

Evidence and Information in Support of a Zero Limit on Sexual Entertainment Venues in the Borough of Cheltenham

Many people who objected to the opening of a Lap Dancing Club in Bath Road, and those who are now calling for a zero limit by signing the relevant petition cited concerns over sexually charged and alcohol-fuelled men posing an increased risk to female members of the public.

It is my understanding that the Licencing Committee granted the Bath Road SEV licence based, partly at least, on their belief that there was no evidence to support this concern. Indeed, Andrew Wood, solicitor for the licensee, clearly stated at the Licencing Meeting that these concerns were ‘unsubstantiated and without foundation’.

However, the concerns are strongly supported and substantiated...

The empirically verified psychological principles of Classical and Operant Conditioning clearly shows that attitudes and actions are strongly influenced by experience. Therefore, the Psychological conditioning effect of the purchase of ‘sexual entertainment’ reinforces the illusion that a female is available to the client for the purpose of sexual gratification.

Therefore, when the conditioning has taken place (by means of the client purchasing services at a SEV) the client’s attitude towards females will unequivocally be altered in the direction of women being viewed as objects of sexual gratification, the client is then most definitely at a higher risk of committing sexually related crime, not just immediately after leaving the SEV, but at any time following the conditioning experience¹. (Aggrawal, 2009 studies the conditioning effect on sexual behaviour in some detail²). Add to this the inhibition-reducing effect of alcohol and then also the further effect of bravado on a group of men and the probability of sexual crime and harassment in, but not limited to, the locality of the SEV will increase.

¹ Information about Psychological Conditioning can be found in any good Psychology textbook or on the internet.

² Aggrawal, A. 2009 *Forensic and Medico-legal Aspects of Sexual Crimes and Unusual Sexual Practices*. Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press

Experience and observation of this psychological phenomenon corroborate:

- Inspector Ian Drummond-Smith of Devon & Cornwall Constabulary was reported by the Daily Telegraph as raising concerns to his local Licencing Authority that the presence of a lap dancing club in Newquay may have contributed to as many as fourteen rapes and 34 sexual assaults. Five rapes and 16 sexual assaults were committed within a one mile radius of the club.³
- Research clearly shows that the instances of reported rape in the vicinity of sexual entertainment venues has increased by anything up to 50%, and that groups of sexually stimulated men are far more likely to engage in sexually threatening behaviour and sexual crime.^{4&5}
- The Licensing Authority of the London Borough of Westminster, which has a great deal of experience of Sexual Entertainment Venues, ‘recognises the inherent risks posed to woman’s safety and wellbeing by venues offering nude entertainment, including antisocial behaviour, increased prostitution and touting, and incidents of coercion on-site [in SEVs]’⁶.

Conclusion:

Cheltenham Borough Council is requested - in the light of the empirical evidence available which substantiates the concerns of 1,122 petitioners, the clear response to the public consultation, and the four licencing objectives, (particularly the prevention of crime and disorder, public safety, and the prevention of public nuisance) – to set a zero limit on Sexual Entertainment Venues in the Borough of Cheltenham.

³ The Daily Telegraph – 23 May 2012. Available online at <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/law-and-order/9284609/Lapdancing-clubs-encourage-rape-and-sexual-assaults-claims-police-chief.html>

⁴ Eden, I. 2003 *The Lilith Report on Lapdancing and Striptease in the Borough of Camden*. London: Eaves

⁵ Bindel, J. 2004 *Profitable Exploits: Lap Dancing in the UK*. London: Child and Woman Abuse Studies Unit

⁶ Westminster City Council, 2006. *The Licencing Act: Background*. (Quoted by Eden, I. 2007 *Inappropriate Behaviour: Adult Venues and Licencing in London* (Page 69). London: Eaves