

12<sup>th</sup> May 2018

Dear Licensing

**Objection to Spearmint Rhino licence renewal**

I refer to the application for a sex establishment licence by Spearmint Rhino ("the club"), 60 Brown Street, Sheffield, S1 2BS.

I believe that the Council should refuse the licence application under the Discretionary Grounds for Refusal of the current Sheffield City Council's 2018 Sex Establishment Policy ("the Policy") on the following grounds:

**Discretionary Ground d)**

**i) Character of the relevant locality**

**(a) the fact that the premises are sited in a residential area;**

The club backs onto student accommodation and the area is increasingly becoming more residential for students and non-students alike.

This is evidenced by the following report from the Sheffield Star on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2018:

<https://www.thestar.co.uk/news/dramatic-rise-in-the-number-of-people-living-in-sheffield-city-centre-1-8960059>

In particular, your attention is drawn to the following extracts:

*Speaking at a business conference at Cutlers' Hall on Thursday, Edward Highfield, Sheffield City Council's director of city growth, said the city centre's residential population had risen from 6,000 to 30,000 over the last 10 years.*

*Coun Mazher Iqbal, the council's cabinet member of business and investment, said increasing the number of people living in the city centre was "very important" to the council.*

*He said: "It's good to see the number of people living in the city centre is on the rise but I hope we can double it... There is a really good mix in the city centre. We have got students, young professionals and now we have got families too.... The city centre is about people that come and visit it, visitors who come and see our attractions, people who work in the city centre and then those who live in the city centre. It's the same as any other neighbourhood - we have to get the mix right."*

*Sheffield Central MP Paul Blomfield said: "I think it's hugely important and very positive that we have more people choosing to live in the city centre. It means we have to rethink the modern city centre - balancing out the need to live, work, shop and indeed study and that's a radical change for the city centre compared to the one that I knew when I was kid in Sheffield."*

Further evidence is provided by the following article from the Sheffield Telegraph regarding the development of the CIQ through an increase in residential and commercial properties -

<https://www.sheffieldtelegraph.co.uk/lifestyle/property/new-build-to-revitalise-steel-city-s-ciq-1-8881810>

**(d) the premises are sited near premises or areas which are sensitive because they are frequented by children, young persons or families, including but not limited to educational establishments, leisure facilities such as parks, libraries or swimming pools, markets and covered markets;**

**These include the following:**

Showroom Cinema

The Work Station

A regular fun fair at the train station

Festival Square

Sheena Amos Youth Trust

Sheffield Hallam University and Student Union

The Leadmill

Sheffield Train Station

Sheffield Bus Station

The Site Gallery

Ofo bike docking station

Sheffield University Technical College

The Great Escape Game

Red Tape Central

**(e) the premises are sited near places and or buildings of historical/cultural interest and other tourist attractions.**

**These include the following:**

Showroom Cinema

Yorkshire Art Space

Rutland Arms pub

The Hubs

Steelworks Studios

Sheffield City Archives

Millennium Galleries

The entire CIQ

APG Works

**ii) Use of other premises in the vicinity**

The Licensing Authority will have regard to, but not limited to, the following:

**(a) schools, nurseries or other premises substantially used by or for children under 18 years of age,**

**These include the following:**

The Sheffield College Granville Road campus and UTC

Freeman College

Showroom Cinema

The Workstation

**(b) parks or other recreational areas designed for use by or for children under 18 years of age;**

**These include the following:**

Festival Square now named as Cultural Industries Quarter Square

Porter Brook Pocket Park.

**(c) hospitals, mental health or disability centres, substance misuse treatment centres, sexual exploitation services, sexual abuse centres or similar premises;**

**These include the following:**

Sheffield Rape Crisis

Sheena Amos Youth Trust

Addaction Sheffield

Together Women Project

**(d) any central gateway to the city or other city landmark, historic building or tourist attraction;**

See (e) under (i).

**(f) predominately residential areas;**

See (a) under (i)

**(g) The Cultural Hub (Millennium Galleries, Tudor Square, theatres and library).**

The location of the club is a de facto "cultural hub" given it is named the Cultural Industries Quarter.

In a positive move toward more joined-up thinking in the Council on such matters, I am pleased to note that Nalin Seneviratne, Director-City Centre Development has also submitted an objection along similar lines.

## Further grounds for refusal

### **The Public Sector Equality Duty and Gender Equality**

The Policy states under the heading "The Equality Act 2010":

"This Act legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and wider society. This includes the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), which means that the Council must thoroughly consider, in the discharge of its licensing functions, the need to:

- promote equality of opportunity;
- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- promote good relations".

This applies for this policy and to the consideration and determination of applications for sex establishments. (p.5)

The Council has a fundamental and non-delegable role to give due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty, including tackling gender inequality.

Through my role as a Senior Caseworker to a local MP, I have anecdotal evidence that lapdancers who work at Spearmint Rhino are expected to provide "extras to punters". This is an assertion that is replicated elsewhere in the country as exemplified by this report in The Huddersfield Daily Examiner – 6 Aug 2017 by Lauren Ballinger

<https://www.examiner.co.uk/news/yorkshire-news/former-stripper-reveals-what-life-13440024>

Upon questioning a former lapdancer about how many times in an average week she would get propositioned, she received the following reply:

*"Very nearly every night - numerous times a night. They wanted to take us to hotels or meet up after work. I never did, but some girls were silly, especially the younger ones, and they did but it didn't go down well with management.*

*It could be quite scary sometimes, especially if they were loitering about outside when the club had shut, but again security or management sorted it, and as we left we stuck together as a pack, but that didn't happen often.*

*Nine out of 10 times if you politely declined they accepted it. It seemed to be the older men that were persistent."*

I understand that Sammy Woodhouse intends to speak of her own experience of working at Spearmint Rhino and trust that her direct knowledge will be given the consideration it is due.

In 2017, the Licensing Sub-Committee received reams of evidence from women who felt vulnerable and frightened in the vicinity of Spearmint Rhino.

In a recent call for evidence on sexual harassment of women and girls in public places, the following submission to the Women and Equalities Select Committee was made:

*A group of men on their way to a lapdancing club in a shopping precinct harassing my cousin and myself in front of my [under 10] niece. They specifically cited the lapdancing club in their harassment, asking my cousin and I to perform for them to save them the cost of entry to the club.*

*The effects of these attacks on me have included:*

*Feeling obliged to go to the council's licensing committee meeting to ask that the lapdancing club which had resulted in my cousin and I being harassed while out shopping should have its licence revoked. I was told that I should have gone to the police about the harassment but the club owner later said that the local police held social events there. If the police are openly participating in an industry which objectifies women how could my cousin and I have expected our harassment experience to be taken seriously?*

The full submission can be found here -

<http://data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/committeeevidence.svc/evidencedocument/women-and-equalities-committee/sexual-harassment-of-women-and-girls-in-public-places/written/79596.pdf>

You will be aware that the entire Council is required to give due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty and this is exemplified by the role of the DACT and other partners in supporting the 'Know the Line' campaign against sexual harassment, which launched in Sheffield in November 2017.

<https://sheffielddact.org.uk/domestic-abuse/uncategorized/know-the-line-campaign-against-sexual-harassment-launches-in-sheffield/>

At the event, Superintendent Paul McCurry, South Yorkshire Police said:

*"Combatting sexual harassment of women and girls in any city, in any situation, is our shared purpose. Nobody should feel afraid to walk along the street, or go on an evening out with friends, in case they are subjected to verbal, sexual or physical abuse, but this is sadly an increasing concern and reality for many women and girls.*

*"Street harassment can be an incredibly upsetting experience and impactful for its victims, and this campaign aims to educate individuals on what behaviour is 'over the line' and how what may be considered by some to be an innocent act or joke, may be a crime and have significant and detrimental consequences on the victim subjected to that behaviour.*

*"We also hope this campaign and its important message empowers bystanders to call out those engaging in sexual harassment and to show solidarity with women and girls subjected to it."*

Also at the event, Louise Haigh MP criticised the decision by Sheffield Council panel not to cap the number of sex venues in the city, a verdict that prompted cries of 'shame' from those gathered for the campaign launch at the Quaker Meeting House, such is the strength of feeling on the matter.

Dr Alan Billings, the South Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner, said he felt there was a huge cultural shift occurring across the Western world. "If that's true that really is something we need to understand and capitalise upon. For 3,000 years we've had a patriarchal society with sexual hierarchy."

Since then, Dr Alan Billings has updated the South Yorkshire's Police and Crime Plan so that it makes reference to tackling misogyny, and is supportive of local campaigners who are working towards recognition of misogyny as a hate crime.

With support from the SYPCC, local MPs and Superintendent to make Sheffield a safer place for

everyone, and recognising how misogyny, sexual harassment and sexual objectification of women relates to that, I would urge the Licensing Sub-Committee to refuse the license renewal for Spearmint Rhino on the grounds that it does not fulfil any of the following requirements of the PSED:

- promote equality of opportunity;
- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- promote good relations.

Finally, the link between sexual objectification of women and violence is well documented and whilst there is numerous research to back this up, of particular interest in the submission by Dr Heather Brunskell-Evans to the APPG Inquiry into links between pornography and sexual violence. Pornography and lapdancing are both forms of sexual objectification of women and therefore, the findings are pertinent to this license renewal application. Details of 3 major studies about the way that sexual objectification contributes to a conducive context for sexual violence can be found on her website - <http://www.heather-brunskell-evans.co.uk/body-politics/submission-to-appg-inquiry-into-links-between-pornography-and-sexual-violence/> - and whilst these studies are focused on young people, their results are of relevance in light of the number of students that are targeted to participate in the sexual objectification of women with drinks offers, and 241 dances at Spearmint Rhino as evidenced below:



The Policy states that “The Licensing Authority will also consider the following factors when deciding if an application is appropriate”:

**(b) proximity to areas with high levels of crime;**

On 22nd February 2018, it was reported in the Star that Arundel Gate which runs in parallel to Paternoster Row and is approximately 1-2 minutes on foot away depending on walking pace, is 10th in the top 10 areas of crime in the city and that “*These offences, including assaults, robberies and sex attacks on women, were recorded between January and November 2017.*”

<https://www.thestar.co.uk/news/listed-these-are-the-10-most-crime-ridden-streets-in-sheffield-1-9030246>

Furthermore, a recent FOI request to South Yorkshire Police unveiled the following incidents in the vicinity of Spearmint Rhino:

Year	IncidentTitle	Details
2017	CONCERN	Male in drink, unconcious on the ground.
2017	CONCERN	Security measures discussed and recorded by a organisation in the area.
2017	ILLNESS/INJURY	Male in drink, Ambulance dealing.
2017	CONCERN	Male unconscious. Ambulance dealing.
2017	THREATS RECD	Threats made by male towards staff.
2017	DISTURBANCE/FIGHTING	Males fighting
2017	CONCERN	Male in drink, refused ambulance
2017	STREET DRINKING	Male refusing to move on outside a business.
2017	CONCERN	Male refusing to leave
2017	CONCERN	Female reporting an assault the previous day
2017	CONCERN	Reporting person drinking who will be driving later
2017	DISTURBANCE/FIGHTING	Groups of people fighting outside the location
2017	OTHER SUSP INC	Males acting suspiciously in the area.
2018	SUSP PERSON	Suspicious males dealing drugs at the location
2018	OTHER SUSP INC	Passer by reporting a female being assaulted
2018	CONCERN	Concerns for male in drink
2018	INDECENT EXPOSURE	Indecent exposure

I refer the Licensing Sub-Committee to the previous comments about evidence of sexual objectification of women contributing to a conducive context for sexual violence. No doubt the inclusion of alcohol in the equation only serves to exacerbate the problem.

Whilst supporters of Spearmint Rhino argue that without it, lapdancing would be “forced underground” (despite there being no evidence of this, unless the argument is to equate Spearmint Rhino with brothels which raises even more questions) - the image of a high-end establishment portrayed by this club serves to normalise both the sexualisation and objectification of women, which is in complete contradiction to the Council’s Equality policies. Treating women as sexual objects for men’s pleasure is not “normal”.





**Bower Claire**

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 13 May 2018 12:00  
**To:** licensingservice  
**Subject:** Spearmint Rhino Licence Objection  
  
**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged  
  
**Categories:** SPEARMINT RHINO

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Licensing Service  
 Block C, Staniforth Road Depot  
 Staniforth Road  
 Surrey Street  
 S9 3HD  
 By email to: [licensingservice@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:licensingservice@sheffield.gov.uk)

12<sup>th</sup> May 2018

Dear Licensing

**Objection to Spearmint Rhino licence renewal**

I refer to the application for a sex establishment licence by Spearmint Rhino (“the club”), 60 Brown Street, Sheffield, S1 2BS.

I am a frequent visitor to Sheffield city centre, with my family living close by. I do not think Spearmint Rhino should be allowed to continue to operate in its current location, right next door to a university, opposite the Showroom Cinema and near lots of organisations for vulnerable and young people. If my grandchildren decide to go to Sheffield Hallam University, what message does it send to them about gender equality and respect that there is such a club right next door?

I believe that the Council should refuse the licence application under the Discretionary Grounds for Refusal of the current Sheffield City Council’s 2018 Sex Establishment Policy (“the Policy”) on the following grounds:

**Discretionary Ground d)**

**i) Character of the relevant locality**

- 1. the fact that the premises are sited in a residential area;**

The club backs onto student accommodation and the area is increasingly becoming more residential for students and non-students alike.

The city centre's residential population had risen from 6,000 to 30,000 over the last 10 years<sup>[i]</sup> with further plans for more residential accommodation within the Cultural Industries Quarter (CIQ) and Knowledge Gateway. Furthermore, "the Alsop Fields development is a mix of residential apartments, studios, offices for the high-tech and creative sectors and places to eat and drink" and ". . . designed to be a destination in itself – a regeneration of part of the Cultural Industries Quarter that will be similar to the trendy parts of Manchester and London"<sup>[ii]</sup> for which Brown Street and Paternoster Row are the main thoroughfares.

**(d) the premises are sited near premises or areas which are sensitive because they are frequented by children, young persons or families, including but not limited to educational establishments, leisure facilities such as parks, libraries or swimming pools, markets and covered markets;**

The Showroom and adjacent Work Station are frequented by families and both host events specifically for children including the world renown Children's Media Conference.

