
Licensing Committee MINUTES

**Of a meeting held in the Penn Chamber, Three Rivers House, Rickmansworth, on
Wednesday, 4 December 2024 from 7.30 pm - 7.47 pm.**

Present: Councillors

Harry Davies, Chair
Tony Humphreys, Vice Chair
David Major
Narinder Sian
Andrea Fraser
Debbie Morris
Ciaran Reed

Officers in Attendance:

Lorna Curtis, Lead Licensing Officer
Matthew Roberts, Development Management Team Leader
Richard Ricks, Principal Litigation/Licensing Lawyer
Anita Hibbs, Committee Officer

LI13/24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Andrew Scarth and Stephen Cox.

LI14/24 MINUTES

The minutes of the Licensing Committee held on 12 June 2024 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair of the meeting.

LI15/24 NOTICE OF OTHER BUSINESS

There were no items of other business.

LI16/24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

LI17/24 REVIEW OF GAMBLING POLICY

The Development Management Team Leader introduced the report.

Following the recommendation of the June Licensing Committee, members of the committee tasked officers to consult publicly on the amended policy which must be reviewed every 3 years. In addition, the agreed resolution was that the consultation sought views on whether the council should adopt a “no casino resolution”.

As the committee report sets out, 7 responses were received, which included from members of the public, Batchworth Community Council, Public Health Services at HCC and Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership.

Officers were also made aware of errors within the policy at paragraphs 8.8.4, 8.10.3, 8.13.2, 10.4.1 and 14.1. These will be amended prior to the adoption of the policy, if agreed.

Only Full Council can formally adopt the policy and a “no casino resolution”. If agreed, Full Council on 10 December will consider the recommendation and a supplement will be provided for council asap.

In response to questions raised regarding the cumulative impact assessment in relation to gambling premises and whether this policy aspect is new, the officer clarified that the assessments have always been in place but due to the limited number of gambling establishments in the district a cumulative impact assessment is not necessary at the current time. Officers also confirmed that regular checks are conducted on these premises to ensure compliance, and address any reported issues.

Members raised concerns about whether the consultation was tailored to reach out to disproportionately affected communities. The officer responded by referencing Appendix 1 of the policy, which lists consultees, including local groups that may be affected by gambling.

The officer acknowledged that while there weren't many responses, the consultation included various national trade associations and adjacent authorities, aligning with legislative requirements.

Members pointed out that Sarratt Parish Council had not been included on the list of consultees and suggested that officers contact the parish council for clarification. Officers confirmed that Sarratt Parish Council were included in the consultation process.

In response to questions around high profile events like the World Series of Poker at venues such as The Grove, the officer clarified that private casino events would fall under the Gambling Act and would not violate the 'no casinos' policy, which is applicable to businesses seeking to establish a casino in the district.

Members expressed confusion regarding the categorise of gaming machines and sought clarification on their differences. The officer referred to Appendix 2 of the report that outlined the various categories of machines and explained that licensing officers can verify the categories and limits of machines based on their licenses.

Members also addressed concerns regarding Moor Park Residents Association's inclusion in the list of associations. The officer acknowledged the oversight and explained efforts made to inform residents through emails, local media and social media platforms.

Members inquired about the potential for a company to establish a casino and the conditions under which the existing resolution could be broken. The officer explained that resolution prevents any applications for casinos and highlighted that any casino establishment must be approved by government (The Secretary of state). Furthermore, the resolution is required to be reviewed every three years, but the Council can reconsider the resolution any time if significant changes arise regarding the establishment of a casino.

Members raised further concerns regarding the appropriateness of gambling establishments in semi-rural areas, emphasising that such locations may not suit the geographical context of the district. They highlighted the importance of considering community safety, particularly the protection of school children in these areas makes them unsuitable for gambling facilities. Additionally, Members mentioned the significant risks associated with gambling, particularly its potential to become addictive, and the severe consequences it can have on mental health, including the risk of suicide.

Councillor Andrea Fraser moved **Option 1** of the recommendation, seconded by Councillor Debbie Morris, that Members:

- i. Agree the revised Policy found at **Appendix B** (this is a tracked document highlighting the amendments made to the current policy) and recommend that Full Council adopt the Policy with effect from 14 January 2025.
- ii. Recommend that Full Council adopt a 'No Casino Resolution' which will be inserted into the Policy and recommend that Full Council adopt the Policy with effect from 14 January 2025.

On being put to the Committee the motion was declared CARRIED by the Chair, the voting being 7 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstention.

RESOLVED:

That Members agree to:

Option 1:

- i) Agree the revised Policy found at **Appendix B** (this is a tracked document highlighting the amendments made to the current policy) and recommend that Full Council adopt the Policy with effect from 14 January 2025.
- ii) Recommend that Full Council adopt a 'No Casino Resolution' which will be inserted into the Policy and recommend that Full Council adopt the Policy with effect from 14 January 2025.

That public access to the report be immediate.

LI18/24 OTHER BUSINESS - IF APPROVED UNDER ITEM 3 ABOVE

There was no other business.

LI19/24 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Chair moved, duly seconded, the following motion:

“that under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined under paragraph (X) of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Act. It has been decided by the Council that in all the circumstances, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.”

CHAIR