

07-04-2026

I am writing to formally lodge my strongest possible objection to the proposed application for a new Adult Gaming Centre on our high street. As someone who has lived in this area for a long time and cares deeply about the future of our neighbourhood, I am genuinely alarmed by the prospect of another gambling establishment being granted space in what should be the social and economic heart of our community. Our high street is already at a tipping point. We need businesses that encourage diverse footfall—places where families, elderly residents, and young people feel welcome and safe. Adult Gaming Centres do the exact opposite. Because of their nature, they often have "dead" frontages with obscured windows and harsh neon lighting that creates a hostile, unwelcoming environment for anyone not using the facility. When you have a cluster of these types of venues, it fundamentally changes the "feel" of the street. It stops being a vibrant place for community interaction and starts feeling like a corridor of low-grade transactional hubs. I am particularly concerned about the social impact on our more vulnerable neighbours. It is well-documented that these centres tend to target areas where people are already struggling financially. We do not need more machines designed to extract money from people who can least afford it; we need shops and services that build local wealth and provide genuine utility. The proliferation of these venues risks normalising gambling for the children who pass by them every day on their way to school, which is a terrifying legacy to leave for the next generation. Furthermore, the 24-hour nature of many of these establishments brings a real risk of increased anti-social behaviour. Even if the activity inside is regulated, the atmosphere outside inevitably shifts, especially late at night. This discourages people from visiting the high street for legitimate evening economy activities, like dining at local restaurants, because they no longer feel the area is safe or pleasant. Our high street should be a source of pride, not a collection of betting shops and gaming centres. Granting this license would be a step backward for our social fabric and would undermine all the hard work being done to regenerate our town centre into a healthy, family-friendly environment. I urge the committee to listen to the voices of the residents who actually live here and reject this application in favour of a more balanced and beneficial use of the retail space.