

Hospitality Ulster

Councillor John Hussey
Licensing Committee
Belfast City Council
C/o Members' Room
City Hall
Belfast
BT1 5GS

05/10/2015

Dear Councillor Hussey,

Hospitality Ulster is the industry body representing the Hospitality Industry in Northern Ireland. It is an industry that, in Belfast, supports over 13,000 jobs and pays £20.2 Million in tax and supports 60,000 jobs and paying £88.4m in tax across Northern Ireland.

At a recent meeting of the Institute of Licensing (IoL), I was concerned to learn that Belfast City Council were proposing a further delay to the introduction of the Pavement Café Legislation.

As I am sure you are aware, many of our members and your rate payers are small / micro businesses that are struggling to survive and even the slightest increase (or decrease) in turnover can make all the difference. The introduction of the Pavement Café Legislation could add c£1000 per year to the income of these businesses and although this may not appear a lot, to many it is a month's salary and something that can bridge the gap in an industry that relies on a fluctuating cash flow.

At the meeting, the BCC officers cited the need for a set of 'Model Terms and Conditions' to be set out by the department. However, given that this was not adopted at the committee stage of the bill, it is highly unlikely that they will be added at this late stage.

The other main issue appeared to be the lack of capacity to issue licenses should there be an influx of applications when the legislation is introduced. This is a position that I am sure can be dealt with through a period of grace to allow everyone to become licensed.

At the IoL meeting, I proposed that representatives from the eleven local authorities, the department and the industry come together to develop a set of model guidelines that all councils could sign up to as a means of addressing the concerns regarding a lack of 'Model Terms and Conditions'. Also, with regard to applications, I am sure the same group could agree a way of introducing the licenses that would reduce pressure on resources without delaying the introduction of the legislation.

As the leading representative body of the Hospitality Industry in Northern Ireland I would ask that BCC Licensing Committee support small businesses by supporting the introduction of the Pavement Café Legislation as soon as possible.

If you would find it helpful, I would be very keen to attend a licensing committee meeting to represent the views of my members in more detail?

Yours sincerely,



Colin Neill
Chief Executive

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