**(e) the premises are sited near places and or buildings of historical/cultural interest and other tourist attractions.**

It is directly opposite the Showroom cinema, which is "one of Europe's largest independent cinemas paired with the longest-running creative business centre in the city, housed in a converted 1930s car showroom."

It is also opposite the Site Gallery which has just undergone a huge expansion. Spearmint Rhino is not only centrally located in terms of proximity to a number of national and international events locations but it is also a direct access route, for example: Doc Fest; the aforementioned Children's Media Conference; Off the Shelf etc all of which are tourist attractions.

The club is next to Sheffield Hallam Students Union (iconic and a city landmark building).

## **ii) Use of other premises in the vicinity**

The Licensing Authority will have regard to, but not limited to, the following:

**(a) schools, nurseries or other premises substantially used by or for children under 18 years of age,**

There are many educational establishments in the vicinity and Brown Street is also an access route to the Sheffield College Granville Road campus and UTC which provides education for children from the age of 14. It is in close proximity to Freeman College which provides education for students (16 – 25) who have a range of complex learning, mental health and behavioural needs.

The club is also at the epicentre of the designated "Knowledge Gateway" and located on Sheffield Hallam University's city campus whose masterplan is to further develop the area, which includes "new buildings for the Business School and social sciences, refurbishing the Students' Union building known as The HUBS, creating a University Green [Festival/CIQ Square] and improving our current estate."<sup>[iii]</sup>

**(b) parks or other recreational areas designed for use by or for children under 18 years of age;**

The recreational space (formerly known as Festival Square but now named as Cultural Industries Quarter Square on the map of the area which can be found on Sheaf Square) is directly adjacent to the club and the club's presence is holding back further use and development of this space into its full potential.

**(c) hospitals, mental health or disability centres, substance misuse treatment centres, sexual exploitation services, sexual abuse centres or similar premises;**

There are a number of charities and organisations in the area which support vulnerable children, young people and adults, one of which is situated directly behind the club. Charles Street is a direct access route from the bus stop on Arundel Gate and the car park on Arundel Street; direct access from both means that service users pass directly past the club through the unused and desolate Festival/CIQ Square.

**(d) any central gateway to the city or other city landmark, historic building or tourist attraction;**

See (e) under (i).

**(f) predominately residential areas;**

See (a) under (i)

**(g) The Cultural Hub (Millennium Galleries, Tudor Square, theatres and library).**

The location of the club is a de facto "cultural hub" given it is named the Cultural Industries Quarter. It is also on the direct access route to the 24/7 Addsetts learning centre from numerous student accommodation blocks in the immediate vicinity, which many will be accessing during the club's opening hours.

**(iii) the layout, character or condition of the premises, vehicle, vessel or stall in respect of which the application is made.**

The building, despite the removal of signage during its closed hours, is a blacked out sinister presence incongruous with its surroundings and clearly marked buildings. Removal of the signage is "a sticking plaster to a gaping wound" approach by Licensing. Regardless of whether the club's signage is visible in the day, it is widely known what the building is. Those who are not familiar with the building's use visiting SHU on open days and viewing properties in the vicinity during the day will be unable to make an informed decision about moving into an area with a sex establishment on the doorstep.

Furthermore, the building could be put to a different use serving a far more diverse and greater number of people thereby enriching the CIQ in a more inclusive and compatible way.

### **Further grounds for refusal**

#### **The Public Sector Equality Duty and Gender Equality**

The Policy states under the heading "The Equality Act 2010":

"This Act legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and wider society.

This includes the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), which means that the Council must thoroughly consider, in the discharge of its licensing functions, the need to:

- promote equality of opportunity;
- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- promote good relations".

This applies for this policy and to the consideration and determination of applications for sex establishments. (p.5)

I believe that sex establishments such as Spearmint Rhino directly discriminate against women by normalising the sexualisation and objectification of women, and that this contributes to their sexualisation and objectification in other areas of society. A 2016 review highlights how these venues undermine women's equality:

"Thus, in objectifying media women's role as a source of male sexual pleasure is emphasized and their humanity is deemphasized. After having internalized the messages of male sexual privilege and female dehumanization, it should be easier for men to envision imposing themselves sexually on women and reacting punitively to women who frustrate their sexual goals."<sup>[iv]</sup>

The Council has a fundamental and non-delegable role to give due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty, including tackling gender inequality. This applies notwithstanding the fact that Parliament has legislated to allow the possibility for sex establishments to be licensed in specific areas – subject to the choices of the local communities.

The Policy further states that:

"Licences will be refused if the Licensing Authority perceives a venue will have negative impacts on members of the public or vulnerable persons living, working or engaged in normal activity in the area".

Many women have voiced their concerns and fears about the presence of Spearmint Rhino in previous objections, including LGBT women and disabled women. In 2017, many examples of the negative impact of this club were given in objections, for example: one woman giving up her studio at Yorkshire Artspace and a contributory factor was the presence of the club and "running the gauntlet of men hanging around outside the club and harassing women." (objection 12) and others have stated how the club impacts on their business at hearings and in writing.<sup>[v]</sup>

As Philip Kolvin (2010) cites the Royal Town Planning Institute's Gender and Spatial Planning Good Practice Note:

"In relation to the 24-hour economy policy, ensure that the views of women are considered. Evidence shows that in certain locations, lap-dancing and exotic dancing club make women feel threatened or uncomfortable" <sup>[vi]</sup>

Kolvin continues with:

"If a woman, whether objectively justified or not, fears to use part of the town centre characterised by sex establishments, this may be argued to amount to discrimination, in that her access to the public infrastructure of the town is impaired in comparison to that of men. Where relevant these considerations ought properly to be taken into account by authorities at the decision-making stage, and possibly at the policy-making stage" <sup>[vii]</sup>.

This is further corroborated by 2012 research published in Criminal Justice Matters which states that:

". . . the women describe feeling frightened, disempowered, violated, embarrassed, unsafe (particularly if men are around) and avoid certain streets at night where they know there is a lap dancing club."<sup>[viii]</sup>

In addition an Australian article about women and girls' perceptions of safety in urban spaces highlights how they restrict their freedom of movement to avoid zones where there are strip clubs.<sup>[ix]</sup>

Lap dancing clubs also reinforce negative gender stereotypes of male insatiable sexuality and female sexual availability which are hugely damaging to both sexes and to non-binary people. The stereotypes upon which they are founded do not foster good relations between the sexes, as evidenced in 2016 by Zero Option at the Villa Mercedes hearing representation and its 2017 oral representation at the hearing<sup>[x]</sup>.

In their UK study published in 2011 Sanders and Hardy <sup>[xi]</sup> reported that 30% of the women performers interviewed said that as a result of doing the job they had lost respect for men; a finding echoed many testimonies of former performers.

The Policy states that "The Licensing Authority will also consider the following factors when deciding if an application is appropriate":

**(b) proximity to areas with high levels of crime;**

On 22nd February 2018, it was reported in the Star that Arundel Gate which runs in parallel to Paternoster Row and is approximately 1-2 minutes on foot away depending on walking pace, is 10th in the top 10 areas of crime in the city and that “These offences, including assaults, robberies and sex attacks on women, were recorded between January and November 2017.”<sup>[xii]</sup>

This image of a high-end establishment portrayed by this club goes in some way to normalising this type of venue in a very active part of the city, and as such giving the impression that Sheffield as a city condones both the sexualisation and objectification of women, which is in complete contradiction to the Council’s Equality policies. The fact that its location within Sheffield Hallam University buildings and the CIQ also conveys the message that this SEV is culturally embedded within the two and indeed integral to a higher education experience and Sheffield’s local heritage.

The Committee is asked to note that in the last few years Leeds City Council successfully defended a refusal to renew two SEV licenses at judicial review:

R (Bean Trading A Ltd) v Leeds City Council (2014)

It was held that a council can “take a fresh look” despite no changes to the character of locality. The Council is also asked to note the following from Philip Kolvin regarding licence renewal:

*“Given that there is potential for the discretion to be exercised afresh, the renewal should not just be a rubber stamping exercise, but an opportunity, if needed, to review the principle and content of the license.”<sup>[xiii]</sup>*

The case of Thompson v Oxford City Council (2014) was also supported at Court of Appeal, and the Council told they could “take a fresh look” at any application for renewal.

According to the BBC, the number of lap dancing clubs has fallen by a third in England<sup>[xiv]</sup>. The same report states that “a survey conducted by YouGov in 2015 found 64% of people in Great Britain said strip clubs were a negative part of British culture.” I ask that the Committee refuse to grant the club a licence for all the reasons outlined and because Spearmint Rhino is anachronistic, it gives Sheffield and our much vaunted CIQ a negative image and may deter investors and developers. At a time when we are hoping to attract large investors and are bidding for Channel 4 to relocate in the vicinity, the Committee needs to turn down this licence application, which it is empowered to do.

I look forward to hearing from you.

## **References**

[i] Sheffield Star 16th January 2018 *Dramatic rise in the number of people living in Sheffield city centre* Available from: <https://www.thestar.co.uk/news/dramatic-rise-in-the-number-of-people-living-in-sheffield-city-centre-1-8960059>

[ii] Sheffield Chamber of Commerce *Sheffield’s Cultural Industries Quarter expansion in £10m City Estates project* Available from: <https://www.scci.org.uk/2017/03/sheffields-cultural-industries-quarter-expansion-in-10m-city-estates-project/>

[iii] Sheffield Hallam University 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2018 *New campus masterplan places Hallam at the heart of the city* Available from: <http://www4.shu.ac.uk/mediacentre/new-campus-masterplan-places-hallam-heart-city>

[iv] Wright, P.J & Tokunaga, R.S (2016) Men’s Objectifying Media Consumption, Objectification of Women, and Attitudes Supportive of Violence Against Women in *Archives of Sexual Behavior*

[v] *Zero Option oral representation at the Spearmint Rhino hearing April 2017* Available from: <https://zerooptionblog.wordpress.com/2017/04/14/zero-options-representation-at-the-spearmint-rhino-licence-renewal-hearing-11th-april-2017/#more-524>

- [vi] Kolvin, P (2010) *Sex Licensing*, The Institute of Licensing p.87
- [vii] Kolvin, P (2010) *Sex Licensing*, The Institute of Licensing p.87
- [viii] Patiniotis, J. & Standing, K. (2012) 'License to cause harm? Sex entertainment venues and women's sense of safety in inner city centres' in *Criminal Justice Matters*, 88:1, 10-12.
- [ix] Safe in the City? Girls tell it like it is. March 26, 2017 <https://theconversation.com/safe-in-the-city-girls-tell-it-like-it-is-72975>.
- [x] Slideshare available from: <https://www.slideshare.net/ZerooptionSheffield/villa-mercedes-hearing-8th-september-2016>
- [xi] Sanders, T., & Hardy, K. (2011) *The Regulatory Dance: Sexual Consumption in the Night Time Economy – Initial Findings*. Leeds: University of Leeds
- [xii] Sheffield Star 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2018 Available from: <https://www.thestar.co.uk/news/listed-these-are-the-10-most-crime-ridden-streets-in-sheffield-1-9030246>
- [xiii] Kolvin, P (2010) *Sex Licensing*, The Institute of Licensing p.90
- [xiv] 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2018 Available from: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-43043842>

**Bower Claire**

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 13 May 2018 12:00  
**To:** licensingservice  
**Subject:** Objection to Spearmint Rhino

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

**Categories:** SPEARMINT RHINO

Objection for the following reason:

It is my belief that having a strip club sexualises and objectifies women and goes against the Council's public sector equality duty to foster good relations between the genders.

[REDACTED]

Sent from my iPad





**Bower Claire**

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 13 May 2018 12:42  
**To:** licensingservice  
**Subject:** Rhino club

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

**Categories:** SPEARMINT RHINO

Can I register my disapproval at renewing the licence for this club. It's an unwelcome addition to the City Centre which otherwise is attractive and welcoming to everyone equally.

[REDACTED]



65

**Bower Claire**

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 13 May 2018 15:51  
**To:** licensingservice  
**Subject:** Objection to Spearmint Rhino licence renewal

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

**Categories:** SPEARMINT RHINO

Licensing Service

Block C, Staniforth Road Depot

Staniforth Road

Surrey Street

S9 3HD

By email to: [licensingservice@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:licensingservice@sheffield.gov.uk)

13/05/18

Dear Licensing

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**Discretionary Ground d)**

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- a. **the fact that the premises are sited in a residential area;**

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The city centre's residential population had risen from 6,000 to 30,000 over the last 10 years<sup>i</sup> with further plans for more residential accommodation within the Cultural Industries Quarter (CIQ) and Knowledge Gateway. Furthermore, "the Alsop Fields development is a mix of residential apartments, studios, offices for the high-tech and creative sectors and places to eat and drink" and "designed to be a destination in itself – a regeneration of part of the Cultural Industries Quarter that will be similar to the trendy parts of Manchester and London"<sup>ii</sup> for which Brown Street and Paternoster Row are the main thoroughfares.

**(d) the premises are sited near premises or areas which are sensitive because they are frequented by children, young persons or families, including but not limited to educational establishments, leisure facilities such as parks, libraries or swimming pools, markets and covered markets;**

The Showroom and adjacent Work Station are frequented by families and both host events specifically for children including the world renowned Children's Media Conference.

**(e) the premises are sited near places and or buildings of historical/cultural interest and other tourist attractions.**

It is directly opposite the Showroom cinema, which is "one of Europe's largest independent cinemas paired with the longest-running creative business centre in the city, housed in a converted 1930s car showroom."

It is also opposite the Site Gallery which has just undergone a huge expansion. Spearmint Rhino is not only centrally located in terms of proximity to a number of national and international events locations but it is also a direct access route, for example: Doc Fest; the aforementioned Children's Media Conference; Off the Shelf etc all of which are tourist attractions.

The club is next to Sheffield Hallam Students Union (iconic and a city landmark building).

**ii) Use of other premises in the vicinity**

The Licensing Authority will have regard to, but not limited to, the following:

**a. schools, nurseries or other premises substantially used by or for children under 18 years of age,**

There are many educational establishments in the vicinity and Brown Street is also an access route to the Sheffield College Granville Road campus and UTC which provides education for children from the age of 14. It is in close proximity to Freeman College which provides education for students (16 – 25) who have a range of complex learning, mental health and behavioural needs.

