

Bower Claire

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 15 May 2018 11:24
To: licensingservice
Subject: Application for licence - objection

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Categories: SPEARMINT RHINO

Dear Councillors and licensing staff,

I have spent many years in Sheffield, supporting women (professionally and personally) who have suffered from rape and sexual abuse. In view of the levels of everyday sexual harassment which have been highlighted by the recent MeToo campaign, I find it hard to believe that I'm still having to explain my objections to licensing lap dancing clubs in Sheffield, but here goes.

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:

- The Council has stated explicitly that it is committed to reducing the normalisation of the objectification of women. Strip clubs are the epitome of this objectification. Encouraging men to see women as objects can contribute to increasing levels of domestic violence.
- Women work in strip clubs because they are paid. But they also suffer lasting psychological harm. Surely this is not in accordance with the Council's Equality Policy?
- I regularly use the area in which Spearmint Rhino is sited to visit the Showroom and other cultural venues. I feel personally intimidated walking near it. The site is close to buildings used by students. Other women using the area are much younger and more vulnerable than myself. Nor do I wish young men to see this as a 'normal' entertainment in the city.

I want this to be a city I can be proud of. I don't want a strip club to be one of the first things visitors see when they leave the station and start exploring. I don't want to live in a city which fails to protect women from degradation and abuse.

Many thanks,
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

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Bower Claire

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 15 May 2018 13:29
To: licensingservice
Subject: Letter of Objection - SEV - Spearmint Rhino, 60 Brown Street [REDACTED]
Attachments: [REDACTED] Letter of Objection - SEV - Spearmint Rhino 2018.pdf

Please find attached a letter of objection regarding the SEV licence application for 60 Brown Street. I would be grateful if you acknowledge receipt.

Kind regards

--

Social Enterprise Exchange
The Social Enterprise Exchange is part-funded by the European Regional Development Fund 2014-2020

Sheffield City Council
Licensing Section
Block C, Staniforth Road Depot
Staniforth Road
Sheffield
S9 3HD

Date: 15th May 2018

To whomever it may concern,

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

This is an objection letter to the application for this licence and I call for the council to refuse it.

I believe that the Council should refuse the licence application under the Discretionary Grounds for Refusal of Sheffield City Council's Sexual Entertainment Venues Licensing Policy on two grounds:

Ground c):

"the number of sex establishments in the relevant locality at the time the application is made is equal to or exceeds the number which the authority consider is appropriate for that locality."

The grounds go on to state that "Nil may be an appropriate number for the purposes of (c)"

Ground d):

"the grant or renewal of a licence would be inappropriate, having regard -

(i) to the character of the relevant locality: or

(ii) to the use to which any premises in the vicinity are put: or

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

Sheffield City Council also has "statutory obligations in relation to disability race and gender" ensuring that these factors are not used to discriminate against anyone. I believe that a sexual entertainment venue directly discriminates against women by normalising the sexualisation and objectification of women, and that this contributes to their sexualisation and objectification in other areas of society.

Furthermore Schedule 3 1982 Act provides specific grounds to refuse/renew license:

e) "cultural hub of city"

f) "central gateway to the city....or tourist attraction"

Our general terms of objection are as follows:

- the part of the city that the club is situated is unsuitable due to it being in the "cultural heart" of the city. The Sexual Entertainment Venue is situated in the cultural heart of Sheffield, and within the area of the railway station, the main gateway and welcome point to the city, encompassing the pedestrianised walk way up to town centre.

- the club is situated directly next to the Hallam Students Union, a hub of young impressionable people, sometimes vulnerable and often away from home for the first time.

- the club is situated in close proximity to the Workstation, a conference facility that hosts events such as the Children's Media Conference, Sheffield Documentary Festival.

- the club is situated in close proximity to The Showroom, an independent cinema that promotes 'Young Cinema', a programme that encourages children and young adults to engage in film, and 'Kicstart', a programme for children with autism and their families.

- the club is situated in close proximity to a number of organisations which support vulnerable children and adults

- when walking around this area, which as a Council you encourage people to do due to the other businesses and services in the area, women feel nervous because of the SEV and have to change their behaviour because of it being there, for example having to look around to see if there are people coming out of the SEV, take a different route walking to the centre of town so that they do not have to go past the SEV. Women should not have to feel like this in their city.

- the Council's own promotion of the city is "Sheffield - where everyone matters" - this includes the female citizens of the city who should not be subjected to their city promoting and normalising the sexualisation and objectification of them

- this image or a high-end establishment portrayed by this SEV 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 and Sheffield's own widely publicised belief of Sheffield being a city "where everyone matters."

- granting a licence would be contradictory to other work that the Council does, funds and promotes, for example the recent SheFest, the Equalities Hub within the community bringing Communities of Identity together to tackle equalities issues within the council and the city,

- the council has a duty under the Equality Act to work to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation

A sexual entertainment venue in the heart of the city, or anywhere in the city, is simply completely contradictory to everything that the council says it stands for, everything that the council should stand for, and has a duty to work towards.

The Council 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 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.

If the panel feel that they cannot make a refusal decision without further discussion, I would ask that a hearing is held so that the application can be discussed in more detail.

I look forward to hearing from you.

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Bower Claire

From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>
Sent: 15 May 2018 13:44
To: licensingservice
Subject: Spearmint Rhino objection
Attachments: SW Spearmint Rhino objection.docx; ATT00001.txt

Can you please email me when received.
Thanks

ATT00001

Sent from my iPhone



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

15th May 2018

Dear Licensing Service

Objection to Sonfield Developments application for Spearmint Rhino licence renewal

About me and why I am objecting

I have already been in contact with Sheffield Licensing about the lap dancing industry, at the time of writing I haven't received a response (see appendix).

My name is [REDACTED]. I am an author, fundraiser, campaigner, public speaker and mother of 2, I am also the child abuse survivor that exposed the Rotherham child abuse scandal with The Times news reporter Andrew Norfolk. My work is now focused on and around child/adult exploitation and I work with agencies such as police, councils and government not to only give professionals a better understanding of exploitation but around changing policies, legislation and laws to better the lives of our countries most vulnerable, which brings me to my point of why I am objecting to the licensing renewal of spearmint rhinos.

Lapdancing is exploitation. Due to my work around exploitation I have previously met with then Prime Minister David Cameron, Victims commissioner, Ministry of Justice, Home Office and the lapdancing Minister Victoria Atkinson, I continue to have a working relationship with these individuals and agencies and have or will be discussing my views that I am sharing with you in this objection to improve or abolish lapdancing in the UK. I am also going to have another meeting with the Home Office about the industry.

I am also a former lapdancer so I speak with first hand experience and. I started lapdancing around the age of 18 and danced in the industry for around 9 years all over the UK including clubs in Sheffield.

As a child I was groomed and abused for many years in my home town of Rotherham, this led me to have many issues in life, my self esteem was very low as well as my self respect and I viewed myself as nothing more but an object for men, I believed I was the one in control and felt empowered, I realise now that this is nonsense. I wasn't in control and taking

my clothes off for strangers is not empowering it is degrading, I was in fact being exploited by these men and the clubs and the councils that allowed them to operate when I was at my most vulnerable.

Lapdancing is exploitation and is putting women at risk, I have lost count how many times I was touched, grabbed, assaulted physically and sexually and managements response was that it was my job and need to expect it, also we wasn't allowed to report it to police as it would go against the clubs licensing renewal. I was on occasions threatened by managers and on one occasion I was held at a club against my will and told I was getting kidnapped and because they knew where I lived they also threatened to kill my children, the management also sacked every girl that I was friends with.

I have also been assaulted by staff too in order to not report issues within the clubs. Often I was not even paid my wages at the end of the night and told cctv would be deleted to ensure it looked like I was never even in the premises.

This happened often and around the clubs in the Uk. The club owners and management also knew that majority of dancers don't declare they are working or there earnings to HM revenues and take advantage treating the girls badly as they know the girls cant report it for that reason. There is a lot of crime happening also such as drugs and drug dealing, prostitution, fraud, money laundering and trafficking.

In the industry I met some of the most strongest and incredible women, however every dancer I had met in the industry had all experienced some kind of abuse in life like myself emotionally, physically or sexually and most didn't even recognise it as abuse as most don't but they felt they couldn't really do much else. As lapdancers we are viewed very badly. I was constantly called names such as slag, whore and a piece of shit, I was viewed and treated like a second class citizen and not just in 1 club but in all, this made me hate men to an extreme level, they repulsed me.

In one club in particular the atmosphere is very tense, girls are not nice in fact they were very bitchy, they were extreme amounts of girls on which makes it harder to make money but ensures the club makes money as there was a house fee and percentage to pay and if you wanted to work the weekend you had to work during the week also there were student nights which meant we had to do free dances to students etc.

On one occasion I was ill so asked if I could leave early, I was told to go and wait in the changing rooms so I did, whilst I was waiting for the manager I put my coat and boots on as not only was I ill but there was some kind of water leak in the changing rooms and there was water all over the floor, the manager came in and asked me why I had put my coat and boots on without his permission, I was then sacked for doing so and escorted off the premises which was very unfair, the changing room was in extremely poor conditions and I was ill.

The management had favourite dancers so the other girls got treated differently which is common in most clubs. I would also like to point out the dancers dancing in one particular club I'm told still are extremely "dirty" with a lot of contact and spreading of the legs making it even harder to make money as a "clean dancer". I also saw staff bending girls over as if they was having sex with them in a 'joking' way, the girls would just laugh.

On one occasion I went into this particular club as a customer I went outside for a cigarette when I was surrounded by a group of very angry male customers, they was very abusive towards me as they thought I was one of the dancers calling me a slag, whore and telling me my children will hate me and be ashamed of me, it was that bad my friend had to escort me to

a taxi to ensure I wasn't attacked physically, unfortunately this happens on a regular basis in fact it is the reason why dancers have to change their name as it protects their real identity being exposed.

The Lapdancing industry is absolutely horrific and needs to be shut down. There should be no such place in our communities for this kind of behaviour and our licensing department should not be condoning it.

