

## **ANNEX 1 - OBJECTIONS**

1

Dear Licensing team,

I hope this letter finds you well. I am writing to bring your attention to how lap dance clubs can have a detrimental direct and indirect impact on girls like me. I wish I didn't have to send you this objection, but I feel that there is little equality between men and women.

Lap dance clubs portray women as commodities for male pleasure. This can undermine efforts to achieve gender equity and sends a message to young women and girls that their worth is primarily tied to their physical appearance and sexuality, rather than their skills and capabilities. Lap dance clubs can also contribute to a broader culture of sexual harassment. Men who frequent such establishments may be more likely to engage in disrespectful and harassing behaviour towards women outside of these venues, including in public spaces. This poses a direct threat to the safety and well-being of young women and girls.

In light of these practical concerns, I urge you to consider the broader societal implications of permitting lap dance clubs in Cheltenham. While individual freedoms and business interests are important, we must also prioritise the safety, dignity, and well-being of women, including young women and girls.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

2

Dear Council member

As a resident of Cheltenham I wish to raise an objection to the SEV license request 23/01277/SEXA.

This objection is raised as I believe the number of premises licensed should be nil. This is especially true given this request is very close to a religious building (namely St Andrews Reformed Church). It is also near some family friendly restaurants which could have young people in at club opening times.

I do not believe that the sexual entertainment licenses are good for the moral standing of Cheltenham and indeed gives the town a bad name. Women don't feel safe going in to town during Race Week and granting this license would increase the sex tourism of race week to all other race meets. I understand that I can't object on moral grounds, but I do believe that the number of licenses should be reduced to nil and the license request should be denied.

Thank you

3

As a Gloucestershire resident and as a woman, I was very concerned about the granting of licence for Lap Dancing during next years Race Week.  
Events such as this threaten the safety of women and girls. It creates an atmosphere where men feel entitled to harass women.

4

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to object to the Application for a Sex Establishment Licence; 23/01277/SEXA on the grounds of

The prevention of crime and disorder  
Public safety  
The prevention of public nuisance  
The protection of children from harm

According to a local publication, the 'Punchline', earlier in the year 'hordes of racegoers flocked to the pop-up venue' for a similar event and 'Bosses are now hoping to attract hundreds more punters to the venue during the November Meet'.

It is clear that the hordes of punters will all be men, flocking to a venue in order to pay to watch women..

Aside from any moral objection which is not allowed, I would argue that allowing an event of this kind which is so specifically geared towards men and is of a sexual nature will be a public nuisance to any women who are in the vicinity. The area around this event will become unsafe for any women and girls who will be forced to stay away for fear of becoming a victim of crime. I also object on the grounds of the safety of the women employed for this event.

Yours sincerely,

5

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am writing to object to application reference 23/01277/SEXA to Steven Burrows for the 17th and 18th November this year.

As a woman and a mother, I feel lap dancing and prostitution has no place in modern society. It is degrading to women and girls and encourages their objectification.

Local women have spoken of not feeling safe at night in Race Week and as it will be dark in November, they are likely to feel particularly vulnerable.

In addition, a high number of women working in this industry have been trafficked or otherwise coerced into taking part. This is not something the Council should be supporting.

Please can you consider the wider impact on the women and girls of Cheltenham when deciding whether to grant this licence.

Yours sincerely

6

Dear All,

I have tried numerous times today to submit an objection on the CBC website to the above application but I am told there is a system error. It is my understanding that the deadline of the consultation is Monday

Please confirm receipt of my objection.

Yours faithfully

6 continued

I am writing to object to this application which I understand is to vary the current licence to allow this venue to operate as a sexual entertainment (SEV) venue each year in November (as well as in March).

When deciding whether to issue a licence for an SEV Cheltenham Borough Council (CBC) have the following duties under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED):

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act – of women and girls
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not – so between men and women

The PSED that CBC have applies to:

- Women working in the SEV
- Women and girls in the vicinity of the SEV
- Women and girls in wider society

This was confirmed in the King (on the application of) CDE versus Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council judicial review earlier in 2023.

