



Northumberland

County Council

Licensing Committee

Date: 20th June 2018

Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport - Government Response to the consultation on proposals for changes to Gaming Machines and Social Responsibility Measures

Report of the Interim Director of Place: Mr Paul Johnston

Cabinet Member: Councillor John Riddle

Purpose of Report

1. To bring the Government response to the consultation to the attention of the Licensing Committee.

Recommendation

1. That Members note the contents of the report.

Link to Corporate Plan

This report is relevant to the Living and Enjoying priorities included in the NCC Corporate Plan 2018-2021

Key Issues

1. Members may recall that this consultation was the subject of a report to this Committee in December last year and may have seen discussions in the press about the appropriate level for the maximum stake on fixed odds betting terminals (FOBTs).
2. The review was to ensure that the Government struck the right balance between a sector of the economy that can grow and contribute and one that is socially responsible and doing all it should to protect consumers and communities. The Government wanted to focus on reducing gambling-related harm, protecting the vulnerable and making sure that those affected get the help they need.
3. The headline item in the Government response is the decision to reduce the maximum stake on FOBTs from £100 to £2. The industry have warned that this will



lead to premises closing and reductions in employment. It is anticipated that there may be a reduction in licensing fee income as bookmakers are likely to remove these machines as they become less profitable and replace them with lower banded machines. No changes are proposed to the stakes on other types of gaming machines.

4. No date for the implementation has been fixed as the changes will have to be brought in by regulation. We cannot calculate the impact on income until the regulations are implemented and we see how the industry reacts in practice.

Background

1. The Government has been reviewing these issues since 2016, firstly with a call for evidence and then with a consultation that closed to responses in January 2018.
2. There has been an examination of all forms of gambling, including through online sites. The Government recognised that the highest proportion of those who contact the main gambling addiction provider identified machines in betting shops as their main form of gambling and gaming machines in betting shops also account for one of the highest proportion of those in treatment for gambling addiction. We are concerned that factors such as these are further amplified by the relationship between the location of B2 gaming machines and areas of high deprivation.
3. The analyses looked at levels of addiction and harm at different levels of stakes, stating that over 170,000 sessions on B2 roulette ended with losses between £1,000 and £5,000. Harms were significantly reduced when players staked no more than £2.
4. The document also looked at online gambling advising that the industry needs to use the information it routinely has access to about customers to better identify problem gamblers and to put protections and interventions in place. There will also be a requirement to tighten up on age verification to prevent children gambling and a prohibition on a gambler playing online until their age has been verified
5. The Gambling Commission and the Competition and Markets Authority will bring in tighter rules on promotions and on terms and conditions respectively. There will also be tighter controls on advertising.

Implications

Policy	The Gambling Policy may need amendment following legislative changes
Finance and value for money	May impact on licensing fee income.
Legal	Changes to be implemented by regulations which have not yet been issued.
Procurement	None
Human Resources	None

Property	None
Equalities (Impact Assessment attached) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	None
Risk Assessment	None
Crime & Disorder	Minor
Customer Consideration	None
Carbon reduction	None
Wards	All

Background papers:

1 Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport - Government Response to the consultation on proposals for changes to Gaming Machines and Social Responsibility Measures

Report sign off.

Authors must ensure that officers and members have agreed the content of the report:

	initials
Monitoring Officer/Legal	
Executive Director of Finance & S151 Officer	
Relevant Executive Director	
Chief Executive	
Portfolio Holder(s)	

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