

**LAP DANCING****(Report by Head of Democratic and Central Services)****1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to alert the Panel to impending legislation which will introduce a requirement for lap dancing clubs to be licensed by the Council as sex encounter venues.

**2. The Need for Licensing**

- 2.1 There has been growing concern in recent years about an expansion in the number of lap dancing clubs and an absence of powers to regulate them satisfactorily. Although estimates vary, numbers are thought to have doubled in the past 5 years to the extent that there are now close to 300 such establishments in the United Kingdom. Although enquiries have been received about the possibility of venues in Huntingdonshire, none have been opened.
- 2.2 Such establishments are likely to require a premises licence under the Licensing Act 2003 for the sale of alcohol and provision of regulated entertainment but they do not fall within the category of a sex establishment for the purposes of licensing which is restricted currently, outside London, to sex cinemas and sex shops. Representations can be made by responsible authorities and interested parties under the Licensing Act on one or more of the licensing objectives only. This does not include the type of entertainment to be provided. The result is that lap dancing clubs have been granted premises licences, notwithstanding the objections of local residents.
- 2.3 The Local Government Association and pressure groups have been lobbying for lap dancing to be licensed and following a consultation exercise last year, the Home Secretary concluded that local communities should have a greater say about the location and number of clubs and similar establishments in their areas.

**3. Regulation**

- 3.1 The proposed legislation is contained in the Policing and Crime Bill which is likely to be enacted shortly. The Bill defines lap dancing clubs and similar establishments as a sex encounter venue which will require licensing as a sex establishment under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982.
- 3.2 The Bill will enable local people to object to an application and allow the Council to refuse a licence that would be inappropriate given the character of the area, set a limit on the number of licences that they consider appropriate for a particular area and impose appropriate conditions. Licences will be renewable annually but a licence will not be required where a venue has been used on no more than 11 occasions at monthly intervals in the preceding 12 months.
- 3.3 A consultation exercise is currently being undertaken by the Home Office on the transitional arrangements but as no such establishments have been opened in Huntingdonshire, a response is not required.

#### **4. Conclusion**

- 4.1 Members are asked to note the content of this report and that a further update will be given when the Bill is enacted.

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#### **Background Papers**

Policing and Crime Bill  
The Regulation of Lap Dancing Clubs – consultation on transitional arrangements by the Home Office.