

LICENSING COMMITTEE

26 February 2026

Present:

Councillor Martyn Snow (Chair)
Councillors Bennett, Darling, Haigh, Harding, Holland, Mitchell, K and Williams, R, and Wood.

Apologies:

Councillors Begley, Banyard and Parkhouse

Also present:

Head of Service - Environment and Waste, Legal Advisor, Apprentice Solicitor, Principal Licensing Officer, Licensing Officer and Democratic Services Officer

13 **Apologies**

Apologies had been received from Councillors Begley, Banyard, and Parkhouse.

Councillor Wood was present as a substitute for Councillor Begley.

14 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 27 January 2026 were taken as read, approved, and signed by the Chair as correct following the correction of a spelling mistake.

15 **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were made by Members.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) ACT 1982

16 **Application for the Renewal of a Sex Shop Licence**

The Chair introduced the Officers and Members to the Applicant.

The Legal Advisor introduced the proceedings and outlined the procedure for the meeting.

The Legal Advisor advised Members that a late representation had been received and it was necessary to determine if this would be accepted.

The Applicant confirmed there was no objection to submitting the late representation and following a unanimous vote, it was confirmed that the late representation could be considered when determining the application.

The Principal Licensing Officer presented the report making the following points:

- the Council had adopted the current Sex Establishments Licensing Policy in 2013;
- the policy set out that Sidwell Street and Fore Street were the only locations a sex shop licence could be considered;
- there was a slight variation with the opening hours, with an intention to open an hour later in the morning;

- adverts had been placed on the shop front and within the newspaper;
- four objections had been received within the statutory 28 day period, with 2 being rescinded;
- compliance visits to the premises had found it to be well-managed and fully compliant with the conditions of the current licence; and
- the policy was in the report.

The Principal Licensing Officer responded to questions from Members in the following terms:

- 'Prowler' were a well-known brand name in the gay community;
- the EQIA indicated a positive impact on sex and gender as the presence of a sex shop in the area was empowering to its users; and
- Simply Pleasure had had their licence in the current location for 19 years, and in Verney Street before that.

The Applicant spoke on behalf of their application making the following points:

- they had complied with been doing the licence renewal process for almost 20 years;
- they were committed to working to the conditions of their licence and Officers had never had any cause to raise concern;
- local people were employed in the shop;
- the sales assistants were exceptional and often gave advice to customers coming to shop in-store;
- there had been no considerable change to the local area in the last 12 months;
- a strict challenge 25 policy was in place, and they only accepted recognised identification documents;
- this was the only sex shop in this area;
- the majority of residents in this area university students over the age of 18;
- there was no involvement with nightclubs and the doors closed at 18:00;
- the statistics raised on the representation had no correlation with the store;
- they had not joined the SWAN (Safety of Women at Night) Charter, as the store closed at 18:00; and
- they had never had a licence renewal refused.

In response to Members questions the Applicant responded in the following terms:

- the only reported incidents at the premises related to shoplifting and refusal of entry for people that did not have ID;
- incidents were recorded in a shared file to enable the identification of patterns across stores;
- other Simply Pleasure stores advertised the Prowler brand as well as their being stand-alone Prowler stores; and
- this application had been picked up by a local newspaper and despite having over 200 comments, there were no negative comments regarding this application.

The Head of Service – Environment and Waste advised Members that he had been overseeing licensing since 2013 and there had never been an issue with this premises. He had only attended once following an issue with the bin.

The Licensing Officers had always had a good response to applications with timely dialogue. The last time Simply Pleasure had appeared at committee was regarding the window display.

RESOLVED that the sex shop licence be renewed subject to the existing conditions as specified on the Licence and set out in the Council's Sex Establishment Policy. The Chair noted that the licence had been renewed because the premises was professionally operated in compliance with the licence conditions and whilst representations had been made there was insufficient evidence to make the Licensing Committee consider refusing or adding any additional conditions to the Licence.

The meeting commenced at 5.30 pm and closed at 6.28 pm

Chair