

Premises Licence: 'Future Leisure', 519 Green Lanes

To open 24 hours / day, 7 days a week

I am writing in my capacity as the local councillor for Harringay ward to express my strong opposition to the request for 24/7 opening hours, 7 days a week, by Future Leisure, an adult gaming centre in my ward. In my view, this would undermine two of the three Licensing Objectives of the Gambling Act 2005:

1. Preventing gambling from being a source of crime and disorder, being associated with crime or disorder, or being used to support crime.
2. Protecting vulnerable persons from being harmed or exploited by gambling.

My submission will address how this application will undermine these two objectives.

1. Prevention of Crime and Disorder

The Police, Council and Ladder Community Safety Partnership have been working hard to mitigate serious crime in Harringay, including by co-designing an action plan to address crime and disorder in the ward. However, thefts from motor vehicles and burglaries from residential homes remain frequent in the area. It is likely that these two types of acquisitive crimes would increase if the area were to attract problem gamblers seeking to finance a gambling addiction through illicit means.

The risk of criminal damage to shop frontages by customers who are upset that they have lost money through gambling is also likely to increase. I am told that, for this very reason, earlier this year a plate glass window had to be replaced at the nearby adult gaming centre on 513 Green Lanes, very close to Future Leisure's premises

The 24/7 trading hours requested by Future Leisure may increase the number of crimes taking place in the late hours, when perpetrators of crime can operate under cover of darkness and are more likely to evade detection by the police.

It is also worth recalling that, in the past, Green Lanes used to have a 24/7 economy, before the Council deliberately sought to transition the area to an evening-based economy. As a 24/7 economy, Green Lanes became a hotspot for Class A drug-related turf wars and severe crime and disorder that often coalesced around 24/7 gambling outlets. It has taken several years of partnership between residents, the Council, and the Police to create a safer environment on Green Lanes centred around an evening economy, not a night-time economy. A key part of this transition to a safer neighbourhood was to limit the opening hours of adult gaming centres. We should not reverse this progress by allowing gaming centres to once again remain open 24/7.

2. Protecting vulnerable persons from harm

Allowing 24/7 opening hours for a gambling centre is likely to pose a risk to the wellbeing of the high number of vulnerable individuals who live and spend time in Harringay and its surrounding wards. These include hundreds of individuals from all over North London who seek care for mental health conditions at the headquarters of the Barnet, Enfield and Haringey Mental Health NHS Trust at St Ann's Hospital, which is only a short ten-minute walk away from Future Leisure. Harringay ward also has a very high number of vulnerable adults receiving

'care in the community' in local hostels. Many of these individuals are recovering from serious addictions and may be more susceptible to problem gambling.

Moreover, there is significant evidence that gambling in the early hours of the morning is linked to problem gambling. According to a study conducted by Gamble Aware, an industry-funded charity, problem gamblers are more likely to place bets between midnight and 4am. Furthermore, according to the Royal Society for Public Health, gambling at night is linked to an increased risk of harm because it is much less likely to be noticed by family and friends, and therefore presents fewer opportunities for interventions. It is therefore likely that the hours requested by Future Leisure will increase the risk of harm to vulnerable individuals who suffer from problem gambling.

3. Conclusion

For the reasons outlined above, I would strongly urge Haringey Council, as the Licensing Authority, to limit Future Leisure's trading hours to its existing hours. This would be the same as the nearby adult gaming centres at 513 Green Lanes and 48 Grand Parade.

It is also worth noting that there are currently no entertainment premises open 24/7 on Green Lanes, while an application for 24/7 opening of the adult gaming centre at 513 Green Lanes was refused by the Licensing Sub-Committee in 2021. Granting 24/7 trading hours, seven days a week to 'Future Leisure' would set a dangerous precedent that would likely encourage other gambling centres on Green Lanes to also apply for similar hours.

Thank you for kindly considering my objection.

Yours sincerely,

Cllr Anna Abela (Harringay ward)