



Item 7.1: Questions from Members of the Public

Full Council – 8 July 2024

1. **Question from James Walerych to Councillor Muhammed Butt (Leader of the Council)**

Can the Leader advise where the expected revenue to be generated over the next four years from the lease awarded for the advertising panels under the Bobby Moore Bridge (covering over the Wembley murals) will be spent?

Response:

I can confirm that the money raised contributes to the Council's borough plan objectives by supporting the work we do to inform residents about a wide range of council services and deliver communications campaigns in areas from tackling fly-tipping and health inequalities to improving recycling rates and community safety.

2. **Question from Daniela Stuppia to Councillor Krupa Sheth (Cabinet Member for Environment & Enforcement)**

Living in Wembley Central I would like to ask why do we need so many betting shops on Wembley High Road.

I count more than 10 on one single road, in a country that has serious problems with gambling. How can this be allowed?

Response:

We are doing all we can to prevent such high concentration of gambling outlets, working with the limited powers that we have. When businesses apply for a licence, we have to follow the Gambling Commission's statutory guidance. This stipulates that we have to 'aim to permit the use of premises for gambling' and expressly prohibits comment on whether there is demand for gambling premises. It also states that moral or ethical objections to gambling are not valid reasons to reject an application and an authority's decision cannot be based on dislike of gambling, or a general notion that it is undesirable to all gambling premises in an area. The Act does not enable us to consider the prevention of public nuisance or anti-social behaviour as a specific licensing objective. Nor, as a licensing authority, can we have regard to the expected demand for the facilities in determining whether to grant a premises licence.

Our 'Statement of Gambling Principles' – which has to comply with the Gambling Commission's requirements, is designed to find a balance between safeguarding those who may be vulnerable to the harmful effects of gambling, while also supporting and boosting the resilience of local businesses in Brent.

On the planning side, anyone wishing to change the use of a building to an adult gaming centre, betting shop or bingo establishment needs planning permission in addition to applying for a premise licence. We have planning policies which place restrictions on the concentration of these uses within a shopping centre but could not prevent these types of uses from being already present within our centres. The policy only affects proposals for new premises and cannot control or limit any existing premises.

Our policies restrict the proportion of frontage that can consist of betting shops (maximum of 4 %) and the amount of frontage that can consist of adult gaming centres, pawnbrokers or payday loan shops (3 %). The policy also requires there to be a minimum of 4 units in an alternative use in-between each. These restrictions apply to our town centres, with a separate maximum percentage applicable to neighbourhood parades.

We do not think our powers are strong enough. A letter to the Minister for DCMS was set by Councillor Nerva and Councillor Farah in January 2024 asking them to consider gambling legislation and take into account clustering of gambling establishments and remove the "aim to permit" clause from the Act. No response was received.

The Gambling Policy was thoroughly reviewed last year and changes made to do as much as we can make to make it a difficult environment, but unfortunately the current Act still has clauses that make most objections from residents inadmissible as they are on moral grounds or saturation.



Item 7.2: Questions from Brent Youth Parliament

Full Council – 8 July 2024

1. **Question from Brent Youth Parliament to Councillor Farah (Cabinet Member for Public Safety & Partnerships)**

Brent Youth Parliament is currently working on launching our local crime and safety campaign; specifically prioritising youth safety so what support could the Council provide in this future campaign?

Response:

Brent Council is committed to supporting young people within our borough and their safety and wellbeing is one of our key priorities. Our aim is to prevent young people from coming into the youth justice system by tackling issues such as early childhood trauma, neglect, school exclusion, poor mental health and health and social care needs. We are working with young people and our local partners to tackle these issues so that we can keep children and young people safe and stop offending behaviour.

The Safer Brent Community Safety Strategy 2024-2026 sets out the key priorities for the Safer Brent partnership and the work that we are doing to keep residents safe. One of these key priorities is tackling violent crime with a specific focus on knife crime. Our plan is to focus on serious violence, prevent reoffending and challenge prolific offenders.

We are keen to support the local crime and safety campaign being developed by the Youth Parliament by identifying key activities which align with our community strategy and ensure we provide more informed feedback on our strategic outcomes for young people.

We are willing to assist with promoting the local crime and safety campaign with commissioned providers, social landlords and other internal and external stakeholders in Brent.

The Safer Brent Partnership and the Youth Justice Management Board will be able to support Brent Youth Parliament's local crime and safety campaign by providing support to the boroughs most vulnerable young people. This will include support for young people in the youth justice system, working with their families to address the issues that have led to their offending behaviour and working with partners to provide services for young people.

One of our key priorities is providing safe spaces for young people in Brent and we will be consulting the Youth Parliament on how we design and increase safe spaces within the borough.

We want to ensure that young peoples voices are heard as we believe that early intervention and prevention are paramount to tackling serious youth violence. We will be establishing a Round Table Project so that we can gain a better understanding of how crime and exploitation is impacting young people. We also want to understand if young people have any fears about their safety in Brent and how we can address their concerns.

We are keen to bring youth services, the police, schools, young people, their families, and the Brent Youth Parliament together to discuss how to further improve the safety of young people in Brent. Through collaborative working with our key partners, we will work to tackle drug abuse, underage drinking, anti-social behaviour, gangs, county lines and knife crime.

Brent continues to work in collaboration with the Raheem Sterling Foundation and Word 4 Weapons, as part of the Knife Amnesty bins initiative. The knife amnesty bins provide an anonymous way for knives to be safely disposed of, with the addition of a QR code signposting young people towards support away from knife crime towards mentoring, education and work opportunities. We would very much like use of the knife bins promoted through youth networks and will be consulting the Youth Parliament on opportunities to install more knife bins, in the Borough.

Through these avenues, we are happy to work with Brent Youth Parliament to support and promote their "Local Crime & Safety Campaign".