

RESPONSE 41

01 September 2016

14:34

Subject	Pub Consultation
From	Steve Corbett
To	[REDACTED] Pubs Consultation Responses
Sent	10 November 2015 12:50

[REDACTED]

I've been involved in the licensed trade for over 30 years. I'm a founder member of the Fair Pint Campaign, a founder member of the Independent Pubs Confederation and a member of the FDFYL Campaign. I work closely with Simon Clarke, who, as you know, will represent tenants at the meeting on Wednesday.

Along with many, I have made many detailed representations to Government about the abuse of the beer tie by pubcos and brewers and was pleased to see light at the end of the tunnel when MRO became law earlier this year. However, I was dismayed to read last week's publication of the draft code and the misleading comments of Baroness Neville Rolfe in the house which led me to think that external influences have once again become the central theme of the debate.

Conflicts of interest have always been prevalent in the pub sector; [REDACTED]. The clients of [REDACTED] have penetrated, with ample financial lubrication, every area of influence needed to promote and perpetuate a very damaging business model. Last week's publication of the draft code suggests more of the same.

Frankly, it beggars belief that BIS would distort the well-intended meaning of the new legislation and seemingly cosy up to the pubcos and brewers which serve you no better than they serve their long suffering tenants. Baroness Neville Rolfe and Lord Hodgson's pleadings of 'no conflict' will, I'm afraid, fall on deaf ears. This is a stunning own goal for BIS and the Government. This clumsy decision will reinforce the minds of the pub trade and MP's to the fact that further action will be needed. We simply will not accept a code that does not follow the good work carried out in both houses earlier this year and seeks to do nothing more than ensure pubcos and their agents continue to feather their own nest.

Be under no illusion, tenants and tenant organisations will simply refuse to accept a distorted code of practice that does not include PRA and sensible MRO triggers. The code currently on offer does not deliver a meaningful MRO option and does NOT ensure the tied tenant is no worse off. PRA is a simple litmus test that allows the tenant to check whether the deal on offer is fair. MRO on its own cannot work without it.

Baroness Neville Role may have chosen her words carefully last week but I have no doubt that she has deep reservations about her Government's U-turn.

[REDACTED] All this effort to stave off the risk that existing legislation – twisted carefully in favour of tenanted pub companies – could be subject to much needed change. That change, should it happen, would be all the good as far as pubs and consumers are concerned but not for the pubcos and brewers that copy them. The draft code currently on offer allows for much of the same abuse.

I urge BIS to reconsider their actions here and implement the code in the spirit it was originally intended.

Best Regards

Steve Corbett [REDACTED]

The Fair Pint Campaign

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