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18th October 2011

Andrew Boff MLA

London Assembly

City Hall, London SE1 2AA

Sir,

BROTHELS

I am a lawyer who served for twelve years as a Borough Councillor on the outskirts of Greater London in which I work. I thank you for complaining about police severity against brothels on the 14th October. Prostitution is lawful in this country and it is, therefore, perverse that all activities associated with it (including brothels) are illegal. This absurd situation is caused by the cowardice of British legislators, who will not touch this hot potato because of the influential "No sex please, we're British" lobby.

Traditionally the police have exercised the common sense that politicians lack by only taking action against brothels which have provoked complaints by neighbours. This is especially so in Birmingham (and Edinburgh) where the police unofficially tolerate a known "red-light" district near the city's conference facilities. As you state, tolerance is likewise needed in London to cope with the influx of visitors for the Olympic Games and prevent individual prostitutes having to work alone without protection.

After the murders of prostitutes in Ipswich in 2008, David Cameron stated that he believes in reform of the law on prostitution to protect sex workers from having to expose themselves to the risk of assault or worse. In addition, the Liberal Party (and also the GMB trade union) have allowed the International Union of Sex Workers to affiliate. I therefore urge you to use your influence with the Coalition Government and Metropolitan Police to achieve sanity before the Olympic Games. You can advocate the system of official licensing which exists in Australia, Germany, Netherlands, New Zealand and other countries.

(That would prevent the "floodgates" feared by Priti Patel MP). Alternatively, you can advocate to the Metropolitan police the unofficial tolerance, which exists in Birmingham.

If you require any legal background information, I can provide it.

Yours,

E. Goodman