

## 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"*.<sup>1</sup>
- 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.

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<sup>1</sup> Item 62, Meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, 6<sup>th</sup> 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.

## **Gambling Inquiry Day – AM session, 8<sup>th</sup> March 2022**

Present:

Councillors - **Cllr Khaled Moyeed** (Chair), **Cllr Pippa Connor** (Vice-Chair), **Cllr Dana Carlin**, **Cllr Makbule Gunes**, **Cllr Matt White**, **Cllr Viv Ross**.

Officers - **Maria Ahmad** (Public Health Officer – Health Improvement), **Daliah Barrett** (Licensing Team Leader), **Marlene D’Aguilar** (Health in All Policies Officer), **Susan Otiti** (Assistant Director of Public Health), **Gavin Douglas** (Regulatory Services Manager)

### **Introduction**

Cllr Khaled Moyeed, Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee (OSC), introduced the morning session of the Gambling Inquiry Day. He noted that, in July 2021, the OSC had considered the Council’s draft statement of Gambling Policy and heard a deputation from a group of Tottenham residents raising concerns about the large number of gambling establishments on Tottenham High Road. This included a former Barclays Bank building which had recently been converted to a gaming centre called Game Nation. Cllr Moyeed explained that the Gambling Act had been described as permissive legislation and that this left Councillors and residents, who were concerned about gambling harms, feeling helpless to prevent more gambling establishments from opening in their communities. He noted that gambling establishments were typically more frequently located in higher levels of deprivation.

Cllr Moyeed explained that Westminster City Council had commissioned its own local research and that evidence gathered from this was later successfully used as grounds to refuse a gambling licensing application. The Gambling Inquiry Day aimed to establish whether similar research could be conducted in Haringey for this purpose.

### **Officer presentation – Gambling Prevalence**

**Maria Ahmad** (Public Health Officer – Health Improvement) provided details about the prevalence of gambling in Haringey:

- The Gambling Act defined gambling as “gaming, betting and participating in a lottery”.
- Approximately 40% of people in England gambled in 2018. In Haringey, 57% of men and 51% of women gambled in 2021. This equated to an estimated total of 115,452 residents. An estimated 12,187 gambled on slots and 4,704 on FOBTs in betting shops.
- An estimated 10,218 young people aged 16-24 in Haringey gambled, out of a total population in that age range of 26,200. An estimated 2,175 gambled on slots and 1,153 on FOBTs in betting shops.
- ‘Problem gamblers’ are defined as gamblers who gamble to a degree that compromises, disrupts or damages family, personal or recreational pursuits. 0.7% of people in England are problem gamblers.
- The 2005 Gambling Act set up the Gambling Commission, an independent non - departmental public body to regulate commercial gambling in Great Britain.
- In April 2019, the Gambling Commission launched a 3-year National Strategy to Reduce Gambling Harms, aiming to coordinate work between health bodies, charities, regulators

and businesses to deliver of two strategic areas: 1 - prevention & education and 2 – treatment and support. A progress report two years later recommended the promotion of co-production with people with lived experience. Haringey Council was currently working on a local Gambling Addiction Campaign.

- The Council's public health team have estimated annual gambling harms in the borough to be between £1.34m and £1.65m. This was based on costs to primary health care, homelessness, unemployment and criminal justice.
- As of 2020 there were 64 gambling establishments in Haringey Borough. This comprised of 50 betting shops, 10 adult gaming centres, 2 bingo premises and 2 track betting premises. There was a higher concentration of gambling establishments in the centre/east of the borough compared to the west.

