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Cops call for review of hotel's licence after alleged rape and near-miss at airport

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A HOTEL could lose its alcohol and entertainment licence after a string of serious incidents, including an alleged rape.

Police have called for a licence review of the Skylark Hotel, in Aviation Way, Southend, after a woman was allegedly raped at a Siesta event on July 12.

It has also emerged, at the same event, a reveller was able to get airside at [Southend Airport](#), forcing the runway to close after going through the hotel's fencing.

The hotel has faced a string of recent controversies and was due to face a licence review in December 2013 after safety concerns about an event that November, but the review was dropped.

Steven Greener, licensing officer for [Essex Police](#), said: "If it had not been for the quick response from the airport staff, the male could have accidentally accessed the runway and put him and any flight planning on landing in danger.

"It appears that hotel owner Andreas Stavrinos has little regard to the advice given to him by the licensing committee.

"Essex Police feel the venue is unable to safely run under-18 events or any outdoor events."

The police also pointed to the arrests of young people at an event at the hotel in February, in which people were taken to hospital.

Mr Greener added: "This event was not managed correctly and failed to safeguard children under their custody and control."

Police have submitted their case for a licence review to [Rochford](#) District Council, which will hold a hearing on the matter on Friday, September 5.

The council's licensing subcommittee, chaired by councillor Dave Sperring, will then have five days to reach a conclusion, including the possibility of Mr Stavrinos having his licence revoked, or suspended.

Mr Greener added: "We wish the committee to consider removing Mr Stavrinos from being the designated premises supervisor, remove outdoor events from the licence and restrict the use of the venue to over-18's only."

WHAT'S BEEN REPORTED

Airport Tower complain about lights impacting on planes

Breach of airport perimeter fence

Male arrested for drugs (cocaine)

Alleged rape

[Theft](#) of four mobile phones

Underage consumption of alcohol

Accessing alcohol by climbing over un-manned bar and passing bottles to friends

A number of arrests and people taken to hospital under supervision

Owner accuses police of harassment

THE Skylark's owner, Andreas Stavrinedes, has accused the police of harassment and will fight the review.

He pointed to the fact the police had tried to review the licence before and questioned their motives.

He said: "We are going to defend ourselves, we are not just going to take this harassment by the police.

"They could not find just reasons to do it, and it is not clear whether they have justifiable reason now.

"They decided for whatever reason, whether it is funding or pressure on work, they do not like the licence we have.

"I have top solicitors and barristers on this, so I will not let them walk all over me."

Mr Stavrinedes claims the police have not asked for his cooperation in any of the matters.

He added: "They have used all their power over the last 18 months to gather evidence.

"There are a number of incidents, but they never had the decency to say 'what is your story' on a particular issue.

"When I asked them questions, they refused to answer."