In addition to my experiences of the industry, and as a regular visitor to the city, I strongly urge the Council to 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 yearsⁱ 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"ⁱⁱ 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 in addition to the events which will be hosted by the Site Gallery upon its reopening.

(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" which is open until midnight everyday.

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.

It is in very close proximity to the Great Escape Game which also caters for children.

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

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

The recreational space 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, including specialist sexual violence services. 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.

Addaction, the adult drug and alcohol service is also on Sidney Street with Paternoster Row and Brown Street as a direct access route from the station and the bus station.

(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 and furthermore, designated to be at the heart of the CIQ. It is also on the direct access route to the 24/7 Addsetts learning centre from numerous student accommodation blocks in the immediate vicinity (with more being built on Sidney Street), 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. 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.

As recorded in the case of R (Bean Trading A Ltd) v Leeds City Council (2014):

The committee noted the applicant’s offer in relation to signage and whilst recognizing attempts to address concerns was of the view that the premises could never be invisible.

It is manifestly preposterous that this was ever considered a solution to the presence of Spearmint Rhino; this does not make the club disappear and this “three wise monkeys” is misguided and does not address the issues raised here nor previously. All other buildings in the vicinity are clearly marked and this was a poor attempt to minimise the impact this venue has and also a recognition by last year’s Sub-committee of its incongruity and inappropriateness. The only other buildings in the area not clearly marked are for reasons of anonymity because of vulnerable service users accessing services.

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 and may encourage the use of the vacant premises next to it.

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.”^{iv}

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)

As I said in my introduction based on my experiences of this industry, 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.^v

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.

I know that in previous years 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, 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.^{vi}

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^{vii}

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^{viii}.

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.^{ix}

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.^x

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^{xi}.

In their UK study published in 2011 Sanders and Hardy^{xii} 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 in many testimonies of former performers. This is in addition to the misogynistic and sexist views espoused by many men (and some women) towards women working in the industry.

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.

Anachronistic, sexist, outdated and passé

According to the BBC, the number of lap dancing clubs has fallen by a third in England^{xiii}. 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."

The Sub-committee's role and wide discretion

As per the Policy,

There is a right of appeal to the Magistrates Court against decisions for the refusal to grant, renew, vary or transfer of a licence, the imposition of conditions and revocations may also be appealed.

Appeals must be made to the Magistrates Court within 21 days, starting from the date the applicant is notified of the Licensing Authority's decision.

It is important to note that appeals only lie against the mandatory refusals on the basis that the mandatory ground does not apply to the applicant/licence holder. Further, no appeal lies against the Licensing Authority's decision made on the discretionary grounds namely:

· that it is inappropriate to grant or renew a licence on the grounds of the character of the locality or the number of premises in it; or · the use of premises in the vicinity or the layout, character or condition of the premises.

The only discretionary grounds against which an appeal lies are those relating to the suitability of the applicant, the manager and/or the beneficiary of the operation

Yet two people, one a former councillor and one who worked for Council tweeted in response to publicity about the forthcoming judicial review how the legal advice given to the Sub-committee was that if they refused the licence they would be taken to court and lose. This seems to be at odds with the above and a range of appeals to licensing decisions where with the exception of one that a Not Buying It researcher has found, all original refusals to granting/renewals and variations of licences were upheld.

For example, the Sub-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.”

In 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.

We ask that the Sub-committee do the same and takes a fresh look although is unequivocal that there have been incremental changes year on year with substantial changes during the past year and far greater change to come, including hopefully, the arrival of a regional Channel 4 hub.

Kind regards

References

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

^v 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*

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- ^{vi} *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>
- ^{vii} Kolvin, P (2010) *Sex Licensing*, The Institute of Licensing p.87
- ^{viii} Kolvin, P (2010) *Sex Licensing*, The Institute of Licensing p.87
- ^{ix} 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.
- ^x 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>.
- ^{xi} Slideshare available from: <https://www.slideshare.net/ZerooptionSheffield/villa-mercedes-hearing-8th-september-2016>
- ^{xii} Sanders, T., & Hardy, K. (2011) *The Regulatory Dance: Sexual Consumption in the Night Time Economy – Initial Findings*. Leeds: University of Leeds
- ^{xiii} 23rd February 2018 Available from: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-43043842>

Appendix



My name is [REDACTED], I am author of *The Sunday Times* best seller 'Just A Child' released 19/4/18, a national speaker, campaigner & fundraiser. I am one of the 1,400 survivors who were groomed, abused and failed in Rotherham.

I was groomed and abused mentally, sexually and physically for many years, made pregnant twice and gave birth to my son when I was 16 years old.

Not only was my rapist psychologically, sexually and physically abusing me, he was also grooming me to commit crime.

In July 2013, I contacted Andrew Norfolk at The Times newspaper and handed over evidence that proved I was abused and also failed by authorities. My story was published, naming Hussain and the deputy leader of Rotherham council in August 2013. This triggered the Professor Alexis Jay report, the inquiry exposed the cover up of 1,400 children being abused and how many authorities had failed in Rotherham and South Yorkshire. I was also the survivor provoked the police investigation (Operation Clover) into my abuse and all other non-recent child abuse cases in Rotherham.

In February 2016, Arshid Hussain was found guilty and sentenced to 35 years in prison.

When I was 18 years old I went to work in the Lap dancing industry. I worked around the UK as a lap dancer for around 9 yrs. I'd like to make clear that I was not forced to work in clubs, it was my own choice. I had a low self-esteem and no respect for myself due to my abuse as a child. I thought at the time I was taking back control and empowering myself, I realise now that taking my clothes off for men's sexual gratification isn't these things but in fact it is degrading, disrespectful and I'm worth much more and so are other women.

Myself and others were treated very badly in the industry. I've never met a lap dancer that hasn't at some point in their life been abused mentally, sexually or physically and that's the reason why they are dancers. Their vulnerabilities allow them to become exploited.

Within the industry there is money laundering, fraud, trafficking, prostitution and drugs. This is the reason I will begin a national campaign. Other dancers are also willing to speak out about the treatment they endure in the industry. I aim working and aiming to abolish the Lap dancing industry from the UK.

I'd like to ask men, what if your daughter, mother or grandmother were a lap dancer, would you be ok with it? Women are viewed as sex objects, how many women compared to men are on page 3 or pornographic magazines? How many women, compared to men, are working in Lapdancing clubs? How many women, compared to men, are working in brothels?

I have recently met with the Lap dancing Minister and Home Office about my concerns and we will be working together to tackle the industry.

I would like to meet with yourself to discuss these issues further, as I'm aware there is a Lap dancing venue in your area.

My status includes

- Triggered the Professor Alexis Jay report, which exposed the cover up of 1,400 children being abused and failed in Rotherham. Opening the largest investigation of our time.
- Significant media representation, raising awareness on a worldwide scale.
- Private meetings with PM David Cameron, DfE, Victims Commissioner, a working relationship with MoJ and the Home Office as well as other government officials.
- Secured £3.1million to Barnardo's, from KPMG, RMBC and DFE as well as securing funding for other charities.
- Assisted in training and consultation sessions with multi agencies around the UK and NI including Bedfordshire, Metropolitan police, Tact Fostering, NSPCC, NHS, NCA and Education.
- Supported the development of the commissioned services.
- Participated in the government NHS CSE training film.
- Consultations with leaders and head of children's services at RMBC and Rotherham Commissioners.
- Working alongside RMBC and government amending licensing policies and procedures nationally.
- Nominated for most positive role model award UK, Best Community Safety Award UK, winner of Suzy Lamplugh Safer Campaign award UK.
- Campaigns so far includes - counselling services, mandatory education, CICA, Sammy's Law, licensing, employment changes, legal action against councils, Loose Women's never too late to tell campaign, court system and training for all professionals.

I recently met with the HO and Minister Victoria Atkins to discuss issues around the Lap dancing industry that I have witnessed throughout clubs in the UK such as fraud, money laundering, prostitution, trafficking, drugs and the overall treatment of women within the industry.

I would like to meet with you face to face as I am launching a campaign, with the support of national media, to abolish or at least improve the industry and bring it to the fore front. I feel that with the proliferation of lap dancing clubs it is accepted by society and the use of the women has become a very normalised yet unsafe industry. I believe if we work together we will have a strong chance of achieving my aims.

Thank you for your time. I look forward to your response.

Kind regards,



Objection to Sheffield Spearmint Rhino Licensing Renewal by [REDACTED], Not Buying It

Recommendations:

- Refuse this license on grounds of locality and breach of PSED
- Provide Exit Strategies for women working at the Club
- This to be funded by ending costly court proceedings to justify the licensing of the industry
This must be running close to £100,000). Use this money instead to support performers with training, placements, encouraging flexible work options at other businesses etc.

If not, Impose Additional Conditions (as other councils have done):

- All dancers to be PAYE with guaranteed minimum wage and employment rights
- NO Private booths or areas of any sort
- A maximum dancer : punter ratio
- Implement other conditions
such as Proper changing facilities/ separate exit door from punters/escorted out of premises at end of shift/ direct anonymous channel of complain and whistle blowing to council or other authority etc????

I visit Sheffield with meetings at The Showroom which is like Grand Central – everyone seems to meet everyone there. It is a few minutes from the railway station and almost directly opposite Spearmint Rhino.

I have been challenging the organised sex industry, including strip clubs, for many years because of the high level of harm associated with it. I previously ran the pressure group Object, which ensured law change to stop strip clubs being licensed like cafés or other leisure venues. During this time I have spoken with many women who have left the industry and am aware of a wealth of evidence as to the harm of this industry.

All the evidence and information given here can be found at:
<http://www.notbuyingit.org.uk/publications#Strip>

Bower Claire

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 15 May 2018 14:04
To: licensingservice
Subject: Objection to Spearmint Rhino License - Please Acknowledge Receipt
Attachments: SR Objection Not Buying It Rakoff.pdf; ATT00001.htm; ATT00002.htm

Please find attached my objection to the licensing renewal of Spearmint Rhino

Please acknowledge receipt of this email

Thank you



Location breaches Licensing Policy

Members considered whether or not the premises was inappropriate having regard to the locality and determined that it is not. Spearmint Rhino Written Determination Notice 2017

No doubt you have heard in depth evidence from locals, familiar with the area, as to exactly how inappropriate this strip club's siting is in terms of its location – where it is clearly in breach of your own licensing policy, on every count. So it is seems somewhat staggering that Council members are able to twist this breach into compatibility.