#### Officer presentation – Gambling Policy

**Daliah Barrett** (Licensing Team Leader), provided details about the legislative framework for gambling:

- The Gambling Act has an “aim to permit” requirement within it. The Gambling Commission carries out all the pre-checks on the betting operators and issues an Operating Licences. The Council, as the Licensing Authority, has responsibility for the granting and regulating of Premises Licences for the conduct of gambling under the Gambling Act 2005.
- The Council must prepare and publish a Gambling Policy Statement every 3 years in accordance with guidance issued by the Gambling Commission. Haringey latest Policy Statement was published in January 2022.
- The Council is required under the legislation to promote the three licensing objectives. These licensing objectives were the criteria used to determine a premises licence application:
  1. **“Preventing gambling from being a source of crime and disorder, being associated with crime or disorder or being used to support crime”.**
  2. **“Ensuring that gambling is conducted in a fair and open way”.**
  3. **“Protecting children and vulnerable persons from being harmed or exploited by gambling”**

It was difficult for a local authority to gather evidence on the first two objectives, the main way being joint operations between the Council and the Gambling Commission to go into betting premises to detect any issues. With the third objective, there was usually more scope for the Licensing Authority to provide evidence on this.

- In previous years, residents had provided evidence about anti-social behaviour outside betting shops and Haringey Council had been willing to push this. After refusing an application on these grounds, the magistrates had said very firmly that this was not sufficient evidence to refuse a betting shop licence.
- While residents often complained that they don't want another bookies in their area, Section 153 (2) of the Gambling Act states that *“Licensing Authorities must not have regard to the expected demand for the facilities which it is proposed to provide”* and so this was not a relevant factor that the Council can use in determining applications.

- A new approach began in 2016 when the Gambling Commission enabled Local Area Profiles which local authorities could develop to provide information about the wards most likely to be affected by gambling harms. 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 Local Area Profile.
- The Licensing Authority expects operators to consider how their gambling operation will affect those risks. This includes:
  - What gambling facilities are available in the premises;
  - What are the staffing levels in the premises;
  - Security and crime prevention arrangements;
  - Provision of information and signposting support for customers.
- Control measures to mitigate risks
  - Systems: staff training, age verification policies
  - Design: exterior design, supervision, and security (e.g. to prevent crime, drug dealing, etc)
  - Physical: e.g. magnetic door locks, ID scans
- Operators must comply with licence conditions, codes of practice, health and safety assessments and industry standard codes.
- The Local Area Profiles are a useful tool but they do not typically provide the means to reject applications outright. It may however, help to illustrate underlying issues in particular areas which would support additional licensing conditions or restrictions on operating hours. In practice, the 'aim to permit' remains a primary consideration.
- Other recent developments included:
  - The National Gambling Harm Strategy launched by the Government in 2018. A Government document on this had described dealing with gambling harms as an 'whole-Council approach'.
  - Changes to stake limits on FORTs permitted in betting shops. This had come into effect in 2019 and had led to a closure of around 11 betting shops in the borough. Some vacant premises (about 3 or 4) had then been taken over by adult gaming centres.
  - Additional Social Responsibility Levy imposed on betting operators by the Gambling Commission.
  - Legislative changes to planning controls on betting shops. The planning process operated separately from the licensing process.
- The Government had recently held a 'call for evidence' review on gambling. Haringey Council had provided a response, arguing that:
  - Licensing Authorities should be permitted to determine saturation policies based on impact and have the ability to create cumulative impact policies written into the legislation.
  - Insert a 'need test' into the Gambling Act 2005, similar to the previous Gaming Act 1968, that is based on community need would support and provide councils dealing with applications in deprived areas the powers to tackle problems and respond to their residents' concerns and fears.

- That Licensing Authorities should have discretion to refuse where there is a proliferation of gambling premises and the “aim to permit” requirement should be repealed.
- The Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC) and the Local Government Association (LGA) had recently proposed that Councils should be able to refuse applications for new outlets if they judge that area have too many. It had been reported that the Government was considering bringing in powers for local authorities to set quotas on the number of gambling establishments.

#### Officer presentation – Gambling Harms Campaign

**Marlene D’Aguilar** (Health in All Policies Officer), provided details about the work that the Council was doing to tackle gambling related harms in the Borough:

- A local Gambling Addiction Campaign had been developed and was approved at Cabinet in November 2021. The Campaign was expected to run from April to December 2022 and included the following five elements:
  - **Adult co-production work:** a literature review and focus groups with Haringey locals directly/indirectly affected by gambling aiming to identify specific needs and solutions.
  - **Youth engagement:** educational workshops on the potential harms of gambling operating in schools/youth clubs with Red Card, including in relation to online gaming.
  - **Raising awareness:** pan-borough raising awareness campaign with materials from national organisations like Gamcare and new localised resources.
  - **Councillor training:** Haringey council members will receive training about gambling related harms. This will delivered by the Young Gamers and Gamblers Education Trust (YGAM).
  - **Deliver gambling summit:** a borough professional conference covering all issues of gambling related harms.
- The Public Health team was closely involved with the Licensing team in responding to applications and to provide the best evidence possible, though the ‘aim to permit’ was always a difficulty.

