

10-04-2026

I object to this application on the grounds that it is inconsistent with the Gambling Act 2005 licensing objectives, specifically the prevention of crime and disorder and the protection of vulnerable persons. My objection is based on specific local evidence, not general principle.

1. This specific street is already a policing priority for ASB and drug crime. The Metropolitan Police Willesden Green Safer Neighbourhood Team has an active, named priority to reduce drug dealing and antisocial behaviour on Walm Lane between Willesden Green station and Sainsbury's (SNT Priorities, March–June 2025). Walm Lane sits directly within this corridor. A gambling premises operating here — potentially with extended hours — will directly worsen the conditions police are already working to address.
2. Brent is one of London's most crime-pressured boroughs. Brent's overall crime rate stands at 85 per 1,000 people — 3.1% above the London average, placing it in the top 20 most dangerous boroughs in the capital (Home Office data, January 2026). In July 2025 it recorded London's worst public order offence rate; in September 2025, its worst drugs offence rate. Anti-social behaviour is already the most common crime type recorded within 0.5 miles of NW2 4QA. This location cannot absorb additional footfall from a gambling venue.
3. Brent already has 81 licensed gambling establishments — the second highest in London. Gambling facilities in Brent already outnumber supermarkets, banks and schools in many wards. The Council's own Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (2024) documents that 6.2% of residents are problem gamblers — more than double the national average of 2.9%. The cost of gambling-related harm to the borough has risen sevenfold since 2012 and now exceeds £14 million per year. Adding an 82nd premises is indefensible given this evidence.
4. This ward contains a high concentration of vulnerable people. Young people in Brent are three times more likely to develop problem gambling habits. Ethnic minority residents experience disproportionately higher gambling harm rates. Frontline health, drug and alcohol workers interviewed for the Social Market Foundation's October 2025 report (commissioned by Brent Council) described the area as having "pretty high need" and noted that gambling venues are "everywhere." Fixed Odds Betting Terminals — likely to be present here — carry a 50% addiction rate, higher than heroin or tobacco, and account for over half of all UK problem gambling cases.
5. The industry's consumer protection record cannot be trusted. A BBC File on 4 investigation (June 2025) found that a self-excluded individual was able to gamble at four out of five AGCs visited across England. The Gambling Commission described the findings as "very concerning." Operator assurances about safeguarding cannot be accepted at face value.
6. Brent Council itself opposes further applications of this type. The Council Leader has written to the Secretary of State urging tighter national controls. The Council, alongside 36 co-signatory councils and two Metro Mayors, formally called for an end to the "aim to permit" rule in April 2025 precisely because it prevents communities like Willesden Green from refusing applications like this one. This application should be refused.