

LICENSING SUB COMMITTEE (SEV'S)

WEDNESDAY, 13TH JUNE, 2012

PRESENT: Councillor S Armitage in the Chair

Councillors B Gettings and G Hussain

21 Election of Chair

RESOLVED – That Councillor Armitage be elected Chair of the meeting

22 Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public

The Sub Committee felt that the hearing should be held in the public domain and agreed that wherever possible, specific reference to the contents of the exempt information contained within Appendix B of the report should not be referred to, however if it became necessary, the public and press would be excluded from the meeting as follows:

RESOLVED – That the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of that part of the agenda designated as exempt information on the grounds that it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information as contained in Appendix B of the report referred to in minute 25 both in terms of Regulation 14 of the Licensing Act 2003 (Hearing Regulations 2005) and the Licensing Procedure Rules, and on the grounds that it is not in the public interest to disclose the contents as the information therein pertains to an individual and that person would not reasonably expect their personal information or discussions thereon to be in the public domain.

23 Late Items

No formal late items of business were added to the agenda, however additional information had been supplied after the agenda despatch for the hearing by two objectors in support of their written submissions contained within the report. These had been made available prior to the hearing to all parties.

24 Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interest

25 Application for the grant of a sex establishment licence for Wildcats, 153-155 The Headrow, Leeds LS1 5RB

The Licensing Sub Committee considered the report of the Head of Licensing and Registration on an application made under Section 2 (Schedule 3) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 for the grant of a sex establishment licence. The application is made by Harjen Limited c/o of Henton and Co. LLP, St. Andrews House, St. Andrews Street, Leeds LS3 1LF for the premises known as 'Wildcats', 153/155 The Headrow, Leeds LS1 5RB. The basement, ground and first floors are to be covered under the provisions of the licence with proposed hours of operation are 00:00 until 00:59 (24hours) seven days per week.

Appendix B of the report was exempt from publication under Access to Information Procedure Rule 10.4 (1, 2 & 3), and Regulation 14 of the Licensing Act 2003 (Hearing Regulations 2005) however the Sub Committee resolved not to specifically discuss the exempt information to allow the hearing to be held in public.

The application attracted a total of 34 objections, 4 of which were from elected members plus one received from a member of parliament. A further objection was received from Councillor Rebecca Charlwood which had been counter signed by 19 elected members, 8 members of parliament, 1 member of the European Parliament, and 4 leaders of religious groups. 4 letters of support were also submitted. Not all of the objectors attended the hearing and the Sub Committee resolved to consider their written submissions in their absence and proceed with the hearing.

Present at the hearing were

For Wildcats

Mr P Whur – Solicitor for the applicant

Mr L Wright – Manager

Mr H Nejad – Director

Mr R Etchells – expert witness

Ms M Gholami – Manager

Objectors

Ms S McNeil

Plus, a number of observers

The Sub Committee heard from Mr Whur on behalf of the applicant who addressed the licensed history of the premises and the experience of the management team, noting that another Wildcats venue was established in Harrogate. Mr Whur addressed the following points:

- the capacity and layout of the venue over 3 floors
- the fact that the venue benefited from planning permission for use as a lap dancing club
- the Policies submitted with the application and commented in particular on the security measures deployed including the CCTV system which was monitored by the receptionist, SIA registered door staff and supervision. He noted that the Harrogate venue had installed panic buttons, but that this had not been suggested for Leeds
- a smoking area specifically for use by the dancers was available
- the external appearance of the venue. Mr Whur reported the applicant had undertaken to remove the logo currently employed, if the Sub Committee required this
- Mr Etchells then addressed the information contained within his written submission on behalf of the applicant.

In discussions with the Sub Committee, Mr Whur and the applicant confirmed the following

- The venue was not open during daytime hours
- Promotion staff were encouraged to de-litter any flyers left in the areas they covered – such as around St Johns Centre/Park Row
- Fridays and Saturdays were the busiest times with up to 300 patrons

The Sub Committee then heard from Ms S McNeil who had submitted an objection to the application and attended the hearing on behalf of Justice For Women and several other objectors. Ms McNeil addressed her concerns regarding the dancers' welfare and the impact that licensing this type of venue would have on the objectification of women and on the image of Leeds.

In conclusion, Mr Whur reiterated the good management record of the premises and that the external appearance of the premises would be addressed

RESOLVED –

- a) To note the contents of both the written and verbal submissions
- b) To note that the application will be further deliberated on Friday 15th June 2012 – once all applications for the new Sex Establishment Licence to be issued under the terms of the Local Government Miscellaneous Provisions Act 1982 (as amended by the Policing and Crime Act 2009) had been dealt with. The press and public will be excluded from the proceedings where Members deliberate the application as it is in the public interest to allow the Members to have full and frank debate on the matter, as allowed under the provisions of the Licensing Procedure Rules. It was further noted that the decision of the sub committee would be made public at the end of the decision making process.