#### Questions from the Committee

- Cllr Ross queried the figure of 0.7% of the population as problem gamblers as his understanding was that the correct figure was 0.4%. Maria Ahmad said that the 0.7% figure was from the national Gambling Strategy. Daliah Barrett said that the Government’s recent gambling-related harms evidence review estimated the figure as 0.5%. The review also estimated that 3.8% were gambling at “at risk levels” and 7% are affected negatively by any other person’s gambling.
- Cllr Moyeed noted that there were only 7 gambling establishment across the whole of the west of the borough compared to 57 establishments in the centre and east of the borough.
- Cllr Ross noted that the Gambling Commission had been cracking down on the industry on social responsibility issues and money laundering and asked if the Council could do more to make sure that the betting operators were actually intervening where they should be. Daliah Barratt said that her understanding was that the Gambling Commission was taking a harder

line but this was their area of expertise. Gambling establishments should provide training for their staff to spot the signs of problem gambling. However, it was difficult for licensing staff to establish this type of compliance in a short inspection and the team did not have the resources for lengthier, more detailed inspections.

- Cllr Connor asked about the co-production element of the Gambling Addiction Campaign and whether the cohort of people engaged in this process would be involved from the start and have oversight on the outcome. Susan Otiti said that the aim would be to continue to work with the residents involved with the focus groups to benefit from their further insight and support throughout the campaign.
- Asked by Cllr Connor about how additional local research could assist the Council, Susan Otiti said that she would need to understand from the Committee what the focus would be and whether it was only about stopping the proliferation of gambling establishments or also being about prevention and early intervention work. She felt it was important to be clear about the research question and then decide on the methodology. It would also be necessary to find the budget to commission the research. Daliah Barratt added that the Westminster research sought to identify vulnerable groups likely to experience gambling harms, identified the locations of these groups across Westminster and then to apply this information to licensing applications.
- Gavin Douglas added that the Westminster research effectively enhanced their Local Area Profile which was a tool to help regulate, potentially by restricting gambling premises due to a particular vulnerability in that area. He added that many local authorities don't want the proliferation of gambling establishments, but licensing officers are not there to facilitate restrictions but to facilitate the legal procedures and policies of the Council. Licensing officers must ensure that due process is carried out and must avoid doing anything that could be seen as pre-determination. Enhancing the Local Area Profile may help the discussion but, even with very good research, there was no guarantee that it would prevent the proliferation of gambling establishments. National legislation would have more of an impact on this.
- Gavin Douglas said that only around 20% of gambling spend was in high street gambling establishments, with the rest spent elsewhere and so the increase in online gambling was more of a growing concern.
- Susan Otiti suggested that an elected Member could be identified as a gambling harms prevention champion, supported by officers, to carry out lobbying on policy at a national level because the local authority was considerably limited by what it could do at a local level.

## **Gambling Inquiry Day – PM session, 8<sup>th</sup> March 2022**

Present:

Councillors - **Cllr Khaled Moyeed** (Chair), **Cllr Pippa Connor** (Vice-Chair), **Cllr Dana Carlin**, **Cllr Makbule Gunes**, **Cllr Matt White**, **Cllr Viv Ross**.

Witnesses – **Dr Heather Wardle** (University of Glasgow), **Sylvia Dobie** (Haringey resident), **Tony Kelly** (CEO – Red Card), **Harry O’Riordan** (Red Card) **Sandra Mtandabari** (Red Card).

