Thank you for responding to the Local Government and Regeneration Committee's Call for Evidence on the Air Weapons and Licensing (Scotland) Bill. All submissions will be examined and considered as part of the Committee's scrutiny of the Bill.

Please be aware that questions marked with an asterisk (*) require an answer before you can submit the form.

Follow the Local Government and Regeneration Committee's Twitter feed - all Committee tweets on this Bill will have the hashtag #aw&lbill.

*1. Please supply your name and contact details:

Name: Anonymous
Organisation: 
Address 1: 
Address 2: 
City/Town: 
Postcode: 
Country: 
Email address (if no email leave blank): 
Phone Number: 

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2. Please confirm that you have read and understood the Scottish Parliaments “Policy on the treatment of written evidence by subject and mandatory committees”:

☑ Yes

3. Please confirm whether you are content for your name to be published with your submission:

☐ Yes

☑ No

4. Which of the three categories below best describes your interest in the Bill (please tick only one)?

☑ Personal

☐ Professional

☐ Commercial

5. Do you wish your email to be added to the Committee’s distribution list for updates on progress of the Bill:

☑ Yes

☐ No
6. Invitations to give oral evidence to the Committee on the Bill will be based on the submissions received. If you wish your submission to be included amongst those considered for possible invitation to give oral evidence, please indicate here.

☐ Yes

☒ No

* 7. You may answer questions on the entire Bill, or on any part of the Bill. Please indicate which parts of the Bill you are responding to? (You may select as many options that apply).

☐ All of the Bill

☐ Equalities, climate change and other Scottish Government objectives

☒ Air Weapons

☐ General licensing issues

☐ Alcohol licensing

☐ Civic licensing – taxi/private hire car licensing

☐ Civic licensing – scrap metal dealers

☐ Civic licensing – theatre licensing

☐ Civic licensing – sexual entertainment venues
Name/Organisation: Alexander Tavern

1. **Air Weapons Licensing**

You may respond to all the questions or only those you have a specific interest in. (Text boxes have no word limit, they will increase in size accordingly).

13. **In what ways will the creation of an air weapons licensing system in Scotland contribute to preserving public order and safety, reducing crime and advancing public health policy?**

There will be no contribution at all to preserving public order and safety or in reducing crime by the introduction of an air weapon licensing system. There has already been a dramatic decrease in crimes involving air guns and people who use airguns irresponsibly and break the law are not going to apply for a licence as by their very nature they do not care if what they are doing is illegal and there is currently adequate provision within current firearms legislation to cover any misuse of an airgun. The only people who are going to comply with the legislation are the thousands of responsible airgun owners who take the responsibility of using an airgun seriously.

14. **Is there sufficient provision, or sufficient capacity to provide, suitable numbers of air weapons clubs across all areas of Scotland for use by registered air weapons owners/ users?**

I am currently unaware if there is adequate provision of clubs for airgun users but no there is no doubt that any application for a new club premises to be created would meet with stiff opposition thus providing a back door way of further restricting what is the legal and legitimate use of airguns for target shooting.

15. **How will the air weapons licensing system affect those using air weapons for personal/recreational use?**
The licensing system will produce a huge burden on legitimate airgun users and will no doubt lead to many giving up a pastime that they carry out in an extremely safe and responsible manner.

16. How will the air weapons licensing system affect those aged 14 to 17 who use air weapons?

There will be a huge effect on those aged 14 to 17 as the licencing requirements will prevent many from taking up the sport and learning how to handle airguns responsibly which will have a serious detrimental effect on future sports stars and pest control.

17. How will the air weapons licensing system affect those using air weapons for commercial/professional reasons (for example: for pest control; as part of the tourist/hunting season; as part of fairs, paintballing centre, entertainment sector etc.)?

There will be a huge economic impact as many people travel from other parts of the UK to carry out pest control duties (especially in the border areas) /take part in fairs/ paintballing which will become more expensive and bureaucratic preventing many from participating. This will also have a knock on effect in the gun trade as due to the overly stringent conditions being imposed for the granting of a licence there will be a marked decrease in people buying / replacing / upgrading air weapons so many will go out of business.

18. How will the air weapons licensing system affect those using air weapons for competitive sporting purposes?
There will be a huge impact on people using air guns for competitive sporting activities. The restrictions will prevent many young people taking up what is a very safe sport as well as preventing many shooters from the rest of the UK coming to Scotland to compete due to the cost of obtaining a licence to bring their guns to Scotland. Again this will lead to an adverse economic impact for Scotland.

19. Is it equitable for those applying for an air weapons certificate to pay a fee which cannot be refundable irrespective of whether a certificate is granted or not?

I feel it is unreasonable to ask someone to pay a non-refundable fee as it should be obvious from some simple quick checks to weed out most if not all of the applications that would result in a certificate not being granted. Making someone pay the full cost for a certificate that will not be granted after a few simple checks is unreasonable.

20. Will the air weapons licensing system have a positive or negative impact on other areas of the public sector in Scotland (eg. The work of local government, public agencies etc.)?

There will be a huge detrimental impact on the Police and government finances. The proposals set out for the licencing of air guns, even with a full cost recovery from the applicants, will create a huge strain on police licencing departments that are barely coping with the current licencing scheme without placing a huge further burden on them. This will lead to a huge cost increase in running these departments as a vast number of additional staff will require to be employed at a time when the police budget is decreasing leading to larger cuts having to be made in other departments. Unless the Scottish Government is willing to ignore the rights of legitimate and law abiding members of the public who shoot for pleasure or pest control and allow the timescales for the grant of certificates to become unacceptably long. If this is the case then this will have a knock on effect when licences are renewed leading to the very real possibility that thousands of law abiding people suddenly find themselves breaking the law as they are in possession of an unlicensed air gun through no fault of their own. Unless we get to the ridiculous position where as soon as the certificate is granted a renewal has to be applied for due to the time taken to process them.

The proposed scheme is overly bureaucratic, extremely expensive, unmanageable and superfluous as air gun crime has dropped dramatically and as a proportion of the estimated number of airguns (estimated to be 500,000 but
could be many more) the rate of airgun crime is infinitesimally small.

21. What, if any, might the unintended consequences of introducing an air weapons licensing system in Scotland be?

There will be several unintended consequences in introducing this bill such as a vast increase in finances required for the police or any other agency to administer the legislation, a vast number of responsible law abiding people suddenly finding themselves criminalised by an unnecessary piece of legislation that will be totally unenforceable as well as many more people applying for a full firearms certificate as if the conditions for being granted a certificate are the same they may as well have the more powerful gun as this will make activities such as pest control easier as they will be able to shoot from further away.

Will there also be plans put in place to carry out border checks on the Scottish/English border as the legislation is not changing South of the Border people will be able to drive to England, purchase an airgun legally and then drive back to Scotland without anyone knowing that they are in possession of it. Therefore the very real possibility that thousands of airguns will be held illegally in Scotland with no way to stop the cross border trade without putting border checks in place. It has been suggested that airgun ammunition could also be regulated. But again as there will be no restrictions in England nobody will know who is bringing airgun ammunition over the border without checks being made.

22. Do you have any other comments to make on air weapons licensing aspects of the Bill?

The proposals will only be taken up by the vast law abiding majority who use air guns responsibly and sensibly. The government’s position that this legislation will solve what is an already small and decreasing number of airgun offences is ludicrous. People who use airguns illegally will take no notice of the bill. For example drink driving is against the law but it does not stop people from doing so. People that already break the law using airguns will continue to do so as there is no way of knowing how many airguns are in circulation in Scotland or who is bringing them or ammunition in from England.