Sexual Violence in Cheltenham

CBC were provided with crime data by Gloucestershire Constabulary which shows a spike in sexual violence and offences against the person in Cheltenham around 13/03/2019 and 16/03/2019 which is during the races. The data also showed a high number of incidents being reported during the races.

The Council have confirmed to me (via an FOIA response) that they do not hold any more contemporaneous data than that which was provided in 2019.

CBC's 2023 Purple Flag submission includes the following paragraph:

“Violence against women and girls is of particular concern at present. This can be justified by the responses to recent resident surveys and a 50% increase in the number of sexual offences reported within the Purple Flag area in the last year. Our vision for Cheltenham's ENTE is that it be safe and welcoming for all.”

It is reasonable to conclude, based on well-established evidence, that the vast majority of perpetrators of sexual violence being committed in Cheltenham are men (male), with the majority of victims/ survivors being women and girls (female). CBC have, themselves, acknowledged that increasing levels of violence against women and girls related to the night time economy is a concern. (2023 Purple Flag submission).

Rape Crisis England and Wales (RCEW) advise that 1 in 4 women have been raped or sexually assaulted as an adult. 98% of adults prosecuted for sexual offences are men. In March 2021, UN Women UK conducted a poll of over 1000 women in the UK and found that 97% of women aged 18-24 had faced harassment, with 80% of these incidents taking place in public spaces.

It is also well established that sexual violence is under reported, with RCEW quoting that 5 in 6 women who are raped do not tell the police. Again, in 2021, UN Women published data from YouGov stating that 80% of survivors of sexual harassment never report their experience. In addition, street harassment has become 'normalised'



## **Street harassment 'relentless' for women and girls**

Being harassed has become 'normal' - and it's time for the government to act, a group of MPs say.

for many women, further decreasing reporting rates.

CBC's own 2021 survey regarding women's safety at night confirmed that women feel less safe in Cheltenham during the night.

The survey which had 638 responses, 95% of which are alarming:

72% of respondents stated that they didn't feel safe at night, rising to 75% not feeling safe during the March race week

39% of respondents had experienced some form of sexual assault

30% of respondents reported being regularly harassed

Based on the conclusions of UN Women and RCEW it is beyond doubt that the statistics Gloucestershire Constabulary have provided to CBC will not provide anywhere near the full scale of men's sexual violence against women and girls that occurs in Cheltenham.

From this data it is reasonable to conclude that women and girls might feel unsafe in Cheltenham during the night time and that anything that increases inequality between men and women (such as the objectification of women at a sexual entertainment venue) might increase these fears and lead to women restricting their movements.

PSED duty to eliminate harassment of women and girls

On 1 February 2023 the CEO of GRASAC confirmed to the licensing committee that "there is evidence from women in race week, including those giving out fliers, that they are groped, grabbed, touched and threatened; a volunteer from Cheltenham Guardians has confirmed that they are extremely busy in race week, intervening many times to stop men from cornering women".

The crime statistics provided above also confirm that sexual violence against women and girls is a "particular concern at the moment".

PSED duty to foster good relations between men and women

Strip clubs create a social environment that allows male privilege and domination over women and where women are objectified for the sexual arousal and pleasure of men. This increases the view, for some men, that they are entitled to seek access to women's bodies whenever they wish regardless of whether the woman consents.

It is unrealistic to expect that (some) men who pay women to dance naked for their sexual gratification in one part of Cheltenham will not be influenced by this experience in other parts of Cheltenham and indeed in their interactions more widely with other women and girls in society.

This is borne out by national newspaper headlines in March 2023. The Sun and the Daily Star referred to this venue as a "Pleasure palace" with one "punter" being quoted by both papers as saying "It's 3 floors of whores".

The dictionary definition of a whore is "prostitute" and "a woman who has many casual sexual encounters or relationships". It states that these definitions are "derogatory" and

“offensive” and supports the argument that (some) men who frequent SEVs have a derogatory view of the women who perform there. This is in direct conflict with the PSED duty that CBC have to foster good relationships between men and women.

PSED duty to women working in the SEV.