### **Dr Heather Wardle (University of Glasgow)**

Cllr Moyeed introduced Dr Heather Wardle to the Committee, noting that she was a social scientist with nearly 20 years’ experience based at the School of Social Political Sciences at the University of Glasgow. She specialises in gambling research, policy and practice and leads the Lancet Public Health Commission on Gambling. She was the author of a 2015 report that explored area-based vulnerability to gambling-related harms working with Westminster and Manchester City Councils.

Dr Wardle explained that she had led various studies since 2006 which estimate gambling harms and the profile of people who experience gambling harms. She had worked on projects with local authorities, including Westminster and Manchester in 2015 and then others including Newham, Lambeth and Public Health Wales. This involved looking at local area risk profiles for gambling harms and local authority policies, working around the tricky legislative framework and the powers that local authorities have. For five years she had been deputy chair of the Advisory Board for Safer Gambling, providing independent advice to the Gambling Commission on gambling policy.

On gambling harms, Dr Wardle said that the evidence was very clear that this was not evenly distributed. Young men, people in more deprived areas, people with low educational attainment and people from BAME backgrounds were all typically more vulnerable.

On the Westminster and Manchester research, Dr Wardle explained that it aimed to use as much local area insight as possible on the kinds of people who lived in particular places and the services located in certain areas that could draw vulnerable people into certain locations. For example, there was elevated gambling risk among homeless people, so locations near to homelessness shelters would bring those people into those places. The gambling harm risk profiles that were developed could then be used to see the areas where, through a combination of factors, there was more likely to be vulnerable people in those areas. Westminster then used this to support their licensing decisions with the aim of mitigating those people from harm. It was difficult, though not impossible, to refuse licensing applications outright in this way but it required a local authority to be quite brave in its decision making.

Dr Wardle provided a recent example from Lambeth, where the Council had refused an application for an amusement arcade on the grounds that it couldn’t be demonstrated that the local population could be protected from harm. The case was due to go to the magistrates court and was finely balanced, but the Council conceded the case due to concerns about legal costs. There were however, a number of conditions attached to the licence, including restrictions on the opening



hours. She was disappointed by this outcome and felt that the Council could have proceeded and that the costs of the social harms from the gambling establishment could end up costing the Council more than the potential legal costs.

Dr Wardle then responded to questions from the Committee:

- Asked about the impact of the Westminster/Manchester research, she said that this was variable and had been more effective in Westminster than in Manchester. There had been stronger buy-in from the Licensing team in Westminster, they were more coordinated and braver in the legal cases. There was one instance of Westminster being able to refuse a licence on a number of grounds but partly based on the Local Area Profile. In Manchester it wasn't used in the same way and there wasn't the willingness to be quite as bold. However, the Greater Manchester Combined Authority were now leading a harm reduction pilot focusing on education, support and treatment instead of dealing with the supply side. She recommended that the Committee speak to Jo Evans who was leading that pilot project.
- Asked by Cllr Carlin about the split between building-based and online gambling, Dr Wardle said that there was a strong evidence base for 'continuous' forms of gambling being more associated with harms. These included FOBTs and slot machines with traditional bookies becoming more like amusement arcades. She had recently been involved in research on gambling harms in the 18-24 age bracket and there were issues with both online casino/slots plus land-based slot machines. There was a strong focus on online gambling but around a third of gambling industry revenue was still generated through land based venues. Certain demographic groups included gamblers who were exclusively land-based, some exclusively online-based and some who did both. Land-based gambling was hit hard by the pandemic and so there had been a greater push towards online gambling. There had also been greater integration between the two, for example by bookmakers providing access to their website in betting shops.
- Asked by Cllr Ross about the possibility of local authorities jointly lobbying the government, Dr Wardle said that there was currently a review of the Gambling Act with a call for evidence from the DCMS. There had been thousands of responses and a draft White Paper was being awaited which would give an indication on policy direction from the government. A coordinated local authority response might be worthwhile at this stage, depending on what the consultation process looks like.
- Cllr Ross referred to the additional social responsibility levy from the Gambling Commission but said that he had also read in the press recently that the industry should not be funding gambling treatment and support. Dr Wardle explained that currently the gambling industry voluntarily provided funding for research, education and treatment, including to GamCare and to NHS clinics. There had been some criticism of this process as the funding levels were not reliable year on year and the industry could always decide to put the money elsewhere. There was also a trust and perception issue around potential conflicts of interest in the projects that they selected. The NHS had therefore said that it no longer wanted to receive money directly from the gambling industry. However, these problems could potentially be reduced by introducing a statutory levy collected and dispersed by the Government.
- Asked by Cllr Ross whether the Council might obtain funding from the Gambling Commission, Dr Wardle said that fines imposed by the Gambling Commission are distributed

