

Sex Establishment Licensing Policy

Guidance and Standard Conditions

Licensing of Sex Establishments

Introduction

- 1.1 This policy has been produced as a result of new provisions that allow the Council to regulate lap dancing and similar venues.
- 1.2 The Licensing Authority is responsible for developing and implementing this policy.
- 1.3 Wiltshire Council has adopted Schedule 3 to the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 (as amended by Section 27 of the Policing and Crime Act 2009) so that it can regulate sex shops, sex cinemas and sexual entertainment venues in the County.
- 1.4 Should any change to the Standard Conditions make it necessary to update relevant parts of the policy document, the amended policy document will be consulted upon.
- 1.5 This policy supersedes all previous policies implemented by Wiltshire Council.

Purpose and Aim of the Policy

- 2.1 This policy is intended to set out clear and concise guidance, procedure and principles for the benefit of the Licensing Authority, the public, applicants and other relevant organisations.
- 2.2 This policy also contains Standard Conditions which will be applied to the sex establishment which forms part of any granted licence.

Scope

- 3.1 This policy relates to any premises wishing to operate as a sex establishment.
- 3.2 Not all premises will automatically require a licence. Where there is an exemption within the legislation this has been set out in this policy document.
- 3.3 Consideration will be given to the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998 when considering applications for Sex Establishment Licences.
- 3.4 When considering applications for a Sex Establishment Licence, in respect of premises that have previously operated without the requirement for a licence prior to the adoption of the legislation, in addition to this policy document the Licensing Authority must have regard to the Home Office guidance issued in March 2010 entitled 'Sexual Entertainment Venues – Guidance for England and Wales'.

Definitions

4.1 Sex Shop

The legislation defines a sex shop as:

- “(1) Any premises, vehicle, vessel or stall used for a business which consists to a significant degree of selling, hiring, exchanging, lending, displaying or demonstrating –
- (a) sex articles; or
 - (b) other things intended for use in connection with, or for the purpose of stimulating or encouraging –
 - (i) sexual activity; or
 - (ii) acts of force or restraint which are associated with sexual activity.
- (2) No premises shall be treated as a sex shop by reason only of their use for the exhibition of moving pictures by whatever means produced.”

Sex articles are defined as:

- “(3) (a) anything made for use in connection with, or for the purpose of stimulating or encouraging –
- (i) sexual activity; or
 - (ii) acts of force or restraint which are associated with sexual activity; and
- (b) anything to which sub-paragraph (4) below applies.
- (4) This sub-paragraph applies –
- (a) to any article containing or embodying matter to be read or looked at or anything intended to be used, either alone or as one of a set, for the reproduction or manufacture of any such article; and
 - (b) to any recording vision or sound, which –
 - (i) is concerned primarily with the portrayal of, or primarily deals with or relates to, or is intended to stimulate or encourage, sexual activity or acts of force or restraint which are associated with sexual activity; or
 - (ii) is concerned primarily with the portrayal of, or primarily deals with or relates to, genital organs, or urinary or excretory functions.”

4.2 **Sex Cinema**

The legislation defines a sex cinema as:

- “(1) Any premises, vehicle, vessel or stall used to a significant degree for the exhibition of moving pictures, by whatever means produced, which –
- (a) are concerned primarily with the portrayal of, or primarily deal with or relate to, or are intended to stimulate or encourage -
 - (i) sexual activity; or
 - (ii) acts of force or restraint which are associated with sexual activity; or

- (b) are concerned primarily with the portrayal of, or primarily deal with or relate to, genital organs or urinary or excretory functions,

but does not include a dwelling-house to which the public is not admitted.

- (2) No premises shall be treated as a sex cinema by reason only –
 - (a) if they are licensed under Section 1 of the Cinemas Act 1985, or their use or purpose for which a licence under that section is required; or
 - (b) of their use for an exhibition to which Section 6 of that Act (certain non-commercial exhibitions) applies given by an exempted organisation within the meaning of Section 6(6) of that Act.

