

REPORT TO LICENSING PANEL SUB COMMITTEE

CONSIDERATION OF THE RENEWAL OF A SEXUAL ENTERTAINMENT VENUE LICENCE UNDER SCHEDULE 3 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) ACT 1982

LICENSING PANEL SUB- COMMITTEE: 11th August 2016

OFFICER REPORTING: Steve Smith - Licensing Officer

A) THE APPLICATION

APPLICANT: Mr Desmond Murphy

PREMISES: Pink Gentleman's Club, Basement, Darville House, Oxford Road East, Windsor, SL4 1EF

The application is to renew the Sexual Entertainment Venue (SEV) licence for the above premises, as is required on an annual basis. An SEV is defined as "any premises at which relevant entertainment is provided before a live audience for the financial gain of the organiser or entertainer". Relevant entertainment is "any live performance or live display of nudity which is of such a nature that, ignoring financial gain, it must reasonably be assumed to be provided solely or principally for the purposes of sexually stimulating any member of an audience (whether by verbal other means). An audience can consist of just one person (e.g. where the entertainment takes place in private booths).

The application does not propose any changes to the current hours or conditions of the licence.

Application history:

12.10.2011 - Application for new SEV heard by panel on 17.11.11 → licence granted

19.01.2012 - Transfer of SEV from Annmarie Harris to Desmond Murphy

05.11.2012 - Renewal of SEV licence renewed

28.01.2014 - Renewal of SEV licence renewed

30.01.2015 - Renewal of SEV licence renewed

21.01.2016 - Renewal of SEV application being considered

B) REPRESENTATIONS

Police:

Thames Valley Police - response received on 16/02/16 – no objection

Objections

Attached are objections from two local Ward members, Cllr James Rankin and Cllr Wesley Richards, and Lead Member for Youth Services and Safeguarding/Windsor resident, Cllr Natasha Airey.

C) OBSERVATIONS

The application is in respect of existing premises which currently has a premises licence under the Licensing Act 2003. There are no outstanding complaints in relation to the premises or either the general or specific location of the premises “vicinity”. The applicant has no relevant convictions.

The Sub-Committee may under paragraph 8(1) of Schedule 3 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 renew the licence subject to any terms & conditions and restrictions it may decide are reasonable.

The term “reasonable” is not defined or mentioned in the 1982 Act but is included to indicate that in deciding what terms are reasonable, under public law, the Sub-Committee must only take account of matters relevant to the application and ignore any that are irrelevant.

As objections have been made to the Renewal of the Licence then in line with paragraph 11 of Schedule 3 and Royal Borough’s Policy a hearing is necessary before this Sub-Committee to decide whether the Licence should be renewed.

Guidance for England and Wales was published by the Home Office in March 2010. The entire Guidance should be considered as a whole, but relevant extracts, regarding the subtitled matters, is set out below as follows:

“Objections

3.23:

When considering an application for the grant, renewal or transfer of a licence the appropriate authority should have regard to any observations submitted to it by the chief officer of police and any objections that they have received from anyone else within 28 of the application. Any person can object to an application but the objection should be relevant to the grounds set out in paragraph 12 for refusing a licence. Objections should not be based on moral grounds/values and local authorities should not consider objections that are not relevant to the grounds set out in paragraph 12. Objectors must give notice of their objection in writing, stating the general terms of the objection.

3.24:

Where the appropriate authority receives notice of any objection the authority shall, before considering the application, give notice in writing of the general terms of the objection to the applicant. However, the appropriate authority shall not without the consent of the person making the objection reveal their name or address to the applicant.

Hearings

3.25:

Under paragraph 10(19) of Schedule 3, before refusing an application, all applicants should be given the opportunity to appear before and be heard by the local authority committee or sub-committee that is responsible for determining the application.

3.26:

Schedule 3 does not make explicit provision for objectors to be heard, but this does not mean that such hearings cannot take place. Rather, case law on this matter states that while local authorities are under no obligation to offer an oral hearing to objectors, they may do so at their discretion. Although a local authority is under a duty to consider any objections made within 28 days of the application, it has discretion to hear later objections provided the applicant is given the opportunity to deal with those objections.

Refusal of a Licence

3.27:

Paragraph 12 of Schedule 3 sets out the grounds for refusing an application for the grant, renewal or transfer of a licence.

A licence must not be granted:

- (a) to a person under the age of 18;
- (b) to a person who is for the time being disqualified due to the person having had a previous licence revoked in the area of the appropriate authority within the last 12 months;
- (c) to a person, other than a body corporate, who is not resident in an EEA State or was not so resident throughout the period of six months immediately preceding the date when the application was made; or
- (d) to a body corporate which is not incorporated in an EEA State; or
- (e) to a person who has, within a period of 12 months immediately preceding the date when the application was made, been refused the grant or

renewal of a licence for the premises, vehicle, vessel or stall in respect of which the application is made, unless the refusal has been reversed on appeal.

3.28:

A licence may be refused where:

- (a) the applicant is unsuitable to hold the licence by reason of having been convicted of an offence or for any other reason;
- (b) if the licence were to be granted, renewed or transferred the business to which it relates would be managed by or carried on for the benefit of a person, other than the applicant, who would be refused the grant, renewal or transfer of such a licence if he made the application himself;
- (c) the number of sex establishments, or of sex establishments of a particular kind, in the relevant locality at the time the application is determined is equal to or exceeds the number which the authority consider is appropriate for that locality;
- (d) that the grant or renewal of the licence would be inappropriate, having regard—
 - (i) to the character of the relevant locality; or
 - (ii) to the use to which any premises in the vicinity are put; or
 - (iii) to the layout, character or condition of the premises, vehicle, vessel or stall in respect of which the application is made.