through a regulatory settlement fund so there was no harm in having a conversation with them to understand how such funds could potentially be accessed in the future.

- Asked by Cllr Connor about how a local research question for Haringey could be focused, Dr Wardle said that the third licensing objective (Protecting children and vulnerable persons from being harmed or exploited by gambling), provided the greatest scope for addressing potential harms caused by licensing applications. This would mean focusing on where the most vulnerable communities were and whether they were likely to be harmed through gambling establishments. However, in legal battles, the gambling industry relies on saying that this cannot definitively prove that harm will be caused so it was not possible to say that such research would prevent licences from being granted. It was about highlighting risk and probability of harm and then linking in the gambling behaviour of the local population.
- Asked by Tony Kelly from Red Card about the value of education and prevention work, Dr Wardle agreed that this was the most cost-effective approach and where the investment should be. However, there were minimal budgets available for preventative activity. The gambling industry gives money for treatment but not for prevention because prevention means stopping people from gambling which affects their profits. The preventive approach was therefore currently focused on encouraging people to set limits. The pandemic had resulted in land-based gambling being shut for several months and the level of problem gambling had subsequently fallen. This showed that there was a relationship between supply and harms. Dr Wardle had recently co-authored an article in the Lancet Europe on this issue: [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanep/article/PIIS2666-7762\(21\)00274-X/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanep/article/PIIS2666-7762(21)00274-X/fulltext)
- Asked by Sandra Mtandabari about the effect of the pandemic on gambling behaviour, Dr Wardle reported on a study which showed that when live sports were postponed for a long period, about a third of people stopped gambling entirely. 40-50% continued to gamble on other things as before while 17% switched to other types of gambling such as online poker/casinos. This latter category was most likely to experience harms but it was not as extensive as expected. Data was being awaited on what gambling behaviours had reverted back to. However, the key point was that limiting the supply reduced population harms.

#### Sylvia Dobie – Haringey resident

Sylvia Dobie told the Committee that she had engaged in many conversations in local community with people concerned about gambling. She felt that the Council needed to do more to address the dangers of gambling and the damage done to young people and families. She referred to incidents of suicide in young men elsewhere in the country including one case of a 24-year old teacher who had started gambling at the age of 16 and won £1,000 in 30 seconds before later developing an addiction and taking his own life. Around 600 people per year were believed to die by suicide due to gambling problems. She said that Tottenham High Road was full of bookmakers and 24-hour casinos and that it was depressing to see the proliferation of it. She also said that gambling advertising on TV was a concern. Cllr Ross noted that under the original 1968 Gambling Act, TV advertising was not permitted.

Sylvia Dobie informed the Committee that an organisation called Gambling With Lives had developed an education programme for young people. This had been piloted elsewhere in the

country and they were looking to expand this to London. She would welcome secondary schools in Haringey becoming involved with this project. Sylvia Dobie said that she was due to speak to Jack at Gambling With Lives later in the week about their pilot project and Cllr Connor asked if Sylvia could provide further information to the Committee following this conversation.

#### Red Card – Tony Kelly (CEO)

Cllr Moyeed introduced Red Card, a non-profit gambling support project that works with schools, colleges, sports clubs, prison/probation services to provide education and awareness about the dangers of gambling addiction. They also work with MIND in Haringey on mental health issues relating to gambling addiction. Tony Kelly was introduced as the CEO and founder of Red Card. He is a former professional footballer and author of a book about his experience of gambling addiction.

Tony Kelly explained that Red Card was formed in 2015 following his own lived experience of gambling addiction for 25 years. Gambling harms did not just include financial loss but also others such as homelessness, crime, mental health and debt and this required a public health approach.