The club is also at the epicentre of the designated "Knowledge Gateway" and located on Sheffield Hallam University's city campus whose masterplan is to further develop the area, which includes "new buildings for the Business School and social sciences, refurbishing the Students' Union building known as The HUBS, creating a University Green [Festival/CIQ Square] and improving our current estate."<sup>iii</sup>

**b. parks or other recreational areas designed for use by or for children under 18 years of age;**

The recreational space (formerly known as Festival Square but now named as Cultural Industries Quarter Square on the map of the area which can be found on Sheaf Square) is directly adjacent to the club and the club's presence is holding back further use and development of this space into its full potential.

**c. hospitals, mental health or disability centres, substance misuse treatment centres, sexual exploitation services, sexual abuse centres or similar premises;**

There are a number of charities and organisations in the area which support vulnerable children, young people and adults, one of which is situated directly behind the club. Charles Street is a direct access route from the bus stop on Arundel Gate and the car park on Arundel Street; direct access from both means that service users pass directly past the club through the unused and desolate Festival/CIQ Square.

**d. any central gateway to the city or other city landmark, historic building or tourist attraction;**

See (e) under (i).

**(f) predominately residential areas;**

See (a) under (i)

**(g) The Cultural Hub (Millennium Galleries, Tudor Square, theatres and library).**

The location of the club is a de facto "cultural hub" given it is named the Cultural Industries Quarter. It is also on the direct access route to the 24/7 Addsetts learning centre from numerous student accommodation blocks in the immediate vicinity, which many will be accessing during the club's opening hours.

**(iii) the layout, character or condition of the premises, vehicle, vessel or stall in respect of which the application is made.**

The building, despite the removal of signage during its closed hours, is a blacked out sinister presence incongruous with its surroundings and clearly marked buildings. Removal of the signage is "a sticking plaster to a gaping wound" approach by Licensing. Regardless of whether the club's signage is visible in the day, it is widely known what the building is. Those who are not familiar with the building's use visiting SHU on open days and viewing properties in the vicinity during the day will be unable to make an informed decision about moving into an area with a sex establishment on the doorstep.

Furthermore, the building could be put to a different use serving a far more diverse and greater number of people thereby enriching the CIQ in a more inclusive and compatible way.

**Further grounds for refusal**

**The Public Sector Equality Duty and Gender Equality**

The Policy states under the heading "The Equality Act 2010":

"This Act legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and wider society. This includes the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), which means that the Council must thoroughly consider, in the discharge of its licensing functions, the need to:

- promote equality of opportunity;
- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- promote good relations".

This applies for this policy and to the consideration and determination of applications for sex establishments. (p.5)

I believe that sex establishments such as Spearmint Rhino directly discriminate against women by normalising the sexualisation and objectification of women, and that this contributes to their sexualisation and objectification in other areas of society. A 2016 review highlights how these venues undermine women's equality:

"Thus, in objectifying media women's role as a source of male sexual pleasure is emphasized and their humanity is deemphasized. After having internalized the messages of male sexual privilege and female dehumanization, it should be easier for men to envision imposing themselves sexually on women and reacting punitively to women who frustrate their sexual goals."<sup>14</sup>

The Council has a fundamental and non-delegable role to give due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty, including tackling gender inequality. This applies notwithstanding the fact that Parliament has legislated to allow the possibility for sex establishments to be licensed in specific areas – subject to the choices of the local communities.

The Policy further states that:

"Licences will be refused if the Licensing Authority perceives a venue will have negative impacts on members of the public or vulnerable persons living, working or engaged in normal activity in the area".

Many women have voiced their concerns and fears about the presence of Spearmint Rhino in previous objections, including LGBT women and disabled women. In 2017, many examples of the negative impact of this club were given in objections, for example: one woman giving up her studio at Yorkshire Artspace and a contributory factor was the presence of the club and “running the gauntlet of men hanging around outside the club and harassing women.” (objection 12) and others have stated how the club impacts on their business at hearings and in writing.<sup>v</sup>

As Philip Kolvin (2010) cites the Royal Town Planning Institute's Gender and Spatial Planning Good Practice Note:

“In relation to the 24-hour economy policy, ensure that the views of women are considered. Evidence shows that in certain locations, lap-dancing and exotic dancing club make women feel threatened or uncomfortable”<sup>vi</sup>

Kolvin continues with:

“If a woman, whether objectively justified or not, fears to use part of the town centre characterised by sex establishments, this may be argued to amount to discrimination, in that her access to the public infrastructure of the town is impaired in comparison to that of men. Where relevant these considerations ought properly to be taken into account by authorities at the decision-making stage, and possibly at the policy-making stage”<sup>vii</sup>.

This is further corroborated by 2012 research published in Criminal Justice Matters which states that:

“... the women describe feeling frightened, disempowered, violated, embarrassed, unsafe (particularly if men are around) and avoid certain streets at night where they know there is a lap dancing club.”<sup>viii</sup>

In addition an Australian article about women and girls' perceptions of safety in urban spaces highlights how they restrict their freedom of movement to avoid zones where there are strip clubs.<sup>ix</sup>

Lap dancing clubs also reinforce negative gender stereotypes of male insatiable sexuality and female sexual availability which are hugely damaging to both sexes and to non-binary people. The stereotypes upon which they are founded do not foster good relations between the sexes, as evidenced in 2016 by Zero Option at the Villa Mercedes hearing representation and its 2017 oral representation at the hearing<sup>x</sup>.

In their UK study published in 2011 Sanders and Hardy<sup>xi</sup> reported that 30% of the women performers interviewed said that as a result of doing the job they had lost respect for men; a finding echoed many testimonies of former performers.

The Policy states that “The Licensing Authority will also consider the following factors when deciding if an application is appropriate”:

**(b) proximity to areas with high levels of crime;**

On 22nd February 2018, it was reported in the Star that Arundel Gate which runs in parallel to Paternoster Row and is approximately 1-2 minutes on foot away depending on walking pace, is 10th in the top 10 areas of crime in the city and that “These offences, including assaults, robberies and sex attacks on women, were recorded between January and November 2017.”<sup>xii</sup>

This image of a high-end establishment portrayed by this club goes in some way to normalising this type of venue in a very active part of the city, and as such giving the impression that Sheffield as a city condones both the sexualisation and objectification of women, which is in complete contradiction to the Council's Equality policies. The fact that its location within Sheffield Hallam University buildings and the CIQ also conveys the message that this SEV is culturally embedded within the two and indeed integral to a higher education experience and Sheffield's local heritage.

The Committee is asked to note that in the last few years Leeds City Council successfully defended a refusal to renew two SEV licenses at judicial review:

R (Bean Trading A Ltd) v Leeds City Council (2014)

It was held that a council can “take a fresh look” despite no changes to the character of locality. The Council is also asked to note the following from Philip Kolvin regarding licence renewal:

“Given that there is potential for the discretion to be exercised afresh, the renewal should not just be a rubber stamping exercise, but an opportunity, **Page 362** to review the principle and content of the license.”<sup>xiii</sup>

The case of *Thompson v Oxford City Council* (2014) was also supported at Court of Appeal, and the Council told they could “take a fresh look” at any application for renewal.

According to the BBC, the number of lap dancing clubs has fallen by a third in England<sup>xiv</sup>. The same report states that “a survey conducted by YouGov in 2015 found 64% of people in Great Britain said strip clubs were a negative part of British culture.” I ask that the Committee refuse to grant the club a licence for all the reasons outlined and because Spearmint Rhino is anachronistic, it gives Sheffield and our much vaunted CIQ a negative image and may deter investors and developers. At a time when we are hoping to attract large investors and are bidding for Channel 4 to relocate in the vicinity, the Committee needs to turn down this licence application, which it is empowered to do.

I look forward to hearing from you.

## References

- i Sheffield Star 16th January 2018 *Dramatic rise in the number of people living in Sheffield city centre* Available from: <https://www.thestar.co.uk/news/dramatic-rise-in-the-number-of-people-living-in-sheffield-city-centre-1-8960059>
- ii Sheffield Chamber of Commerce *Sheffield's Cultural Industries Quarter expansion in £10m City Estates project* Available from: <https://www.scci.org.uk/2017/03/sheffields-cultural-industries-quarter-expansion-in-10m-city-estates-project/>
- iii Sheffield Hallam University 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2018 *New campus masterplan places Hallam at the heart of the city* Available from: <http://www4.shu.ac.uk/mediacentre/new-campus-masterplan-places-hallam-heart-city>
- iv Wright, P.J & Tokunaga, R.S (2016) Men's Objectifying Media Consumption, Objectification of Women, and Attitudes Supportive of Violence Against Women in *Archives of Sexual Behavior*
- v *Zero Option oral representation at the Spearmint Rhino hearing April 2017* Available from: <https://zerooptionblog.wordpress.com/2017/04/14/zero-options-representation-at-the-spearmint-rhino-licence-renewal-hearing-11th-april-2017/#more-524>
- vi Kolvin, P (2010) *Sex Licensing*, The Institute of Licensing p.87
- vii Kolvin, P (2010) *Sex Licensing*, The Institute of Licensing p.87
- viii Patiniotis, J. & Standing, K. (2012) 'License to cause harm? Sex entertainment venues and women's sense of safety in inner city centres' in *Criminal Justice Matters*, 88:1, 10-12.
- ix Safe in the City? Girls tell it like it is. March 26, 2017 <https://theconversation.com/safe-in-the-city-girls-tell-it-like-it-is-72975>.

x Slideshare available from: <https://www.slideshare.net/ZerooptionSheffield/villa-mercedes-hearing-8th-september-2016>

xi Sanders, T., & Hardy, K. (2011) *The Regulatory Dance: Sexual Consumption in the Night Time Economy – Initial Findings*. Leeds: University of Leeds

xii Sheffield Star 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2018 Available from: <https://www.thestar.co.uk/news/listed-these-are-the-10-most-crime-ridden-streets-in-sheffield-1-9030246>

xiii Kolvin, P (2010) *Sex Licensing*, The Institute of Licensing p.90

xiv 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2018 Available from: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-43043842>



66

Licensing Service  
Block C, Staniforth Road Depot  
Staniforth Road  
Surrey Street  
S9 3HD  
By email to: [licensing@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:licensing@sheffield.gov.uk)

DATE

Dear Licensing

### **Objection to Spearmint Rhino licence renewal 2018**

I refer to the application for a sex establishment licence by Spearmint Rhino, 60 Brown Street, Sheffield, S1 2BS.

I believe that the Council should refuse the licence application under the Discretionary Grounds for Refusal of the current Sheffield City Council's 2018 Sex Establishment Policy (the Policy) on the following grounds:

#### **Discretionary Ground d)**

##### **i) Character of the relevant locality**

###### **(a) the fact that the premises are sited in a residential area;**

The club backs onto student accommodation and the area is increasingly becoming more residential for students and non-students alike.

The city centre's residential population had risen from 6,000 to 30,000 over the last 10 years<sup>i</sup> with further plans for more residential accommodation within the Cultural Industries Quarter (CIQ) and Knowledge Gateway. Furthermore, "the Alsop Fields development is a mix of residential apartments, studios, offices for the high-tech and creative sectors and places to eat and drink" and ". . . designed to be a destination in itself – a regeneration of part of the Cultural Industries Quarter that will be similar to the trendy parts of Manchester and London"<sup>ii</sup> for which Brown Street and Paternoster Row are the main thoroughfares.

###### **(d) the premises are sited near premises or areas which are sensitive because they are frequented by children, young persons or families, including but not limited to educational establishments, leisure facilities such as parks, libraries or swimming pools, markets and covered markets;**

The Showroom and adjacent Work Station are frequented by families and both host events specifically for children including the world renown Children's Media Conference.

###### **(e) the premises are sited near places and or buildings of historical/cultural interest and other tourist attractions.**

It is directly opposite the Showroom cinema, which is "one of Europe's largest independent cinemas paired with the longest-running creative business centre in the city "housed in a converted 1930s car showroom."

It is also opposite the Site Gallery which has just undergone a huge expansion. Spearmint Rhino is not only centrally located in terms of proximity to a number of national and international events locations but

it is also a direct access route, for example: Doc Fest; the aforementioned Children's Media Conference; Off the Shelf etc all of which are tourist attractions.

The Club is next to Sheffield Hallam Students Union (an iconic and a city landmark building).

**ii) Use of other premises in the vicinity**

The Licensing Authority will have regard to, but not limited to, the following:

**(a) schools, nurseries or other premises substantially used by or for children under 18 years of age,**

There are many educational establishments in the vicinity and Brown Street is also an access route to the Sheffield College Granville Road campus and UTC which provides education for children from the age of 14. It is in close proximity to Freeman College which provides education for students (16 – 25) who have a range of complex learning, mental health and behavioural needs.

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**(b) parks or other recreational areas designed for use by or for children under 18 years of age;**

The recreational space (formerly known as Festival Square but now named as Cultural Industries Quarter Square on the map of the area which can be found on Sheaf Square) is directly adjacent to the club and the club's presence is holding back further use and development of this space into its full potential.

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There are a number of charities and organisations in the area which support vulnerable children, young people and adults, one of which is situated directly behind the club. Charles Street is a direct access route from the bus stop on Arundel Gate and the car park on Arundel Street; direct access from both means that service users pass directly past the club through the unused and desolate Festival/CIQ Square.

**(d) any central gateway to the city or other city landmark, historic building or tourist attraction;**

See (e) under (i).

**(f) predominately residential areas;**

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**(g) The Cultural Hub (Millennium Galleries, Tudor Square, theatres and library).**

The location of the club is a de facto "cultural hub" given it is named the Cultural Industries Quarter. It is also on the direct access route to the 24/7 Addsetts learning centre from numerous student accommodation blocks in the immediate vicinity, which many will be accessing during the club's opening hours.

**(iii) to the layout, character or condition of the premises, vehicle, vessel or stall in respect of which the application is made.**

The building, despite the removal of signage during its closed hours, is a blacked out sinister presence incongruous with its surroundings and clearly marked buildings. Removal of the signage is “a sticking plaster to a gaping wound” approach by Licensing. Regardless of whether the club’s signage is visible in the day, it is widely known what the building is. Those who are not familiar with the building’s use visiting SHU on open days and viewing properties in the vicinity during the day will be unable to make an informed decision about moving into an area with a sex establishment on the doorstep.

