



The Licencing Committee

Cheltenham Borough Council

By email to: democraticservices@cheltenham.gov.uk and licensing@cheltenham.gov.uk

Wednesday 29th December 2021

To whom it may concern:

Ref: 21/02047/SEXR Application to vary the Sexual Entertainment Venue (SEV) licence for the Two Pigs, Cheltenham

Firstly, may I welcome this opportunity to make representations to you regarding the above application. I very much prefer following the usual process in making such responses, and regret that option was not available to me during the original submission for the above licence, by virtue of not being made aware of the application until it was already 'out of time'.

You may recall my previous public statements on the original SEV application that a club of this nature (the only one of its type in Gloucestershire) is inappropriate in the current climate of increased concerns around misogyny, women's safety and the prevalence of violence against women and girls. It would appear from reports that have been submitted to the Constabulary, and other responses relating to the original application and this variation, that there is a groundswell of similar feeling from the public. I saw that strength of feeling myself when I participated in the well-attended Reclaim the Night women's march last month in the centre of Cheltenham.

However, I do not seek to revisit your original decision to agree the SEV licence, and will confine my detailed comments to this variation. You will have seen the response from the Constabulary relating to this proposed change of condition. Like we all are, they are tightly restricted by the existing legislation when dealing with such applications. Particularly in relation to applications such as this, they are also hamstrung by the lack of reporting that we know is a factor in relation to violence and intimidation against women and girls (some 80% of victims of sexual assault fail to report their attacks) – I am seeking to redress this issue through my Police and Crime Prevention Plan.

Nevertheless, I believe that this variation seeks to erode the reasonable protections for public decency that were, in my view rightly, put in place in the original conditions, and should therefore be rejected.

Condition 6 is in place to prevent the centre of town and other public spaces being exposed to the solicitation of activities of a sexual nature, potentially creating a hostile environment for other women and girls seeking to enjoy Cheltenham's Night Time Economy.

Agreeing to such a variation would be contrary to the Council's Sexual Entertainment Venue Policy Statement, and would therefore undermine the democratically approved policy adopted by Cheltenham Borough Council. It would also be in contravention of the Code of Conduct for the 'Night Safe Scheme', something that I know that the Council is rightly proud of promoting, which seeks to prevent printed material causing widespread offence.

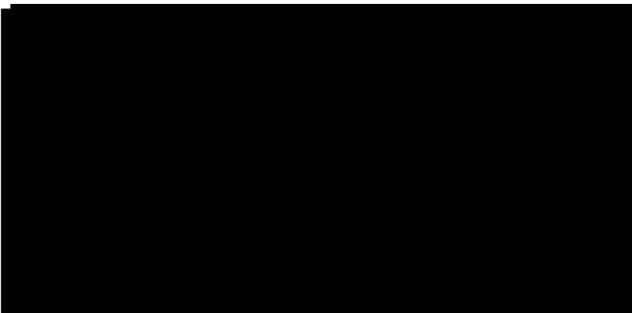
The Borough Council's own recent survey identified that three quarters of women feel less safe in town at night during Race Week, and the original condition goes some way to address those concerns. By seeking to remove it, those women brave enough to venture into town at night run the risk of facing a gauntlet of potential intimidation and abuse, not just in the vicinity of the venue, but right across the town.

Further, while I support the protection of the performers by providing them with transport to and from the venue and believe that this could be a legitimate condition of the licence, using this transport to advertise the sexualised activity which takes place and to transport customers to the venue is inappropriate. Isn't that why we have licensed taxis? Such dedicated transport would be a breeding ground for misogynistic comments and attitudes and may, I believe, put performers and other women and girls in Cheltenham at risk of abuse or inappropriate and unwanted advances.

As I understand things, your Committee agreed to the 2 Pigs SEV licence partly on the basis that it allowed you to keep control of proceedings, in a way that was not easily achievable for temporary pop-up venues. Yet allowing uncontrolled public advertising and soliciting of the venue could result in public nuisance, and harm the safety of female members of the public frequenting the town. I am also well aware of the littering problems that can result from the profligate and uncontrolled distribution of leaflets, an issue that regularly annoys local residents. I believe that agreeing this condition variation would therefore undermine the credibility of your original decision to allow a *strictly controlled* SEV licence.

We are suffering an epidemic of violence and intimidation towards women and girls in our Country, and I am committed to doing something about it. I believe that this variation would harm the public safety of women and girls in Cheltenham during race week and create a public nuisance. It is incumbent on those of us in positions of authority in public safety to address those concerns. I therefore respectfully request that you oppose this application.

Yours faithfully,



Police and Crime Commissioner for Gloucestershire