increase price to reduce consumption	4
Issues related to improved safety	
Introduce plastic glasses in licensed premises	2
Increase powers of closure for polices	2
Change drinking culture	
More promotion and variety of non-alcohol drinks:	8
More focus on extended hours for table service restaurants and cafes (as opposed to bars)	2
Increased focus on educating people about dangers of alcohol	2
Focus on looking at/minimising causal factors for over consumption of alcohol	2

Summary of responses from orgs/groups

There were 11 more detailed responses received from representatives of organisations/groups inc:

- Jersey Chamber of Commerce
- British Beer and Pub Association
- Jersey Street Pastors
- Jersey Hospitality Association
- States of Jersey Police
- Wine and Spirit Trade Association
- Liberation Group
- Caritas Jersey
- Trade representative²
- Safer St Helier Community Partnership
- Jersey Nightclub Association

Key re-occurring issues arising from those responses are set out below. It is important to recognise that there was a divergence of views in some areas, reflecting the inherent complexity of developing a strategy which aims to reduce the harm that alcohol can cause without disproportionately affecting those who drink sensibly. These issues include:

Focus of strategy:

- strategy should focus not on business, but on “the common good”, and the needs of those effected by alcohol misuse
- need to consider the potential negative impact on business in more detail including additional costs and administrative processes
- need to recognise importance of economic benefits provided by licence/hospitality trade

Off-licence and on-licence issues:

- concern that pre-loading³ is driven predominately by the difference in the price of alcohol in off-licence as opposed to on-licences

² This representative requested that their response was not made public.

³ “Pre-loading” refers to drinking large quantities of alcohol before going out for the evening

- controls should focus more on off-licence premises than on-licence premises. Need to recognise that on-licence operators already operate responsibility and within a much tighter framework than off-licence premises.

Health issues:

- need for more investment in services/support for people with an alcohol problem (in Third Sector not just States provision)
- concern about numbers of people, at night, on the streets, who are very intoxicated, and health and safety risks these people face

Education/advertising:

- need for promotion of health messages
- need to recognise that health education has limited impact
- lack of evidence of effectiveness of limiting children's exposure to alcohol advertising

Drink driving limits:

- concern about potential reduction in drink-driving limits and impact on country pubs
- support for possible reduction in drink-driving limits

Opening hours:

- closing hours should not be a condition of licence and opening hours for individual premises should be the decision for a licensing authority
- opening hours should be extended for non-alcoholic drinks
- opening hours should be restricted rather than increased

Pricing:

- need to consider options for driving a reduction in consumption via the pricing initiatives set out in the strategy
- need to recognise that evidence showing the link between cost of alcohol and consumption is contested and that there are extensive concerns about the effectiveness of pricing measures
- need to recognise that pricing initiatives potential failure to impact problem drinkers, as opposed to non-problem drinkers
- focus should be on disparity of pricing between on and off licences

Licensing categories:

- categories of licence need to be simplified
- a one licence system should be introduced; retaining a system of categories is ineffective
- reduction to 7 categories is acceptable in light of introduction of personal licences

Licensing Law issues

- concern about blanket use of conditions eg: door staff requirements
- concern about practicalities of "zoning"
- concern about police closure powers and need for appeals process
- requirement to ensure licence fees are proportionate
- support for personal licences but need more clarification of responsibilities associated with them and consideration of the renewal period of personal licences
- support for indefinite duration of premise licences

Other issues:

- concern about "fairness" of Parish Assembly voting system for licences
- more focus on impact of licences on neighbouring properties
- concern about introduction of "health" as a licensing objective
- removal of restrictions on all fresco areas for those venues that do not own the land
- alternative system should be set up to current Licensing Assembly to provide more flexibility and more informed decisions (as per UK)

- Training of staff seen as key to creating understanding of responsibilities under law and with regard to door staff. Off-licences that sell alcohol also require training.

Next steps

The issues raised by all the respondents will help inform finalisation of the strategy, and the finalisation of the licensing law which will be laid before the States Assembly.