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Many women have voiced their concerns and fears about the presence of Spearmint Rhino in previous objections, including LGBT women and disabled women. In 2017, many examples of the negative

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“... the women describe feeling frightened, disempowered, violated, embarrassed, unsafe (particularly if men are around) and avoid certain streets at night where they know there is a lap dancing club.”<sup>viii</sup>

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The Policy states that “The Licensing Authority will also consider the following factors when deciding if an application is appropriate”:

**(b) proximity to areas with high levels of crime;**

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I look forward to hearing from you.

NAME and ADDRESS which will be redacted

## **References**

<sup>i</sup> Sheffield Star 16th January 2018 *Dramatic rise in the number of people living in Sheffield city centre* Available from: <https://www.thestar.co.uk/news/dramatic-rise-in-the-number-of-people-living-in-sheffield-city-centre-1-8960059>

<sup>ii</sup> Sheffield Chamber of Commerce *Sheffield's Cultural Industries Quarter expansion in £10m City Estates project* Available from: <https://www.scci.org.uk/2017/03/sheffields-cultural-industries-quarter-expansion-in-10m-city-estates-project/>

<sup>iii</sup> Sheffield Hallam University 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2018 *New campus masterplan places Hallam at the heart of the city* Available from: <http://www4.shu.ac.uk/mediacentre/new-campus-masterplan-places-hallam-heart-city>

<sup>iv</sup> Wright, P.J & Tokunaga, R.S (2016) Men's Objectifying Media Consumption, Objectification of Women, and Attitudes Supportive of Violence Against Women in *Archives of Sexual Behavior*

<sup>v</sup> *Zero Option oral representation at the Spearmint Rhino hearing April 2017* Available from: <https://zerooptionblog.wordpress.com/2017/04/14/zero-options-representation-at-the-spearmint-rhino-licence-renewal-hearing-11th-april-2017/#more-524>

<sup>vi</sup> Kolvin, P (2010) *Sex Licensing*, The Institute of Licensing p.87

<sup>vii</sup> Kolvin, P (2010) *Sex Licensing*, The Institute of Licensing p.87

<sup>viii</sup> Patiniotis, J. & Standing, K. (2012) 'License to cause harm? Sex entertainment venues and women's sense of safety in inner city centres' in *Criminal Justice Matters*, 88:1, 10-12.

<sup>ix</sup> Safe in the City? Girls tell it like it is. March 26, 2017 <https://theconversation.com/safe-in-the-city-girls-tell-it-like-it-is-72975>.

<sup>x</sup> Slideshare available from: <https://www.slideshare.net/ZerooptionSheffield/villa-mercedes-hearing-8th-september-2016>

<sup>xi</sup> Sanders, T., & Hardy, K. (2011) *The Regulatory Dance: Sexual Consumption in the Night Time Economy – Initial Findings*. Leeds: University of Leeds

<sup>xii</sup> Sheffield Star 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2018 Available from: <https://www.thestar.co.uk/news/listed-these-are-the-10-most-crime-ridden-streets-in-sheffield-1-9030246>

<sup>xiii</sup> Kolvin, P (2010) *Sex Licensing*, The Institute of Licensing p.90

<sup>xiv</sup> 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2018 Available from: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-43043842>

Licensing Service, Sheffield City Council,  
Block C  
Staniforth Road Depot,  
Staniforth Road  
SHEFFIELD S9 3HD  
email to: [licensing@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:licensing@sheffield.gov.uk)

To Whom It May Concern

I wish to register my objection to the application by Sonfield Developments Ltd c/o 161 Tottenham Court Road, London for renewal of a Sexual Entertainment Venue licence for Spearmint Rhino, 60 Brown Street, Sheffield S1 2BS on the following grounds;

- Strip/lap dancing clubs are a form of violence against women, promoting the idea that women's bodies can be bought, treating performers as commodities. This is dehumanising. If the performer really wanted to strip she wouldn't need to be paid to do so.
- Testimonies from men who admit to using such establishments demonstrate that those men eroticise their power over the performer, getting a sexual thrill from control over her. This is related to the negation of, and absolute disregard for, her feelings within the financial transaction. This is toxic, abusive masculinity.
- Many ex-strippers describe psychological harm experienced as a result of the work. This is trauma caused by dissociation, the act of separating minds and feelings from their bodies, in order to cope. Often, it is only when they have stopped stripping that the impact of that harm is realised. This is similar to the experiences of women leaving abusive relationships
- Condoning, by licensing, a club which is set up to profit from the objectification of women gives a message to everyone in the city, not just the men who use it, that Sheffield Council thinks it is acceptable for women to be treated like this. This is not consistent with the Councils Equality duty to foster good relations between men and women.
- Research suggests that men who hold objectifying views of women are more likely to be violent and to attribute responsibility (Victim blame) to women for violence perpetrated against them. Thus in licensing Spearmint Rhino the Council may be compromising its own Domestic and Sexual abuse strategy.
- Many women have advised the Council of feeling unsafe in the vicinity of Spearmint Rhino and avoid walking past it. No woman should feel unsafe anywhere in the city.
- The Council states explicitly that it is committed to reducing the normalisation of the objectification of women. SEV's of this type do not contribute to that aspiration. Spearmint Rhino actively contributes to the normalisation of objectification of women and actively discriminates against women by promoting negative and limiting gender stereotypes and impacting on women's comfort and freedom in moving round the city. Neither is this consistent with the Councils obligations under the Equality Act 2010.
- Spearmint Rhino is situated in a residential area that is now undergoing major and extensive re development. The area has become increasingly residential with sites of cultural interest, charities providing support to vulnerable people, education providers and recreational areas in the vicinity. This gives further basis for refusal of the licence on the discretionary grounds available.

- In conclusion Sheffield should be a city that aspires to promote fairness and equality for all. As such I would ask that Spearmint Rhino's license renewal is declined.
- SIGNED  
PRINT NAME & ADDRESS





**Bower Claire**

**From:** [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** 14 May 2018 08:20  
**To:** licensingservice

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

**Categories:** SPEARMINT RHINO

Licensing Service  
 Block C, Staniforth Road Depot  
 Staniforth Road  
 Surrey Street  
 S9 3HD  
 By email to: [licensingservice@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:licensingservice@sheffield.gov.uk)

13<sup>th</sup> May 2018

Dear Licensing

**Objection to Spearmint Rhino licence renewal**

I refer to the application for a sexual entertainment venue licence by Spearmint Rhino ("the club"), 60 Brown Street, Sheffield, S1 2BS.

I work as a maths tutor in and around the Sheffield area. The presence of clubs such as Spearmint Rhino in our city centres sends out a message starkly contradictory to the one we should be sending to our young people.

At a time when we are encouraging more young women to enter STEM related careers permitting Spearmint Rhino to continue doing business next door to a university with an excellent record of increasing participation is shockingly inappropriate.

I believe that the Council should refuse the licence application under the Discretionary Grounds for Refusal of the current Sheffield City Council's 2018 Sex Establishment Policy ("the Policy") on the following grounds:

**Discretionary Ground d)**

**i) Character of the relevant locality**

**(a) the fact that the premises are sited in a residential area;**

The club backs onto student accommodation and the area is increasingly becoming more residential for students and non-students alike.

The city centre's residential population had risen from 6,000 to 30,000 over the last 10 years<sup>[1]</sup> with further plans for more residential accommodation within the Cultural Industries Quarter (CIQ) and Knowledge Gateway. Furthermore, "the Alsop Fields development is a mix of residential apartments, studios, offices for the high-tech and creative sectors and places to eat and drink" and ". . . designed to be a destination in

itself – a regeneration of part of the Cultural Industries Quarter that will be similar to the trendy parts of Manchester and London<sup>[iii]</sup> for which Brown Street and Paternoster Row are the main thoroughfares.

**(d) the premises are sited near premises or areas which are sensitive because they are frequented by children, young persons or families, including but not limited to educational establishments, leisure facilities such as parks, libraries or swimming pools, markets and covered markets;**

The Showroom and adjacent Work Station are frequented by families and both host events specifically for children including the world renown Children's Media Conference.

**(e) the premises are sited near places and or buildings of historical/cultural interest and other tourist attractions.**

It is directly opposite the Showroom cinema, which is "one of Europe's largest independent cinemas paired with the longest-running creative business centre in the city, housed in a converted 1930s car showroom."

It is also opposite the Site Gallery which has just undergone a huge expansion. Spearmint Rhino is not only centrally located in terms of proximity to a number of national and international events locations but it is also a direct access route, for example: Doc Fest; the aforementioned Children's Media Conference; Off the Shelf etc all of which are tourist attractions.

The club is next to Sheffield Hallam Students Union (iconic and a city landmark building).

#### **ii) Use of other premises in the vicinity**

The Licensing Authority will have regard to, but not limited to, the following:

**(a) schools, nurseries or other premises substantially used by or for children under 18 years of age,**

There are many educational establishments in the vicinity and Brown Street is also an access route to the Sheffield College Granville Road campus and UTC which provides education for children from the age of 14. It is in close proximity to Freeman College which provides education for students (16 – 25) who have a range of complex learning, mental health and behavioural needs.

The club is also at the epicentre of the designated "Knowledge Gateway" and located on Sheffield Hallam University's city campus whose masterplan is to further develop the area, which includes "new buildings for the Business School and social sciences, refurbishing the Students' Union building known as The HUBS, creating a University Green [Festival/CIQ Square] and improving our current estate."<sup>[iii]</sup>

**(b) parks or other recreational areas designed for use by or for children under 18 years of age;**

The recreational space (formerly known as Festival Square but now named as Cultural Industries Quarter Square on the map of the area which can be found on Sheaf Square) is directly adjacent to the club and the club's presence is holding back further use and development of this space into its full potential.

**(c) hospitals, mental health or disability centres, substance misuse treatment centres, sexual exploitation services, sexual abuse centres or similar premises;**

There are a number of charities and organisations in the area which support vulnerable children, young people and adults, one of which is situated directly behind the club. Charles Street is a direct access route from the bus stop on Arundel Gate and the car park on Arundel Street; direct access from both means that service users pass directly past the club through the unused and desolate Festival/CIQ Square.

**(d) any central gateway to the city or other city landmark, historic building or tourist attraction;**

See (e) under (i).

**(f) predominately residential areas;**

See (a) under (i)

**(g) The Cultural Hub (Millennium Galleries, Tudor Square, theatres and library).**

The location of the club is a de facto “cultural hub” given it is named the Cultural Industries Quarter. It is also on the direct access route to the 24/7 Addsetts learning centre from numerous student accommodation blocks in the immediate vicinity, which many will be accessing during the club’s opening hours.

**(iii) the layout, character or condition of the premises, vehicle, vessel or stall in respect of which the application is made.**

The building, despite the removal of signage during its closed hours, is a blacked out sinister presence incongruous with its surroundings and clearly marked buildings. Removal of the signage is “a sticking plaster to a gaping wound” approach by Licensing. Regardless of whether the club’s signage is visible in the day, it is widely known what the building is. Those who are not familiar with the building’s use visiting SHU on open days and viewing properties in the vicinity during the day will be unable to make an informed decision about moving into an area with a sex establishment on the doorstep.

Furthermore, the building could be put to a different use serving a far more diverse and greater number of people thereby enriching the CIQ in a more inclusive and compatible way.

**Further grounds for refusal**

**The Public Sector Equality Duty and Gender Equality**

The Policy states under the heading “The Equality Act 2010”:

“This Act legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and wider society. This includes the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), which means that the Council must thoroughly consider, in the discharge of its licensing functions, the need to:

- promote equality of opportunity;
- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- promote good relations”.

This applies for this policy and to the consideration and determination of applications for sex establishments. (p.5)

I believe that sex establishments such as Spearmint Rhino directly discriminate against women by normalising the sexualisation and objectification of women, and that this contributes to their sexualisation and objectification in other areas of society. A 2016 review highlights how these venues undermine women’s equality:

“Thus, in objectifying media women’s role as a source of male sexual pleasure is emphasized and their humanity is deemphasized. After having internalized the messages of male sexual privilege and female dehumanization, it should be easier for men to envision imposing themselves sexually on women and reacting punitively to women who frustrate their sexual goals.”<sup>[iv]</sup>

The Council has a fundamental and non-delegable role to give due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty, including tackling gender inequality. This applies notwithstanding the fact that Parliament has legislated to allow the possibility for sex establishments to be licensed in specific areas – subject to the choices of the local communities.

The Policy further states that:

"Licences will be refused if the Licensing Authority perceives a venue will have negative impacts on members of the public or vulnerable persons living, working or engaged in normal activity in the area".

Many women have voiced their concerns and fears about the presence of Spearmint Rhino in previous objections, including LGBT women and disabled women. In 2017, many examples of the negative impact of this club were given in objections, for example: one woman giving up her studio at Yorkshire Artspace and a contributory factor was the presence of the club and "running the gauntlet of men hanging around outside the club and harassing women." (objection 12) and others have stated how the club impacts on their business at hearings and in writing.<sup>[vi]</sup>

As Philip Kolvin (2010) cites the Royal Town Planning Institute's Gender and Spatial Planning Good Practice Note:

"In relation to the 24-hour economy policy, ensure that the views of women are considered. Evidence shows that in certain locations, lap-dancing and exotic dancing club make women feel threatened or uncomfortable" <sup>[vi]</sup>

Kolvin continues with:

"If a woman, whether objectively justified or not, fears to use part of the town centre characterised by sex establishments, this may be argued to amount to discrimination, in that her access to the public infrastructure of the town is impaired in comparison to that of men. Where relevant these considerations ought properly to be taken into account by authorities at the decision-making stage, and possibly at the policy-making stage" <sup>[vii]</sup>.

This is further corroborated by 2012 research published in Criminal Justice Matters which states that:

". . . the women describe feeling frightened, disempowered, violated, embarrassed, unsafe (particularly if men are around) and avoid certain streets at night where they know there is a lap dancing club." <sup>[viii]</sup>

In addition an Australian article about women and girls' perceptions of safety in urban spaces highlights how they restrict their freedom of movement to avoid zones where there are strip clubs. <sup>[ix]</sup>

Lap dancing clubs also reinforce negative gender stereotypes of male insatiable sexuality and female sexual availability which are hugely damaging to both sexes and to non-binary people. The stereotypes upon which they are founded do not foster good relations between the sexes, as evidenced in 2016 by Zero Option at the Villa Mercedes hearing representation and its 2017 oral representation at the hearing <sup>[x]</sup>.

