

# Review of Gambling Act Policy



**Report to:** Licensing Committee

**Date:** 18 June 2024

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## Recommended that:

- A** The Licensing Committee approve the proposed replacement Gambling Act Licensing Policy, as set out in Appendix A to the report, for consultation.
- B** A further report to be presented which shall set out any representations received following the 6-week consultation. The Licensing Committee to recommend adoption to Full Council.

## Executive Summary

- A** Section 349 of the Gambling Act 2005 requires the Licensing Authority to publish a Statement of Gambling Policy and review the policy at no less than 3-yearly intervals. Under the Act, the Licensing Authority must publish a new policy effective from 31 January 2025. The last Policy took effect on 31 March 2022.

## Background

1. The adoption of the Gambling Act Policy is reserved to Full Council; however, it is appropriate that it is considered by the Licensing Committee with a view to a recommendation to Council. The Authority is required to consult on the proposed Gambling Act Policy and it is proposed the consultation runs for 6 weeks, from 24 June 2024 to 5 August 2024.

## Issues/Proposals

2. The current policy can be viewed at [www.harlow.gov.uk/business/licensing/other-licences/gambling-licences/gambling-licensing-policy](http://www.harlow.gov.uk/business/licensing/other-licences/gambling-licences/gambling-licensing-policy)
3. The proposed draft policy is set out in Appendix A to the report. The draft includes any proposed amendments.
4. It is envisaged that the proposed draft policy is issued for consultation, with a view to consideration of any representations by a future meeting of the Licensing Committee (expected to be 10 September 2024) before making a recommendation to Full Council for adoption of the policy.
5. The new Statement of Gambling Policy shall come into effect on 31 January 2025.
6. Minor amendments of an administrative nature have been made to the policy to ensure the policy remains up to date, which includes the addition of delegation of powers listed in Annex E of the policy.
7. In April 2023, the government produced a white paper called "High Stakes: Gambling Reform for the Digital Age"
8. This set out proposals for reform in six areas across the gambling trade in the UK. The area that most relates to local authority gambling regulation is "land-based gambling."
9. On 16 May 2024, following public consultation, the government published its conclusions and proposals that will impact the land-based gambling sector. Following analysis of the evidence submitted, the government will further consult on the following measures:
  - a) Relaxation on casino rules: by increasing the number of gaming machines.
  - b) Increasing the allowance for Category B gaming machines in arcades (Adult Gaming Centres) and bingo halls from a max. 20% to 50%.
  - c) To allow cashless payments on gaming machines by removing the prohibition on direct use of debit cards.
  - d) Introduction of a legal age limit of 18 for certain low stake Category D slot-style gaming machines that pay out cash.
10. For comparative purposes, Category B2 (betting shops) and B3 machines (betting shops and \*adult gaming centres/arcades) have a max. stake £2, max. prize £500, while Category C machines (found in pubs and alcohol licensed premises) have a max. stake £1, max. prize £100.

\*Adult gaming centre (AGC's) are premises (known as arcades) that currently allow up to only 20% gaming machines with the higher payouts (i.e. Category B3).

11. To give effect to the changes, 6 statutory instruments (regulations) will be laid before Parliament and it is understood that Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) currently aims to implement all changes except those relating to cashless payments (consultation on (c) above to take place separately) later this year, although exact timing remains subject to Parliamentary timescales.

## **Implications**

### **Equalities and Diversity**

An Equality Impact Decision Tree has been completed and requires an Equality Impact Assessment at a later date.

### **Climate Change**

None specific.

### **Finance**

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

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### **Governance**

Provided that proper consultation is undertaken and that all advertising requirements are discharged the risk to successful challenge is minimal.

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## **Appendices**

Appendix A - Statement of Gambling Policy 2025-2028, Draft Version for consultation.

## **Background Papers**

[DCMS Consultation Outcome - measures relating to the land-based gambling sector \(16 May 2024\)](#)

[DCMS High Stakes: Gambling Reform for the Digital Age \(27 April 2023\)](#)

[Gambling Act 2005](#)

## **Glossary of terms/abbreviations used**

DCMS - Department for Culture, Media & Sport