“Research shows that women who work in stripping are subject to high levels of abusive behaviour by customers: research in the U.S. (Holsopple, 1998) found that 100% of the women working in lap dancing who were surveyed reported that they had experienced physical violence from customers. All the women had been sexually abused in the club. All the women had been verbally harassed.” (Source Safe and Equal Bristol report: Sexual Entertainment Venues Policy Review (November 2021)).

I have been told that a number women from other parts of England work in the SEVs in Cheltenham as there is a lot of money, but there is also a significant amount of harassment and abuse. This is in line with existing evidence that regulation of SEVs does not support the safety of performers.

The Sun reported that “There are reports some girls offer extras in private booths.” Whilst anecdotal, these reports are of great concern regarding the activities of the SEVs within Cheltenham.

PSED duty to women and girls in the vicinity and PSED duty to women and girls more widely in society

It is not sufficient for CBC to only consider women working in the SEV or in the vicinity of the SEV. The PSED requires CBC to consider the impact on women and girls more widely in society. This was confirmed in the Bournemouth 2023 judicial review.

I believe that the evidence of the GRASAC CEO from February 2023 included above supports these PSED duties.

Many women (myself and my friends included) will not venture into Cheltenham in the evening when racing is being held, and indeed other women elect to work from home as the atmosphere towards women is found to be intimidating and we feel unsafe. Women working in restaurants in Cheltenham have told me that harassment by men during race week is an unpleasant and frightening aspect to their working lives. Women’s self-exclusion from Cheltenham during race weeks is arguably a breach of their human right to free movement which CBC has a duty to seek to prevent.

This is supported by extensive evidence that women’s “sense of security and entitlement to public space” are reduced when strip clubs are present. (Object UK). No go zones for women are in effect created. Again, this is arguably discrimination.

The following is an excerpt from the Safe and Equal Bristol report: Sexual Entertainment Venues Policy Review (November 2021)

“In the largest ever multinational study of male violence against women published in 2013 by the United Nations, the most common motivation of men who have admitted to rape is the belief that they are entitled to sex, even without the female partner’s consent. This study

interviewed 10,000 men and 1 in 4 had raped their wife, their partner or another woman. That is not an insignificant minority of men. Entitlement, which is the stock in trade of lap dancing clubs, is the main motivation given by men who rape. 70-80 percent of men who had raped reported that they believed they had the right to sex. The second most frequently reported motivation was related to entertainment-seeking – interpreting forced sexual access to women’s bodies as fun or as something to alleviate boredom. The most commonly identified attitudinal risk factor for men’s sexual and domestic violence and coercion against women globally stems from gender inequality - a belief in the dominance of men, and their needs or wishes and bodies, over women”

There is clear evidence at a local, national and indeed international level that the presence of SEVs is harmful towards women whether they work within the SEV or are in the vicinity of it. Additionally, the reinforcement of male entitlement and objectification of women harms women in wider society.

## Conclusion

I believe that if CBC approve this licence application, they will be in contravention of their PSED and ask that it is refused in its entirety.

7

Hello,

I’m registering my objection to the application from Steven Burrows for a license to run “Eroticats” lap dancing at Under The Prom, reference 23/01277/SEXA

I notice in Punchline (8 Sept) that Mr Burrows has been granted a license previously and “Police did not object to the application and the council could not object on moral grounds as sex establishments are lawful businesses which are a legitimate part of the retail and leisure industries.”

I don’t think the failure of the police to object should sway councillors. We know that women’s trust in the police is at an all-time low, for very good reasons. Rape and sexual abuse have effectively been decriminalised, police fail to support victims of stalking and two to three women a week are murdered by current and former partners. Of course they’re not going to object to lap dancing.

The council said it could not object on “moral grounds”. What a strange use of terminology. You were presented with evidence of the harm caused to women and girls in the area, as well as those working in the clubs. Those aren’t “moral grounds”, it’s about safety.

I’ve checked the statements for and against a previous license and many of the 59 in favour seem bogus at best – and one of them is in the wrong section (no33).