In their UK study published in 2011 Sanders and Hardy <sup>[xi]</sup> reported that 30% of the women performers interviewed said that as a result of doing the job they had lost respect for men; a finding echoed many testimonies of former performers.

The Policy states that "The Licensing Authority will also consider the following factors when deciding if an application is appropriate":

**(b) proximity to areas with high levels of crime;**

On 22nd February 2018, it was reported in the Star that Arundel Gate which runs in parallel to Paternoster Row and is approximately 1-2 minutes on foot away depending on walking pace, is 10th in the top 10 areas of crime in the city and that "These offences, including assaults, robberies and sex attacks on women, were recorded between January and November 2017." <sup>[xii]</sup>

This image of a high-end establishment portrayed by this club goes in some way to normalising this type of venue in a very active part of the city, and as such giving the impression that Sheffield as a city condones both the sexualisation and objectification of women, which is in complete contradiction to the Council's Equality policies. The fact that its location within Sheffield Hallam University buildings and the CIQ also conveys the message that this SEV is culturally embedded within the two and indeed integral to a higher education experience and Sheffield's local heritage.

The Committee is asked to note that in the last few years Leeds City Council successfully defended a refusal to renew two SEV licenses at judicial review:

R (Bean Trading A Ltd) v Leeds City Council (2014)

It was held that a council can “take a fresh look” despite no changes to the character of locality. The Council is also asked to note the following from Philip Kolvin regarding licence renewal:

*“Given that there is potential for the discretion to be exercised afresh, the renewal should not just be a rubber stamping exercise, but an opportunity, if needed, to review the principle and content of the license.”<sup>[xiii]</sup>*

The case of Thompson v Oxford City Council (2014) was also supported at Court of Appeal, and the Council told they could “take a fresh look” at any application for renewal.

According to the BBC, the number of lap dancing clubs has fallen by a third in England<sup>[xiv]</sup>. The same report states that “a survey conducted by YouGov in 2015 found 64% of people in Great Britain said strip clubs were a negative part of British culture.” I ask that the Committee refuse to grant the club a licence for all the reasons outlined and because Spearmint Rhino is anachronistic, it gives Sheffield and our much vaunted CIQ a negative image and may deter investors and developers. At a time when we are hoping to attract large investors and are bidding for Channel 4 to relocate in the vicinity, the Committee needs to turn down this licence application, which it is empowered to do.

I look forward to hearing from you.

## References

<sup>[1]</sup> Sheffield Star 16th January 2018 *Dramatic rise in the number of people living in Sheffield city centre* Available from: <https://www.thestar.co.uk/news/dramatic-rise-in-the-number-of-people-living-in-sheffield-city-centre-1-8960059>

<sup>[1]</sup> Sheffield Chamber of Commerce *Sheffield’s Cultural Industries Quarter expansion in £10m City Estates project* Available from: <https://www.scci.org.uk/2017/03/sheffields-cultural-industries-quarter-expansion-in-10m-city-estates-project/>

<sup>[1]</sup> Sheffield Hallam University 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2018 *New campus masterplan places Hallam at the heart of the city* Available from: <http://www4.shu.ac.uk/mediacentre/new-campus-masterplan-places-hallam-heart-city>

<sup>[1]</sup> Wright, P.J & Tokunaga, R.S (2016) Men’s Objectifying Media Consumption, Objectification of Women, and Attitudes Supportive of Violence Against Women in *Archives of Sexual Behavior*

<sup>[1]</sup> *Zero Option oral representation at the Spearmint Rhino hearing April 2017* Available from: <https://zerooptionblog.wordpress.com/2017/04/14/zero-options-representation-at-the-spearmint-rhino-licence-renewal-hearing-11th-april-2017/#more-524>

<sup>[1]</sup> Kolvin, P (2010) *Sex Licensing*, The Institute of Licensing p.87

<sup>[1]</sup> Kolvin, P (2010) *Sex Licensing*, The Institute of Licensing p.87

<sup>[1]</sup> Patiniotis, J. & Standing, K. (2012) ‘License to cause harm? Sex entertainment venues and women’s sense of safety in inner city centres’ in *Criminal Justice Matters*, 88:1, 10-12.

<sup>[1]</sup> Safe in the City? Girls tell it like it is. March 26, 2017 <https://theconversation.com/safe-in-the-city-girls-tell-it-like-it-is-72975>.

<sup>[1]</sup> Slideshare available from: <https://www.slideshare.net/ZerooptionSheffield/villa-mercedes-hearing-8th-september-2016>

- [1] Sanders, T., & Hardy, K. (2011) *The Regulatory Dance: Sexual Consumption in the Night Time Economy – Initial Findings*. Leeds: University of Leeds
- [1] Sheffield Star 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2018 Available from: <https://www.thestar.co.uk/news/listed-these-are-the-10-most-crime-ridden-streets-in-sheffield-1-9030246>
- [1] Kolvin, P (2010) *Sex Licensing*, The Institute of Licensing p.90
- [1] 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2018 Available from: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-43043842>
- 
- [i] Sheffield Star 16th January 2018 *Dramatic rise in the number of people living in Sheffield city centre* Available from: <https://www.thestar.co.uk/news/dramatic-rise-in-the-number-of-people-living-in-sheffield-city-centre-1-8960059>
- [ii] Sheffield Chamber of Commerce *Sheffield's Cultural Industries Quarter expansion in £10m City Estates project* Available from: <https://www.scci.org.uk/2017/03/sheffields-cultural-industries-quarter-expansion-in-10m-city-estates-project/>
- [iii] Sheffield Hallam University 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2018 *New campus masterplan places Hallam at the heart of the city* Available from: <http://www4.shu.ac.uk/mediacentre/new-campus-masterplan-places-hallam-heart-city>
- [iv] Wright, P.J & Tokunaga, R.S (2016) Men's Objectifying Media Consumption, Objectification of Women, and Attitudes Supportive of Violence Against Women in *Archives of Sexual Behavior*
- [v] *Zero Option oral representation at the Spearmint Rhino hearing April 2017* Available from: <https://zerooptionblog.wordpress.com/2017/04/14/zero-options-representation-at-the-spearmint-rhino-licence-renewal-hearing-11th-april-2017/#more-524>
- [vi] Kolvin, P (2010) *Sex Licensing*, The Institute of Licensing p.87
- [vii] Kolvin, P (2010) *Sex Licensing*, The Institute of Licensing p.87
- [viii] Patiniotis, J. & Standing, K. (2012) 'License to cause harm? Sex entertainment venues and women's sense of safety in inner city centres' in *Criminal Justice Matters*, 88:1, 10-12.
- [ix] Safe in the City? Girls tell it like it is. March 26, 2017 <https://theconversation.com/safe-in-the-city-girls-tell-it-like-it-is-72975>.
- [x] Slideshare available from: <https://www.slideshare.net/ZerooptionSheffield/villa-mercedes-hearing-8th-september-2016>
- [xi] Sanders, T., & Hardy, K. (2011) *The Regulatory Dance: Sexual Consumption in the Night Time Economy – Initial Findings*. Leeds: University of Leeds
- [xii] Sheffield Star 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2018 Available from: <https://www.thestar.co.uk/news/listed-these-are-the-10-most-crime-ridden-streets-in-sheffield-1-9030246>
- [xiii] Kolvin, P (2010) *Sex Licensing*, The Institute of Licensing p.90
- [xiv] 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2018 Available from: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-43043842>

**Bower Claire**

---

**From:** [Redacted]  
**Sent:** 14 May 2018 08:25  
**To:** licensingservice  
**Subject:** Objection to license for Spearmint Rhino

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

**Categories:** SPEARMINT RHINO

To Whom It May Concern

I wish to register my objection to the application by Sonfield Developments Ltd c/o 161 Tottenham Court Road, London for renewal of a Sexual Entertainment Venue licence for Spearmint Rhino, 60 Brown Street, Sheffield S1 2BS on the following grounds;

Strip/lap dancing clubs are a form of violence against women, promoting the idea that women's bodies can be bought, treating performers as commodities. This is dehumanising. If the performer really wanted to strip she wouldn't need to be paid to do so.

Testimonies from men who admit to using such establishments demonstrate that those men eroticise their power over the performer, getting a sexual thrill from control over her. This is related to the negation of, and absolute disregard for, her feelings within the financial transaction. This is toxic, abusive masculinity.

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]





**Bower Claire**

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**From:** [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** 14 May 2018 08:43  
**To:** licensingservice  
**Subject:** Objection to Spearmint Rhino license

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

**Categories:** SPEARMINT RHINO

To whom it may concern

I wish to state my objection to the renewal of the Spearmint Rhino license. The club premises are close to the student's union, the Site Art Gallery where activities for young people will take place, and the Showroom/Workstation. There are many young people, I'm particularly thinking about young women, living, working and socialising in the area and the club exerts a negative influence for them.

Such establishments are demeaning to women and men. They commodify women's bodies for commercial purposes which is not in keeping with the aim of the cultural industries quarter. Sheffield can be better than this.

Please do not renew the license.

Yours faithfully,

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]



**Bower Claire**

---

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 14 May 2018 09:02  
**To:** licensingservice  
**Subject:** Renewal of licence of Spearmint Rhino club

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

**Categories:** SPEARMINT RHINO

Licensing Service, Sheffield City  
Council,  
C  
aniforth Road  
Depot,  
Road  
FIELD  
S93HD

Block

St

Staniforth  
SHEF

email to: [licensingservice@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:licensingservice@sheffield.gov.uk)

To Whom It May Concern

I wish to register my objection to the application by Sonfield Developments Ltd c/o 161 Tottenham Court Road, London for renewal of a Sexual Entertainment Venue licence for Spearmint Rhino, 60 Brown Street, Sheffield S1 2BS on the following grounds;

- Strip/lap dancing clubs are a form of violence against women, promoting the idea that women's bodies can be bought, treating performers as commodities. This is dehumanising. If the performer really wanted to strip she wouldn't need to be paid to do so.
- Testimonies from men who admit to using such establishments demonstrate that those men eroticise their power over the performer, getting a sexual thrill from control over her. This is related to the negation of, and absolute disregard for, her feelings within the financial transaction. This is toxic, abusive masculinity.
- Many ex-strippers describe psychological harm experienced as a result of the work. This is trauma caused by dissociation, the act of separating minds and feelings from their bodies, in order to cope. Often, it is only when they have stopped stripping that the impact of that harm is realised. This is similar to the experiences of women leaving abusive relationships
- Condoning, by licensing, a club which is set up to profit from the objectification of women gives a message to everyone in the city, not just the men who use it, that Sheffield Council thinks it is acceptable for women to be treated like this. This is not

consistent with the Council's Equality duty to foster good relations between men and women.

- Research suggests that men who hold objectifying views of women are more likely to be violent and to attribute responsibility (Victim blame) to women for violence perpetrated against them. Thus in licensing Spearmint Rhino the Council may be compromising its own Domestic and Sexual abuse strategy.
  - Many women have advised the Council of feeling unsafe in the vicinity of Spearmint Rhino and avoid walking past it. No woman should feel unsafe anywhere in the city.
  - The Council states explicitly that it is committed to reducing the normalisation of the objectification of women. SEV's of this type do not contribute to that aspiration. Spearmint Rhino actively contributes to the normalisation of objectification of women and actively discriminates against women by promoting negative and limiting gender stereotypes and impacting on women's comfort and freedom in moving round the city. Neither is this consistent with the Council's obligations under the Equality Act 2010.
  - Spearmint Rhino is situated in a residential area that is now undergoing major and extensive re development. The area has become increasingly residential with sites of cultural interest, charities providing support to vulnerable people, education providers and recreational areas in the vicinity. This gives further basis for refusal of the licence on the discretionary grounds available.
- In conclusion Sheffield should be a city that aspires to promote fairness and equality for all. As such I would ask that Spearmint Rhino's license renewal is declined.

s

[REDACTED]



Licensing Service  
Block C, Staniforth Road Depot  
Staniforth Road  
Surrey Street  
S9 3HD

By email to: [licensing@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:licensing@sheffield.gov.uk)

14th May 2018

Dear Licensing

Objection to Spearmint Rhino licence renewal

I refer to the application for a sex establishment licence by Spearmint Rhino ("the club"), 60 Brown Street, Sheffield, S1 2BS.

I believe that the Council should refuse the licence application under the Discretionary Grounds for Refusal of the current Sheffield City Council's 2018 Sex Establishment Policy ("the Policy") on the following grounds:

**Discretionary Ground d)**

**i) Character of the relevant locality**

(a) the fact that the premises are sited in a residential area;

The club backs onto student accommodation and the area is increasingly becoming more residential for students and non-students alike with the development of Alsop Fields.

(d) the premises are sited near premises or areas which are sensitive because they are frequented by children, young persons or families, including but not limited to educational establishments, leisure facilities such as parks, libraries or swimming pools, markets and covered markets;

The Showroom and adjacent Workstation are frequented by families and both host events specifically for children. In addition, the premises is close to the University Technical College, which is a school for children aged 14-19 and I see pupils walking past the premises every day on their way to and from the College.

(e) the premises are sited near places and or buildings of historical/cultural interest and other tourist attractions.

It is directly opposite the Showroom cinema, which is “one of Europe’s largest independent cinemas paired with the longest-running creative business centre in the city, housed in a converted 1930s car showroom.”

It is also opposite the Site Gallery which is just completing a major expansion and which will re-open in September. Spearmint Rhino is not only centrally located in terms of proximity to a number of national and international event locations but it is also a direct access route, for example: Doc Fest; the Children’s Media Conference; Off the Shelf etc all of which are tourist attractions. Both DocFest and the CMC have international reputations and attract delegates from around the world.

The club is also right next to Sheffield Hallam Students Union (iconic and a city landmark building).

## **ii) Use of other premises in the vicinity**

The Licensing Authority will have regard to, but not limited to, the following:

schools, nurseries or other premises substantially used by or for children under 18 years of age,

There are many educational establishments in the vicinity and Brown Street is also an access route to the Sheffield College Granville Road campus and UTC which provides education for children from the age of 14. It is in close proximity to Freeman College which provides education for students (16 – 25) who have a range of complex learning, mental health and behavioural needs.

