

Bristol City Council

Minutes of the Licensing (Hearings) Sub-Committee

27 April 2017 at 12.30pm



Members Present:

Councillor Harriett Clough
Councillor Richard Eddy (Chair)
Councillor Mike Langley

Officers in Attendance:

Abigail Holman – Licensing Policy Advisor, Ashley Clark – Legal Advisor, Michael Bonnick – Legal Advisor, Norman Cornthwaite – Democratic Services

1. Election of Chair

Resolved – that Councillor Eddy be elected Chair for the duration of the Meeting.

2. Welcome, Introductions and Safety Information

The Chair welcomed all parties to the hearing and requested that all parties introduce themselves.

3. Apologies for Absence

None received.

4. Declarations of Interest

None were received.

5. Public Forum

Nothing was received.

6. Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982

Application for the Renewal of a Sexual Entertainment Venue Licence made by Reedbed Ltd in Respect of Premises Trading as Central Chambers, 9-11 St Stephens Street, Bristol, BS1 1EE.

Objections

The Members of the Committee noted the objections received. Objectors Nos. 3, 5, and 6 were in attendance. Each of the objectors summarised the objections that they had previously submitted.

Site Visit

It was noted that the Members of the Committee had made a site visit to the premises earlier in day. The Licensing Officer summarised the findings of the site visit and asked that the Applicants address these findings during their presentation.

Report

The Licensing Officer introduced the report and summarised it for everyone.

- 10 objections had been received on time and none received late. All were accepted and noted by the Sub-Committee;

The following representatives of the applicant were in attendance:

Bob Hale – Nightlife Limited

Carrie Hale – Nightlife Limited

Tracey Hall – Nightlife Limited

Matthew Jones – Manager, Urban Tiger

John Morse – Solicitor representing Urban Tiger

Philip Kolvin QC/Andrew Sivertson – Barrister representing Urban Tiger

Applicant's Submission

Philip Kolvin put the case for the Applicants highlighting the following:

Site Visit Findings:

He confirmed that the Applicants would carry out the necessary works to address the issues raised by Members on the site visit.

- Fire Exit covered by CCTV – this will be further improved by the fitting of an alarm
- CCTV downstairs – an additional camera will be installed to cover the area not covered at present
- Refurbishment of the downstairs will be carried out
- The dumb waiter near the entrance will be removed to create more space
- The dumb waiter behind the bar will be removed
- A WC Attendant is on site Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays



Application:

- This is the fifth application made under the present regime; the previous four were granted
- The premises have been licensed since 2001; the business is operated by the family; employees' backgrounds were summarised; has always been run by the Hales; Carrie is DPS and works there two or three times a week; she is also SIA trained; Matthew Jones, is general manager, used to be compliance manager at Urban Tiger, and previously worked at Central Chambers
- The Applicants run a very tight ship; all staff are made aware of and enforce the rules
- There is good CCTV coverage both inside and outside the premises
- Customers are made aware of the rules on entry
- Dancers are made aware of the rules and must comply with them
- As well as the dancers there are a number of female staff; 5 of the 6 bar staff are female
- The club attracts a number of female customers – 25%
- Customers span a wide age range
- A disabled dancer is employed
- The Applicants run a number of other events that are not connected with SEVs – cocktail making and life drawing
- Drinks are expensive; very seldom any problems in the club
- Although the club is licensed to hold 100 people - there are very seldom more than 70 in attendance at any one time
- The layout of the premises has been approved previously; the layout is constrained by the size of the building
- There is good supervisory control of the premises
- The premises have no significant impact on the locality
- There were no objections from any of the Regulatory Authorities
- There were no objections from any of the local businesses
- There is no evidence of customers from the club causing any problems
- There were only 10 objections from the whole of Bristol
- The premises operate during the night time
- BCC imposes controls on the premises
- There are no signs outside the premises indicating that it is a Lap Dancing Club
- There is no evidence of misbehaviour outside the premises
- There is no basis for saying that the premises are in an inappropriate location
- There are no issues in relation to the Equalities Act taking account of the protected characteristics under Licensing Legislation
- The Members have to decide the Application under Licensing Legislation
- If the club were to close 40 dancers would lose their income as well as the other female staff



- Dancers feel protected in the environment; a number have worked for the operators for a long time - 80 % have been there more than 1 year, 36% more than 3 years, 24% more than 5 years; they are well paid
- Parliament debated Lap Dancing in 2009 and did not consider that it should be banned; they allowed Local authorities to set numbers and conditions
- If the licence is granted the operators will be governed by the Conditions attached to the Licence
- The operators will continue to trade in compliance with the law and conditions and provide a safe, well regulated environment

Deliberations and Decision

The Applicants left the room whilst the Committee made its decision.

The Committee considered very carefully all of the written and verbal evidence presented to it.

The Committee noted that this type of activity has been determined lawful by Parliament, and that the mandatory grounds for refusal do not apply to this application. Members also had regard to their obligations to consider the Equalities Act

The Members considered each of the discretionary grounds in turn.

Discretionary grounds:

- a) No evidence of the applicant being unsuitable found. Found that it is well managed, and convinced by the submissions of the applicant that rules are followed and no evidence to suggest that this is not happening. Weight was given to the fact that there were no objections from the Police or other Regulatory Authorities. The members noted the undertakings to improve the facilities for performers in particular.
- b) The Members were satisfied that this was a family run business and it was run for the benefit of the applicant. This ground does not therefore arise.
- c) Members determined to follow the policy in this respect and therefore the ground did not arise.
- d) Ground D
 - i. Character locality – Members were satisfied that it was discreet operation, with discreet exterior, and because of operation of the venue for relevant entertainment only in the night time hours, would have little or no impact on the character of the locality
 - ii. Use of premises in vicinity – Members noted that there is a mix of residential and office or business use in the vicinity and a number of premises which operate at different hours to the premises, and so impact will be reduced. Since this is a discreet operation and for the reasons above little or no impact.



- iii. Layout of premises – Members were satisfied that it is appropriate for the use to which it is put. Members noted the applicants undertaking to address the issues raised in the hearing, in particular the performers’ area, access corridor, CCTV blind spot, and alarming of fire exit doors.

Members were satisfied that there was not sufficient reason not to grant, therefore the application for renewal was granted. Members granted the application for renewal to maintain the renewal date, the licence will therefore expire on 16 September 2017.

The Applicants returned to the room to hear the announcement of the decision.

Resolved –

1. That the renewal of the Sexual Entertainment Licence for Reedbed Ltd in respect of Premises Trading as Central Chambers be granted for 12 months from the expiry of the last licence in September 2016;

Meeting ended at 1.55 pm.

(Chair)

