



Report to: Falkirk Council Scrutiny Committee

**SUBJECT: JOINT INSPECTIONS OF LICENSED PREMISES WITHIN THE
FALKIRK COUNCIL AREA.**

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report has been produced following a specific inquiry from the Falkirk Scrutiny Committee in relation to the current status of joint inspections of licensed premises within the Falkirk Council area.

2. Current process for licensed premises inspections

- 2.1 Currently, there are no joint inspections carried out between SFRS and local authority licensing officers. Historically, the antecedent Central Scotland Fire and Rescue Service, carried out joint inspections however, following a review by the then Head of Legislative Fire Safety, this practice was ceased. The decision to cease joint inspections was based on the determination that, from a fire service perspective, the process was not proving to be 'best value' or appropriate use of finite fire service resources.
- 2.2 Licensed premises are deemed as 'relevant premises' under the Fire(Scotland Act) 2005 and as such are required to meet legislative standards and requirements. Ensuring compliance with this legislation is the responsibility of the premise 'duty holder' and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) is responsible for auditing the level of this compliance.

- 2.3 Although licensed premises are not routinely audited by the SFRS on a pre-planned basis, they are subject to auditing following any incidents occurring within the premises, or following any fire safety related complaints. In addition, the SFRS may set a thematic auditing regime, which would focus on a specific premise type i.e. licensed premises. Thematic auditing may result from trends relating to fires, non-compliance within licensed premises being identified, or as part of a seasonal campaign aimed at targeting a specific premise type. Any decision to set a thematic auditing regime may be set at a national or local level.
- 2.4 In the event that a future risk based decision is taken by the SFRS or the Local Senior Officer for Falkirk and West Lothian, to undertake thematic audits of licence premises, discussions would be entered into with the local authority licensing department to determine if there are any mutual benefits from a partnership approach to the auditing regime.
- 2.4 In addition to the criteria highlighted above, any licensed premise applying for accreditation to the 'Best Bar None' scheme are subject to a full audit from SFRS. This ensures that any premises applying to the scheme are fully compliant with the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005.

3. RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 That the Falkirk Scrutiny Committee notes and approves or otherwise the content of this report.

Gary Laing
Local Senior Officer
Falkirk and West Lothian
November 2013