The club is also at the epicentre of the designated “Knowledge Gateway” and located on Sheffield Hallam University’s city campus whose masterplan is to further develop the area, which includes “new buildings for the Business School and social sciences, refurbishing the Students’ Union building known as The HUBS, creating a University Green [Festival/CIQ Square] and improving our current estate.”

parks or other recreational areas designed for use by or for children under 18 years of age;

The recreational space (formerly known as Festival Square but now named as Cultural Industries Quarter Square on the map of the area which can be found on Sheaf Square) is directly adjacent to the club and the club’s presence is holding back further use and development of this space into its full potential. As a result, the space is ugly and neglected and is not a pleasant place to walk through after dark.

hospitals, mental health or disability centres, substance misuse treatment centres, sexual exploitation services, sexual abuse centres or similar premises;

There are a number of charities and organisations in the area which support vulnerable children, young people and adults, one of which is situated directly behind the club. Charles Street is a direct access route from the bus stop on Arundel Gate and the car park on Arundel Street; direct access from both means that service users pass directly past the club through the unused and desolate Festival/CIQ Square.

any central gateway to the city or other city landmark, historic building or tourist attraction;

See (e) under (i).

(f) predominately residential areas;

See (a) under (i)

(g) The Cultural Hub (Millennium Galleries, Tudor Square, theatres and library).

The location of the club is in a central position within the Cultural Industries Quarter. It is also on the direct access route to the 24/7 Addsetts learning centre from numerous student accommodation blocks in the immediate vicinity, which many will be accessing during the club's opening hours.

(iii) the layout, character or condition of the premises, vehicle, vessel or stall in respect of which the application is made.

The building, despite the removal of signage during its closed hours, is a blacked out sinister presence incongruous with its surroundings and clearly marked buildings. Removal of the signage is an empty gesture approach by Licensing. Regardless of whether the club's signage is visible in the day, it is widely known what the building is. Those who are not familiar with the building's use visiting SHU on open days and viewing properties in the vicinity during the day will be unable to make an informed decision about moving into an area with a sex establishment on the doorstep.

Furthermore, the building could be put to a different use serving a far more diverse and greater number of people thereby enriching the CIQ in a more inclusive and compatible way.

### **Further grounds for refusal**

#### **The Public Sector Equality Duty and Gender Equality**

The Policy states under the heading "The Equality Act 2010":

"This Act legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and wider society. This includes the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), which means that the Council must thoroughly consider, in the discharge of its licensing functions, the need to:

- promote equality of opportunity;
- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- promote good relations".

This applies for this policy and to the consideration and determination of applications for sex establishments. (p.5)

I believe that sex establishments such as Spearmint Rhino directly discriminate against women by normalising the sexualisation and objectification of women, and that this contributes to their sexualisation and objectification in other areas of society. The Policy further states that:

"Licences will be refused if the Licensing Authority perceives a venue will have negative impacts on members of the public or vulnerable persons living, working or engaged in normal activity in the area".

Many women have voiced their concerns and fears about the presence of Spearmint Rhino in previous objections, including LGBT women and disabled women. In 2017, many examples of the negative impact of this club were given in objections, for example: one woman giving up her studio at Yorkshire Artspace and a contributory factor was the presence of the club and "running the gauntlet of men hanging around outside the club and harassing women." (objection 12) and others have stated how the club impacts on their business at hearings and in writing.

As Philip Kolvin (2010) cites in the Royal Town Planning Institute's Gender and Spatial Planning Good Practice Note:

"If a woman, whether objectively justified or not, fears to use part of the town centre characterised by sex establishments, this may be argued to amount to discrimination, in that her access to the public infrastructure of the town is impaired in comparison to that of men. Where relevant these considerations ought properly to be taken into account by authorities at the decision-making stage, and possibly at the policy-making stage" .

I am a self-employed woman and my work means that I am mostly based at the Workstation and Sheffield Technology Parks on Arundel Street. I am often in one or other of these locations after dark and late into the evening and need to walk alone past the premises to return to where I park my car. It is not a pleasant experience.

The Policy states that "The Licensing Authority will also consider the following factors when deciding if an application is appropriate":

- (b) proximity to areas with high levels of crime;

On 22nd February 2018, it was reported in the Star that Arundel Gate which runs in parallel to Paternoster Row and is approximately 1-2 minutes on foot away depending on walking pace, is



10th in the top 10 areas of crime in the city and that “These offences, including assaults, robberies and sex attacks on women, were recorded between January and November 2017.”

I ask that the Committee refuse to grant the club a licence for all the reasons outlined and because Spearmint Rhino gives Sheffield and our much vaunted CIQ a negative image and may deter investors and developers. At a time when we are hoping to attract large investors and are bidding for Channel 4 to relocate in the vicinity, the Committee needs to turn down this licence application, which it is empowered to do.

I look forward to hearing from you.

*[Faint, illegible text]*



**Bower Claire**

---

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 14 May 2018 10:18  
**To:** licensingservice  
**Subject:** Spearmint Rhino License

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

**Categories:** SPEARMINT RHINO

Licensing Service, Sheffield City Council,  
 C  
 Depot,  
 Road  
 3HD  
 to: [licensingservice@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:licensingservice@sheffield.gov.uk)

Block  
 Staniforth Road  
 Staniforth  
 SHEFFIELD S9  
 email

**To Whom It May Concern**

I wish to register my objection to the application by Sonfield Developments Ltd c/o 161 Tottenham Court Road, London for renewal of a Sexual Entertainment Venue licence for Spearmint Rhino, 60 Brown Street, Sheffield S1 2BS on the following grounds;

- Strip/lap dancing clubs are a form of violence against women, promoting the idea that women's bodies can be bought, treating performers as commodities. This is dehumanising. If the performer really wanted to strip she wouldn't need to be paid to do so.
- Testimonies from men who admit to using such establishments demonstrate that those men eroticise their power over the performer, getting a sexual thrill from control over her. This is related to the negation of, and absolute disregard for, her feelings within the financial transaction. This is toxic, abusive masculinity.
- Many ex-strippers describe psychological harm experienced as a result of the work. This is trauma caused by dissociation, the act of separating minds and feelings from their bodies, in order to cope. Often, it is only when they have stopped stripping that the impact of that harm is realised. This is similar to the experiences of women leaving abusive relationships
- Condoning, by licensing, a club which is set up to profit from the objectification of women gives a message to everyone in the city, not just the men who use it, that Sheffield Council thinks it is acceptable for women to be treated like this. This is not consistent with the Councils Equality duty to foster good relations between men and women.
- Research suggests that men who hold objectifying views of women are more likely to be violent and to attribute responsibility (Victim Blaming) to women for violence perpetrated against them. Thus in licensing Spearmint Rhino the Council may be compromising its own Domestic and Sexual abuse strategy.
- Many women have advised the Council of feeling unsafe in the vicinity of Spearmint Rhino and avoid walking past it. No woman should feel unsafe anywhere in the city.
- The Council states explicitly that it is committed to reducing the normalisation of the objectification of women. SEV's of this type do not contribute to that aspiration. Spearmint Rhino actively contributes to the normalisation of objectification of women and actively discriminates against women by promoting

negative and limiting gender stereotypes and impacting on women's comfort and freedom in moving round the city. Neither is this consistent with the Council's obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

- Spearmint Rhino is situated in a residential area that is now undergoing major and extensive re-development. The area has become increasingly residential with sites of cultural interest, charities providing support to vulnerable people, education providers and recreational areas in the vicinity. This gives further basis for refusal of the licence on the discretionary grounds available.

- In conclusion Sheffield should be a city that aspires to promote fairness and equality for all. As such I would ask that Spearmint Rhino's license renewal is declined.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Licensing Service  
 Block C, Staniforth Road Depot  
 Staniforth Road  
 Surrey Street  
 S9 3HD  
 By email to: [licensing@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:licensing@sheffield.gov.uk)

14.5.18.

Dear Licensing

**Objection to Spearmint Rhino licence renewal**

I refer to the application for a sex establishment licence by Spearmint Rhino ("the club"), 60 Brown Street, Sheffield, S1 2BS.

I believe that the Council should refuse the licence application under the Discretionary Grounds for Refusal of the current Sheffield City Council's 2018 Sex Establishment Policy ("the Policy") on the following grounds:

**Discretionary Ground d)**

**i) Character of the relevant locality**

**(a) the fact that the premises are sited in a residential area;**

The club backs onto student accommodation and the area is increasingly becoming more residential for students and non-students alike.

The city centre's residential population had risen from 6,000 to 30,000 over the last 10 years<sup>i</sup> with further plans for more residential accommodation within the Cultural Industries Quarter (CIQ) and Knowledge Gateway. Furthermore, "the Alsop Fields development is a mix of residential apartments, studios, offices for the high-tech and creative sectors and places to eat and drink" and ". . . designed to be a destination in itself – a regeneration of part of the Cultural Industries Quarter that will be similar to the trendy parts of Manchester and London"<sup>ii</sup> for which Brown Street and Paternoster Row are the main thoroughfares.

**(d) the premises are sited near premises or areas which are sensitive because they are frequented by children, young persons or families, including but not limited to educational establishments, leisure facilities such as parks, libraries or swimming pools, markets and covered markets;**

The Showroom and adjacent Work Station are frequented by families and both host events specifically for children including the world renown Children's Media Conference.

**(e) the premises are sited near places and or buildings of historical/cultural interest and other tourist attractions.**

It is directly opposite the Showroom cinema, which is "one of Europe's largest independent cinemas paired with the longest-running creative business centre in the city, housed in a converted 1930s car showroom."

It is also opposite the Site Gallery which has just undergone a huge expansion. Spearmint Rhino is not only centrally located in terms of proximity to a number of national and international events locations but

it is also a direct access route, for example: Doc Fest; the aforementioned Children's Media Conference; Off the Shelf etc all of which are tourist attractions.

The club is next to Sheffield Hallam Students Union (iconic and a city landmark building).

**ii) Use of other premises in the vicinity**

The Licensing Authority will have regard to, but not limited to, the following:

**(a) schools, nurseries or other premises substantially used by or for children under 18 years of age,**

There are many educational establishments in the vicinity and Brown Street is also an access route to the Sheffield College Granville Road campus and UTC which provides education for children from the age of 14. It is in close proximity to Freeman College which provides education for students (16 – 25) who have a range of complex learning, mental health and behavioural needs.

The club is also at the epicentre of the designated "Knowledge Gateway" and located on Sheffield Hallam University's city campus whose masterplan is to further develop the area, which includes "new buildings for the Business School and social sciences, refurbishing the Students' Union building known as The HUBS, creating a University Green [Festival/CIQ Square] and improving our current estate."<sup>iii</sup>

**(b) parks or other recreational areas designed for use by or for children under 18 years of age;**

The recreational space (formerly known as Festival Square but now named as Cultural Industries Quarter Square on the map of the area which can be found on Sheaf Square) is directly adjacent to the club and the club's presence is holding back further use and development of this space into its full potential.

**(c) hospitals, mental health or disability centres, substance misuse treatment centres, sexual exploitation services, sexual abuse centres or similar premises;**

There are a number of charities and organisations in the area which support vulnerable children, young people and adults, one of which is situated directly behind the club. Charles Street is a direct access route from the bus stop on Arundel Gate and the car park on Arundel Street; direct access from both means that service users pass directly past the club through the unused and desolate Festival/CIQ Square.

**(d) any central gateway to the city or other city landmark, historic building or tourist attraction;**

See (e) under (i).

**(f) predominately residential areas;**

See (a) under (i)

**(g) The Cultural Hub (Millennium Galleries, Tudor Square, theatres and library).**

The location of the club is a de facto "cultural hub" given it is named the Cultural Industries Quarter. It is also on the direct access route to the 24/7 Addsetts learning centre from numerous student accommodation blocks in the immediate vicinity, which many will be accessing during the club's opening hours.

**(iii) the layout, character or condition of the premises, vehicle, vessel or stall in respect of which the application is made.**

The building, despite the removal of signage during its closed hours, is a blacked out sinister presence incongruous with its surroundings and clearly marked buildings. Removal of the signage is “a sticking plaster to a gaping wound” approach by Licensing. Regardless of whether the club’s signage is visible in the day, it is widely known what the building is. Those who are not familiar with the building’s use visiting SHU on open days and viewing properties in the vicinity during the day will be unable to make an informed decision about moving into an area with a sex establishment on the doorstep.

Furthermore, the building could be put to a different use serving a far more diverse and greater number of people thereby enriching the CIQ in a more inclusive and compatible way.

**Further grounds for refusal**

**The Public Sector Equality Duty and Gender Equality**

The Policy states under the heading “The Equality Act 2010”:

“This Act legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and wider society. This includes the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), which means that the Council must thoroughly consider, in the discharge of its licensing functions, the need to:

- promote equality of opportunity;
- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- promote good relations”.

This applies for this policy and to the consideration and determination of applications for sex establishments. (p.5)

I believe that sex establishments such as Spearmint Rhino directly discriminate against women by normalising the sexualisation and objectification of women, and that this contributes to their sexualisation and objectification in other areas of society. A 2016 review highlights how these venues undermine women’s equality:

“Thus, in objectifying media women’s role as a source of male sexual pleasure is emphasized and their humanity is deemphasized. After having internalized the messages of male sexual privilege and female dehumanization, it should be easier for men to envision imposing themselves sexually on women and reacting punitively to women who frustrate their sexual goals.”<sup>iv</sup>

The Council has a fundamental and non-delegable role to give due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty, including tackling gender inequality. This applies notwithstanding the fact that Parliament has legislated to allow the possibility for sex establishments to be licensed in specific areas – subject to the choices of the local communities.

The Policy further states that:

“Licences will be refused if the Licensing Authority perceives a venue will have negative impacts on members of the public or vulnerable persons living, working or engaged in normal activity in the area”.