Most come from those who either work in the club, or they’re customers – including 7 apparently “sceptical” customers that have been invited to the club. Others, including residents, are supportive in principle of lap dancing, and don’t see it as harmful. Or they make facile statements about it being “just like Magic Mike or The Dreamboys”, forgetting that women are way more vulnerable than men.

I don't think these supportive comments should carry as much weight as the objections, several of which have a more substantial evidence base. This includes council surveys of how safe women feel, a reminder about the Public Sector Equality Duty, and reports from those who worked as lap dancers in the past and didn't see the harm at the time.

Finally I want to appeal to the council on behalf of the men (including those I know) who go to Race Week and perhaps get dragged into a lap dancing club against their better judgement – maybe because of their peer group, or even the clients they're paid to "entertain".

Remember how smoking used to be a routine part of a night out, and smoking adverts were everywhere? Everyone smoked, or it felt like it. So it was very hard not to. Nothing really changed until adverts were banned, warning labels appeared on packaging and smoking was banned in public places.

How about treating lap dancing in the same way. You shouldn't be normalising and enabling this sleazy and dangerous trade. Of course some men will still seek out, and profit from, lap dancers but why should the council make it easy for them?

Best wishes

7 continued

Just to confirm, my objection is for the November 2023 race dates. Eroticats are already advertising they will be open before the license has even been granted.

Thank you

8

Dear Cheltenham Borough Council (CBC) Licensing Team,

The Nelson Trust is writing to oppose the license variation application submitted by European Events Consultants Limited that would allow for lap dancing during Autumn race events. We believe that where Sexual Entertainment Venues (SEVs) operate there are always multiple harms that cannot be mitigated. Our objection to this application is based on years of frontline professional experience supporting women involved in the sex trade.

The Nelson Trust is a gender-responsive and trauma-informed organisation that works with women involved in the sex trade in Gloucestershire to help address their complex and multiple needs. There are strong links between lap dancing and selling sex, with a UK Home Office report finding that the majority of lap dancers also sell sex. The longer a woman has been stripping, the more likely it is she will be selling sex

(Prostitution\_and\_Sex\_Work\_Report.pdf). Other research studies also indicate that alcohol and drug abuse is standard in the lap dancing industry, if not integral to the job (The occupational milieu of the nude dancer: Deviant Behavior: Vol 18, No 2 (tandfonline.com)), both by dancers and punters. This places women both in and outside of SEVs at even more risk of assault. Research also indicates considerable use of Class A drugs, initiated after entering the trade.

This published evidence supports our experience on the ground; most women we support have been through adverse childhood experiences, have been involved in domestic abuse relationships and often use drugs and alcohol as a coping mechanism. Women often are unable to realise the harms of the sex trade until they are out of it. One of the women we



supported to exit wrote her story in her own words, and here is an extract of how someone might end up involved in the sex trade: 'I was forced into selling sex at the age of 17 and it then became a choice I made with an addict's insane mind that I could fund my habit selling my body. But what I didn't realise is that I was not just selling my body, but I was selling a part of my soul each time I did this. And chipping away at my self-worth, my self-esteem and slowly but surely losing any empowerment as a woman I had or could have.' This woman's story is not uncommon, and it is a voice that does not often get heard, as many women do not have access to support to address their unmet needs and increase their life choices, including the opportunity to exit the sex trade.

We are also aware of CBC's intention to develop a 'pledge for women's safety' linked to findings of their 'Safety of women in the evening and at night-time survey 2021', that highlighted the impact of sexual harassment on the lives of women and girls in the community. However, it is not clear what progress has been made in this regard. Finally, the CBC's responsibility to have due regard to 'foster good relationships between men and women', in accordance with their Public Sector Equality Duty seems to conflict with the granting of new and/or variation of licenses for SEVs.

After carefully considering the published evidence, the CBC's legal responsibilities, our professional experience, and the voices of women who have exited, The Nelson Trust vehemently opposes the granting of SEV licenses and/or variations to licenses as we believe they are incompatible with women's rights, safety & equality.