3.29:

A decision to refuse a licence must be relevant to one or more of the above grounds.

3.30:

When determining a licence application, the local authority must have regard to any rights the applicant may have under Article 10 (right to freedom of expression) and Article 1, Protocol 1 (protection of property) of the European Convention on Human Rights.

3.31:

The Provision of Services Regulations 2009 amended Schedule 3 to the 1982 Act to state that, if having considered an application for the grant, renewal or transfer of a licence, the appropriate authority decides to refuse it on one or more of the above grounds, it must provide the applicant with reasons for the decision in writing.

Relevant Locality

3.32:

Paragraph 12(3)(c) and 12(3)(d) of Schedule 3 allow appropriate authorities to refuse applications on grounds related to an assessment of the “relevant locality”. A licence can be refused if either, at the time the application is determined the number of sex establishments, or sex establishments of a particular kind, in the relevant locality is equal to or exceeds the number that the authority considers appropriate for that locality; or that a sex establishment would be inappropriate having regard to the character of the relevant locality, the use to which any premises in the vicinity are put or the layout, character or condition of the premises. Nil may be the appropriate number.

3.33:

Schedule 3 to the 1982 Act does not define “relevant locality” further than to say that:

- (a) in relation to premises, it is the locality where they are situated; and

(b) in relation to a vehicle, vessel or stall, any locality where it is desired to use it as a sex establishment.

3.34:

Clearly, the decision regarding what constitutes the 'relevant locality' is a matter for the appropriate authority. However, such questions must be decided on the facts of the individual application.

3.35:

Therefore, it is reasonable and potentially useful to future applicants, for a local authority to decide in advance of receiving any applications that certain areas are, or are not, appropriate locations for a sex establishment or a particular number of sex establishments. Nevertheless, all applications must be considered on their individual merits.

3.36:

When considering a particular application case law has indicated that the relevant locality does not have to be a clearly pre-defined area nor are local authorities required to be able to define its precise boundaries. Therefore, while a local authority is not prevented from defining the exact area of the relevant locality, it is equally free to conclude that it simply refers to the area which surrounds the premises specified in the application and does not require further definition. Nevertheless a local authority's view of what constitutes a locality could be open to challenge if they took a completely unreasonable view of the area covered, for example, by concluding that two sex establishments 200 miles away from one another were in the same locality. Case law also indicates that a relevant locality cannot be an entire local authority area or an entire town or city.

3.37:

Once the appropriate authority has determined the relevant locality, it should seek to make an assessment of the 'character' of the relevant locality and how many, if any, sex establishments, or sex establishments of a particular kind, it considers appropriate for that relevant locality.

3.38:

Section 27 amends paragraph 12(3)(c) of Schedule 3 to allow local authorities to determine an appropriate number of sex establishments of a particular kind. In practice, this means that the appropriate authority may, for example, decide that a particular locality is suitable for a sex shop but is not suitable for a sexual entertainment venue or vice versa.

Licence Conditions

3.39 Once the appropriate authority has decided to grant a licence they are able to impose terms, conditions and restrictions on that licence, either in the form of conditions specific to the individual licence under paragraph 8 of Schedule 3 or standard conditions applicable to all sex establishments, or particular types of sex establishments, prescribed by regulations made by the appropriate authority under paragraph 13 of Schedule 3.

Appeals

3.44:

In the event that the appropriate authority refuses an application for the grant, renewal or transfer of a sex establishment licence the applicant may appeal the decision in a magistrates' court, unless the application was refused under 12(3)(c) or (d), in which case the applicant can only challenge the refusal by way of judicial review.”

The Sub-Committee may refuse to renew the Licence under the Grounds set out in Paragraph 12(3) of Schedule 3, namely:

- (a) the applicant is unsuitable to hold the licence by reason of having been convicted of an offence or for any other reason;
- (b) if the licence were to be granted, renewed or transferred the business to which it relates would be managed by or carried on for the benefit of a person, other than the applicant, who would be refused the grant, renewal or transfer of such a licence if he made the application himself;
- (c) the number of sex establishments, or of sex establishments of a particular kind, in the relevant locality at the time the application is determined is equal to or exceeds the number which the authority consider is appropriate for that locality;
- (d) that the grant or renewal of the licence would be inappropriate, having regard—
 - (i) to the character of the relevant locality; or
 - (ii) to the use to which any premises in the vicinity are put; or to the layout, character or condition of the premises, vehicle, vessel or stall in respect of which the application is made.

Particular attention should be paid to the grounds under 12(3)(c) and 12(3)(d), as these are the grounds for objection in the representations received.

In making its decision, the Committee should have regard to the Home Office Guidance and the Council's own Licensing Policy.

The Sub-Committee must have regard to all of the representations made and the evidence it hears.

The options available to the Sub-Committee are that it may:

- a) renew the licence, attaching any conditions they consider reasonable under paragraph 8(1) or,
- b) refuse the application under paragraph 12(2)

Where the Sub-Committee has refused to renew a licence then it is required to give written reasons for its decision to the licence holder (paragraph 11(20)).