Red Card delivers educational workshops, which had involved over 6,000 young people aged 11-18 in locations including Enfield, Wokingham and Liverpool. They also delivered to adults, for example through MIND but most of the focus was on young people. The lived experience model developed by Red Card worked because it was authentic and powerful. He said that it was important to educate from a young age and that he was tired of hearing about research and treatment as it was better to reach people before problems developed. He had worked with the Gambling Commission as part of their Lived Experience Advisory Group but he felt that there was a resistance against education and awareness in favour of research and treatment. The majority of funding seemed to go to big players such as Gamble Aware. As it had been difficult to get funding from the Gambling Commission, Red Card had obtained much of its funding from the National Lottery.

Tony Kelly referred to the recent Gambling Act Review which he had been a part of through an advisory group. However, he didn't envisage any robust changes taking place through the White Paper that would follow. He felt that the sort of changes that should happen included restrictions on advertising, the banning of loot boxes, proper affordability checks and customer intervention from operators.

Cllr Ross commented that gambling addiction was treated differently by the NHS compared to drug or alcohol addiction. Tony Kelly said that he was aware of ex-gamblers who had gone to their GP with anxiety/depression but had been incorrectly diagnosed. He felt that GPs needed better education/training on gambling harms. Sandra Mtandabari added that there was also a need for greater awareness of gambling harms for those delivering NHS talking therapies.

#### Red Card – Harry O'Riordan (Lived Experience)

Harry O'Riordan spoke to the Committee about his lived experience of gambling harms. He was 26 years old and ran a number of different companies working in youth sport. He had first started gambling at the age of 18 and it was initially just a bit of fun. He later placed a £100 bet on a football match and won £3,000. This was the worst thing that could have happened as it seemed easy and had enabled him to pay off his overdraft. He ended up gambling away all his winnings, then spent his overdraft and then started taking out loans, credit cards and payday loans to fund his gambling.

After a few years he told his family that he had financial issues and they paid his debts which totalled around £40,000. He was serious about stopping gambling and did stop for 3-4 months but then relapsed and spent another 18-24 months gambling. Eventually he did manage to stop and got involved with Red Card and the education programmes. He realised that he was gambling because he was trying to live a lifestyle that he couldn't afford but didn't have the mindset that he could become addicted to gambling. He now contributed to the Red Card workshops which he felt was informative and engaging for young people. A particularly concerning issue for children was loot boxes in games as this got them accustomed to paying money for something that had an element of chance, similar to the opportunities to gamble that they would encounter when they became older. By becoming involved with Red Card he aimed to turn his negative experience into a positive and help to rebuild trust with his family. Members of the Committee thanked Harry for his powerful testimony and for explained his story in an honest and engaging way.

Cllr Connor asked whether Red Card had considered working with Year 6 pupils in primary schools as they may already be encountering loot boxes. Tony Kelly said that they hadn't done this as yet but acknowledged that Year 6 pupils were at an age where they were getting more pocket money and playing online games. He noted that gambling awareness was now part of the secondary school curriculum.

Asked by Cllr Connor, whether Red Card delivered their workshops in Haringey, Tony Kelly said that they hadn't yet had the opportunity and that this meeting was the first invitation they'd received from Haringey Council. He was based in Edmonton and Red Card had worked with schools in Enfield Borough but would welcome the opportunity to work in Haringey Borough as well.

Tony Kelly said that Red Card had recently completed a one-year project on preventing gambling harms in diverse communities and that gambling could be a hidden problem within certain communities, particularly where gambling is taboo or forbidden due to religious or cultural reasons. Cllr Gunes commented that this was a significant issue in the Turkish/Kurdish community and would welcome broader research about gambling in diverse communities.

The Committee made recommendations based on the evidence heard as follows:

1. That a funding source should be sought for additional local research on gambling harms to strengthen the evidence in Haringey's Local Area Profile.
2. That the Council should pursue the greater use of education/prevention on gambling harms as a priority.
3. That a 'gambling harms prevention champion' should be appointed to lead any lobbying activity aimed at the government on this issue.