4.3 Sexual Entertainment Venue

The legislation defines a Sexual Entertainment Venue as:

- “2A (1) In this Schedule “sexual entertainment venue” means any premises at which relevant entertainment is provided before a live audience for the financial gain of the organiser or the entertainer.
- (2) In this paragraph “relevant entertainment” means –
- (a) any live performance; or
 - (b) any 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 purpose of sexually stimulating any member of the audience (whether by verbal or other means).
- (3) The following are not sexual entertainment venues for the purposes of this Schedule –
- (a) sex cinemas and sex shops;
 - (b) premises at which the provision of relevant entertainment as mentioned in sub-paragraph (1) is such that, at the time in question and including any relevant entertainment which is being provided at that time –
 - (i) there have not been more than eleven occasions on which relevant entertainment has been so provided which fall (wholly or partly) within the period of 12 months ending with that time;
 - (ii) no such occasion has lasted more than 24 hours; and
 - (iii) no such occasion has begun within the period of one month beginning with the end of any previous occasion on which relevant entertainment has been so provided (whether or not that previous occasion falls within the 12 month period mentioned in sub-paragraph (i));

(c) premises specified or described in an order made by the relevant national authority.

(4) – (12) refer to other matters and are not relevant to this policy.

(13) For the purposes of this Schedule references to the use of any premises as a sexual entertainment venue are to be read as references to their use by the organizer.

(14) In this paragraph –

“audience” includes an audience of one;

“display of nudity” means –

(a) in the case of a woman, exposure of her nipples, pubic area, genitals or anus; and

(b) in the case of a man, exposure of his pubic area, genitals or anus;

“the organiser”, in relation to the provision of relevant entertainment at premises, means any person who is responsible for the organization or management of –

(a) the relevant entertainment; or

(b) the premises;

“premises” includes any vessel, vehicle or stall but does not include any private dwelling to which the public is not admitted;

And for the purposes of sub-paragraphs (1) and (2) it does not matter whether the financial gain arises directly or indirectly from the performance or display of nudity.”

Examples of “relevant entertainment” are:

- Lap Dancing
- Pole Dancing
- Table Dancing
- Strip Shows
- Peep Shows
- Live Sex Shows

Application Process

5.1 The application form and relevant documentation for the new licence, renewal or transfer must be completed and returned with the appropriate fee as set out in the Council’s fees and charges.

- 5.2 A copy of the application form and supporting documentation must be forwarded to the Chief of Police within 7 days of the date of the application being made.
- 5.3 Applicants must also make notice of the application by publishing an advertisement in a local newspaper which circulates within the area of the premises. The notice should clearly identify the premises to which it relates and should be published no later than 7 days from the date the application is made. There is an additional requirement for the notice of application to be displayed for 21 days on or near the premises in a place that is convenient for the public to read. The notice must contain certain information prescribed by the Licensing Authority.
- 5.4 the Council will carry out a consultation process where views are sought from: Wiltshire Council, Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service, Council Divisional Members for the area of the premises and the Council's Planning Department.
- 5.5 Objections to the application for the grant, renewal or transfer of a licence shall be given in writing, stating the terms of the objection no later than 28 days from the date of the application.
- 5.6 Where notice of an objection is received by the Council they will give notice in writing to the applicant of the general nature of the objection before it is given due consideration.
- 5.7 Objections must be made in writing and should include the following:
- (a) the name and address of the person making the objection;
 - (b) the premises to which the objection relates
 - (c) the proximity of the premises to the person making the objection;
 - (d) the reasons for making the objections.
- 5.8 Objections should be relevant to the statutory grounds for refusal as set out in the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 Act and listed in Paragraph 6.3..
- 5.9 The Licensing Authority will not consider objections that are frivolous or vexatious and decisions on these will be made objectively by Licensing Officers. Where objections of this nature are rejected, the objector will be notified in writing.

Vexatious Objections are generally taken to be one which is repetitive, without foundation or made for some other reason such as malice.

Frivolous Objections are generally taken to be one that is lacking in seriousness.