We stand with GRASAC and the Office of Police and Crime Commissioner of Gloucestershire and many local people who are objecting to this application. Should the Licensing Committee decide to approve the current application they would have failed to consider the impact of SEVs on the local community, especially on women in and out of SEVs.

CBC has an opportunity to show leadership and enforce their Public Sector Equality Duty by rejecting this licence variation application.

With kind regards,

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Re License Application Reference: 23/01277/SEXA

I write with regard to the above referenced application for a variation to the Licence to provide a Sexual Entertainment Venue. As an organisation committed to supporting those who have been sexually abused, raped or exploited at any point in time in their lives, we have serious concerns regarding the licensing of these venues, and we strongly oppose the Council awarding a licence. GRASAC expects and hopes that the Council will do all in its power to ensure the safety of women, girls, men and transgender peoples in the town. As a town that prides itself on being 'intimate and friendly, a civilised place of culture, learning and discovery', and with education, culture and connectivity highlighted amongst its best attributes. (VisitCheltenham.com) the awarding of a licence for a SEV during the October Racing Festival seems counter the very attributes that Cheltenham likes to promote itself. We understand there is no 'market' for SEVs during the weeks outside of race festivals, so it is purely for the entertainment of men from outside the area that these licenses are sought. I'm unclear why the Council would want to condone such an attitude from large groups of men from outside of the area. Added to this the venue will presumably (as in previous years) encourage patronage by shipping in racegoers via transport: Which all seems rather

unsavoury and encourages men to attend the SEV. GRASAC is a specialist organisation that works to increase understanding and recognition of sexual violence through our education and training activities. The Office of Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) for Gloucestershire has just released its Sexual Violence Strategy for the coming three years - with its overall priority being to effectively tackle the stereotypes that contribute to sexual violence in our society. GRASAC has recently, with the OPCC, submitted a bid to the Home Office for funding for engagement workers to go into schools to educate young people from Year 7 upwards on misogyny, healthy relationships and bystander engagement. We are all working towards a world (or in our case county) free of sexual violence. Why isn't the Council? I am aware that the Applicant makes every effort to protect staff from sexual violence in the course of their work and train door staff in interventions. The issue we have is during these events there is a shift in the culture in the community; the University tells female students to not go out during the nights of the festival, bar and pubs escort female staff or do not roster them on shift for those nights; the media just want to interview and report on the sexual harassment that takes place during race festivals - so I am unclear why the council wants to add fuel-to-the-fire by awarding a licence Gloucestershire Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre PO Box 3292, Gloucester GL1 9HW Charity No. 1155902 application/variation for an entertainment venue that contributes to the misogynistic view that women and girls are there to be objectified and used by men? We are concerned and strongly believe that sexual entertainment venues in the town spreads harmful attitudes that pose a risk to women around the area. Verbal reports from women either working in bars and restaurants as waiting staff, or patrons of the venues – none of which are related to sexual entertainment venues, recount sexual harassment as well as aggressive behaviour and intimidating behaviour. GRASAC also opposes the application on the grounds that men having attended the venue and paid for 'entertainment' from women, then leave the venue intoxicated with no regard for women in the local area, who are then at greater risk of sexual harassment or sexual assault.

Yours sincerely

Gloucestershire Rape & Sexual Abuse Centre (GRASAC)

10

Dear Licencing Committee and Licencing Officers

I am very concerned to hear that permission is being granted for lap-dancing at "Eroticats" at Under the Prom, during Cheltenham Races, licencing application no: 23/01277/SEXA

As you know, sadly trust in the police is weak at the moment, as many women and girls doubt how seriously they take abuse and exploitation of women

I understand that you cannot refuse permission when you judge that it would go against the law, but serious safeguarding issues are raised when men buying sexual "entertainment" enters the culture of a town.

People who stand to make money about this enterprise, or who enjoy being around near naked women, are naturally expressing their support, but I ask you to give substantial weight to the objections, particularly in the light of your Public Sector Equality Duty.

We love visiting Cheltenham, and visiting during Race Week is exciting, but this sort of sleazy activity is tarnishing the reputation and atmosphere of your beautiful town. Instead of being a pleasure, for women and girls, walking around certain areas of the city in the evening

will be a really nasty experience, simply because we are apparently reluctant to put safety, pleasure, peace and equality before the demands of a certain kind of man.

