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ACS criticises calls for alcohol restrictions

05 April 2017

By John Wood

The Association of Convenience Stores has responded to the publication of a House of Lords Committee Review into the Licensing Act, raising concerns about recommendations made on alcohol promotions and licensing fees.

The 168-page review recommends further restrictions on alcohol promotions (which are already in place in Scotland), while also recommending giving power to local authorities to increase licensing fees in their area.

ACS chief executive James Lowman said: "The Committee has called for restrictions on alcohol promotions and siting in-store despite acknowledging that alcohol consumption is on a downward trend. While we broadly welcome the Committee's report, calls for restrictions on alcohol promotions and siting in-store are a blunt instrument that will harm all consumers, instead of targeting the minority that consume alcohol irresponsibly."

Commenting on the introduction of locally set licensing fees, Lowman said: "We believe that licensing fees are overdue an increase but local authorities should not be given free rein to set their own licensing fees. Previous Home Office consultations have demonstrated that locally set fees would result in significantly inflated costs despite the licensing process being streamlined."

In the review, the committee rejected a raft of proposals that were debated extensively through the legislative review process including: introducing Health as Licensing Objective, powers to ban super strength alcohol, the introduction of blanket licensing conditions and Group Review Intervention Powers (GRIPs).

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