

Committee Clerk,
Room 410, Parliament Buildings,
Ballymiscaw,
Stormont,
Belfast,
BT4 3XX
10 December 2020

To Whom It May Concern,

**Proposed changes to liquor licensing laws in Northern Ireland - Licensing and Registration of Clubs
(Amendment) Bill**

Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough Council (hereinafter 'the council') welcomes the Department for Communities' examination into ways and means of modernisation of liquor licensing regulations within Northern Ireland. Given current circumstances, the council further recognises that support for our important hospitality sector is even more vital than previously envisaged and that the support needs to include the provision of legislation that is reasonable in this modern age.

The council submitted a response to the original consultation on proposed changes to the liquor licensing laws in Northern Ireland, in 2019 and is heartened to see that some elements of change have been included. However, we would like to suggest that further consideration be given to the following sections of the above (Amendment) Bill.

Categories of Licence: The council welcomes the introduction of an additional category of licence that will permit local ciders, craft breweries and distilleries to sell directly to the public. The council suggests that this new category of licence should both enable the licensee to sell from their own premises and at a pre-determined number of events annually such as craft fairs, food fairs and cultural events.

Easter Opening Hours: While fully recognising the spiritual importance of the Easter period, the council welcomes the legislation bringing opening hours in line with normal opening periods.

Events licencing: The council understands that current licensing laws do not sufficiently cater for major events such as those identified within the consultation document (e.g. Tall Ships, MTV European Music Awards, 148th Open). However, the council would like consideration given to other signature events (such as those that take place in the council's borough including Food & Cider Festival, UK Pipe Band Championships & Armagh Georgian Festival) being permitted to obtain a liquor licence rather than have to obtain an 'occasional licence' from another licence holder. Licences would be subject to restrictions laid down by the courts.



**Armagh City
Banbridge
& Craigavon**
Borough Council

The council takes this opportunity to thank the Department for its commitment to providing vital support for the hospitality industry and, in doing so, assist in the development of our burgeoning tourism and hospitality sector. These seemingly minor changes to legislation will have a substantial and positive impact on producers, hospitality providers, citizens and visitors.

Yours Faithfully,

Brian Johnston

Brian Johnston
Head of Tourism, Arts & Culture