Please think carefully about your decision, and the reputation of the city

Thank you very much for your attention.

Best Wishes

11

Dear Licensing Team

10 September 2023 SEV Licence Variation - ref: 23/01277/SEXA

We are writing on behalf of our members to object to the application submitted by European Events Consultants Limited to vary their existing SEV licence, to allow for lap dancing at Under the Prom during the autumn race meetings.

Impact on the lives of women and girls

As previous objections to SEV licences have pointed out, lap dancing clubs, where women are sexually objectified and the idea that men are entitled to access women's bodies is reinforced, contribute to harmful sexist and misogynistic attitudes that underpin the endemic abuse, harassment and violence against women and girls in society.

There are a number of research studies, as well as research carried out by the United Nations and our own government, that show the link between these harmful attitudes, a culture that perpetuates and reinforces these messages and the perpetration of sexual violence. Please see the following report, for details of this research 'Safe and Equal Bristol Report: Sexual Entertainment Venue Policy Review' 2021.

(<https://www.bristolwomensvoice.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/SEVReport2021FINAL.pdf> )

Cheltenham Borough Council's (CBC) own research from 2021 ('Safety of women in the evening and at night-time survey 2021') revealed the impact of sexual harassment on the lives of women and girls. From a sample of 638 responses:

- 75% of respondents said that they do not feel safe during race week;
- 30% of respondents said that they get regularly sexually harassed
- Women said that they do not want to be blamed or asked to change their behaviours, instead they want to see a culture created where sexual harassment is unacceptable.

Our own research into the experiences of women and girls during Race Week, found that:

- 78% of respondents said that they do not feel safe in Cheltenham during race week;
- 84% of respondents said that they change what they usually do in Cheltenham during race week, with many avoiding the town centre;
- 53% of respondents said that they had experienced sexual comments or noises during race week;

Women told us of routine harassment from drunk men, their experiences of fear and powerlessness and feeling 'like an object just for men's amusement'. Others complained about the SEVs stating that, 'Turning the pubs into strip clubs again only reinforces objectifying women' and 'The SEVs make the atmosphere really unpleasant and unsafe for women.'

A culture where sexual harassment is unacceptable cannot be created when CBC enables the continued sexual objectification and dehumanisation of women and girls through the grant of SEV licences.

Following the results of the 'Safety of women in the evening and night-time survey', CBC promised that they would develop a 'pledge for women's safety'. However, we do not believe there has been any significant progress on this.

Instead, CBC have continued to grant SEV licences, stating that if they don't, lap dancing will happen anyway (using the legal loophole), without the scrutiny that the licensing framework imposes. Could CBC provide evidence that sexual entertainment goes underground if SEV licences are not granted? If this evidence exists, why aren't CBC working to reduce demand for sexual entertainment and lobbying central government to close the legal loophole that we are told is so influential in CBC's decision making each year? Why aren't CBC considering other solutions, such as making a prohibition on hosting sexual entertainment a condition of alcohol licensing?

Concerns about the negative impact on women and girls of entrenching the sex trade in Cheltenham have been waved away by the licensing committee and described as 'moral objections'. The effect of this is the silencing of women and girls. We are denied the opportunity to actively participate in local democracy and decision making and CBC send a very loud and clear message that women and girls do not matter and CBC does not support equality between the sexes.

The group of women who must not be forgotten, are the women performing in the lap dancing clubs. Whilst some may freely choose to participate in this trade, we know that many others do not have complete freedom in their choices. Poverty and insecure immigration status are undoubtedly factors that drive many women into the sex trade. Many others may be coerced into such work. The impact of working in an environment where sexual objectification and women's dehumanisation are deeply entrenched, should not be underestimated. We implore CBC to engage with the research on why many women begin to work in the sex industry, the very significant and often traumatic impact it has on their lives and links between sexual entertainment and abuse through prostitution. Links to a number of useful reports can be found in the 'Safe and Equal Bristol Report: Sexual Entertainment Venue Policy Review' 2021. (<https://www.bristolwomensvoice.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/SEVReport2021FINAL.pdf> )

