

SUTTON & CROYDON Guardian

Lambeth Council backs Newsquest's sex advert ban

Lambeth Council has backed the Streatham Guardian's campaign to stop local newspapers, such as the South London Press (SLP), from profiting from vulnerable women in the sex trade by running sex advertisements in their papers.

Council leader Steve Reed called our decision to ban adverts for massage parlours and escort agencies, and campaign for other local newspapers to do the same, "an important step in the battle against the exploitation of vulnerable women".

Our campaign is based on strong evidence from anti-trafficking campaigners that 85 per cent of women working as off-street prostitutes in London are not UK nationals, and the vast majority of them are trafficked.

Many of the brothels they work in are advertised in local newspapers as massage parlours, and more than 40 per cent of men who access off-street prostitutes do so through the local media, according to a Government report.

Yet the SLP still continue to profit from the sex industry by running the advertisements.

Their stance is in direct contrast to the Streatham Guardian, and its publisher Newsquest, who took the lead in banning all adult advertisements in July

2008, having been persuaded of the clear link between the ads and women being trafficked for sex.

Coun Reed said: "I commend and fully support Newsquest and the Streatham Guardian for taking the decision to stop accepting these type of adverts - this is an ethical and bold move.

"Prostitution is not a victimless crime and there are clear links between the sex trade and people trafficking."

The council's endorsement follows backing from the Met Police's vice unit, and anti sex trafficking campaign groups such as the Poppy Project.

Lambeth-based charity Eaves - which gives housing and support to vulnerable women including those trying to escape from prostitution - has also said local newspaper adverts for adult services are fuelling prostitution in the borough and want local papers stop accepting them.

The South London Press has been asked to justify why they are still running sex ads but has so far declined to comment.

- What do you think? Should all local newspapers ban these adverts? Have your say in the comments section below.

<https://www.yourlocalguardian.co.uk/news/4292116.lambeth-council-backs-newsquests-sex-advert-ban/>