Many women have voiced their concerns and fears about the presence of Spearmint Rhino in previous objections, including LGBT women and disabled women. In 2017, many examples of the negative impact of this club were given in objections, for example: one woman giving up her studio at Yorkshire Artspace and a contributory factor was the presence of the club and “running the gauntlet of men

hanging around outside the club and harassing women.” (objection 12) and others have stated how the club impacts on their business at hearings and in writing.<sup>v</sup>

As Philip Kolvin (2010) cites the Royal Town Planning Institute’s Gender and Spatial Planning Good Practice Note:

“In relation to the 24-hour economy policy, ensure that the views of women are considered. Evidence shows that in certain locations, lap-dancing and exotic dancing club make women feel threatened or uncomfortable”<sup>vi</sup>

Kolvin continues with:

“If a woman, whether objectively justified or not, fears to use part of the town centre characterised by sex establishments, this may be argued to amount to discrimination, in that her access to the public infrastructure of the town is impaired in comparison to that of men. Where relevant these considerations ought properly to be taken into account by authorities at the decision-making stage, and possibly at the policy-making stage”<sup>vii</sup>.

This is further corroborated by 2012 research published in Criminal Justice Matters which states that:

“. . . the women describe feeling frightened, disempowered, violated, embarrassed, unsafe (particularly if men are around) and avoid certain streets at night where they know there is a lap dancing club.”<sup>viii</sup>

In addition an Australian article about women and girls’ perceptions of safety in urban spaces highlights how they restrict their freedom of movement to avoid zones where there are strip clubs.<sup>ix</sup>

Lap dancing clubs also reinforce negative gender stereotypes of male insatiable sexuality and female sexual availability which are hugely damaging to both sexes and to non-binary people. The stereotypes upon which they are founded do not foster good relations between the sexes, as evidenced in 2016 by Zero Option at the Villa Mercedes hearing representation and its 2017 oral representation at the hearing<sup>x</sup>.

In their UK study published in 2011 Sanders and Hardy<sup>xi</sup> reported that 30% of the women performers interviewed said that as a result of doing the job they had lost respect for men; a finding echoed many testimonies of former performers.

The Policy states that “The Licensing Authority will also consider the following factors when deciding if an application is appropriate”:

**(b) proximity to areas with high levels of crime;**

On 22nd February 2018, it was reported in the Star that Arundel Gate which runs in parallel to Paternoster Row and is approximately 1-2 minutes on foot away depending on walking pace, is 10th in the top 10 areas of crime in the city and that “These offences, including assaults, robberies and sex attacks on women, were recorded between January and November 2017.”<sup>xii</sup>

This image of a high-end establishment portrayed by this club goes in some way to normalising this type of venue in a very active part of the city, and as such giving the impression that Sheffield as a city condones both the sexualisation and objectification of women, which is in complete contradiction to the Council’s Equality policies. The fact that its location within Sheffield Hallam University buildings and the CIQ also conveys the message that this SEV is culturally embedded within the two and indeed integral to a higher education experience and Sheffield’s local heritage.

The Committee is asked to note that in the last few years Leeds City Council successfully defended a refusal to renew two SEV licenses at judicial review:

R (Bean Trading A Ltd) v Leeds City Council (2014)



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<sup>xii</sup> Sheffield Star 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2018 Available from: <https://www.thestar.co.uk/news/listed-these-are-the-10-most-crime-ridden-streets-in-sheffield-1-9030246>

<sup>xiii</sup> Kolvin, P (2010) *Sex Licensing*, The Institute of Licensing p.90

<sup>xiv</sup> 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2018 Available from: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-43043842>



Licensing Service -Sheffield City Council,  
 Block C , Staniforth Road Depot,  
 Staniforth Road  
 SHEFFIELD S9 3HD

Email to: [licensing@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:licensing@sheffield.gov.uk)

To Whom It May Concern

I wish to register my objection to the application by Sonfield Developments Ltd c/o 161 Tottenham Court Road, London for renewal of a Sexual Entertainment Venue licence for Spearmint Rhino, 60 Brown Street, Sheffield S1 2BS on the following grounds;

- Strip and lap dancing clubs are a form of violence against women, promoting the idea that women's bodies can be bought and treating performers as commodities. This is dehumanising: if the performer really wanted to strip she wouldn't need to be paid to do so.
- Testimonies from men who admit to using such establishments demonstrate that those men eroticise their power over the performer, getting a sexual thrill from this control over her which is related to the negation of, and absolute disregard for, her feelings within the financial transaction. This is toxic, abusive masculinity.
- Many ex-strippers describe experiencing psychological harm as a result of this. This is trauma caused by dissociation, the act of separating their minds and feelings from their bodies in order to cope. Often it is only when they have stopped stripping that the impact of that harm is realised. This is similar to the experience of women who have left abusive relationships.
- Condoning, by licensing, a club which is set up to profit from the objectification of women gives a message to everyone in the city, not just to the men who use it, that Sheffield Council thinks it is acceptable for women to be treated like this. This is not consistent with the Council's duty under the Equality Act to foster good relations between men and women.
- Research suggests that men who hold objectifying views of women are more likely to be violent to women and to attribute responsibility (victim blaming) to women for violence perpetrated against them. Thus, in licensing Spearmint Rhino the Council may be compromising its own Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy.
- Many women have informed the Council's Licensing Department that they feel unsafe in the vicinity of Spearmint Rhino and avoid walking past it. There should be no no-go areas for women and no woman should feel unsafe anywhere in the city.
- The Council has stated explicitly that it is committed to reducing the normalisation of the objectification of women. Strip and lap dancing clubs do not contribute to that aspiration. Spearmint Rhino actively contributes to the objectification of women and actively discriminates against women by promoting negative and limiting gender stereotypes and impacts on women's comfort and freedom in moving round the city. This is not consistent with the Council's obligations under the Equality Act 2010
- Spearmint Rhino is situated in an area that is now undergoing major and extensive redevelopment. The area has become increasingly residential and several sites of major cultural interest, charities providing support to vulnerable young people, education providers

and recreational areas are situated nearby. This gives further basis for refusal of the licence on the discretionary grounds available.

- Sheffield should be a city that aspires to promote fairness and equality for all. As such I would ask that Spearmint Rhino's license renewal is declined.
- Why does the council support having an SEV so near many educational establishments?
- SEV's show poor modelling of adult behaviour to young people.

SIGNED

PRINT NAME & ADDRESS:

DATE 14<sup>th</sup> May 2018

**Bower Claire**

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 14 May 2018 10:53  
**To:** licensingservice  
**Subject:** Objection to Spearmint Rhino licence renewal

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

**Categories:** SPEARMINT RHINO

I wish to register my objection to the application by Sonfield Developments Ltd c/o 161 Tottenham Court Road, London for renewal of a Sexual Entertainment Venue licence for Spearmint Rhino, 60 Brown Street, Sheffield S1 2BS.

As a woman living in Sheffield I feel demeaned and intimidated by the presence of this club in the middle of our centre. I avoid walking past it, which is difficult given I often go to the Showroom Cinema and I attend events at the Hallam Students Union and in the Workstation. I also visit Site Gallery.

Why do I feel so strongly? Strip clubs are based on treating a woman as a commodity. Strippers are dehumanised - their purpose is to pleasure men.

There is always the threat of violence if a woman does not comply. So what do the men who visit the Spearmint Rhino club think of me, if they come out and I am walking down the street? When they have been encouraged to see women as less than human. Research again and again identifies the link that men who hold objectifying views of women as lesser than human are more likely to be violent to them.

You cannot close this abuse of women away behind darkened doors and believe it is ok. It is not. The women working in such places may say they are not harmed but many ex-strippers talk of the psychological harm they have experienced. There is trauma caused by dissociation, the act of separating their mind and feelings from their bodies, which is required in order to cope. Often, it is only when they have stopped stripping that they realise the harm caused to them by it, which is similar to the experience of women once they have left an abusive relationship.

Be licensing Spearmint Rhino the Council gives a message to everyone in the city, not just the men who use it, that Sheffield Council thinks it is acceptable for women to be treated like this. If the Council relicenses Spearmint Rhino you are promoting inequality between the sexes, which is not consistent with the Council's obligations under the Equality Act to foster good relations between men and women.

Sheffield should be a city that aspires to promote fairness and equality for all and I ask you to decline Spearmint Rhino's license renewal. How proud we could then be to have a city that does stand up for women.

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This email has been checked for viruses by Avast antivirus software.  
<https://www.avast.com/antivirus>



Licensing Service, Sheffield City Council,  
 Block C  
 Staniforth Road Depot,  
 Staniforth Road  
 SHEFFIELD S9 3HD  
 email to: [licensing@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:licensing@sheffield.gov.uk)

To Whom It May Concern



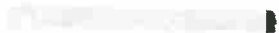


Once again, I wish to register my objection to the application by Sonfield Developments Ltd c/o 161 Tottenham Court Road, London for renewal of a Sexual Entertainment Venue licence for Spearmint Rhino, 60 Brown Street, Sheffield S1 2BS on the following grounds;

- Strip/lap dancing clubs are a form of violence against women, promoting the idea that women's bodies can be bought, treating performers as commodities. This is dehumanising. If the performer really wanted to strip she wouldn't need to be paid to do so.
- Testimonies from men who admit to using such establishments demonstrate that those men eroticise their power over the performer, getting a sexual thrill from control over her. This is related to the negation of, and absolute disregard for, her feelings within the financial transaction. This is toxic, abusive masculinity.
- Many ex-strippers describe psychological harm experienced as a result of the work. This is trauma caused by dissociation, the act of separating minds and feelings from their bodies, in order to cope. Often, it is only when they have stopped stripping that the impact of that harm is realised. This is similar to the experiences of women leaving abusive relationships
- Condoning, by licensing, a club which is set up to profit from the objectification of women gives a message to everyone in the city, not just the men who use it, that Sheffield Council thinks it is acceptable for women to be treated like this. This is not consistent with the Councils Equality duty to foster good relations between men and women.
- Research suggests that men who hold objectifying views of women are more likely to be violent and to attribute responsibility (Victim blame) to women for violence perpetrated against them. Thus in licensing Spearmint Rhino the Council may be compromising its own Domestic and Sexual abuse strategy.
- Many women have advised the Council of feeling unsafe in the vicinity of Spearmint Rhino and avoid walking past it. No woman should feel unsafe anywhere in the city.
- In view of the #ME TOO and #TIMESUP campaigns to continue to license such establishments which simply endorse and objectify women for financial gain is both absurd and not appropriate to a forward thinking city like Sheffield
- The Council states explicitly that it is committed to reducing the normalisation of the objectification of women. SEV's of this type do not contribute to that aspiration. Spearmint Rhino actively contributes to the normalisation of objectification of women and actively discriminates against women by promoting negative and limiting gender stereotypes and impacting on women's comfort and freedom in moving round the city. Neither is this consistent with the Councils obligations under the Equality Act 2010.
- Spearmint Rhino is situated in a residential area that is now undergoing major and extensive re development. The area has become increasingly residential with sites of cultural interest, charities providing support to vulnerable people, education providers and recreational areas

in the vicinity. This gives further basis for refusal of the licence on the discretionary grounds available.

- In conclusion Sheffield should be a city that aspires to promote fairness and equality for all, as outlined in the Sheffield Fairness Commission's recommendations endorsed by full council in 2013. I was one of the Fairness Commissioners and as such I would ask that Spearmint Rhino's license renewal is declined.
- 

- SIGNED



**Bower Claire**

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 14 May 2018 12:19  
**To:** licensingservice  
**Subject:** Objection to Spearmint Rhino licence renewal

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

**Categories:** SPEARMINT RHINO

To whom it may concern:

### **Objection to Spearmint Rhino licence renewal**

I refer to the application for a sex establishment licence by Spearmint Rhino ("the club"), 60 Brown Street, Sheffield, S1 2BS.

I write this objection as a university of lecturer aware of the widespread harassment of female students in the vicinity of the university and the mother of teenage girls who frequent venues such as the Showroom Cinema, which is opposite the site. I believe that sex establishments such as Spearmint Rhino directly discriminate against women by normalising the sexualisation and objectification of women, and that this contributes to their sexualisation and objectification in other areas of society. As a member of the Labour Party, I am astonished that Sheffield Council seems unable to mobilise its collective principles behind this concern.

I believe that the Council should refuse the licence application under the Discretionary Grounds for Refusal of the current Sheffield City Council's 2018 Sex Establishment Policy ("the Policy") on the following grounds:

#### **Discretionary Ground d)**

##### **i) Character of the relevant locality**

###### **a. the fact that the premises are sited in a residential area;**

The club backs onto student accommodation and the area is increasingly becoming more residential for students and non-students alike.

The city centre's residential population had risen from 6,000 to 30,000 over the last 10 years<sup>i</sup> with further plans for more residential accommodation within the Cultural Industries Quarter (CIQ) and Knowledge Gateway. Furthermore, "the Alsop Fields development is a mix of residential apartments, studios, offices for the high-tech and creative sectors and places to eat and drink" and ". . . designed to be a destination in itself – a regeneration of part of the Cultural Industries Quarter that will be similar to the trendy parts of Manchester and London"<sup>ii</sup> for which Brown Street and Paternoster Row are the main thoroughfares.

**(d) the premises are sited near premises or areas which are sensitive because they are frequented by children, young persons or families, including but not limited to educational establishments, leisure facilities such as parks, libraries or swimming pools, markets and covered markets;**

The Showroom and adjacent Work Station are frequented by families and both host events specifically for children including the world renowned Children's Media Conference.

**(e) the premises are sited near places and or buildings of historical/cultural interest and other tourist attractions.**

It is directly opposite the Showroom cinema, which is "one of Europe's largest independent cinemas paired with the longest-running creative business centre in the city, housed in a converted 1930s car showroom."

It is also opposite the Site Gallery which has just undergone a huge expansion. Spearmint Rhino is not only centrally located in terms of proximity to a number of national and international events locations but it is also a direct access route, for example: Doc Fest; the aforementioned Children's Media Conference; Off the Shelf etc all of which are tourist attractions.

The club is next to Sheffield Hallam Students Union (iconic and a city landmark building).

**ii) Use of other premises in the vicinity**

The Licensing Authority will have regard to, but not limited to, the following:

**a. schools, nurseries or other premises substantially used by or for children under 18 years of age,**

There are many educational establishments in the vicinity and Brown Street is also an access route to the Sheffield College Granville Road campus and UTC which provides education for children from the age of 14. It is in close proximity to Freeman College which provides education for students (16 – 25) who have a range of complex learning, mental health and behavioural needs.

