Summary report
Sex establishments consultation findings
Summary of consultation findings

Executive Summary

This survey was carried out in line with Nottingham City Council’s Manifesto pledge (MP061) “to continue to set a licensing framework in the city to reduce the number of nightclubs and big bars, limit the number of casinos and sex shops, but encourage a wider range of smaller venues and restaurants.” It was also in response to the introduction of Section 27 of the Policing and Crime Act 2009 of a new category of sex establishment called “sexual entertainment venues (SEVs)” which allow licensing authorities to regulate lap dancing clubs and similar venues.

The introduction of these new legislative powers gives a Licensing Authority greater control over these types of premises. To adopt the provisions introduced by section 27, a Local Authority must consult local people about whether they should make such a resolution. **This duty is to ensure the views of the local people are captured.**

Community Protection planned to consult widely and give due consideration to the views of all those who responded to the consultation.

The consultation survey was available
- On-line via the Nottingham City Council website
- Paper copies were sent to various groups where requested.
- Emails were sent to community groups and organisations to distribute or respond to
- Posters were placed in libraries and leisure centres with consultation information and web address

The notion was to make the consultation available to Nottingham residents as well as trying to consult with hard to reach groups who previously may not have had the facility to voice their views on such establishments.

There were a total of 1,395 responses to the survey. Over 1,000 of these came after the Nottingham Evening Post article featuring the Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner’s comments.

This report presents an analysis of the survey responses, by respondent type, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation and religion. Along with the national and Nottingham averages, the response rate showed a good balance of response types/mix.

Responses on whether to implement a policy to have no sex shops or SEVs did not lean by a majority either way. Respondents had equally mixed views for and against Nottingham having licensed sex establishments. However, a majority agreed that sex establishments should ideally not be located near schools, nurseries and colleges or places that may be frequented by young people.
1. Introduction and methodology

Nottingham City Council proposed to review its policy on the number and location of Sex Establishments allowed in the city. There has been an increase in the number of lap dancing venues nationally since the implementation of the Licensing Act 2003 which then became a concern for many local communities.

Previously, premises only needed to be licensed under the Licensing Act 2003 for music and dancing. Responsible Authorities (Police / Fire Service etc.) and interested parties (residents/businesses in the vicinity) could only make representation based on the four licensing objectives, namely:

- Prevention of crime and disorder
- Public safety
- Prevention of public nuisance
- Protection of children from harm

As a result of this, licensing authorities could not consider the objections of local people and businesses that were based on matters outside the scope of the four objectives. For example, a representation based on whether the venue was appropriate given its character and locality of the area would not be considered. The introduction of Section 27 of the Policing and Crime Act 2009 brought in a new category of sex establishment called “sexual entertainment venues (SEVs)”, allowing licensing authorities to regulate lap dancing clubs and similar venues. The licensing authority can impose standard conditions and also ‘premises specific’ conditions to help control the activities taking place at the premises. The legislation also gives an opportunity for the local community to make comments with regard to specific applications.

The purpose of this consultation was to capture the views of citizens to inform the decision-making process.

The following consultation approach was adopted:

- Look at other authority approaches taken from their reports and adopt to suit our stakeholders and constraints
- Attend group/focus/public meetings (if applicable)
- Draft an appropriate consultation questionnaire with a covering letter/statement. A copy of the survey and covering letter used is in the appendix
- Draft a detailed consultation paper, with legislative direction taken from the Home Office guidance document
- Distribute surveys to appropriate organisations and groups, paper and electronically
- Create a web page with a survey link for citizens to complete the survey on-line
- Analyse the survey responses
- Make appropriate recommendations (including defining an exclusion zone/s if relevant)

A short survey was devised and placed online on the Council website for responses. Hard copies were also made available. The survey was open for replies from December 7th 2012 to February 24th 2013.

The survey was publicised on the Council intranet and internet, and by email and letter to voluntary sector groups including tenants’ and residents’ associations, faith groups and community centres. Posters were displayed in libraries and leisure centres alerting people to the
consultation. In addition, the existing sexual entertainment venue and sex shops in the city were sent details of the consultation to enable their customers to participate.

