

15-04-2026

I wish to formally object to the application to convert the former Lloyds Bank premises into an adult bingo hall and adult casino. This objection is made on the grounds that the proposal would undermine the licensing objectives relating to the prevention of crime and disorder, prevention of public nuisance, and the protection of vulnerable persons, and would negatively affect the character and resilience of the local high street.

**Evidence of Increased Anti-Social Behaviour and Crime** There is a substantial and growing body of evidence demonstrating that land-based gambling premises are associated with increased levels of anti-social behaviour and crime in their immediate vicinity. Research by the Institute for Social and Economic Research (University of Essex) found that higher densities of gambling outlets are significantly and positively associated with increased crime, including anti-social behaviour, theft and disorder, even after controlling for deprivation and other local factors. The study concludes that gambling premises act as “crime attractors” and contribute to neighbourhood social disorganisation. A peer-reviewed study published in *Regional Studies* analysing betting shops across England found statistically significant links between the number of gambling premises and higher rates of disorder and theft offences, with the strongest impacts observed in already vulnerable communities. Public Health England’s **Gambling-Related Harms Evidence Review** identifies gambling venues as contributing to community-level harms, including crime, anti-social behaviour, family breakdown and increased pressure on policing and local authority services. The Local Government Association (LGA) has consistently reported that councils experience higher levels of police call-outs and enforcement issues linked to gambling premises, and has warned that current licensing powers make it difficult to prevent cumulative harm where gambling venues cluster on high streets. While the applicant may seek to distinguish a bingo hall from a bookmaker, modern bingo halls are heavily reliant on high-speed gaming machines, which have been repeatedly linked to problem gambling, conflict, and incidents of anti-social behaviour within and around premises. **Local Context and Cumulative Impact** Brent already has a notably high concentration of gambling premises. As highlighted by Dawn Butler MP in Parliament, gambling facilities in Brent are now more accessible than banks, supermarkets and schools. Granting another licence in this location would exacerbate cumulative impacts that are well recognised in both research and local government evidence. This proposal is particularly concerning as it would replace a former community bank, at a time when another bank has recently closed in Willesden Green. The loss of essential services and their replacement with gambling uses undermines financial inclusion and weakens the local community. Gambling-related harm already places a significant burden on Brent. It is estimated that gambling harms cost Brent Council approximately £14.3 million per year, including impacts on housing, mental health services, safeguarding, and community safety. These are long-term costs borne by residents and public services, while the

financial benefits are accrued privately. Impact on the High Street Gambling premises do not support a diverse, family-friendly or resilient high street. Evidence shows they do not promote linked shopping trips, can deter independent businesses, and can create inactive frontage outside peak trading hours. This conflicts with wider objectives for regeneration and town centre vitality. Conclusion The association between gambling premises and increased anti-social behaviour, crime, and community harm is well-evidenced by academic research, public health bodies, and local authorities. This application represents a short-term commercial gain with long-term social and economic costs for residents and the borough. For these reasons, I respectfully request that the Licensing Committee refuse this application in order to uphold the licensing objectives and protect the wellbeing of the local community.