

Licensing Sub-Committee – Meeting held on Thursday, 6th July, 2023.

Present:- Councillors Shah (Chair), Mohammad and Stedmond

Officers Present:- Mr Cryan (Legal Services), Ms Kauser (Democratic Services) and Ms Rumney (Licensing)

PART 1

1. Declarations of Interest

None received.

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting held on 26th April 2023

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 26th April 2023 be approved as a correct record.

3. Guidance on Predetermination/ Predisposition - To Note

Members confirmed that they had read and understood the guidance on predetermination and predisposition.

4. Renewal application for Simply Pleasure, 32 Windsor Road, Slough, SL1 2EJ.

Following introductions and confirmation that all parties had received a copy of the paperwork, the Chair outlined the procedure for the hearing.

Introduction by the Licensing Officer

The Senior Licensing Officer, introduced the report to the Sub-Committee. An application to renew the sex shop licence for Simply Pleasure, 32 Windsor Road had been received. An objection to the renewal application was received on behalf of Slough Baptist Church on the grounds that the premises was situated on a busy pedestrian route to local shops and services, housing in the area had increased which meant more families residing in the local vicinity and proximity of the premises to a family church.

Options available to the Sub-Committee were outlined.

Questions to the Licensing Officer

Members asked how long the premises had been operating and whether there had been representations made to the application from Thames Valley Police. The Licensing Officer informed the Sub-Committee that their records indicated that the business had been operating since at least 2004 and that TVP had not made any objections to the renewal application.

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Clarification was sought whether the renewal application had been properly carried out, specifically if an advertisement of the application had been made in the local newspaper. The Licensing Officer confirmed that the application was placed in a local newspaper.

A Member asked whether there had been any breaches of the licence, specifically incidents of underage sales and was informed that there had been none. It was noted that the premises had a greyed out frontage and a double entry system to let customers in and operated a Challenge 25 Policy.

Submissions by the Applicant

Mr Clarke on behalf of the applicant submitted that the premises had been operating for a number of years and that there had been no breaches of any of its licensing conditions as per the Council's terms and conditions. The company was a local employer with twenty one stores nationally.

The application was seeking to renew the existing hours of operation, namely 10am to 7pm, Monday to Saturday. The premises were not open on Sundays or on Public Holidays and had a challenge 25 policy to ensure that no-one under the age of 18 was admitted to the premises. Mr Clarke indicated that local developments had taken traffic away from the local area but that otherwise the environment had not changed and believed that the objection should not be upheld.

Questions to the Applicant

In response to questions from the Sub-Committee Mr Clarke stated that three local staff comprising of a manager and two sales assistants were employed. Mr Clarke could not confirm how many of the company's other shops were located near to a church. Mr Clarke submitted that although Slough Baptist Church had previously objected to the licence he was unaware of any other objections.

Submissions made on behalf of Slough Baptist Church

Pastor Wilson of Slough Baptist Church was in attendance to submit objections to the renewal application on behalf of the Church. Objections were based on the location of the premises near to the Church and to shops and a residential area. Pastor Wilson explained that Slough was a fast growing area where families with children had moved into the area and that the Church was a multi-ethnic church with many children and young people. The Church also operated a Friday toddler group and a summer holiday club. Pastor Wilson also said that many families pass by on their way to local schools.

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Questions to Pastor Wilson

In response to questions from the Sub-Committee Pastor Wilson said that although there had not been any formal complaints about the premises a number of informal comments had been made to him about the premises.

Closing remarks

The Licensing Officer reminded the Sub-Committee of the options available to them.

In closing, Pastor Wilson of Slough Baptist Church reiterated that he was objecting to the location of the premises being near to the Church and to its impact on families.

In summing up, Mr Clarke stated that the business was a local employer operating within the terms of its licensing conditions.

Decision

The Sub-Committee carefully considered all the evidence before it, and all oral submissions made during the hearing. The Sub-Committee was satisfied that the premises had measures in place, such as a controlled entry system and challenge 25 scheme, to ensure that children were protected and that there had been no breaches of any licence conditions.

The Sub-Committee was also satisfied that there had been no significant changes in the local environment and that the business had been operating responsibly within the terms of the licensing terms and conditions of the Council.

Resolved - That the application for a renewal of the licence be granted for one year with trading hours of 10:00am to 7:00pm from Monday to Saturday. The premises will not be open on Sundays or on public holidays.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 11.00 am and closed at 12.05 pm)