The premises is well run with no complaints known to the licensing authority or the premises.

Again this seems very carefully worded. Surely objections at licensing hearings are 'complaints'? And they have been 100s of objections over the years about this venue.

Legally Binding Equality Duties

Here, I would like to focus on the council's *legally binding* Public Sector Equality Duties (PSED):

https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/technical_guidance_on_the_psed_enland.pdf
<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/essential-guide-public-sector-equality-duty>

Under this Councils must have due regard to:

- **ELIMINATE harassment, discrimination and victimisation' of women**
- **Advance Equality of Opportunity between men and women**
- **Foster Good Relations between men and women**

In addition:

- **The greater the relevance and potential impact, the higher the regard for the duty**

Obviously, when considering the lap dancing industry, this duty is particularly high.

The Right to Look at Licensing Applications with ‘Fresh Eyes’

The Council has already *conceded* that it had *breached* the PSED because of the manner in which it previously granted Spearmint Rhino strip club a license. It is therefore, clearly imperative that the Council revisits how it arrives at its licensing decision this time or it will again be acting unlawfully.

In other words, the Council **MUST look at its licensing decision ‘with fresh eyes’**. In fact the PSED technical guidance specifically states:

The duty requires relevant bodies to tackle the consequences of **past decisions** which failed to give due regard to **the equality aims**.

I know that barristers representing the strip industry like to inform Councils ‘that if a license has previously been granted, it must be re-granted’ but this is not even an accurate reflection of licensing law, let alone the PSED.

Councils may ALWAYS revisit past licensing decisions. All they need do is take into account that a license was previously granted. And this has been confirmed in law on more than one occasion, including by licensing expert Philip Kolvin QC, who frequently serves as representative for Spearmint Rhino and other strip club chains :

“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.**”

Case law also confirms this right. A review of recent judgements for the Local Government Lawyer website by Philip Kolvin, QC, and two other eminent barristers concludes:

‘In two recent decisions the courts have affirmed the wide powers enjoyed by licensing authorities to **refuse renewals** of licences for lap dancing clubs’

http://www.localgovernmentlawyer.co.uk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=17968%3Alap-dance-no-more&catid=49%3Acomment-a-analysis-articles&Itemid=1

This is again confirmed by Mr Justice Turner:

‘It is, in my judgment, an inescapable fact that the Act of 1982 expressly contemplates the possibility that the circumstances in which a licence had been granted or renewed might change; hence the provisions of paragraph 12 of the 3rd Schedule, which apply not just in respect of the grant but, more importantly, also on the **renewal** of a licence. Thus the **proposition that an existing licence holder can expect that he will be granted a licence in perpetuity for any given set of premises is plainly wrong**’.

Furthermore, license renewal applications may be refused even when there has been **no change to** either the licensee or the surrounding area:

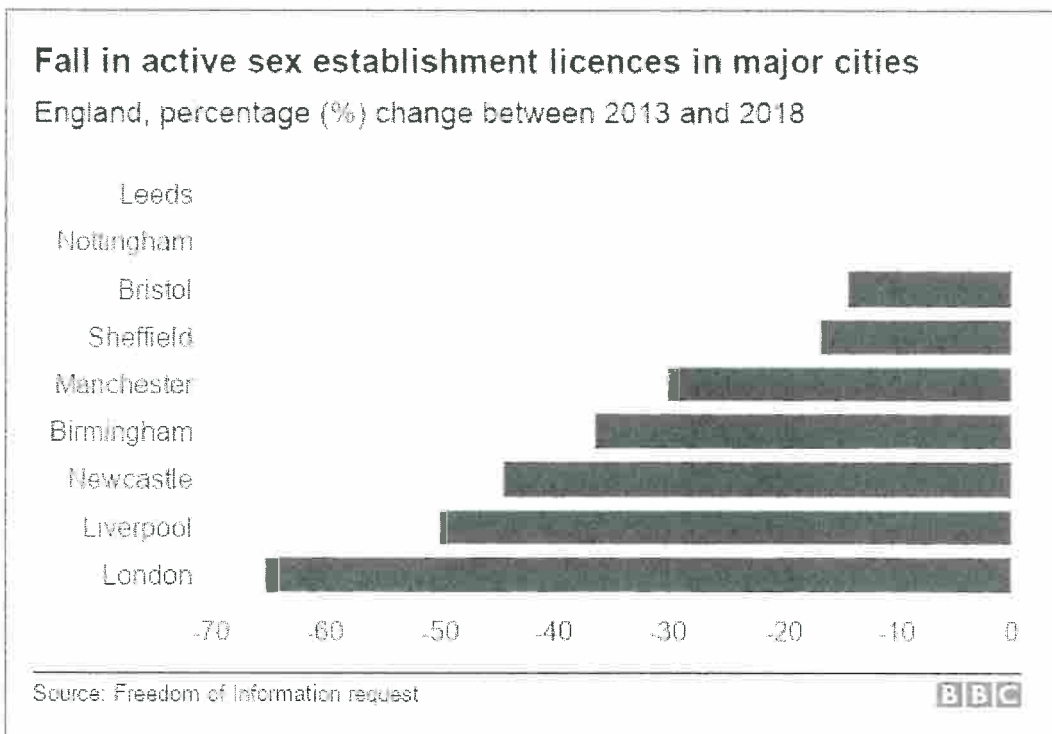
licensing authorities are entitled to 'have a fresh look' at an application for renewal of an SEV licence, and may refuse to renew even when there is no material change in circumstance.'

http://www.localgovernmentlawyer.co.uk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=17968%3AAlap-dance-no-more&catid=49%3Acomment-a-analysis-articles&Itemid=1

Again, given that Council has conceded that its previous licensing decision to grant the club a license was *made illegally*, the Council is now absolutely beholden to look at this license with new eyes.

Other Councils are **NOT** re-granting Licenses

Furthermore a precedent for *not* re-granting licenses has been set on numerous occasions since a great many other councils now have not re-granted strip club licenses. In fact, the number of licenses of strip clubs and sex establishments is reported to have fallen by 1/3: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-43043842> :



In the overwhelming majority of cases, this has passed without incident, ie without legal challenge by strip club operators.

In fact, Sheffield seems to be the only city I know of that currently seems intent on introducing a 'no limit' policy, likely to substantially *expand* its lap dancing industry.

Unfounded Fear of Legal Challenge by the Strip Industry

It has become obvious over the years, that one of the reasons Councils grant strip club licenses is because of fear of legal challenge by strip industry operators.

Even an ex-Sheffield Councillor has stated that the legal advice given to councilors was to automatically grant license or they would be taken to court and lose.



Geoff Smith
@geoffforrookes

Replying to @NotBuyingItSaf and @NikoNetheridge

Interesting to see what happens. Our legal advice as councillors was always that if we refused to renew the licence it would be challenged and we would lose the case.

2:09 pm · 26 Apr 18

However, we have not found a SINGLE case where a strip club operator has mounted a successful legal challenge against a council for failing to grant a license. This includes numerous occasions where licenses have not been *re-granted*:

Camden: Camden Council vs The Red Rooms

Camden Council took The Red Rooms strip club to High Court to argue its right to allow no private areas. Council won.

Leeds: Bean Leisure vs Leeds City Council [2014]

Two clubs lose in High Court challenge to Council's refusal to renew licenses

Leicester: Lily's Lounge Leicester [2016]

SEV took council to court for refusing to renew license. SEV no longer operating.

Oxford: 'The Lodge' Thompson, R (On the Application Of) v Oxford City Council [2014]

Court of Appeal upholds Council decision not to renew license.

South Bucks: R (KVP ENT LTD) v South Bucks DC [2013]

SEV not even given leave to go to Judicial Review when license was not renewed

The only incident where a Judge ruled in favour of an SEV (strip club) was on a technicality (too many councilors had been involved in the decision):

Cheshire: Bridgerow Ltd, R (on the application of) v Cheshire West and Chester Borough Council [2014]

In fact the judge explicitly pointed out that in all other respects he agreed *with* the Council. The club in question shut within a year of this case.

Breach of the PSED – Disregarding Concerns as ‘Moralistic’

The Council appears to have been largely guided by evidence and research from highly biased sources, from strip club operators (problematic as outlined throughout) to pro-industry researchers, including self-professed fans of the strip industry like Colosi, PhD.

These researchers, without fail, denigrate genuine concerns for the sex and strip industry as ‘moralistic’. Even researchers like Sanders, who expose the abuse within the industry, still assert that the opposition that might reasonably arise from these findings is driven by ‘morality’ rather than the fact that it could reasonably be concluded that the industry itself is corrupt and incompatible with equality and human rights.

But crediting concerns with the industry as merely ‘moralistic’ was a key reason Judicial Review was granted against Sheffield City Council’s previous decision to re-license Spearmint Rhino:

.. There is a tenable basis for the Claimant’s inference that the Defendant [Sheffield City Council] has **wrongly ignored objections** based the potential impact on gender equality treating them as **moral objections** and irrelevant.”

Judge’s observation when granting permission for Judicial Review,
Honourable Mrs Justice Nerys Jefford, DBE, Justice at High Court Queen’s Branch Division, 2015

Surely the council needs to now exercise considerable caution not to make the same mistakes again – and must not treat genuine, tangible and demonstrable concerns over the harm of lap dancing as ‘moralising’. Similarly it must take heed to take into account the bias of pro-industry ‘morality’ of many sex industry advocates.

Breach of the PSED - Poor Understanding of the Reality of the Industry

Another reason Councils grant licenses is because of a serious lack of understanding of the industry and an apparent refusal to listen to the large body of evidence of harm across the industry. **This lack of understanding also gives grounds to challenge under equality law.** It also means the council is putting young dancers at particular risk.

That is why, again, it is imperative Sheffield City Council strives to understand the reality of this industry. I have been concerned that the information and research that the council is relying on appears to have come entirely from advocates of the strip industry and sex trade – whether from industry representatives or academics. Just two examples of misinformation are given below:

‘lap dancing is not sexual’

When SEV licensing was first being considered, strip industry reps were lining up claiming *‘lap dancing is not sexual’* in the press and even at Parliamentary Select Committee Hearings. You must remember that this industry twists the truth or openly lies at every opportunity.