The club is also at the epicentre of the designated "Knowledge Gateway" and located on Sheffield Hallam University's city campus whose masterplan is to further develop the area, which includes "new buildings for the Business School and social sciences, refurbishing the Students' Union building known as The HUBS, creating a University Green [Festival/CIQ Square] and improving our current estate."iii[iii]

**a. parks or other recreational areas designed for use by or for children under 18 years of age;**

The recreational space (formerly known as Festival Square but now named as Cultural Industries Quarter Square on the map of the area which can be found on Sheaf Square) is directly adjacent to the club and the club's presence is holding back further use and development of this space into its full potential.

**a. hospitals, mental health or disability centres, substance misuse treatment centres, sexual exploitation services, sexual abuse centres or similar premises;**

There are a number of charities and organisations in the area which support vulnerable children, young people and adults, one of which is situated directly behind the club. Charles Street is a direct access route from the bus stop on Arundel Gate and the car park on Arundel Street; direct access from both means that service users pass directly past the club through the unused and desolate Festival/CIQ Square.

**a. any central gateway to the city or other city landmark, historic building or tourist attraction;**  
See (e) under (i).

**(f) predominately residential areas;**

See (a) under (i)

**(g) The Cultural Hub (Millennium Galleries, Tudor Square, theatres and library).**

The location of the club is a de facto “cultural hub” given it is named the Cultural Industries Quarter. It is also on the direct access route to the 24/7 Addsetts learning centre from numerous student accommodation blocks in the immediate vicinity, which many will be accessing during the club’s opening hours.

**(iii) the layout, character or condition of the premises, vehicle, vessel or stall in respect of which the application is made.**

The building, despite the removal of signage during its closed hours, is a blacked out sinister presence incongruous with its surroundings and clearly marked buildings. Removal of the signage is “a sticking plaster to a gaping wound” approach by Licensing. Regardless of whether the club’s signage is visible in the day, it is widely known what the building is. Those who are not familiar with the building’s use visiting SHU on open days and viewing properties in the vicinity during the day will be unable to make an informed decision about moving into an area with a sex establishment on the doorstep.

Furthermore, the building could be put to a different use serving a far more diverse and greater number of people thereby enriching the CIQ in a more inclusive and compatible way.

**Further grounds for refusal**

**The Public Sector Equality Duty and Gender Equality**

The Policy states under the heading “The Equality Act 2010”:

“This Act legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and wider society. This includes the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), which means that the Council must thoroughly consider, in the discharge of its licensing functions, the need to:

- promote equality of opportunity;
- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- promote good relations”.

This applies for this policy and to the consideration and determination of applications for sex establishments. (p.5)

I believe that sex establishments such as Spearmint Rhino directly discriminate against women by normalising the sexualisation and objectification of women, and that this contributes to their sexualisation and objectification in other areas of society. A 2016 review highlights how these venues undermine women’s equality:

“Thus, in objectifying media women’s role as a source of male sexual pleasure is emphasized and their humanity is deemphasized. After having internalized the messages of male sexual privilege and female dehumanization, it should be easier for men to envision imposing themselves sexually on women and reacting punitively to women who frustrate their sexual goals.”iv[iv]

The Council has a fundamental and non-delegable role to give due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty, including tackling gender inequality. This applies notwithstanding the fact that

Parliament has legislated to allow the possibility for sex establishments to be licensed in specific areas – subject to the choices of the local communities.

The Policy further states that:

"Licences will be refused if the Licensing Authority perceives a venue will have negative impacts on members of the public or vulnerable persons living, working or engaged in normal activity in the area".

Many women have voiced their concerns and fears about the presence of Spearmint Rhino in previous objections, including LGBT women and disabled women. In 2017, many examples of the negative impact of this club were given in objections, for example: one woman giving up her studio at Yorkshire Artspace and a contributory factor was the presence of the club and "running the gauntlet of men hanging around outside the club and harassing women." (objection 12) and others have stated how the club impacts on their business at hearings and in writing.v[v]

As Philip Kolvin (2010) cites the Royal Town Planning Institute's Gender and Spatial Planning Good Practice Note:

"In relation to the 24-hour economy policy, ensure that the views of women are considered. Evidence shows that in certain locations, lap-dancing and exotic dancing club make women feel threatened or uncomfortable" vi[vi]

Kolvin continues with:

"If a woman, whether objectively justified or not, fears to use part of the town centre characterised by sex establishments, this may be argued to amount to discrimination, in that her access to the public infrastructure of the town is impaired in comparison to that of men. Where relevant these considerations ought properly to be taken into account by authorities at the decision-making stage, and possibly at the policy-making stage" vii[vii].

This is further corroborated by 2012 research published in Criminal Justice Matters which states that:

". . . the women describe feeling frightened, disempowered, violated, embarrassed, unsafe (particularly if men are around) and avoid certain streets at night where they know there is a lap dancing club."viii[viii]

In addition an Australian article about women and girls' perceptions of safety in urban spaces highlights how they restrict their freedom of movement to avoid zones where there are strip clubs.ix[ix]

Lap dancing clubs also reinforce negative gender stereotypes of male insatiable sexuality and female sexual availability which are hugely damaging to both sexes and to non-binary people. The stereotypes upon which they are founded do not foster good relations between the sexes, as evidenced in 2016 by Zero Option at the Villa Mercedes hearing representation and its 2017 oral representation at the hearingx[x].

In their UK study published in 2011 Sanders and Hardy xi[xi]reported that 30% of the women performers interviewed said that as a result of doing the job they had lost respect for men; a finding echoed many testimonies of former performers.

The Policy states that "The Licensing Authority will also consider the following factors when deciding if an application is appropriate":

**(b) proximity to areas with high levels of crime;**

On 22nd February 2018, it was reported in the Star that Arundel Gate which runs in parallel to Paternoster Row and is approximately 1-2 minutes on foot away depending on walking pace, is 10th in the top 10 areas of crime in the city and that "These offences, including assaults, robberies and sex attacks on women, were recorded between January and November 2017."xii[xii]

This image of a high-end establishment portrayed by this club goes in some way to normalising this type of venue in a very active part of the city, and as such giving the impression that Sheffield as a city condones both the sexualisation and objectification of women, which is in complete contradiction to the Council's Equality policies. The fact that its location within Sheffield Hallam University buildings and the CIQ also conveys the message that this SEV is culturally embedded within the two and indeed integral to a higher education experience and Sheffield's local heritage.

The Committee is asked to note that in the last few years Leeds City Council successfully defended a refusal to renew two SEV licenses at judicial review:

R (Bean Trading A Ltd) v Leeds City Council (2014)

It was held that a council can "take a fresh look" despite no changes to the character of locality. The Council is also asked to note the following from Philip Kolvin regarding licence renewal:

*"Given that there is potential for the discretion to be exercised afresh, the renewal should not just be a rubber stamping exercise, but an opportunity, if needed, to review the principle and content of the license."*<sup>xiii</sup><sup>[xiii]</sup>

The case of Thompson v Oxford City Council (2014) was also supported at Court of Appeal, and the Council told they could "take a fresh look" at any application for renewal.

According to the BBC, the number of lap dancing clubs has fallen by a third in England<sup>xiv</sup><sup>[xiv]</sup>. The same report states that "a survey conducted by YouGov in 2015 found 64% of people in Great Britain said strip clubs were a negative part of British culture." I ask that the Committee refuse to grant the club a licence for all the reasons outlined and because Spearmint Rhino is anachronistic, it gives Sheffield and our much vaunted CIQ a negative image and may deter investors and developers. At a time when we are hoping to attract large investors and are bidding for Channel 4 to relocate in the vicinity, the Committee needs to turn down this licence application, which it is empowered to do.

I look forward to hearing from you.

## References

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<sup>[i]</sup>Sheffield Star 16th January 2018 *Dramatic rise in the number of people living in Sheffield city centre* Available from: <https://www.thestar.co.uk/news/dramatic-rise-in-the-number-of-people-living-in-sheffield-city-centre-1-8960059>

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- ii[ii] Sheffield Chamber of Commerce *Sheffield's Cultural Industries Quarter expansion in £10m City Estates project*  
Available from: <https://www.scci.org.uk/2017/03/sheffields-cultural-industries-quarter-expansion-in-10m-city-estates-project/>
- iii[iii] Sheffield Hallam University 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2018 *New campus masterplan places Hallam at the heart of the city*  
Available from: <http://www4.shu.ac.uk/mediacentre/new-campus-masterplan-places-hallam-heart-city>
- iv[iv] Wright, P.J & Tokunaga, R.S (2016) Men's Objectifying Media Consumption, Objectification of Women, and Attitudes Supportive of Violence Against Women in *Archives of Sexual Behavior*
- v[v] *Zero Option oral representation at the Spearmint Rhino hearing April 2017* Available from:  
<https://zerooptionblog.wordpress.com/2017/04/14/zero-options-representation-at-the-spearmint-rhino-licence-renewal-hearing-11th-april-2017/#more-524>
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- vii[vii] Kolvin, P (2010) *Sex Licensing*, The Institute of Licensing p.87
- viii[viii] Patiniotis, J. & Standing, K. (2012) 'License to cause harm? Sex entertainment venues and women's sense of safety in inner city centres' in *Criminal Justice Matters*, 88:1, 10-12.
- ix[ix] Safe in the City? Girls tell it like it is. March 26, 2017 <https://theconversation.com/safe-in-the-city-girls-tell-it-like-it-is-72975>.
- x[x] Slideshare available from: <https://www.slideshare.net/ZerooptionSheffield/villa-mercedes-hearing-8th-september-2016>
- xi[xi] Sanders, T., & Hardy, K. (2011) *The Regulatory Dance: Sexual Consumption in the Night Time Economy – Initial Findings*. Leeds: University of Leeds
- xii[xii] Sheffield Star 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2018 Available from: <https://www.thestar.co.uk/news/listed-these-are-the-10-most-crime-ridden-streets-in-sheffield-1-9030246>
- xiii[xiii] Kolvin, P (2010) *Sex Licensing*, The Institute of Licensing p.90
- xiv[xiv] 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2018 Available from: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-43043842>

**Bower Claire**

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 14 May 2018 12:36  
**To:** licensingservice  
**Subject:** Spearmint rhino licence

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

**Categories:** SPEARMINT RHINO

Dear Sir/Madam

I object in no uncertain manner to the parameters of this business. I have two children who I am bringing up to understand that sexuality should never be a consumer product, that men and women should not be used as sex objects, either to sell their physical attributes or use their physical attributes as a marketing tool. Please do not licence this obscene trade.

[REDACTED]

Sent from my iPhone





**Bower Claire**

**From:** [REDACTED] >  
**Sent:** 14 May 2018 13:51  
**To:** licensingservice  
**Subject:** Spearmint Rhino Licence Objection

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

**Categories:** SPEARMINT RHINO

Licensing Service  
 Sheffield City Council Block C  
 Staniforth Rd Depot  
 Staniforth Rd  
 Sheffield S9 3HD

14th May 2018

To Whom It May Concern - I am a Quaker and am objecting in terms of our Testimony to Equality. I wish to register my objection to the application by Sonfield Developments Ltd c/o 161 Tottenham Court Rd, London for renewal of a Sexual Entertainment Venue Licence for Spearmint Rhino, 60 Brown St, Sheffield, S1 2BS on the following grounds-

Strip lap dancing clubs are promoting the idea that women's bodies can be bought, treating performers as commodities. This is dehumanising. If the performer really wanted to strip she wouldn't need to be paid to do so.

Testimonies from men who admit to using such establishments demonstrate that these men eroticise their power over the performer getting a sexual thrill from control over her. This is related to the absolute disregard for her feelings within the financial transaction. This is toxic, abusive masculinity.

Many ex-strippers describe psychological harm experienced as a result of the work. This trauma is caused by disassociation, the act of separating minds and feelings from their bodies in order to cope. Often it is only when they have stopped stripping that the impact of that harm is realised. This is similar to the experience of women leaving abusive relationships.

Condoning by licensing, a club which is set up to profit from the objectification of women gives a message to everyone in the city, not just the men who use it, that Sheffield Council thinks it is acceptable for women to be treated in this way. This is not consistent with the Council's equality duty to foster good relations between men and women.

Research suggests that men who hold objectifying views of women are more likely to be violent and attribute responsibility (Victim blame) to women for violence perpetrated against them. Thus in licensing Spearmint Rhino the Council may be compromising its own Domestic and Sexual Abuse strategy.

Many women have advised the Council of feeling unsafe in the vicinity of Spearmint Rhino and that they avoid walking past it. No woman should feel unsafe anywhere in the city.

The Council states explicitly that it is committed to reducing the normalisation of objectification of women. SEV's of this type do not contribute to that aspiration. Spearmint Rhino actively contributes to the normalisation of objectification of women by promoting negative and limiting gender stereotypes and impacting on women's comfort and freedom in moving around the city. This is inconsistent with the Council's obligation under the Equality Act 2010.

Spearmint Rhino is situated in a residential area that is now undergoing major and extensive redevelopment. The area has become increasingly residential with sites of cultural interest, charities providing support to vulnerable people, education providers and recreational areas in the vicinity. This gives further basis for refusal of the licence on the discretionary grounds available.

In conclusion Sheffield should be a city that aspires to promote fairness and equality for all. As such I would ask that Spearmint Rhino's licence renewal be declined.



**Bower Claire**

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**From:** [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** 14 May 2018 14:10  
**To:** licensingservice  
**Subject:** Spearmint Rhino licence

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

**Categories:** SPEARMINT RHINO

To whom it may concern,

I am writing with regards to the licence for Spearmint Rhino. I would like to object to the strip club's application for a licence for the following reasons:

- It does not foster good relations between the genders. This is because strip clubs, where women are objectified and sexualised, create an unequal relationship between the genders. As such the granting of a licence goes against the Council's Public Sector Equality Duty which requires the local authority to foster good relations between the genders.
- The location of Spearmint Rhino is totally inappropriate. It is right next to Sheffield Hallam University's Student Union. This makes the area unsafe for young people, especially young women who should be enabled to feel safe if they want to enjoy an evening at the Student Union. The University's plans for its City Campus mean that they will be forced to become the only university in the country with its own on-campus strip club.

Yours faithfully,

[REDACTED]

