

The Mayor's Vision for a Diverse and Inclusive City

Joint Response to Draft Consultation

By [Not Buying It](#), [Nordic Model Now!](#) and [Filia](#)

Are these the right priorities? Are there other priorities we should consider?

Consulting on a safe, healthy, inclusive city *surely* means you must address the antithesis of this – London's prolific sex industry in all its guises, from massage parlours to strip clubs alongside their advertising in newspapers (Metro and ES) distributed throughout TfL's network.

The sex industry is both a fundamental symptom and cause of the very issues the Mayor seeks to address – health, safety, inclusion. It exists *because of, and creates*, inequality, poverty, sexual harassment, domestic violence, sexual abuse, child abuse, poor sexual and emotional health and more. The overwhelming majority of women enter the sex trade *because* of a lack of safety, inclusivity and good health. Most women enter prostitution *because* of poverty – typically as underage children. The majority have come from abusive family backgrounds. Once in the industry they face high levels of abuse, including sexual assault, rape and murder (indeed every sex act can be considered non consensual, thus a form of abuse, as it was entered into through lack of choice). At the same time the very presence, not to mention legitimising, of all forms of the sex trade provides an unhealthy, unsafe, non-inclusive environment for all: women feel threatened or are harassed in the vicinity of massage parlours or strip clubs and the industries promote global attitudes by men (particularly users) that are deeply harmful to women in wider society.

It is particularly urgent to address the sex trade now because the 'night time economy' means the sex industry in all its guises will no doubt hugely expand. Yet one of the advisors to the Night Time Tzar is a barrister who is often paid counsel for strip club operators.

We are extremely concerned that our Mayor appears to have dropped plans brought in by Boris Johnson to tackle the *demand* for prostitution. The former Mayoral Strategy on Violence Against Women and Girls sought to tackle the demand for prostitution, clamping down on buyers and pimps whilst helping women out of the sex trade (the 'Sex Buyer Law' or 'Nordic Model'). Sadiq Khan's Policing and Crime proposals however make no mention whatsoever to tackling the buyers or profiteers of prostitution.

We are concerned that the powerful pro-prostitution lobby (which includes pimps and policies advocated by jailed sex traffickers) might be having undue influence with the Mayor and the GLA as it is with many other decision makers and caution as to who the Mayor is listening to.

At the same time groups such as ours are simply not being sought out adequately for our considerable expertise and insight from our representatives gained from years of working specifically on these issues (as detailed below).

We believe that by *not* addressing these issues and by dropping previously progressive policies alongside *not* consulting adequately with expert groups falls foul of the Mayor's/GLA's Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) to promote equality, 'good relations' between women and men and an environment free from harassment, discrimination and intimidation.

What evidence of inequalities do you or your organisation have that we could include in our evidence base?

The Mayor already possesses substantive evidence of the harm of all forms of the sex trade from previous Mayoral consultations and strategies on violence against women – where it was recognised as harmful and policy was to curb it. It feels that the ‘wheel is being reinvented’ instead of making use of previous well-rationalised (and hard fought) policies. This is despite the current Mayor being particularly respected as a self-professed feminist.

In addition, numerous UN human rights treaties, such as CEDAW, the Palermo Protocol and Beijing Platform for Action, recognise the harm of the sex trade in all its forms. They call to outlaw profiteering from prostitution, to reduce demand for prostitution and to address the poverty and lack of inclusion that makes individuals prey for pimps and traffickers. The UK is signatory to all of these documents, many of which are legally binding.

Prostitution:

Comprehensive information can be found at www.nordicmodelnow.org and <http://enddemand.uk/about/frequently-asked-questions>

Lap Dancing/Strip Clubs:

Again the Mayor already has substantive information and policies on this from his predecessor. Further information can be found here: www.notbuyingit.org.uk/publications

Information specific to the PSED and how strip club licensing is likely to be in breach of it will be available here: www.notbuyingit.org.uk/ZeroOption

Past Mayoral Strategies:

London Mayoral Strategy on VAWG 2013-2017

Outlines the commitment to challenging pimps and punters (page 25-27):

https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/gla_migrate_files_destination/Pan-London%20Strategy%20on%20Violence%20against%20Women%20and%20Girls%202013_17_1.pdf

The Way Forward Strategy 2010-13 also has a wealth of evidence and strategies on how to challenge VAWG. Of particular note to the Mayor and TfL (page 28) is the fact that one of the most common ways men access prostitution is through ads in newspapers. The strategy also talks about tough action on strip clubs (61) and the demand for prostitution (p 27):

https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/the_way_forward_-_strategy.pdf

What are the most effective actions we could take to act on our priorities? *

Constructive, meaningful talks with women’s rights groups who challenge the porn and sex trade (rather than the pro-sex industry lobby which often include pimps within their ranks). This includes Not Buying It, Nordic Model Now!, Filia and many others.