Likewise, one of the only major studies of the industry in the UK exposed how all strip club operators claimed their establishments were perfectly well run, while pointing the finger at every other as being poorly run and constantly rule breaking:

<http://www.notbuyingit.org.uk/sites/default/files/PrivateBooths.pdf> .

Breach of the PSED – Discriminatory Working Conditions

Members considered the representations raised that the dancers at Spearmint Rhino are suffering as a result of unfair and unequal working conditions. The arrangements in place are legal and entered into with full knowledge and consent.

Spearmint Rhino Written Determination Notice
2017

Members further considered the three aims under PSED and determined that they needed to ensure that the worker's rights were being enforced, and especially that equality of opportunity between different groups is being advanced.

They had a statement from the Safeguarding Board saying that there were no concerns about welfare and no complaints had been received however thought it proportionate to condition that the premises be subject to quarterly inspections to ensure these are being complied with. This would be evidence that could be used at the next renewal application.

Lap dancers (women) are the only workers at strip clubs who are 'self employed' and do not receive any work security or rights, unlike all other staff (the overwhelming majority of whom are men)

These working conditions are:

- **Pay to work in the venue**
- **Pay a portion of takings back to the venue**
- **Buy expensive 'house clothes'**
- **Fines at every opportunity**
- **Being forced to buy drinks**
- **Far too high a ratio of performers to punters (making it hard for any individual to earn enough money to even break even by the end of her shift)**
- **No sick pay/maternity or other PAYE benefits**
- **No job security or guarantee of income**

"I frequently was only making enough to cover the house fee, train tickets and the cost of a bed and breakfast with no extra profit for myself " Liz

www.notbuyingit.org.uk/publications#Strip

70% of lap dancers make no money by the end of their shift

Sanders: www.sociology.leeds.ac.uk/assets/files/research/Regulatory_Dance/FINALSUMMARYJAN2012.pdf

Do members of the council think these conditions are *fair*? Do they think any individual who was *genuinely empowered* would enter into work conditions like this with full *knowledge and consent*? Do they think leaving a shift in debt or having made no money is not *suffering*? How can *quarterly inspections* eradicate the basic working model of strip clubs – these are businesses which only exist because of young women ('product') and yet treats them in the most financially abusive manner imaginable.

These employment conditions are clearly unfair and unequal and can be seen as a breach of the PSED. They are also a driving force for the far more sinister abuse found across the industry – coercion, sexual abuse and exploitation.

Breach of the PSED – Abuse and Exploitation in Clubs

Members further considered the three aims under PSED and determined that they needed to ensure that the worker's rights were being enforced, and especially that equality of opportunity between different groups is being advanced. They had a statement from the Safeguarding Board saying that there were no concerns about welfare and no complaints had been received however thought it proportionate to condition that the premises be subject to quarterly inspections to ensure these are being complied with. This would be evidence that could be used at the next renewal application.

Lap dancing is synonymous with harassment and victimisation of performers ie breach of the PSED:
<http://www.notbuyingit.org.uk/publications#Strip>:

“Customers .. would touch me and grab me and one even bit me during a dance”

Liz

“Sexual contact becomes the norm. You start to sell yourself out.

Vicky

“There’s a rule regarding distance. You’re allowed to get closer than they say in the contract. It’s supposed to be three feet .. That is broken instantly” Sarah

This has been exposed in two major academic studies of the UK strip industry; countless testimonies from women who have left the industry; undercover journalists and even current lap dancers such as members of the East London Strippers Collective. It is revealed by police reports; press reports; comments from punters and even by strip club operators.

The largest research study ever conducted into the strip industry highlighted how half lap dancers reported frequent verbal harassment and unwanted touching from customers (in other words, sexual assault).

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

“I’m frequently asked how much I charge for sex – it seems to be taken as read that, as a lap dancer, I offer services outside the club”

Journalist reveals the constant verbal and physical harassment she was subjected to when undercover as a stripper: <https://londonist.com/london/features/this-is-what-it-s-like-being-a-lap-dancer-in-london>

Much of this has been collated here: <http://www.notbuyingit.org.uk/publications#Strip>

Given that research suggests that students are believed to make up 1/3 of lap dancers and Spearmint Rhino is in the middle of the University, the Council has a particular duty to pay heed to the harm associated with the industry. If it does not it is responsible for putting young female students, often teenagers, at risk: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/01425692.2013.854596>

Breach of the PSED: Fostering Poor Relations Between the Sexes

Lap dancing is the antithesis of 'fostering good relations between the sexes'. This too is a breach of the PSED.

The largest study of the industry ever conducted in the UK revealed that 1/3 of performers said the job had effected their view of men: Sanders, T., & Hardy, K. (2011) *The Regulatory Dance: Sexual Consumption in the Night Time Economy – Initial Findings*. Leeds: University of Leeds

"It's screwed up my view of men. Every time I see a man now, I just see him as a punter. There's only so many bad experiences you can have before you start hating them all . . ."

"You start to see men as nothing more than their wallets, idiots to be fleeced for as much as you can. You start to despise them for believing you when you flutter your eyelashes and tell them they're the most interesting customer that you've ever talked to."

"I always thought of the customers as vermin and, ironically, that is what they thought of me."

149. **ladivina69**
8 Feb 2012 09:26

My daughter is a dancer and its not harmless fun. In order to bear dealing with this degrading and soul destroying work the girls drink too much and endure the worst aspects of male nature. She has become cynical, jaded and doesnt have relationships any more. She thinks that men are all untrustworthy and only after what they can get away with. Its not really a job to be proud of.

↑ 73 ↓ 43

The intense competition between performers, nurtered by clubs which ensure far too high a ratio of lap dancers to customers, also does not foster good relations with other members of the female sex.

And of course, this is as nothing compared to the attitudes clubs foster by men towards women. Obviously the impact of this is far more concerning as men carry these attitudes around with them in a society where 10 million (1 in 3 women) experience male violence, in most part *because* of men's attitudes towards women.

In a study of customers of strip clubs it was found that over half of the men interviewed stated that their motivation for visiting lap dancing clubs was to **escape** from what they perceived as a code of conduct which 'restrained' them.

Journal of Sex Research 40:1, 61-75, 2004

"You can go in there and shop for a piece of meat , quote unquote , so to speak. I mean, you want to see a girl, you can see a girl run around naked. Have her come over, pay her to do a dance or two or three and walk away and not even ask her her name" Frank, K.

'Just trying to relax': Masculinity, masculinizing practices, and strip club regulars" *Journal of Sex Research* 40:1, 61-75, 2003

Recent Incidences

This situation is so bad that a quick Google search of press reports exposes how close to a dozen clubs have been shut in the few years alone. The true level of incidence is obviously like to be considerably higher. This is collated here: www.notbuyingit.org.uk/sites/default/files/Strip%20Sleaze%20Recent.pdf

It includes Villa Mercedes, a branch of which was nearly licensed by Sheffield City Council

Bing, West Bromwich 2017

Shut down after a brawl led to GBH. Police also expressed grave concerns about prostitution, the use of possibly under age Romanian girls and the possibility that they may have been trafficked:

Hanley's, Staffordshire 2017

Shut down after years of concerns over inappropriate touching, offers of prostitution, drugs and drink spiking.

Jack of Diamonds, Bristol 2017

Closed for inappropriate touching.

Legs 11, Birmingham 2017

License suspended for trafficking. Sexual contact observed and under cover trading officers offered 'sexual services' in VIP rooms.

Angels, Leicester 2016

Fondling and touching viewed on CCTV. Several dancers undocumented and suspected of being underage.

Villa Mercedes, Harrogate 2015

Shut down after repeated breach of licensing conditions including physical contact with dancers and 'audience participation'. (Appeal by operator to license refusal was withdrawn).

Bentley's, Doncaster 2017

Performer assaulted outside after refusing sex with punter.

Diamonds Dolls, Glasgow 2017

License suspended immediately when a half dressed, drunk and unconscious dancer was dragged out of the club by management and dumped onto the street (performer in question refused to speak to police, presumably out of fear of retaliation by management).

Cleopatra's Lounge, Huddersfield 2016

Man smashes club window when dancer refuses to 'meet up' with him outside of the club:

<http://www.examiner.co.uk/news/west-yorkshire-news/man-smashed-lap-dance-club-11379793>

X in The City, Liverpool 2015

Punter attacks lap dancer and steals her purse after she refused to give oral sex in a private booth. Punter: "I said 'are you going to suck my **** upstairs?' and she said 'yes'. Obviously that was the whole purpose."

Platinum's, Stoke 2017

Loses its license: 'Exploitation' of punters, including violence and drink spiking.

Silks, Manchester 2017

Several incidences of brawls and violent behavior

Charlie Brown's London 2014

Breach of Frequency Exemption & Illegal Activity

Diamond Dolls & clubs across Scotland 2014

Massive police sting

Breach of the PSED – Private Booths

“There is only one reason why you have a cubicle. It’s because touching is going on and all sorts”
manager of Club Crème, Bristol

<http://www.notbuyingit.org.uk/sites/default/files/PrivateBooths.pdf>

Sheffield City Council’s allowing of private booths is a case in point.

Legs 11, Birmingham, had its license suspended in 2017 with under cover officers being offered sexual services in private rooms.

“From a police perspective it would make life and enforcement easier if we did not have the VIP rooms”
Police Officer

“If anything’s going to go wrong, it will be in the VIP or private rooms. You have to trust the integrity of the person who is in charge of security, but you can never be sure a blind eye is not going to be turned. Most venues have a VIP room, because it promotes intrigue to the customer who will go there and maybe look for something more, because of the secrecy” Police Officer

<http://www.notbuyingit.org.uk/sites/default/files/PrivateBooths.pdf>

Camden Council has had a policy against ‘private’ areas of any description in its clubs since SEV licensing was introduced. It has even gone to the High Court (successfully) to ensure this. This policy applies to Spearmint Rhino in Camden.

