

Sent: 18 April 2021 14:59

Subject: OFFICIAL [PARTNERS]: Licensing and Registration of Clubs (Amendment) Bill (15927-20) (4180-21)

This e-mail has been marked OFFICIAL [PARTNERS]

Dear Sean,

RE: LICENSING AND REGISTRATION OF CLUBS (AMENDMENT) BILL

Thank you for your e-mail of 19 March 2021. In constructing this response I have sought the advice of my colleagues in our Community Safety Department who lead on licensing policy matters for the service. You have asked on behalf of the Committee for Communities, in relation to Clause 2, what the additional policing costs might be if pubs and hotels are granted additional opening hours.

In our written evidence that we previously submitted we made the assumption that pubs and hotels would use the 104 nights at the weekend. We indicated that shift pattern changes under the current 'variable shift agreement' would allow us to meet this demand without having to consider the use of significant overtime. The Committee will also be aware that during the oral evidence session, Assistant Chief Constable Mark McEwan reiterated that it was only at weekends that we could deal with this without significant and challenging resourcing pressures. He went on to say, that the issue for PSNI was that if we started to see these being applied for and granted Monday through to Thursday, it would have a significant impact on our resourcing requirement and this would cause us concern.

Therefore, to be clear, the remainder of this response is based on pubs and hotels also being able to use the 104 nights on a Monday through to Thursday night. As the Committee will acknowledge, it is extremely difficult to provide an accurate figure on what the costs would be, on the basis that we do not know how many pubs and hotels will choose to open on which night. This has been discussed at length with operational colleagues. If taken to the extreme of late openings throughout the week it is assessed that in order to meet this demand will necessitate the use of significant overtime. It is estimated that the annual cost for this could be as high as £7m (dependent upon take up). I must also point out that any changes to variable shift arrangements are challenging and must meet our obligations arising from the European Working Time Regulations.

Finally, it is important to point out that any increase in commitments to manage the night-time economy could inevitably result in an adverse effect on policing other priorities at those times.

I hope this is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

John McCaughan – Superintendent - Chief Constable's Office
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