Shortly before the closing of the survey, the Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner spoke to the Evening Post about her views on this consultation. This resulted in a front page article: “No Sex in the City” appearing on February 14th, which generated a number of comments on the article itself. It also encouraged a large number of people to respond to the survey. There were a total of 1,395 responses to the survey: over 1,000 replies were received after this article appeared in the press.
2. Profile of Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response Breakdown</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>As individuals</td>
<td>92.9%</td>
<td>1,285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voluntary/community/faith groups</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Businesses</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public sector organisations</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responding in another capacity</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Answered Question</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1,382</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skipped Question</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A list of the groups, businesses, and organisations who contributed to the consultation is in the Appendix.

The gender split of respondents was 51% male, 49% female; this is a good representation of Nottingham’s population. This is encouraging, as men and women may prove to have different views on the issues addressed in this consultation.

There was also a reasonable distribution by age, as can be seen in the chart below.

In terms of sexual orientation, 85% of responses came from people identifying as heterosexual, with smaller numbers identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual or some other sexual orientation. No official statistics are currently available to indicate the proportion of the population who are lesbian, gay or bisexual; the national estimates most commonly used range from 5% to 7%. This survey should therefore show adequate representation from respondents who are lesbian, gay or bisexual.
Nine percent of respondents indicated that they had a **limiting health problem or disability**, which is lower than the census results for Nottingham, but still does give a reasonable representation of views.

Forty-two percent of respondents (567 people) stated that they had no **religion or belief**, and 50% (673 people) that they were Christian. The remaining 8% of respondents were split as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response breakdown</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Buddhist</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sikh</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindu</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other religion or belief</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Answered Question** - 1,340

**Skipped Question** - 55

This does show some under-representation of people who are Muslim, Sikh or Hindu.

In terms of **ethnicity**, there was a good balance of responses. 84% of respondents identified as White British; this is slightly higher than the 2011 census figures. However, the census figures include under 16s who are more likely to identify as Black or Minority Ethnic (BME), and yet are unlikely to have completed this survey.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Percentage of respondents</th>
<th>Count of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White: English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish, British</td>
<td>84.6%</td>
<td>1,136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White: Irish</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White: Gypsy or Irish traveller</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White: Other</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed/multiple: White &amp; Black Caribbean</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed/multiple: White &amp; Black African</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed/multiple: White &amp; Asian</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed/multiple: Other</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Asian British: Indian</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Asian British: Pakistani</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Asian British: Bangladeshi</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Asian British: Chinese</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Asian British: Other</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/Black British: Caribbean</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/Black British: African</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/Black British: Other</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other: Arab</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other ethnic group</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Answered Question** - 1,343

**Skipped Question** - 52
3. Current provision of sex shops and sexual entertainment venues

Respondents were informed that there were currently two sex shops and one sexual entertainment venue (SEV) in Nottingham, and asked if they felt that each of these was too many, too few or about the right number.

As can be seen below, slightly more people said that they believed there was about the right number of sex shops in Nottingham than felt there were either too many or too few. Opinions on SEVs were more polarised, with approximately the same number of people saying they felt it was too many as saying they felt it was too few.

![Opinions of current number of sex shops and sexual entertainment venues in Nottingham](image)

Men and people aged 18 to 39 were more likely to feel that there were too few or about the right number of sex shops and SEVs. Women and people aged 40 or over were more likely to feel that there were too many sex shops and SEVs.
4. Future licensing proposals

Impact of no sex shops or sexual entertainment venues in Nottingham

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sex shops</th>
<th>Sexual entertainment venues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive effect</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No effect</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative effect</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Respondents were given the opportunity to explain why they felt that having no sex shops or sexual entertainment venues in Nottingham would have a positive or negative effect on them.

Whilst there was only a single space available to write in comments around both sex shops and sexual entertainment venues, it is worth noting that a number of people made a distinction in their response between sex shops and sexual entertainment venues. In total, 18 people expressed the view that sex shops did no harm, but that they would prefer sexual entertainment venues not to exist.