## Purple Flag Scheme

Given the results of CBC's and our own research into women's safety at night, we find it surprising that Cheltenham retains accreditation under the Purple Flag Scheme. The core standards of the scheme state that destinations should be 'safe and welcoming' and that leisure and entertainment should be for a 'diversity of ages, groups, lifestyles and cultures'. Can CBC not see that endorsing the sex trade by continuing to grant SEVs, thereby creating a hostile environment for women and girls, is incompatible with these standards?

## Public Sector Equality Duty

CBC may be aware that the High Court has recently ruled, in *The King (on the application of) CDE v Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) Councils*, that Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Councils' policy of having no limit on the number of SEVs was unlawful. The Court found that the Council was wrong to ignore concerns that strip clubs contribute to the abuse, harassment and violence towards women and girls in society. Just as CBC does repeatedly, the concerns of women and girls in Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole were dismissed as 'moral objections'.

The Court also found that the Council's equalities assessments failed to sufficiently consider the need to tackle discrimination against women or the requirement for public bodies to have due regard to 'foster good relations between men and women', in accordance with their Public Sector Equality Duty.

Where is the evidence that CBC are working towards eliminating discrimination and harassment of women, advancing equality of opportunity for women, as well as fostering good relations between men and women, in accordance with their Public Sector Equality Duty? How is the granting of SEV licences compatible with these obligations?

We hope that CBC will listen to the voices of women and girls and finally show a commitment to their Public Sector Equality Duty and refuse this variation licence application.

Yours faithfully

Gloucestershire Women's Liberation Collective (GlosWomen)

12

Dear CBC

I am writing in relation to the above SEV application. This is notification of my objection to the granting of this licence to Steve Burrows.

I am shocked and disappointed to hear that CBC may grant this licence on grounds that 'it isn't illegal'. To hang the decision on this, which seems an excuse to simply grant a businessman a way to make money, flies in the face of CBC's prized acquisition of a purple flag status.

To use the legal loophole as your only consideration over and above the safety of women, simply means that CBC is enabling and colluding with the sex industry which fuels itself off the objectification and dehumanisation of women. This lap dancing outfit has its place on the same spectrum of human and sex trafficking where women are used and abused simply for the sexual gratification of men.

Does CBC really want to align itself to the industry of violence against women and girls? Does CBC want to be an ally and an advocate of the degradation of women for man's pleasure? Because by granting this licence, using the legal reason in its entirety, is exactly what you are doing. And you are placing that above the voices of women who have a human right to feel safe and free of violence and abuse.

Yours sincerely

13

(Awaiting address)

Hello, i dont think it is appropriate to license this as i think that it will lead women and especially children to feel and potentially be unsafe.

14

(Awaiting address)

I am writing to object to the possibility of a lap dancing licence being issued.

We no longer live in the sexist 1970s and I find it repugnant that women dancing sexually to titillate men is being reconsidered as entertainment in the 21st century; especially as it goes completely against the image that Cheltenham wants to project to the outside world.

I am also concerned about the impact it will have on the local area and its reputation, including noise levels. Even more important is the potential impact on women and girls who risk being seen as sexual objects, and potentially fair game. This risks increasing the amount of sexual harassment they receive, and potentially also sexual assaults.

I implore you to not approve this licence.

Yours

15

(Awaiting address)

Dear Councillors

I am writing in objection to the proposed lap dancing licence in Cheltenham.

It should be an ambition of every politician of any party or none, at any level of democratic representation, to ensure that the communities and environments they represent, are safe, respectable and do everything possible to ensure that the employment and recreation opportunities available to the residents and visitors offer better security, safety and value than these jobs do.

As local councillors it should be an inherent ambition to promote the wellbeing of women and girls, reduce the risk of abuse and violence of any kind, an escalating problem rather than a diminishing one.

This offers you the opportunity to send a positive message out to your community and show respect for the women of Cheltenham, by refusing the licence.

Many thanks for your consideration