

**Full Council – 19 September 2024**

**Labour Group Motion (1)**

**Cracking down on gambling harms**

**This Council notes:**

- The clustering of gambling premises and Licensed Betting Operators (LBOs) has become a significant issue across all councils, including Brent.
- In Harlesden, on a 600 meter stretch, six gambling premises exist. Residents have long been campaigning to prevent the opening of further premises.
- The social, economic, and public health impacts of gambling are well documented. Numerous studies have highlighted links between gambling and suicidality, depression, anxiety, and poor physical health.
- Online gambling harms are an increasingly insidious epidemic. Research has found 60% of the profits from online gambling come from the 5% of consumers experiencing harm, with half of more than £6 billion online gambler losses attributable to slots.

**This Council further notes:**

- While the previous government's Gambling Act Review white paper sought to amend our gambling laws so they are fit for a digital age, they did not afford sufficient Parliamentary time to formalise the legislation while in office.
- Various delays to the review – namely five different ministers overseeing the legislation since 2020 – has meant outdated and insufficient laws failing to protect vulnerable gamblers.
- The statutory 'Aim to Permit' policy restricts local authority powers required to prevent the opening of LBOs and the subsequent clustering of premises.

**This Council supports the following reforms:**

- The introduction of limits to stakes, prizes and speed of play online, as already exists on venue-based machines. Online slots should be capped at £2 a spin, in line with Fixed Odds Betting Terminals.

- A standardised threshold at which enhanced affordability checks take place for all licensed online gambling operators - the Social Market Foundation's suggests these checks should take place when a person's losses exceed £100 within a month.
- The introduction of a statutory levy on gambling operators for research, education and treatment that should be administered through an independent public body. This levy should initially be set at 1% of gross revenue but should be increased in line with need, in accordance with the 'polluter pays' principle.
- An end to gambling advertising, promotion, and sponsorship. Children should not be exposed to gambling advertising at all, given the degree of harm which arises from online gambling.
- The creation of a dedicated Gambling Ombudsman to ensure consumers who have been treated unfairly by gambling operators are able to access a means for redress.
- Reform to the statutory 'Aim to Permit', so local authorities have the power to reject premise license applications if the Statement of Gambling Principles were put at risk.

**This Council resolves to:**

- (1) Write to the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, to inform them of our priorities for reform and ask the government to consider gambling a public health issue, as well as wider reform of the Gambling Act.
- (2) Support implementation of a revised Statement of Gambling Principles (pending public consultation). Tightening our policy will ensure applicants and operators whose premises are used for gambling have taken stringent steps to prevent gambling becoming a source of crime and disorder and protect people from gambling related harm.

Councillor Matt Kelcher  
Harlesden Ward