The majority of respondents who said a ban would have no effect on them did not answer the follow-up question; the remainder mostly stated that this was because they did not use the venues and were not affected by their presence in any way.

There were a wide range of reasons given for people’s responses, and a full list of the 1,141 comments made is available in the appendix. The comments have been grouped into themes, and the charts overleaf show these themes. A small number of direct quotes are also included to illustrate some of the more commonly expressed views. There are clearly varying views around the potential impact on crime which sex shops and sexual entertainment venues may have: some people feel that the venues increase crime and harm a community, others feel that the venues do no harm and there is no evidence to show they increase crime. Similarly, there are differences of opinion on whether the establishments are demeaning to women.
Reasons why banning sex shops & SEVs would have a negative impact on respondents

- Banning them would restrict personal freedoms
- I use them / enjoy them / work at them
- People should be able to use them if they want
- Would be bad for the local economy
- Would encourage unlicensed venues/illegal trade
- Council shouldn't legislate on morality
- Would have to travel elsewhere
- Sex is normal & shouldn't be stigmatised
- Not harming anyone
- There is a demand for them
- Need more modern attitudes / less prudish
- Would have to shop on Internet instead
- Would give negative view of Nottingham
- People don't have to use them
- Current venues are safe
- Would impact tourism
- Other

Some example quotes were:

- A lack of licensing does not mean a lack of venues/shops - it simply means unlicensed venues and outlets will appear. Unregulated establishments will lead to the exploitation of staff (in venues) and the sale of unrated films in shops, neither of which is desirable.
- As an adult enjoying a healthy sex life I welcome the opportunity to purchase items that will enhance my sex life from shops. I do not want to purchase items I cannot inspect beforehand. I welcome the specialist help and advice available in such shops and acknowledge the sexual education service they provide.
- Because I wouldn't have anywhere to buy or browse sex toys with my partner. And I wouldn't have anywhere to take my friends for hen and stag parties where they can have fun pole dancing and have a laugh with lovely dancers in a clean and controlled sexual environment.
- I understand that some people do not have particularly enlightened attitudes to sex and would rather pretend it doesn't exist, but I fail to see why it is up to local government to pander to this prudish minority. Those who are against sex shops and sexual entertainment venues can simply avoid going to them or working in them. Those of us who will happily visit and work in these kinds of establishment can do so without involving anyone else or trampling on their rights; why precisely should they be allowed to trample on ours?
- I enjoy supporting my local economy. Shutting down these shops is the same as the big high street brands shutting up shop. More people will become jobless.
- Restricting people's freedom of choice, persecuting those who choose to work in this sector.
Reasons why banning sex shops & SEVs would have a positive impact on respondents:

- Degrading to women / promote wrong views
- Nottingham would be better without them
- Banning them would protect children & families
- Would reduce crime / they increase crime
- Against my personal / religious views
- They are exploitative
- Do not want or need them in Nottingham
- People will feel safer without them
- They are bad for society
- They are bad for relationships
- Would show NCC is doing something about this
- There is already too much porn around
- They attract vulnerable people as workers
- They attract undesirable people as customers
- They pervert the mind
- They encourage sex outside of relationships
- People avoid the areas they are in
- Other

Some example quotes were:

- As a woman it is hard to believe in the claims of a city council that claims to back equality if the council allows establishments where women are only there as sexual titillation for men. What message is this giving about the status of women in our city? Surely this is not the image we want to be promoting of the city.
- I am against the exploitation and objectification of people (nearly always women) that these shops and venues result in.
- I believe that they can be degrading to women and as a Christian I believe that they cheapen the gift that sex was meant to be.
- I think that it would improve the appeal of Nottingham. In areas such as Alfreton Road where there is a sex shop it really lowers the tone of the area. Being in mainstream areas where children pass frequently is distasteful and inappropriate.
- Several years ago I read that police stats show that in areas where sexual venues exist, crime against women in general, and specifically sexual crime, increases. If this is the case then they should not be allowed within city limits.
- We live in a society obsessed by sex - the sexualisation of children is a serious issue for society and has a detrimental effect on young people and families. Less places where this is the focus is very important. Children are not allowed to be children anymore - they are bombarded by media of sexual content. It is important to protect our young people from this.
5. Potential unsuitable locations

Respondents were asked if they felt there were any locations near which sex shops or sexual entertainment venues should not be located. A list of possible suggestions were given, and respondents could also suggest any additional sites.

