

(Although I no longer live in Northampton I still regularly visit due to family + friends living here. I fully support this campaign.)

[REDACTED]

The Licensing Officer
Northampton Borough Council
Borough Solicitors Division
The Guildhall
St Giles Square
Northampton
NN1 1DE

LICENSING
10 JAN 2011

2-1-11

Dear Madam or Sir

I am writing to OBJECT to the application for a Sexual Entertainment Venue Licence for the Urban Tiger Lap Dancing Club, Wellingborough Road, Northampton, NN1 4AA.

My objections are on the following grounds:

1. Lap dancing clubs encourage their customers, and wider society to see women as sex objects. They reinforce the idea that women are always sexually available, as long as you've got a bit of cash to spare. This has to be seen in the wider context of a society in which men still dominate the positions of power and where violence against women is endemic, with 1 in 4 women facing rape in her lifetime and 1 in 2 women facing sexual harassment, stalking or domestic violence. Those working with female victims of male violence believe that the mainstreaming of the sex industries legitimises the attitudes that ultimately lead to violence against women.
2. The existence of lap dancing clubs effectively creates 'no-go' areas where women feel unsafe walking past the clubs because of the graphic advertising, and for fear of bumping into the punters from the club and being subjected to harassment and intimidation. It is also inappropriate that such images should be seen by children in the street, and offensive to many members of the public of all ages.

The Urban Tiger is situated in an inappropriate site for such a club -being close to local retail outlets and other local businesses, close to bus stops which are used by women late at night, and close to the Games Workshop, a place primarily used by children for the playing of warhammer games.

3. Lap dancing clubs are clearly linked to gender inequality – while women can be bought and sold we will never have equality between the genders. They are also linked to sexism in the workplace as many businesses may use such a club for finalising deals or entertaining clients – which necessarily would exclude the participation of women within those businesses. The council has a duty to consider gender equality in all its actions under its Gender Equality Duty arising from the Equality Act 2007.

A proper understanding of how lap-dancing clubs operate alongside properly conducted gender impact assessments as required by European legislation, means that Northampton Borough Council cannot sanction any clubs at all as they cannot promote equality – lap dancing clubs are the exact antithesis.

4. Lap dancing clubs are linked to wider systems of prostitution. The working practices in lap dancing clubs include a requirement that women pay rent to work and a high performer to customer ratio which leads to intense competition between performers to gain the attention of male customers. Even if clubs do enforce a no touching rule, and even if there is no sexual contact between dancers and customers, the presence of strip clubs in a locality increases demand for nearby prostitution services.
5. The growth of lap dancing clubs promote 'sex-object' culture – the mainstreaming of the sex and porn industries and the ever increasing sexual objectification of women and girls.
6. Lap dancing clubs have a negative impact on women's safety in wider society. They normalise the representation of women as sexual objects who are always sexually available. They make sexual harassment seem normal, as what takes place within the four walls of a lap dancing club would be considered harassment in any other context

I would urge the council, if it does allow lap dancing clubs to continue to exist in our town, to at the very least impose the following conditions on their licences:-

1. Restriction of opening times to evenings only
2. The use of CCTV monitoring equipment throughout
3. Any external advertising of adult entertainment shall not include:
 - a) Any depiction of full nudity.
 - b) Any images of breasts, buttocks or genitalia.

- c) Any depiction of overtly sexual or violent images or any other images which may give rise to concerns in respect of public decency or protection of children from harm.
- d) Any overt wording such as 'striptease' 'credit crotch' or similar
4. Prohibition of advertising in public spaces, including on billboards, telephone booth boards, and leafleting. Advertising will only be permitted on the interior and exterior of the premises. The use of ad-vans to advertise sexual entertainment venues is prohibited for public decency. No advertising allowed in media that is not exclusively aimed at adults – this would exclude local 'family' newspapers for example.
5. a) No persons under the age of 18 will be permitted on the premises.
b) Proof of age will be required from anyone appearing to be under the age of 25.
c) No performer or employee will be under the age of 18 and an employment record will be held on the premises. Adequate checks will be made to ensure compliance.
6. a) No full nudity will be permitted.
b) There shall be no physical contact between the customers and performers.
c) Performers are to keep a minimum distance of 3 feet away from the customers. Notices outlining these conditions must be clearly displayed on the premises.
d) Performers will stop immediately and move away from any customer who is offensive or attempts to touch them and shall report such behaviour and any other inappropriate behaviour or breach of house rules to the management.
e) Performers will not take or give telephone numbers or business cards or in any way solicit themselves.
f) No dancing or entertainment shall be provided in dedicated private booths within the premises.
g) All performers will at the conclusion of their last performance, leave the premises and not return that day.

These conditions would go some way to protecting women working in lap dancing clubs and women in the wider community. However, because of the negative impact that lap dancing clubs have on women's equality and women's safety, I call on Northampton Borough Council to reject this application for a Sexual Entertainment Licence by the Urban Tiger.

Yours faithfully

