



## Item 9.1

### Full Council – 6 July 2026

#### Labour Group Motion

#### Declaring a Gambling Harms Emergency in Brent

This Council notes:

- That gambling harm is a public health, community safety and issue of pride in Brent, with a visible concentration of betting shops and adult gaming centres in our most deprived communities.
- That Brent's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment identified the financial, health and social costs of gambling harm locally, including its links to debt, poor mental health, family breakdown, crime and inequality.
- That Brent has led a national campaign for gambling reform, working with over 40 councils, alongside Dawn Butler MP and Andy Burnham MP to call for a five-point plan for change, including stronger local licensing powers, the removal of the outdated "aim to permit" duty, greater public health oversight and tougher enforcement.
- That Brent Council sponsored the Social Market Foundation report '*High Streets at Stake*', which highlighted the growth of adult gaming centres and the weakness of the current licensing framework.
- The impact of this campaigning in securing a change in the law, with the Government legislating for Gambling Impact Assessments, so that when enacted, councils can introduce presumption against new premises licences in vulnerable areas.

This Council believes that:

- Gambling harm should be treated as a serious public health emergency.
- Residents should not have to watch their high streets permeated with gambling premises while councils are left with limited powers to act, and where residents and councils do not want gambling premises, they should have the power to say no.

- Residents and community leaders in Wembley, Willesden and Kilburn should be thanked for speaking with one voice in opposition to the further spread of gambling premises.
- With 81 licensed gambling premises in Brent, it is easier to find a betting shop or adult gaming centre than a supermarket. Any limited business activity these premises bring is far outweighed by the wider harm they cause.
- The growth of the gambling industry should not be supported in our borough and that every lawful tool available should be used to create a hostile environment to its entrenchment.

This Council resolves to:

- (1) Declare a gambling harms emergency in Brent and launch a Gambling Harms Strategy, setting out a joined-up approach across licensing, planning, public health, community safety, schools, debt advice and resident support.
- (2) Welcome the new Gambling Impact Assessment powers and urge Government to set a commencement date as soon as possible, so the new provisions can be implemented without delay and operators cannot rush applications through under the old regime before councils are equipped to act.
- (3) Write to major landowners in Wembley reiterating the Council's opposition to gambling advertising and the normalisation of gambling in public spaces.
- (4) Write to the Gambling Commission challenging its hands-off approach to local licensing, making clear that Brent believes communities and their elected representatives, not distant regulators or the courts, should have the strongest voice in deciding what venues are on their high streets.
- (5) Continue working with residents, MPs, councils and campaigners across the country to push for a new Gambling Act that puts public health first.

Councillor Jasbinder Bajwa  
Kingsbury Ward