Which of these, if any, should sex shops and sexual entertainment venues not be located near to?

- Nurseries, schools & colleges
- Parks & playgrounds
- Places of worship
- Community centres
- Care homes
- Day centres
- Leisure centres
- Health centres & GP surgeries
- Shopping centres
- Anywhere in Nottingham
- None are unsuitable
- Other

Among the main ‘other’ answers given were:
- Residential areas
- Nurseries and schools, but not a problem being near colleges
- Places where children gather

Again, a full list of the ‘other’ comments made is included in the appendix.

As can be seen above, the locations most commonly identified by respondents were places frequented by children and young people.
6. Additional comments

Just over half of the survey respondents (764 people) used the additional space at the end of the survey to make further comments about the proposals. In many cases, their additional comments reinforced the views they expressed previously in the survey.

Some of the main themes raised were:

- Support for the Council’s proposal (203 respondents)
- Suggesting that venues which are properly licensed and monitored should be left alone (88 respondents)
- Concerns that a ban on sex shops and SEVs would result in the industry going underground, and this being less safe for the people involved (59 respondents)
- Opposition to the Council’s proposal (51 respondents)
- Stating that the SEVs and sex shops provide an economic benefit, including jobs (47 respondents)
- Feeling that the proposal is old-fashioned or prudish (46 respondents)
- Expressing the view that the Council should not interfere in this area (41 respondents)
- Commenting that the existing venues are safe, well-organised and cause no problems (41 respondents)
- Considering that venues should not be banned just because some people may be offended by them (32 respondents)
- Commenting that there is nothing shameful about sex (30 respondents)
- Explicitly disagreeing with the views expressed by Chris Cutland in the Evening Post (29 respondents)
- Restating the importance of freedom of choice (29 respondents)
- Challenging the perception that sex shops & SEVs contribute to crime, violence and/or abuse (28 respondents)
- Suggesting that the Council is wasting time and money on this consultation, and should target more important issues (28 respondents)
- Suggesting that publicity for venues should be discrete (24 respondents)
- Questioning why Ann Summers is able to operate without a license and is therefore excluded from the proposal to ban the venues (23 respondents)
- Expressing the view that the consultation process is biased/decisions already made (19 respondents)
- Stating that the existing venues meet a need (19 respondents)
- Stating that they would not want any additional venues to be licensed (17 respondents)
- Questioning the reasoning behind the Council’s proposal to ban sex shops & SEVs (17 respondents)
- Challenging the perception that sex shops and SEVs are seedy and used by “dirty old men” (10 respondents)
- Emphasising the difference between sex shops and SEVs (10 respondents)
7. Conclusions

The main reasons given by respondents for supporting a possible ban are:

- Negative impacts on children and young people
- Moral or religious objections
- Perceived link to increased crime
- Resultant sexist or demeaning attitudes towards women

The majority of these are subjective reasons, so are difficult to prove or disprove. The link to increased crime levels appears to also be a matter of debate, with links cited to studies which support differing viewpoints.

The main reasons given for opposing a potential ban are:

- Restrictions of personal freedom
- Personal impact on respondents who use or work in these venues themselves
- Economic impact of closing profitable businesses
- Concerns that the trade would go underground, with resultant reduced safety for people who use or work in these businesses

In the further comments suggestions, respondents made some suggestions which might help to reduce some of the perceived negative impacts. These included

- Ensuring licensed premises are monitored
- Minimising advertising of the premises
- Not locating venues near areas which are likely to be frequented by children (e.g. playgrounds, schools).

Overall, there does not appear to be a strong consensus either in favour of or against banning sex shops and sexual entertainment venues. However, there is support for considering the location of such venues, with over half of respondents feeling they should not be located near nurseries, schools and colleges or parks and playgrounds.