

APPENDIX C

I want to begin by sending my thoughts to both women who were the victims of sexual assault at the Duke of Devonshire pub, this is obviously a distressing and traumatising time for them both. I applaud their bravery for speaking out and showing courage in reporting this crime.

There is no denying the prevalence of sexual assault on women. We are no longer simply speaking up, we are now standing up, speaking out and making sure our voices are heard. Whilst we are troubled to know that so many women have suffered the traumatic impact of sexual harassment, we also know that this issue must be brought to light. It is our fundamental right to say no and put an end to the widespread violence that affects millions of women.

I am absolutely appalled to see that this subcommittee is made up of 3 male Cllrs, when sexual harassment pervades the lives of women and girls, it is deeply ingrained in our culture, and it is gender discrimination.

Night clubs and bars must create a supportive environment for women, they need to take seriously unwanted encounters in order to foster safe venues for women and to help end gendered violence.

Under the equality act if you report sexual harassment to a licenced proprietor they have a responsibility to do something about it and make sure the victim is safe, in this case a 17 year old girl was sexually assaulted and was asked to leave the premises, she was consequently followed out of the premises by the perpetrator. She has been failed by the proprietor. Furthermore the following day another woman was sexually assaulted on the premises of the Duke of Devonshire pub with this incident resulting in a mass brawl, again the woman was failed.

I share the concerns raised by the police about the operation and management of the premises and I am extremely troubled about how these incidents have seriously undermined the licensing objectives. There is no room for consideration, this committee must suspend the premises licence with the intention to fully revoke it. Women globally are demanding accountability for the sexist structures and norms in our society, venues must play a key role in creating a safe environment that makes it clear that unwanted sexual aggression will not be tolerated, there must be a joined up approach to tackling violence against women and girls in the night-time economy and Portsmouth City Councillors from all parties must be seen to be addressing sexual violence in our city.

Cllr Kirsty Mellor.