

APPENDIX 1

Gambling Inquiry Day – March 2022

Summary of evidence and the recommendations of Overview & Scrutiny Committee

- 1.1 At a meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee in July 2021, the Council's draft Statement on Gambling Policy was considered. The Committee expressed concerns about the proliferation of gambling establishments in Haringey. However, the Licensing Team leader explained that the legislation limited the ability of local authorities to refuse licenses simply on this basis. It was reported that Westminster City Council had undertaken their own research on gambling harms and that evidence gathered from this research was subsequently used as grounds to refuse a licensing application.
- 1.2 It was proposed at this meeting that Haringey Council should commission its own research in order to set the Council on a better footing to potentially refuse an application and provide evidence if a decision is challenged/tested in a court of law. The Committee recommended at this meeting *"That a piece of research be commissioned by the Council on the local impact of gambling establishments on the community and, in particular, any harm caused by them"*.¹
- 1.3 The Centre for Governance & Scrutiny provided scrutiny officers with advice on 'Gambling Inquiry Days' held by other local authorities which aim to bring together a range of witnesses who deal with gambling and the harms that it can cause. This would help to establish what local data is currently available on gambling harms, which people are particularly vulnerable and what is known about the impact of gambling on them.
- 1.4 Haringey's Gambling Inquiry Day was held by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee in March 2022. Expert witnesses included a leading academic expert with a research background on gambling policy, the CEO of a gambling support project, a person with lived experience of gambling harms, a local resident concerned about the impact of gambling establishments in Tottenham and Council officers from the Licensing Team and the Public Health Team.
- 1.5 Concerns were heard by the Committee that national legislation limited the ability of local authorities to refuse licensing applications leading to the proliferation of gambling establishments in Haringey. The Gambling Act 2005 has an "aim to permit" requirement within it and the Council is required to promote the three licensing objectives defined by the Act and to use them as the criteria for determining premises licence applications. The three licensing objectives are:
 - Preventing gambling from being a source of crime and disorder, being associated with crime or disorder or being used to support crime.
 - Ensuring that gambling is conducted in a fair and open way.
 - Protecting children and vulnerable persons from being harmed or exploited by gambling.

¹ Item 62, Meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, 6th July 2021. Link: [Agenda item - Statement of Gambling Policy | Haringey Council](#)

- 1.6 The Committee heard that there were 64 gambling establishments in Haringey Borough as of 2020 and the annual cost of gambling harms in the Borough were estimated to be between £1.34m and £1.65m based on costs relating to primary health care, homelessness, unemployment and criminal justice.
- 1.7 The Committee was told that research to gather additional evidence on local gambling harms could help to put the Council on a better legal footing in cases where the Licensing Committee was minded to refuse a licensing application. All gambling operators must now assess the local risks to the licensing objectives posed by the provision of gambling facilities at each of their premises and have policies, procedures and control measures to mitigate those risks. This includes issues such as proximity of schools, community centres, gambling care providers, high crime areas and high unemployment areas. This information is provided in the Council's 'Local Area Profile' document. While officers and other expert witnesses agreed that research could enhance the Local Area Profile, they were also clear that, even with very good research, there was no guarantee that it would prevent the proliferation of gambling establishment.
- 1.8 The Committee also heard evidence from Red Card, a non-profit gambling support project that works with schools, colleges, prison/probation services to provide education and awareness about the dangers of gambling addiction. Evidence was also heard from a young man with lived experience of serious gambling addiction.
- 1.9 After hearing the range of evidence submitted, the Committee recommended:
- That a funding source should be sought for additional local research on gambling harms.
 - That the Council should pursue the greater use of education/prevention on gambling as a priority.
 - That a 'Gambling Harms Prevention Champion' should be appointed to lead any lobbying activity aimed at the government on this issue.