

## Licensing Committee

Date: 20th December 2017

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### **DDCMS - Consultation on proposals for changes to Gaming Machines and Social Responsibility Measures**

**Report of the Chief Fire Officer: Mr Paul Hedley**

**Cabinet Member: Councillor John Riddle**

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#### **Purpose of Report**

To advise Members of the publication of the above Consultation Paper by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DDCMS)

#### **Recommendations**

1. That Members note the content of the report
2. That the Authority does not respond to the consultation

#### **Key Issues & Background**

##### **Summary of Consultation Document**

1. In October 2016 the Government began a review of Gaming Machines and Social Responsibility Measures in the Gambling Industry by means of a call for evidence from any interested party. In October 2017, the DDCMS published a formal consultation document inviting responses by 23rd January 2018.
2. The focus of the Gaming Machines element of the consultation is on category B” Gaming Machines. These are known as Fixed Odds betting Terminals (FOBTs) which can permit gamblers to bet at a rate of £300 per minute, (£100 maximum stake on a 20 second ‘spin’). These machines are permitted in high street bookmakers.
3. The consultation reports that 11.5% of users in betting shops are classed as problem gamblers and 32% are at risk of harm, that the maximum stake of £100 can quickly lead to significant losses and that there is a concentration of betting shops and, thus of the FOBTs, in areas of high deprivation.
4. The consultation includes options for reducing the maximum stake to £50, £30, £20 or £2 and considers each in turn.
5. There is a review of other types of gaming machines and consideration is given to proposals from the industry for increases in stakes and prize money for different types of machines. The Government is not minded at this point to introduce any of the suggested changes.

6. Chapter 4 of the consultation looks at allocations of gaming machines. The government does not support increasing the ratio of machines to gaming tables in casinos or an increase in the number of machines permitted in pubs. Nor does it support the use of credit or debit cards as a direct form of payment to gaming machines. The industry had suggested that contactless payment should be introduced.
7. It is clear that the Government does not feel that the industry's social responsibility measures have gone far enough or been effective enough. The consultation includes suggestions for further efforts, including a programme called GAMSTOP which would bar registered persons from all online gambling sites. The Government clearly expects the industry to provide more support to problem gamblers.
8. There is a review of advertising promotion, including advertising. Concerns are raised about offers such as free bets and bonuses. Gambling advertising is covered by the Code of Advertising Practice which is administered by the Advertising Standards Authority who investigate any complaints. whilst the rules are very detailed and the ASA received 630 complaints in the first 9 months of 2017, there are concerns that the ASA's strongest sanction is to advise that the adverts should not be shown again. This was seen as an insufficient sanction by some who had previously responded as the advertising campaign had usually run its course by then.
9. Despite a massive increase in the amount of advertising in the last 10 years there has been no corresponding increase in problem gambling. More research is being undertaken on this by GambleAware.

## Local Information

10. At the time of the Call for Evidence, the Mayor of the London Borough of Newham, Sir Robin Wales, wrote to the previous Leader, Councillor Davey, asking for the Authority's support in their campaign against the proliferation of FOBTs.
11. The Authority's Adult Safeguarding Team, local Citizens Advice Bureaux and the Illegal Money Lending Team were contacted and asked for any evidence of problems in the County. Their responses were: -
12. **Adult Safeguarding** "I have checked with the strategic team and we have not had anything specific relating to this issue either direct to the team or queries through from community teams.

It may well be that some of the people we are asked to see in adult social care have underlying gambling issues but the problems presenting to social care are self neglect, exploitation etc as opposed to gambling per se. We do not capture this as a type of abuse in safeguarding as it is not (by itself) one of the statutory criteria.

13. If it transpires that gambling is a root cause of someone's difficulties, we would offer assistance and signpost but the detail of that intervention will be in the narrative of the person's notes and I would not be able to extract systematically."
14. **Citizens Advice Bureaux** "After a discussion with our Advice Service Managers and debt team, I'm afraid we don't have any specific examples of clients who have found



Finance Officer	n/a
Monitoring Officer/Legal	n/a
Human Resources	n/a
Procurement	n/a
I.T.	n/a
Executive Director	PH
Portfolio Holder(s)	JR