Dear

Alcohol (Licensing, Public Health and Criminal Justice) (Scotland) Bill

In its report on the Financial Memorandum, the Finance Committee queried why it was “not possible to obtain information about the costs of previous container marking schemes given that a number of pilots appear to have taken place”.

At the time of preparation of the Financial Memorandum, I was not aware of the further schemes which had been trialled in Scotland. However, when this came to my attention following a number of different agencies’ responses to the Committee’s call for evidence, contact was made with those organisations. Responses have now been received from East Renfrewshire Licensing Forum and North Ayrshire Alcohol and Drug Partnership in relation to their respective container marking schemes and these responses are enclosed.

I trust the Committee will find this information helpful.

Yours sincerely

Dr Richard Simpson MSP
Email correspondence received from East Renfrewshire Licensing Forum

In December 2009, East Renfrewshire Licensing Forum examined a number of container marking schemes and formed a working group to examine the pros and cons of such a scheme and to evaluate which model would work best in our authority. The sub group reported back to the Forum in March 2010 having researched costs and practicalities of implementing the scheme. The Forum approved one of the models presented and entered into discussions with partners to assist in implementing the scheme.

The Container Marking Scheme was launched in East Renfrewshire on 5th January 2011 and ran until 1st May 2011. The scheme was launched with local press releases and also with a news release with the assistance of East Renfrewshire Council.

The Container Marking Scheme involved 10 premises within East Renfrewshire with 8 out of the 10 localities of East Renfrewshire having one premises participating in the scheme. I would state that the scheme was voluntary.

The Forum decided the best option for marking the containers was Ultra Violet Labels. In total the cost of materials was £1000. The breakdown was;
· £150 for 50 UV Readers
· £130 for 10,000 UV labels
· £700 for 10 UV Label dispensing guns that were loaned to the participating premises.

The Forum worked with a number of partners which were the Police, LSO, Licensees, Trading Standards, Community Wardens, Cleansing Department and Environmental Health.

During the 4 month pilot period for the project approximately 14,000 bottles were marked within East Renfrewshire. Extensive auditing of the premises was carried out by the LSO and Trading Standards to ensure premises were applying the UV labels to the agreed upon products.

The Forum noted that not all premises who agreed to participate in the scheme had a 100% marking rate. The average marking rate of the premises involved was 80% but one premises was only 15%.

From the scheme the Police noted one seizure was made from an underage youth, the bottle was marked and allowed the alcohol to be sourced to a store and an investigation was carried out. It should be noted no intelligence came from Community Wardens, Environmental Health or the Cleansing Department who were routinely monitoring bottles in recognised “drinking dens” and also hot spots for refuse tipping.

At the end of the pilot project the Police compared alcohol related crime figures to the year before with the results being almost identical, no noticeable reduction during the 4 month scheme.
The Forum heard from partners that the scheme was resource [sic] intensive with regards staff. The LSO and one Trading Standards Officer were spending approximately 8 hours per week monitoring premises ensuring that the UV Labels were being applied.

All other partners were also contributing 8 to 10 hours a week to participate in the scheme. The Forum did not receive a breakdown of the costs relating to Officer time.

After some discussion the Forum decide not to follow up on the pilot scheme.
Email correspondence received from North Ayrshire Alcohol and Drug Partnership

I have liaised with colleagues from Trading Standards and Police Scotland, who are key partners in carrying out the bottle marking initiative, which is mainly utilised during the Safer Streets Festive Campaigns that runs for a four week period from early December.

In respect of those points seeking further details, please note it is very difficult to quantify the costs for staff time, and the actual costs for materials is negligible. The Divisional Licensing department confirmed they purchased a box of a 1000 UV security marker pens at a total cost of £30 along with a couple of UV lamps at a cost of £5 each. Additional material costs involved posters in order to promote within local shops.

Staffing resources involved time spent targeting and visiting relevant shops to provide individual support, and to ensure bottles were marked. Additional staff time was spent on night patrols. Each shop took responsibility to mark bottles.