



Agenda Item No: 4 E

Bristol City Council
Minutes of the Licensing (Hearings) Sub-Committee
Friday 10 April 2015 at 12.30 pm

Members Present:

Councillor Peter Abraham and Councillor Jason Budd

Officers in Attendance:

Pauline Powell - Legal Advisor, Carl Knights - Licensing Policy Advisor,
Jeremy Livitt - Democratic Services

1. Apologies for Absence

None

2. Election of Chair.

Councillor Abraham was elected as Chair.

3. Declarations of interest.

None were made.

4. Public Forum.

Nothing was received.

5. Housekeeping, introductions and procedure to be followed for hearings.

The Chair explained the procedure that would be followed. In addition he advised that an opportunity would be given to each of the people/organisations who had submitted written objections to the application to outline these objections at the meeting.

**6. Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982
Application for the Renewal and variation of a Sexual
Entertainment Venue Licence made by Reedbed Limited In
Respect of Premises Trading As Central Chambers, 9-11 St
Stephens Street, Bristol BS1 1EE**

The Applicants and Representatives were in attendance as follows – John Morse (legal representative), Carrie Hale (DPS), Robert Hale, Kelly Dillet (Assistant Manager) and Tracy Hall (Reedbed Limited).

The Licensing Policy Advisor (LPA) introduced the report and summarised it for everyone. He advised that a site visit had been made to the premises just prior to the meeting but explained that no discussion on the application had taken place during the visit. He drew members' attention to some concerns that officers had concerning certain adverts from SEVs which indicated that some female performers would appear in outfits which were similar to school uniforms. He indicated officers' view was that no application for renewal should be approved which gave an impression that children were sexually available.

The LPA suggested that, in the event that the Sub-Committee was minded to approve the application, the applicants be requested to agree to the condition set out in Paragraph 12 Page 21 of the report as follows:

“Relevant entertainment shall not include any word, action or imagery that endorses or depicts, or might reasonably be taken as endorsing or depicting, or be promoted as including, any conduct which, if taking place in reality, would amount to a criminal offence; for the avoidance of doubt this imposes a prohibition on any performer being clothed in a school uniform or otherwise attired or presented as being a school student or a child or being promoted as such in any media.” He pointed out that this could not be

imposed upon the applicant but would need to be voluntarily agreed by them.

He stated that he did not believe the grounds for a mandatory reason for a refusal arose and pointed out that the discretionary grounds did not apply.

The objectors made the following points:

Objection 1

The objector thanked Bristol City Council for making this part of the City Centre a nicer area. However, she felt that the location of this establishment brought a sleaziness to the area. She also stated that she believed Bristol City Council needed to make more effort into ensuring the public knew how to object in such situations.

These objections were received and noted.

Objection 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 (the objectors did not speak at the meeting). It was noted that Objection 6 had been received from the responsible officer for safeguarding.

These objections were received and noted.

Appendix J (This was a Late Objection which had been accepted for consideration).

The objector stated that she was a Spokesperson of the Fawcett Society which campaigned at local level to improve services for women and girls, bringing gender equality to the city. Their objections were on the following grounds: (a) Location – this establishment was inappropriate for the character of business in the area (b) Crime and Disorder – Bristol City Council's duties to uphold this could be undermined. Police reports showed that there had been an increase in sexual and violent crime in 2011 and 2012. There had been an increase of 82% within 15 metres of SEV's in the Central CIA. The Sub-Committee should commission an inquiry into this and analyse the necessary results. The Society did not believe that the presence of door staff deterred sexual and violent crime. Bristol had recently been awarded White Ribbon

status – the objective was to reduce the negative perceptions of women and renewing this application would run counter to this (c) Dancers are self-employed in a risky and stigmatised profession. In a city that values equality, the number of SEVs in the city should be zero

John Morse, the Applicant's Legal Advisor, together with Carrie Hale, put the case for the applicant. He made the following points:

- The SEV licence had been granted on 23rd April 2012 and renewed on one occasion. It had an established venue for 10 years under separate provision before this date;
- The premises were in a good state of repair and there was no advertising outside or with fly posters to identify it. Screens had been repositioned to help with security, along with the employment of adequate door staff, including Ms Hale who had also received the appropriate certificate for door staff
- There had only been 2 Police incidents in the last year, one of which had been retracted and the other of which had resulted in an individual being removed from the club and the individual reported to the Police. Management had no concerns about the current operation of the premises;
- The report mentioned by the Fawcett Society had been made in 2011 (ie prior to the original granting of the licence) and so was historic. The locality was unchanged since the time when the licence had originally been issued;
- There had been no objections received from businesses or people in the immediate vicinity ie the Church, students or backpackers. In addition, the upstairs of the building had been put to beneficial use;
- The 7 objections raised issues that had previously been heard and did not include anything new to indicate why the licence should not be renewed;
- Door Staff (including Carrie Hale) included a minimum of 2 staff for weekdays, Friday and Saturday.

In response to a question from a member of the Panel, John Morse confirmed his view that the evidence presented by the Fawcett Society was historic. He confirmed that there had been one incident in December 2013 when a customer had been asked to leave the premises after he attempted to assault one of the performers and had, therefore, been ejected from the establishment. The incident had been referred to the Police to take any necessary action.

The Chair referred to the earlier Site Inspection which indicated that there was a well maintained and controlled premises. However, in such instances, the Sub-Committee always needed to take into account any concerns about crime and disorder.

John Morse summed up as follows: the establishment was clean, small and well-run. There had only been one incident within a period of 12 months which had been very quickly and efficiently dealt with. There were no further incidents which had been brought to the establishment's attention. The establishment was not contributing to Crime and Disorder in the city.

All parties left the room.

The details of the Committee's findings and reasons for the decision are set out below. Members considered very carefully all of the written and verbal evidence presented to them. They considered fully each of the Objections that were submitted.

All parties returned to the room to hear the decision of the Committee.

It was unanimously agreed to **renew the application.**

Following earlier confirmation from John Morse that the establishment had no objection, members agreed that the following additional paragraph related to safeguarding should be added to the decision.

Resolved – that the Licence be renewed with the conditions previously attached to it, along with the new condition attached as follows: *“Relevant entertainment shall not include any word, action or imagery that endorses or depicts, or might reasonably be taken as endorsing or depicting, or be promoted as including, any conduct which, if taking place in reality, would amount to a criminal offence; for the avoidance of doubt this imposes a prohibition on any performer being clothed in a school uniform or otherwise attired or presented as being a school student or a child or being promoted as such in any media.”*

(Meeting ended at 1.35pm)

CHAIR