The reason for this is the high levels (and likelihood) of harassment, coercion and abuse in private booths. I would suggest allowing Spearmint Rhino private booths is in and of itself a breach of equality law as it is extremely likely to lead to ‘harassment and victimisation’.

Over 50% of dancers reported having received harassment ‘lots of times’ or a ‘a few times’, nearly half reported frequent verbal harassment and unwanted touching from customers. This was reported more widely in clubs with private dancing than those with only stage shows. Error! Bookmark not defined.

Private Booths: many dancers felt that the way in which private booths were set up also made them vulnerable and also allowed standards to be lowered by dancers offering more than is allowed in the dances.

<http://www.notbuyingit.org.uk/sites/default/files/PrivateBooths.pdf>

This paper that we submitted to Camden Council for its High Court proceedings outlines the high levels of harm associated with private areas in strip clubs and is quoted from throughout this submission:

<http://www.notbuyingit.org.uk/sites/default/files/PrivateBooths.pdf>

Breach of the PSED – Simplistic Acceptance of Statements from Management

Again it is a breach of equality duty if the Council is not properly considering and analysing the information before them. This means evidence from management and even performers needs to be scrutinised with caution, rather than being simplistically taken at face value.

'It was clear to me ... that many owners and managers create a context in which the buying and selling of sexual services would be likely to happen. Club owners tend to absolve themselves of any responsibility if sexual services are found to be on offer, or being arranged on the premises, yet at the same time the dancers are encouraged to project an air of sexual availability to customers.'

<http://www.notbuyingit.org.uk/sites/default/files/PrivateBooths.pdf>

Our paper to Camden Council references how statements from management of 'excellent' operating conditions and performers well being simply cannot be taken at face value, for surely obvious reasons. Management have a clearly highly vested interest for abusive work conditions and prostitution, as this is how they will earn the most money. .

And if strip club operators are prepared to tell Parliament that 'lap dancing isn't sexual' then any statements they make surely have to be treated with extreme caution.

Besides, management and their legal team are adept at 'phrasing' information to ensure they are not lying but certainly misleading.

This includes constant statements by John Specht (Spearmint Rhino UK Vice President) in his witness statement to the Council for this licensing hearing that '**no complaints have been received**'. But this belies the fact that 100s of objections (*complaints*) actually have been received over years of licensing hearings. And yet this 'lack of complaint' is then re-iterated by Sheffield City Council's own licensing committee.

Management also, very deliberately, puts a 'Chinese wall' between it and any wrong doings at the club. An atmosphere is carefully cultivated that touching and full-blown sex acts are available yet when it happens management is able to claim no knowledge and instead fire the dancer as responsible.

The fact that a great many punters and members of the public view lap dancers as *de facto* prostitutes has been evidenced many times to the council (including by Not Buying It Sheffield at this licensing review).

In Conclusion

'A number of factors contribute to the possibility of the dancers being pressurised into offering, or agreeing to, sexual services without direct instruction from management.'

'The clubs [are] run in a way that implicitly encourages the customers to expect and seek sexual services from the dancers.'

'It can be concluded, from the body of evidence that some lap dance club owners and managers create conditions in which prostitution is likely to occur.'

'So long as club managers assure the police and others that any dancer found to be offering or engaging in sexual services will be dismissed, places the onus for behaviour onto the dancer. There has been a tendency, as highlighted through tribunals and police evidence, that club owners who either encourage dancers to engage in sexual activity, or merely 'turn a blind eye' are not held responsible for allowing that to happen.'

<http://www.notbuyingit.org.uk/sites/default/files/PrivateBooths.pdf>

Breach of the PSED – Simplistic Acceptance of Statements from Lap Dancers

Equally the Council needs to scrutinise statements from performers, rather than simplistically taking these at face value <http://www.notbuyingit.org.uk/sites/default/files/PrivateBooths.pdf> :

Several journalists have confirmed that the conduct of staff, dancers and customers is affected when they are aware they are being observed

'I found that no one except the management, who were excited by the idea of newspaper coverage, wanted to talk to me, and I was viewed with suspicion. Everything seemed controlled, and I had a sense that I was not seeing the true picture.'

Of course, no lap dancer can openly expose problems within clubs, including breach of the 'no touching rule' or sex acts, because if she does she is will then fired and black listed amongst other clubs. Or worse.

Of course, if a club operator 'asks' his performers to sign statements supporting 'perfect practices' within their club, they will do exactly that. As again referenced in our report on Private Booths, the women working in the clubs often operate under a culture of fear and intimidation <http://www.notbuyingit.org.uk/sites/default/files/PrivateBooths.pdf> :

This can be so extreme that performers who have been assaulted by club operators still will not talk, even to the police:

When a performer was dragged out on to the street by management, drunk, half naked and unconscious, she refused to talk to police even though this incident was so severe that the club's license was immediately suspended.

It can extend beyond performers to those researching the industry, as this journalist attested:

'for the record, one club owner telephoned me after our meeting and made what I took to be a veiled threat'^{Error! Bookmark not defined.}

Women from the industry have told me in conversations that:

'if management tells you to do something, you do it'

This includes Sammy Woodhouse (former lap dancer who blew the lid on the Rotherham child sex abuse scandal, who I believe is also providing an evidenced-based objection to Sheffield City Council). I have also been told by her and others, including Stacey Clare, founder of The East London Strippers Collective that they:

'know of women being coerced by management into signing statements in support'

Stacey Clare is currently writing a book to, yet again, expose working conditions for lap dancer and this evidence was given to Camden City Council in a High Court case that upheld its decision to ban private areas in its clubs.

Even Women who have *left* the industry *still* feel intimidated

"The shadowy world behind some clubs is not something that you would want to go up against"

"I'd rather not say what I am doing these days, for the same reason that I won't tell you my real name. These are people [the club owners] you don't want to mess with. I am genuinely afraid of them. Who knows exactly what goes on behind the scenes, but I'd still rather not mess with it."

<http://www.notbuyingit.org.uk/sites/default/files/PrivateBooths.pdf>

'A New Reality'

"Often if a person has asked about my experience as a dancer I have responded with a socially desirable answer, and simply asserted that I enjoyed dancing, that I made a lot of money but in the end dancing was not for me. This explanation has in no way conveyed the extremity of emotion and mental distress I have experienced as a dancer and in no way conveys the sexual degradation and humiliation I have experienced and observed during my short dancing career " Liz former lap dancer

http://notbuyingit.org.uk/sites/default/files/LAP%20DANCING%20testimony_Liz.pdf

Of equal significance, is the fact is that a 'new reality' very quickly sets in when you start working in stripping. As numerous women state once they have left the industry. This includes lying to yourself that 'all is well' as a coping mechanism and because your entire sense of self-worth is wrapped up in the industry – so to admit that anything might be wrong with it becomes unthinkable. And it includes genuinely not even recognising that being constantly harassed and groped or even paid for sexual acts is untoward or is not normal. A 'new reality' sets in, as researcher shows:

'These women, as you would expect, are keen to defend the work they do and furious that what they regard as patronising feminists seem bent on turning them into sex workers.'

".. for a time, it is possible to convince yourself that everything is OK. "No one in the club would express any uncertainty about what they are doing - they're too busy competing for work - so even if you do feel bad about it, you wonder if you are the only one. You convince yourself that your perception of what the job would be like is the same as what the job is, even though there is a quite weird gap between the two. It's only when you have made the decision to leave that you realise how insane it all was."

<http://www.notbuyingit.org.uk/sites/default/files/PrivateBooths.pdf>

Breach of the PSED – in the Vicinity of Clubs

Members heard how some women felt threatened and unsafe walking past the premises during the day knowing that the premises was there and that it triggered memories of past events for them. The premises will now essentially be 'invisible' during the day which will aim to mitigate this.

The Council has heard countless examples of how women and others feel unsafe in the vicinity of the club in objections made to licensing renewals. The club operator has even taken pictures outside of the club showing little traffic during its operating hours. This, of course, was used to suggest 'no one uses the street'. However it could equally mean that the club has in effect created a '**no go zone**'.

The Council's solution? Stop exterior signage outside the club. But Sheffield is a small city and local people know full well that the club is there even during the day when not open. If anything, a black unsigned building seems even more sinister.

And this does *not* address the club during its opening hours. The council has also heard countless evidence from objectors over years that they avoid the area during the night. Students (many of whom are teenagers, some as young as 17), of course, have *no choice* but to use the area given the club is next to halls of residence.

Whether or not the venue is open during the day or 'blacked out' is irrelevant when considering the PSED. It has been confirmed numerous times that the very presence of a strip club can amount to a breach of equality law by making women feel vulnerable, unsafe and causing them not to use the street or nearby facilities.

And strip clubs undoubtedly do make women feel threatened and uncomfortable (ie harassed and victimised) in their vicinity as highlighted by the Royal Town Planning Institute:

"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 clubs **make women feel threatened or uncomfortable"**

This is elaborated upon as:

' . . . 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.'

A considerable number of witness statements provided to Sheffield City Council at Spearmint Rhino licensing hearings and at policy review clearly demonstrate this strip club's presence shows that the free movement of women and others with protected characteristics is being prevented by the club:

- Women running LGBT groups
- Disabled Women
- Those running support centres for marginalised young people
- Those accessing services for vulnerable women
- Women using work space

This feeling of intimidation and avoidance measures women take, goes far beyond when a club is operating at night. As highlighted in the journal *Criminal Justice Matters*:

“.. women also reported **avoiding** certain streets and **feeling frightened** in the **day time**, when the clubs are closed. It is the **existence** of the clubs that **causes women to feel alienated in public space at all times**, and fearful of the threat of violence posed by the sexual objectification of women.”

Jackie Painiotti & Kay Standing (2012) License to cause harm? Sex entertainment venues and women's sense of safety in inner city centres. *Criminal Justice Matters* 88.1 10-12.

The Institute goes on to explain that if women *feel* threatened and uncomfortable by the presence of a strip club then **their very presence amounts to a form of discrimination**, as it prevents full access and freedom of movement by women in the borough:

“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**”

¹ Royal Town Planning Institute 'Gender and Spatial Planning Good Practice' Note, 2010, p. 87

Local Authorities have a **legal duty** to prevent all of this. By not doing so they can be challenged in court. Thus if the PSED is given due consideration it becomes increasingly hard for Local Authorities to justify the presence of any Sexual Entertainment Venues and to consider anything other than a 'zero policy' on SEVs.

