

Department of Environmental Services

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Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Questionnaire seeking your views on future licensing of Sexual Entertainment Venues (SEVs) in the City of London

I am writing to you to ask for your views as to whether or not the City of London Corporation (the City) should adopt a policy to judge applications it may receive in future to open and operate Sexual Entertainment Venues (SEVs) within in the City of London's boundaries.

The choices given to us under new legislation recently passed by Parliament are that the City could adopt a policy and then consider each application in the light of this, deciding if and when to make an exception in individual cases. A policy will guide applicants as to the expectations and requirements that the City has with respect to SEVs in its area.

Alternatively, if the City does not adopt a policy, it will consider each licence application only on its merits, deciding whether the discretionary grounds for refusal apply, taking into account what the applicant, any objectors and statutory authorities have to say.

The City is keen to hear your views and will encourage a wide range of people to participate in the licensing process, wherever people may live or work. As part of this approach, we are undertaking this consultation exercise amongst residents, workers, businesses and other relevant organisations by letter, face-to-face interviews and on line via our website.

Background

On 1 September 2010 the City of London Corporation adopted legislation – through the Policing and Crime Act 2009 – that gives it the power to regulate sexual entertainment venues (SEVs) in the City. SEVs are defined as commercial venues offering live performance or stripping, pole dancing, peep shows, live sex shows, lap and/or table-dancing which are designed for the purpose of sexually stimulating the audience.

In the future, any venue proposing to offer sexual entertainment will need a sex establishment licence from the City. Members of the public are able to object to licence applications. The law sets out situations when a licence must automatically be refused. It also sets out situations where the local authority can choose whether or not to refuse a licence, including:

- The applicant, the manager, or others who would benefit from the application being unsuitable to hold a licence
- If a licence is granted it would exceed the number considered 'appropriate' in a locality
- Granting a licence would be inappropriate given the 'character' of the locality, the nature of business and community premises in the vicinity, or the layout, character or condition of the premises

The definition of 'locality' is a matter of judgement, but another word that may be used is 'neighbourhood'. It is clear from case law that the City cannot be regarded as a single locality.

Further information

You can find more detailed information on the background to the legislation and Home Office guidance on SEVs here <http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/licensing> where the questionnaire can also be completed on line. There is also a useful map showing different building uses across the Square Mile, some of which are referred to in the questionnaire. If you would like hard copies of any of these documents please telephone the Licensing Team on 020 7332 3406 or e-mail licensing@cityoflondon.gov.uk

Please complete the questionnaire and return in the freepost envelope by **11 February 2011**.

The results of the consultation will be collated and used to determine whether the City should have a policy in relation to SEVs, and if so, what that policy should be. The matter will be considered at a meeting of the Licensing Committee in March 2011.

Thanks for your time.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Edward Lord', with a small horizontal line underneath.

C. Edward Lord JP CC
Chairman, City of London Licensing Committee