What best practice exists in the areas we are focusing on that we learn from?

Prostitution:

Ipswich adopted a Sex Buyer approach to prostitution – a huge undertaking but one that essentially eradicated prostitution in the area. After the horrific murders of 5 prostituted women, Suffolk Chief of Police took the lead in working with all stakeholders, including local residents and support workers to get prostituted women off the streets and clamp down on pimps, brothel keepers and punters. This saw a massive reduction in prostitution, a saving to the tax-payer, women lifted from the most abusive industry on the planet, safer streets for all and improved attitudes towards all women.

This demonstrates that regions can adopt their own action around prostitution and that a concerted effort, with strong, committed leadership can be highly effective. Imagine if the Mayor proactively backed and pushed for such an approach pan London? We could see a substantive reduction in prostitution and the abstract misery that goes hand-in-hand with it.

This approach has of course also been adopted on a country-wide basis, most notably in Sweden with a substantial reduction in prostitution, child prostitution, trafficking and the acceptance of prostitution as 'inevitable' or 'a man's right'. Sweden of course constantly scores highest on global indicators of gender equality and safety. Many other nations have since followed suit including Canada, Norway, Iceland, France and Northern Ireland.

We are in contact with former Chief of Police, Sir Alan Caton, responsible for implementing the Sex Buyer Law in Suffolk who would be more than happy to talk to the Mayor and relevant bodies.

Parliament's APPG on Prostitution has also published a report on how the Sex Buyer Law could be implemented UK wide: <http://enddemand.uk/2016/02/new-report-from-commission-on-the-sex-buyer-law>

Strip Clubs:

Sheffield City Council recently conceded during court proceedings against it, that it was in breach of the PSED in its licensing of strip joint chain, Spearmint Rhino. It now faces further legal challenge for writing its licensing policies around pre-existing strip clubs. We note that Westminster City Council has some 2 dozen licensed sex venues in one small area of the borough and ask how this can possibly be compatible with the PSED. We also note that at least 3 other boroughs (Camden, Tower Hamlets and Hackney) have a policy of 'zero strip clubs' yet have some 2 dozen pre-existing clubs between them.

All of this is likely to be a breach of the PSED and councils need guidance from the Mayor over their legal obligations and why streets crawling with massage parlours and strip clubs run totally counter to providing a healthy, safe or inclusive city.

Legal Breach of PSED by TfL

We have written numerous times to TfL asking why it is allowing Metro and ES to advertise sex chat and even prostitution ('chat or date') in newspapers it has sanctioned to enjoy free distribution on its network. This is despite the fact that new codes published recently by TfL ban the promotion of the porn and sex trade (Section 2 of this codes this states that these codes relates to ads in *any* form) and counter to Schedule 9 Codes which give TfL a say on content and ads in newspapers distributed on its network: www.notbuyingit.org.uk/TfL. It seems particularly ironic that the Mayor has recently called out to men not to view porn on the transport network, yet the sex industry is advertised in newspapers distributed daily in millions across the network.

We have recently sought legal counsel over allowing the placement of such ads in newspapers and have been informed that the ASA, also a public body, is almost certainly in breach of the PSED. We believe TfL might be too and urge it to act promptly on this.

Could we work together with your organisation on our priorities? How could we do this?

We urge you to work with us whether collectively or individually. We can be contacted at the emails given below and would welcome an initial meeting. We feel despite attempts to raise these important issues we have been ignored or told 'there is nothing we can do' when clearly there is much that can be done and much that the Mayor/GLA is *legally required* to do.

Not Buying It

The CEO of Not Buying It, formerly of Object - which ensured law change to stop strip clubs being licensed as cafes and to make it a criminal offence to buy sexual services from anyone coerced. We are currently challenging the ASA over allowing sex ads in newspapers and have been asking TfL to ensure Metro and ES drop such ads if they wish to continue being distributed across the London transport network.

www.notbuyingit.org.uk no@notbuyingit.org.uk

Nordic Model Now!

Nordic Model Now! Includes survivors of the sex trade and has become a leading voice in challenging the legitimisation of prostitution. Most recently it successfully lobbied the BMA not to introduce a pro-prostitution motion and is currently lobbying the TUC for the same. Both of these bodies have been lobbied by the sex industry in a manner 'akin to lobbying by the tobacco industry' according to the Chair of the BMA.

www.nordicmodelnow.org nordicmodelnow@gmail.com

Filia

Filia hosts the Feminism in London conferences, one of the largest international conferences on women's rights in the UK with speakers from across the world including Bianca Jagger and Shami Chakrabati. They are highly networked with expert advocates against the porn and sex trade including academics, decision makers, lobbyists and survivors.

www.filia.org.uk info@feminisminlondon.co.uk

Any other comments?

Please contact us!
Thank you for your time