

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

COUNCIL MEETING

WEDNESDAY 17th DECEMBER 2008

**RESPONSE TO SCRUTINY REVIEW ON
THE LICENSING OF STRIP CLUBS**

AGENDA ITEM 8.1

REPORT OF THE SERVICE HEAD, DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 On 20th June 2007 the Council considered a motion moved by Councillor Denise Jones and seconded by Councillor Abjol Miah regarding the licensing of strip clubs. Following debate of this motion and a number of amendments the Council resolved (inter alia) to ask the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to investigate the impact of such clubs and trends in new applications on the local community, inviting experts, residents, community and faith groups to submit evidence, and seeking legal and professional advice and support. The Council's resolution is set out in full overleaf.
- 1.2 The Scrutiny Working Group on the Licensing of Strip Clubs was established in November 2007 and submitted a detailed report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 1st April 2008 including 14 recommendations.
- 1.3 A detailed action plan has now been developed to address the recommendations of the Scrutiny Working Group and this was approved by the Cabinet on 5th November 2008.
- 1.4 As the Scrutiny Working Group on this matter arose in the first instance from a Council resolution, the Cabinet report together with the action plan (Appendix A and the report of the Scrutiny Working Group (Appendix B) are now reported back to the Council for information.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That the Council note the report of the Scrutiny Working Group on the Licensing of Strip Clubs and the action plan approved by the Cabinet on 5th November 2008.

3. RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL ON 20TH JUNE 2007

This Council Notes:

1. All Licensing objectives have to be judged against the following objectives:
 - Prevention of crime and disorder
 - Public safety
 - Prevention of nuisance
 - Prevention of harm to Children
2. London Boroughs, under local legislation, can regulate sexual encounter establishments (sex shops and sex cinemas) and under a previous resolution the Council have decided not to allow any of these premises to operate in the Borough.
3. The new Licensing regime limits councils' powers over striptease

This Council Resolves:

1. To ask Overview and Scrutiny Committee to investigate the impact of such clubs, and trends in new applications, on the local community, employees and users, inviting experts, residents', community and faith groups to submit evidence, and seeking legal and professional advice and support.
2. To use the results of this review to inform the Council's approach to safeguarding the rights of women and protection of children as well as the wider community.
3. That the Council investigate ways in which existing powers under licensing law can be used to exercise greater control over strip clubs and to seek information from the local authorities named above in undertaking this review.
4. That a report on the outcomes of these two studies be presented to the Cabinet and to Licensing Committee for consideration.
5. That the report be disseminated in co-operation with campaigners and community groups including a seminar and briefings.
6. To publicise regular guidance for residents on their rights and powers in regard to planning, licensing and other regulatory regimes governing such venues.
7. That the report consider the speed and effectiveness of investigations into alleged breaches of licensing regulations, and the enforcement of licensing regulations when breaches are revealed.
8. That the report contains recommendations concerning the allocation of costs for the enforcement of breaches of licensing regulations.