Valid Objections will be considered by the Licensing Committee to consider the application

Determination of an Application

- 6.1 The Council will consider every application on its merits, following the appropriate consultation and in accordance with this policy.
- 6.2 The Act specifies a number of issues that should and should not be considered:

- (a) A Council cannot have regard to the morality of sex establishments.
- (b) Straightforward objections on the grounds that sex establishments should not be allowed, will not be taken into account when assessing applications.
- (c) That the applicant is unsuitable to hold the licence by reason of having been convicted of an offence or for any other reason.
- (d) That if the licence was to be granted, renewed or transferred, the business to which it relates will 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/she had made the application himself/herself.
- (e) That the grant or renewal of a licence would be inappropriate having regard to:
 - (i) the character of the relevant locality;
 - (ii) the existence of other similar businesses within the locality;
 - (iii) the use to which any premises in the vicinity are put;
 - (iv) the layout, character or condition of the premises, vehicle, vessel or stall in respect of which the application is made.
- (f) No new sex establishment will be permitted if it will be situated within “inappropriate proximity”:
 - (i) near to housing;
 - (ii) near, or near to access routes to and from schools, play areas, nurseries, children’s centres or similar premises;
 - (iii) in shopping centres;
 - (iv) near places of worship;
 - (v) near a community facility or public building, including but not limited to swimming pools, leisure centres, public parks, youth centre’s/club and sheltered housing;
 - (vi) near historic buildings or tourist attractions.

“Inappropriate proximity” is defined as a distance of 200m in direct line of sight between the proposed establishment and any locations listed above, or 100m distance if there is no direct line of sight.

- (g) An applicant must be a fit and proper person to hold a licence. In determining suitability for a new licence or a transfer the Council will take the following into account:
 - (i) previous relevant knowledge and experience of the applicant;
 - (ii) any evidence of the operation of any existing or previous licence held by the applicant, including any licence held in any other council area;
 - (iii) any report about the applicant and management of the premises received from statutory objectors.

6.3 Section 12(1) of Schedule 3 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 prohibits the Licensing Authority from granting a licence:

- (a) “to a person under the age of 18; or

- (b) to a person who is for the time being disqualified from holding a licence following revocation of such a licence; or
- (c) to a person, other than a body corporate, who is not resident in a European Economic Area (EEA) state or was not so resident throughout the period of 6 months immediately preceding the date when the application was made; or
- (d) to a body corporate who is not in an EEA state; or
- (e) to a person who had, within a period of 12 months immediately preceding the date when the application was made, been refused the grant or renewal of a sex establishment licence for the premises, vehicle, vessel or stall in respect of which the application is made, unless the refusal has been reversed on appeal.”

- 6.4 The Licensing Authority will give clear reasons for its decision.
- 6.5 Any sex establishment licence may be granted subject to conditions imposed by the Council; therefore an application should not be refused if conditions could adequately address any area of concern.
- 6.6 All licences will be subject to the Council’s Standard Conditions for sex establishments as at Appendix A.
- 6.7 in the event of conflict between Standard Conditions and Special Conditions contained in the sex establishment licence, the Special Conditions shall prevail.

Grant of a Licence

- 7.1 All applications for the grant of a new licence will be determined by the Licensing Committee, irrespective of whether objections are received.

Renewal or Transfer of an Existing Licence

- 7.2 Where no valid objections or observations have been received, the application will be considered under officer delegated powers.
- 7.3 If the officer is minded to refuse such an application it will be referred to the Licensing Committee.
- 7.4 Where valid objections are received the application will be determined by the Licensing Committee.
- 7.5 At a Licensing Committee hearing the applicants and any objectors/observers will be given an opportunity to address the Committee.

Hearing Procedure

- 8.1 Where the Council is required to determine an application by referral to a Licensing Committee, the applicant and objectors/observers will be advised of the date, time and venue of the hearing.
- 8.2 In preparation for the hearing, all parties will receive a copy of the Licensing Officer’s report prior to the hearing. The report will contain a summary of the application, representations and any other relevant information.

- 8.3 At the hearing all parties will have the opportunity to address the Committee and ask factual questions of other parties. The Licensing Committee may also ask questions of all parties that they feel relevant to determine the application.
- 8.4 The Licensing Committee will communicate their decision at the end of the hearing and all parties will receive written confirmation within 7 days.
- 8.5 If a licence is to be granted the Licensing Authority will aim to do this within 5 working days of the Committee's decision.