

Edinburgh swingers' club planning appeal denied

Plans to set up a photography studio at a venue hosting a swinger's club in an Edinburgh industrial estate has been rejected by councillors over safety concerns.

Cornucopia LTD had applied for permission to introduce a café, photography studio and office space inside the building in Bankhead for daytime use.

The application was rejected in August of last year, and officers had recommended that an appeal against that decision be rejected by councillors due to the 'unacceptable loss' in business space in the area that converting the building would cause.

Venue bosses told officers and councillors through their planning application that there were a large number of businesses nearby that were vacant.

And it said that the conversion of their space to accommodate daytime uses would contribute to the local economy.

At present, the venue is only open nights, closing between 11pm and 3am depending on the day.

Councillors accepted the officers recommendations, but also raised concerns over safety due to the late opening hours of the club.

SNP councillor Amy McNeese-Meechan said: "I want to uphold the officers' decision here, this gives me a lot of concerns – particularly around the safety of people there until one in the morning."

Cllr McNeese-Meechan also asked officers if requiring that venue staff escort patrons to their cars was an option, but she was told councillors could not mandate this.

Green councillor Ben Parker said: "One of my anxieties around this is due to operation being until very early in the morning, and the fact that this is, in fact, an industrial park."

He then asked officers to explain what considerations Cornucopia LTD had put forward for late night safety.

A council officer mentioned that the firm had proposed some mitigation measures in their public transportation and safety report to the council.

These included an established relationship with a taxi firm, venue staff escorting some patrons to their transport home in the early morning and encouraging patrons to travel home in groups.

Liberal Democrat councillor Ed Thornley, who convened the committee, said: "I think that the safety element is a real concern for me as well.

"On that basis, I would also support all of the officers' recommendations."

Councillors unanimously agreed to uphold the officers' decision in the appeal.

By Joseph Sullivan Local Democracy Reporter