It is NOT Pro Equality to license clubs to stop them 'Going Underground'

The Council appears to be under the illusion that they *are* upholding their equality duties by granting strip club licenses because by not licensing clubs the industry will 'go underground'. A circular argument surely as by that logic the Council has to license everything and anything in order to stop it 'going underground'.

On top of this there is absolutely no evidence that *not* granting licenses drives the industry 'underground'.

I have contacted several Councils with a 'zero policy' and no clubs. Not one has found any evidence of 'underground activity'.

In fact, Sheffield City Council appears to be basing its 'going underground' argument from a research paper by a lap dance enthusiast (R Colosi) in which she cites a book about New York:

<https://www.publishersweekly.com/978-0-446-52571-8>

It should be pointed out that this book is not academic research – it is a book about New York, written by a man who has also co-authored books with Erin Brokovitch and Barry White! Besides many of the clubs dubbed 'illegal' might not be 'illegal' (as in unlicensed), but rather operating in breach of that license.

Besides it is surely disingenuous to compare a small city like Sheffield with a heaving metropolis like New York.

And where illegal clubs set up they can always be found and shut down. If punters can find them, so can the authorities, as has happened across the USA:

Atlanta: Man busted for running illegal strip club in his home:

<https://www.wsbtv.com/news/local/dekalb-county/man-60-accused-of-running-illegal-strip-club-in-home/473973225>

<https://www.11alive.com/article/news/crime/illegal-strip-club-busted-next-to-daycare-church-in-dekalb/85-362385752>

San Jose: Illegal clubs being shut after press reports:

<http://sanfrancisco.cbslocal.com/2015/12/08/san-jose-police-illegal-strip-clubs-crackdown/>

Phoenix, 'stripper cage fighting', openly advertised on Facebook, shut by authorities:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3DuR1EwaXJI>

But most importantly, the core premise that not licensing the industry will drive it underground is, I would suggest, on its head: **It is actually the legitimising of the sex trade that drives a substantial underground sector – as has been found in every country that has legalised or decriminalised prostitution.**

It is NOT Pro Equality to License Strip Clubs to ‘Keep Women Out of Poverty’

Another argument that is often made to justify licensing the strip industry is that if it is not licensed lap dancers ‘will be put out of work and into poverty’. Again this is a circular argument of the sort used to justify sweat shops.

This analogy is particularly apt given that it is the strip industry which actually tends to *put women into poverty* and lead them into future *unemployment* – not just because of its poor pay and work conditions but because it can be hard for women when they do leave to then find employment (because of low self esteem, stigma or lack of qualifications).

If the Council is really so concerned by keeping women out of poverty, why hasn't it enforced proper pay and employment conditions on Spearmint Rhino (as given in the recommendations), as many other councils have done?

And instead of licensing strip clubs, why doesn't it offer exit plans for lap dancers – supporting them into other work with proper employment – with respectful pay and working conditions and minimal risk of sexual exploitation (as also outlined in the recommendations)?

I would also point out that most lap dancers are ‘itinerant’ – working in many different clubs across the country. This was also acknowledged by Philip Kolvin, QC, at the last Spearmint Rhino licensing hearing. If one club closes, women are not ‘put out of work’ they merely move to another club.



Bower Claire

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 15 May 2018 14:33
To: licensingservice
Subject: SEN licence renewal for 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.
 - 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

Bower Claire

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 15 May 2018 15:03
To: licensingservice
Subject: Objection to Sexual Entertainment Licence for Spearmint Rhino

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

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.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

15 May 2018

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Bower Claire

From: [Redacted]
Sent: 15 May 2018 15:37
To: licensingservice
Subject: Objection to Sonfield Developments application for Spearmint Rhino licence renewal
Attachments: SR Objection 2018.docx
Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged
Categories: SPEARMINT RHINO

Dear Licensing Service,

Please find attached a letter of Objection to Sonfield Developments application for Spearmint Rhino licence renewal.
Kind regards,

Confidential Freephone Helpline:- [Redacted]
Text Support:- [Redacted]
Email Support:- [Redacted]

Registered Charity Number:- 1139555

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LOTTERY FUNDED

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

15th May 2018

Dear Licensing Service

Objection to Sonfield Developments application for 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.

As a regular visitor to the city of Rape Crises Centre in Sheffield I strongly advocate 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. As Sheffield's city population continues to grow it is more than likely that this area will become even more residential.

(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 in addition to the events which will be hosted by the Site Gallery upon its reopening.

(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” which is open until midnight everyday.

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.

It is in very close proximity to the Great Escape Game which also caters for children and families.

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.

(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.

(b) 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 vicinity which support vulnerable children, young people and adults, including a specialist sexual violence service and a women’s project which is situated directly behind the club, the same project a mother of a service user was quoted as saying she could not let her daughter access due to it being within feet of the club in 2017’s objections.

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.

Addaction, the adult drug and alcohol service is also on Sidney Street with Paternoster Row and Brown Street as a direct access route from the railway station, bus station and bus stops on Arundel Gate coming in from the south of the City.

(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 and furthermore, designated to be at the heart of the CIQ. It is also on the direct access route to the 24/7 Addsetts learning centre from numerous student accommodation blocks in the immediate vicinity (with more being built on Sidney Street), 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 an obtrusive blacked out sinister presence incongruous with its surroundings. 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.

As recorded in the case of R (Bean Trading A Ltd) v Leeds City Council (2014):

The committee noted the applicant’s offer in relation to signage and whilst recognizing attempts to address concerns was of the view that the premises could never be invisible.

All other buildings in the vicinity are signed and this was a poor attempt to minimise the impact this venue has. It is also a recognition by last year’s Sub-committee of the club’s incongruity and inappropriateness. The only other buildings in the area not clearly marked are for reasons of anonymity because of vulnerable service users accessing services.

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.ⁱ

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 disturbing examples of the negative impact of this club were given in objections, for example: one woman giving up her studio, 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). Others have stated how the club impacts on their business at hearings and in writing.ⁱⁱ

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 uncomfortableⁱⁱⁱ

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^{iv}.

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.^v

In addition to 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.^{vi}

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^{vii}.

In their UK study published in 2011 Sanders and Hardy^{viii} 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 in many testimonies of former performers. This is in addition to the misogynistic and sexist views espoused by many men (and some women) towards women working in the industry.

According to the BBC, the number of lap dancing clubs has fallen by a third in England^{ix}. The same report states that "a survey conducted by YouGov in 2015 found that 64% of people in Great Britain said strip clubs were a negative part of British culture."

It is clear in the current context that the presence of a lap dancing club in Sheffield is detrimental to all of its residents and contravenes the Public Sector Equality Duty and Gender Duty.

I ask that the committee take all of the above into account when deciding on the licence application and consider the continued impact on the city and its residents of renewing the licence.

Kind regards

References

ⁱ 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*

ⁱⁱ *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>

ⁱⁱⁱ Kolvin, P (2010) *Sex Licensing*, The Institute of Licensing p.87

^{iv} Kolvin, P (2010) *Sex Licensing*, The Institute of Licensing p.87

^v 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.

^{vi} 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>.

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

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

^{ix} 23rd February 2018 Available from: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-43043842>

Bower Claire

From: [Redacted]
Sent: 15 May 2018 15:46
To: licensingservice
Subject: Objection letter
Attachments: Strip clubs.docx

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Categories: SPEARMINT RHINO

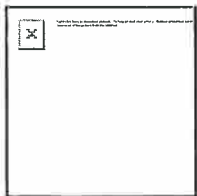
Hi

Please see attached objection letter to the renewing of the spearmint rhino licence.

With regards

[Redacted signature block]

Tel: [Redacted]
Email: [Redacted]



R (Bean Trading A Ltd) v Leeds City Council (2014) Licensing Service
Block C, Staniforth Road Depot
Staniforth Road
Surrey Street
S9 3HD
By email to: licensing@sheffield.gov.uk

15 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. Apna Haq regularly facilitates training and awareness sessions on issues of violence against women and girls within the Sheffield area, a number of these sessions have been held at the workstation. Within these sessions numerous young women ie students from the universities have shared about how uncomfortable they feel with spearmint rhino being located so near their daily life haunts. They have shared that they have felt unsafe as a result of knowing the type of establishment it is.

Also in relation to the next paragraph a number of women have shared how potential new businesses that had young women as target audiences have decided not to be based in Sheffield on seeing Spearmint Rhino being present, this is as they did not want to be associated with such an establishment as they felt it would lessen their customer base of women.

The city centre's residential population had risen from 6,000 to 30,000 over the last 10 yearsⁱ 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"ⁱⁱ 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

(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.”^{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

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}

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}.

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}

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}

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^x.

In their UK study published in 2011 Sanders and Hardy^{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}

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:

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."^{xiii}

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^{xiv}. 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 22nd 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*

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- ^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 22nd 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} 23rd February 2018 Available from: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-43043842>

Bower Claire

From: [redacted] >
Sent: 15 May 2018 16:49
To: licensingservice
Subject: Objection to Spearmint Rhino
Attachments: SpearmintRhinoObjection2018.docx

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Categories: SPEARMINT RHINO

Dear Licensing Service

Please find attached my representation with regard to Spearmint Rhino's licence renewal application. Could you please confirm receipt?

Many thanks and kind regards

[redacted]
[redacted]

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

15th May 2018

Dear Licensing Service

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:

1. 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 yearsⁱ 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”ⁱⁱⁱ for which Brown Street and Paternoster Row are the main thoroughfares.

Last year, members determined that “from the evening onwards Brown Strete [sic] is very quiet with minimal footfall” – the Alsop Fields Development will increase footfall. There is also the Rutland Arms on the corner.

(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. The Site gallery is due to reopen and will be hosting regular events for young people:



YOUNG PEOPLE

Site Gallery attracts inquisitive and brilliant young people. They come to the gallery from all over Sheffield, from all backgrounds. They have divergent opinions and beliefs, and they spark off each other. They collaborate, create, discuss, challenge and respond. By getting stuck in and sharing their ideas, they help us create better arts opportunities for young people.

