

**At an Extraordinary Meeting of the LICENSING COMMITTEE held in the CIVIC CENTRE on MONDAY, 4<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST, 2008 at 2.00 p.m.**

**Present:-**

Councillor A. Wilson in the Chair

Councillors Francis, P. Gibson, Gofton, G. Hall, Paul Maddison, Richardson and J.B. Scott.

**Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were submitted to the meeting on behalf of Councillors Errington, Old, T. Martin, Trueman, J. Walton and Whalen.

**Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**Control of Lap Dancing Establishments**

The Director of Community and Cultural Services submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided Members with the opportunity to respond to a consultation document on the subject of lap dancing establishments issued by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) on 18<sup>th</sup> June, 2008.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor P. Gibson concurred with the option that such establishments be placed in a legal category similar to sex shops to bring them under the control of the regime provided by the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982. He referred to a previous establishment in Sunderland that employed topless bar staff who could be clearly seen by children who gathered outside. He believed that if licensed, conditions could be attached requiring the premises to take measures to prevent this.

Councillor Gofton stated that it was a difficult area. Whilst supporting the idea of licensing, she recognised the balance that needed to be taken between allowing consenting adults to carry out a lawful business and the need to prevent exploitation and enhance child protection.

Councillor Francis stated that the licensing regime would allow the general public an opportunity to express their views in relation to such establishments.

Councillor G. Hall shared the concerns raised with regard to exploitation and child protection but was not convinced that licensing was the most appropriate route to follow. He believed that the 2003 Licensing Act had given too great a prominence to minority objectors who tended to be more vocal than the supporters of a proposal. He felt that it may be more appropriate to allow market forces to regulate the establishments as a dictatorial licensing regime could drive them underground.

Mr. Terrett, Trading Standards and Licensing Manager having noted Members' comments, it was:-

1. RESOLVED that the Director of Community and Cultural Services be authorised to respond to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport in the appropriate fashion agreeing that lap dancing be brought under the control of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982.

(Signed) A. WILSON,  
Chairman.