One of the main ways young people get involved in Site Gallery is through the [Society of Explorers](#).

"Site Gallery always puts together an exciting and enviable programme of activities for young people – and its Society of Explorers is one gang we'd love to be in, if only we could do our teenage years all over again." Our Favourite Places

The 'Explorers' is an art collective of 14-19 year olds from Sheffield that meets at Site Gallery. In Summer 2017, they launched their amazing Art Van – [On The Road](#). They helped the gallery team transform a white van into an exceptional mobile gallery and workshop space, commissioning architects and artists and putting their plans into action.

(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.”

As already mentioned, the Site Gallery which is directly opposite has just undergone a huge expansion, supported by the Council.

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.”^{iv}

(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, including including Together Women and Element Society in the immediate vicinity. There are further charitable organisations in the area supporting vulnerable young people and adults which occupy a building within a very short distance from venue, including a specialist sexual violence support centre which supports children from the age of 13 upwards. With Brown Street and Grinders Hill as a direct access route from Arundel Gate and Charles Street where many buses stop and service users will alight from. Furthermore, there is the car park behind the HUBS which many service users of all the charities and organisations in the area are likely to use if driving into the city centre. 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). This will be a central gateway to the Alsop Fields development and the newly established Jawing from both the train and bus stations.

(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 although last year, the Sub-committee conceded that it was in the CIQ. 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.

Last year the determination notice stated “members heard how some women felt threatened and unsafe walking past the premises during the day knowing that the premises was there and that it triggered memories of past events for them. The premises will now essentially be ‘invisible’ during the day which will aim to mitigate this.” **I completely disagree, we all know what the club is and it sticks out like a sore thumb. No amount of “silk pursing” or “invisibilising” of this place will ever make women feel safer.**

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. It is not possible to make a venue of this nature “invisible.” 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.

I would be absolutely furious if I discovered that the university I had decided to study at/accommodation I had decided to buy or rent had a strip club on the doorstep. This is a dishonest and disingenuous approach.

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. For example a tapas bar in Bristol is now occupies the site of a former strip club and is a thriving business contributing far more to the local economy than its predecessor.

(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.”

In last year's determination notice, members determined that "the crime levels on Brown Street as a whole are very low", however Nikki Bond has some statistics on this which are provided in her objection so I will not enclose them here.

2. 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."^v

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.^{vi}

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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”^{viii}.

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.”^{ix}

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.^x

In last year’s determination notice it was stated “members believe that if anybody wishes to attend the premises then they should be free to do so, but also believe that they should be free to enjoy other city centre entertainment without being exposed to leafletting. As such members determined to condition the licence to stop this activity.” I was under the impression that this was already not supposed to be happening. However, in addition to this, women have the right to go about our everyday business, travel in the city and access amenities and facilities and feel safe. Last year there was a very cavalier and dismissive attitude towards women who had shared their experiences of being excluded from the area because of Spearmint Rhino.

3. Gender stereotypes

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^{xi}.

In their UK study published in 2011 Sanders and Hardy^{xii} 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.

4. Other matters of concern for consideration by the Sub-Committee

4.1 Spearmint Rhino promotional materials

I have been objecting to Spearmint Rhino (and other proposals for new clubs) for several years. In 2015, the club’s Dancer Rules were enclosed in the Agenda Pack although they haven’t been since. Upon revisiting these, there are several rules in place which dancers must abide by, one of which is that are not permitted to touch their breasts.

However, there are a number of advertising images which contradict this (Not Buying It Sheffield has covered some), including video footage on the following site:

<https://www.welovesheffield.uk/reviews/videos.html?m=rJ00C>

Sheffield Directory & Reviews [▶](#) Food & Drink [▶](#) Bars, Pubs & Clubs [▶](#) Spearmint Rhino



Spearmint Rhino

visited by: We Love Sheffield!



0 0 0



[Compare](#) [Add Media](#) [Write Review](#) [Claim this listing](#) [Add to favorites](#)

LOCATION

Area City Centre
Address 60 Brown St, Sheffield
Postcode S1 2BS

CONTACT

Telephone 0114 279 8092
Website <http://www.spearminrhino.com/microSiteUK.php?pld=22>

Popular gentlemen's club, situated on Brown Street, Sheffield.

Spearmint Rhino probably needs no introduction. A popular club for drink and gentlemen's entertainment, open 7 nights a week.



[Tweet](#)

[G+](#)

[in Share](#)

0

[Save](#)



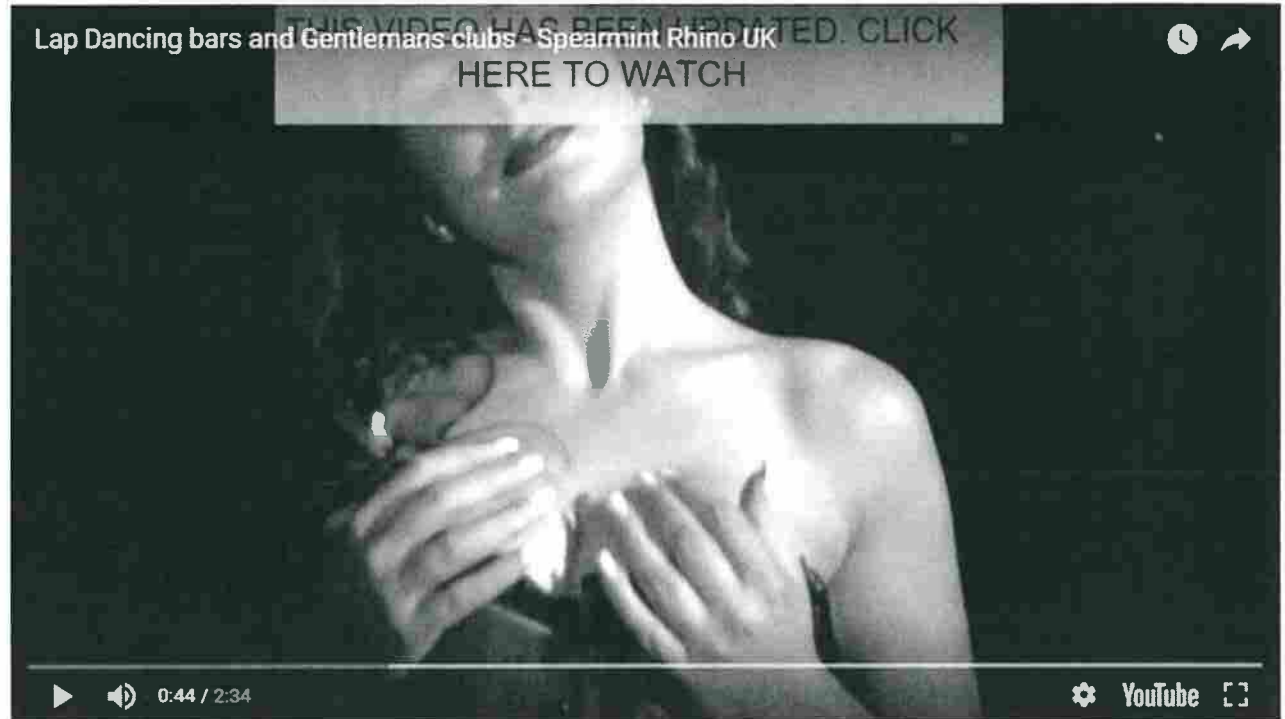
PHOTOS

[All Photos \(2\)](#)

Spearmint Rhino: VIDEOS

Lap Dancing bars and Gentlemans clubs - Spearmint Rhino UK

◀ Spearmint Rhino Add Media



July 28, 2013 - Duration: 02:35 - More by We Love Sheffield!

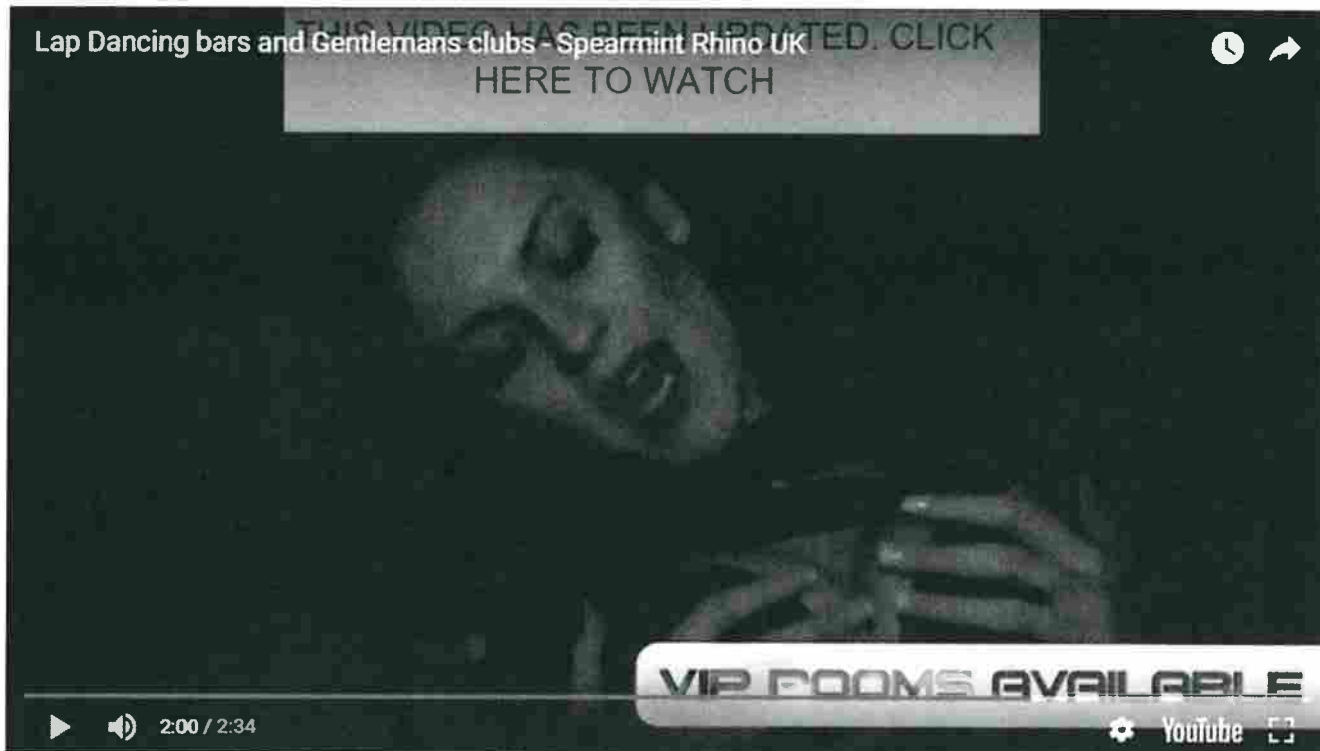
1996 views

Spearmint Rhino - The finest lap dancing bar in the UK and top-scale adult entertainment. Locations around the world are open 7

Spearmint Rhino: VIDEOS

Lap Dancing bars and Gentlemans clubs - Spearmint Rhino UK

◀ Spearmint Rhino Add Media



According to the same dancer rules submitted in 2015, with regard to contact of dancers between dancers, it states:

9. Dancers are never to intentionally touch the genitals, anus or breasts of another dancer or to knowingly permit another dancer to intentionally touch their genitals, anus or breasts.

Presumably this applies to breast on breast contact? If not then the following image in addition to the ones above are very misleading in terms of what customers can expect. They also give contradictory messages to the dancers themselves who sign up to a set of rules which the promo images and videos do not reflect.



This image is arrived at from clicking on the link in a tweet in the Sheffield Spearmint Rhino Twitter account and is one of several images. This type of advertising raises customers' expectations and leads to incidents such as this reported on 23rd April 2017 in the Daily Mail (the Sheffield Star link on this is down at the time of writing):

A stripper who was punched in the face by a middle-aged racist clubber claims he had pestered her for sex all night.

Anastasia Frances, 21, suffered a shattered cheekbone and broken eye socket due to the sickening blow while trying to break up a fight with the thug and her boyfriend.

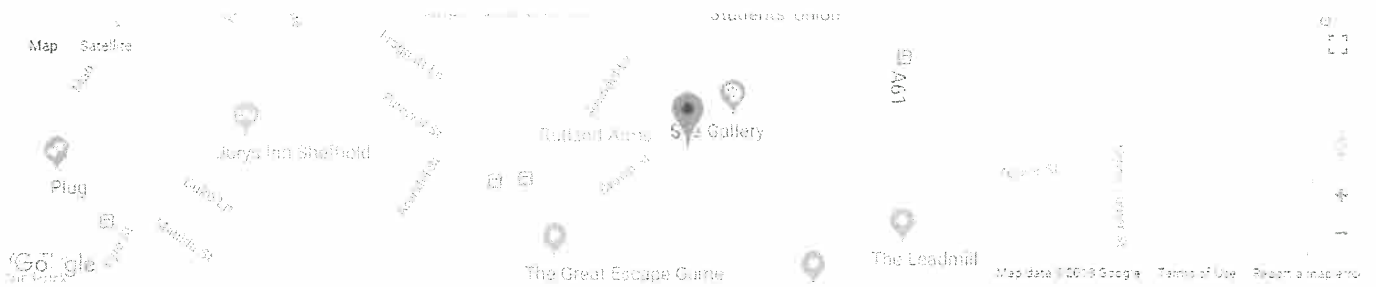
The mother-of-one from Leeds said her attacker offered her cash for sex at the strip club where she worked in Doncaster.

When she turned him down the brute left - but lurked outside for her, followed her to a taxi rank and began calling her boyfriend a 'n****r'.



Customer reviews

Reviews on this site: <https://lustnames.com/spearmint-rhino-sheffield> suggest physical contact which goes against the dancer rules and that one reviewer talks about “extras” although in this case he didn’t get his “extras” but there is an expectation that they are part of the package. Also, is Spearmint Rhino a “white only” dancer club? The dates these reviews were posted are not clear but to the right of the reviews, it states that they joined in January 2017 so one assumes them to be relatively recent?



Strip clubs → Europe → England → Sheffield → Spearmint Rhino



Spearmint Rhino

★★★★☆

Add review

+44 (0)1142 798 092

60 Brown Street

Prices and features

Club type: Nude Dancers

Atmosphere: 3

Dancers Ethnicity: White

Dancers: 3

Features: Beer and Wine, Full Bar, Bikini Dancers Only, Topless Dancers, Nude Dancers, Bikini Lap Dances

Value: 3

Dance price: 20

Overall: 3

Drink price: 3

Boyztime cover: 10

Comments and reviews

Atmosphere: ★★★★★

Dancers: ★★★★★

Value: ★★★★★

Overall: ★★★★★

100% (10) (10)

I went on the tuesday, as it is a student night, meaning free entry with a student card!

10 pounds all night for dances were also really good value, and I ended up spending about 90 pounds, all in all it was very worth it and the girls were very attractive. You also get sambucca and tequila shots for a pound each which is great if you are looking to get a bit merry.

The club is a very good environment, and is as non-sleazy as a strip club could possibly be, and the girls are actually interested, and dont look bored out of their faces like most places ive been.

I have had a private dance before, and the girl was very good and naughty :) Would definitely recommend spending some extra cash!



anonfig

2014-05-12

Visit Day: Tuesday



Visit Time: After

0 0 0

This one has contact with the reviewer's groin:

Atmosphere: ★★☆☆☆ Dancers: ★★☆☆☆ Value: ★★☆☆☆ Overall: ★★☆☆☆




Another visit to Spearmint Rhino sheffield, this time a little bit better than the last, Ventured in on a monday a little bit before 10pm and it was v. quiet as I expected. However, there were certainly more girls on this time than my sadly lacking previous visit. The prices are always very reasonable here, the £40 for 15 minutes is certainly one of the best deals around as the VIP rooms where you get taken are very plush, private and the girls are straight into the action. However, sometimes I feel 15 minutes without a break is a bit too long and my mind tends to wander, although it soon comes back again when some of these girls pummel there behinds into your groin, I swear it was almost painful a few times!!! In general the girls are pretty good looking but not stunning, they are pleasant enough and won't rush you and as usual for Spearmint Rhino the club is managed pretty well.

 kally71 2005-10-13 Visit Day: Unknown Visit Time: 0  

This same reviewer seems to agree with objectors about the location:

Atmosphere: ★★☆☆☆ Dancers: ★★☆☆☆ Value: ★★☆☆☆ Overall: ★★☆☆☆

Fantastic looking club (as usual for SR) but in completely the wrong place - student hell! Went there on a wednesday about 11pm and it was dead. There were only six girls on (I spoke to the manager who said there should have been 12!) so it was really difficult to get dances - do they not want my money! Had three dances and at £40 for 15 minutes they were pretty good value by UK standards. I'm told the place is buzzing at weekends and on tuesday night (student night) but I'm not sure how sustainable the club is. Having said that if you want a relaxing low pressure time, I would recommend it.

 kally71 2004-11-20 Visit Day: Unknown Visit Time: 0  

5 Conclusion

I reiterate that the Policy 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".

It is time that the Sub-committee faced up to the reality that Spearmint Rhino is not welcome in Sheffield. This has nothing to do with "killjoys" nor being "anti-sex" which are frequent accusations. If we were "anti-sex" then we would be meeting you annually at La Chambre hearings which we are not.

Nor is this an issue about women being "put out of work" as is another accusation. Last year, Mr Kolvin informed the Sub-committee that the dancers are peripatetic and one night will dance in Sheffield and another in Wakefield. By his own admission, therefore, the dancers will not lose their livelihoods although this is also not a consideration for Licensing.

Formula One racing has stopped using "grid girls" and the Sub-committee also needs to recognise that in addition to all the points raised by me and others that strip clubs are at odds with modern day social norms and gender equality.

I look forward to hearing from you.



References

ⁱSheffield 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>

ⁱⁱSheffield 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<http://www.sitegallery.org/youngpeople/>

^{iv}Sheffield Hallam University 22nd 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>

^vWright, 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*

^{vi}*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>

^{vii}Kolvin, P (2010) *Sex Licensing*, The Institute of Licensing p.87

^{viii}Kolvin, P (2010) *Sex Licensing*, The Institute of Licensing p.87

^{ix}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.

^xSafe 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>.

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

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

Bower Claire

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 15 May 2018 17:37
To: licensingservice
Subject: Objection to Spearmint Rhino Strip Club
Attachments: Licensing Service Rhino Spearmint club.docx

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Categories: SPEARMINT RHINO

Please find attached letter of objection to the club.

Thank you

Licensing Service

Block C, Staniforth Road Depot

Staniforth Road

Surrey Street

S9 3HD

By email to: licensing@sheffield.gov.uk

15/05/2018

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.

Whilst Spearmint Rhino has been trading for a number of years, its location is becoming increasingly unsuitable for a lap-dancing club. The growing development of the Cultural Industries Quarter and the expansion of student accommodation and teaching locally are highly relevant to the appropriateness of the location. The premises are located on what is to be known as the Knowledge Gateway, recognising the enhancement of the area as a place of creative knowledge and progressive development. Furthermore, the location is adjacent to land earmarked for a major proposed expansion of Sheffield Hallam University.

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.

A lap-dancing club is increasingly at odds with this vision. I note the application form does not attempt to address any of the licensing objectives except by stating it is a renewal application. Nor does it attempt to address the minimum legal duties of the authority in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010.

The nature of a lap-dancing club means there is significant difference in the treatment of the sexes. In particular, I understand the establishment treats the regular staff (mostly if not all, men) as employees but requires the dancers (i.e. women) to be self-employed, with correspondingly lower degrees of employment protection. This is not a matter of choice on the part of the dancers. The local authority must demonstrate it has due regard to the various principles in the public sector equality duty when considering the application, so as to comply with its own legal obligations.

If the authority is minded to grant the licence, I would support a condition requiring all workers, including dancers, to be engaged directly only under the terms of a written contract of employment.

I trust the Committee will take these views into account.