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SCRUTINY INQUIRY PANEL - REDUCING GAMBLING-RELATED HARMS IN SOUTHAMPTON

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 16 JANUARY 2025

Present: Councillors Cooper (Chair), Greenhalgh, Percival and Powell-Vaughan

7. **APOLOGIES AND CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP (IF ANY)**

8. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (INCLUDING MATTERS ARISING)**

RESOLVED: that the minutes for the Panel meeting on 19 December 2024 be approved and signed as a correct record.

9. **PRIMARY PREVENTION**

The Panel noted the report of the Scrutiny Manager and considered the information provided by the invited guests which would be used as evidence in the review.

The focus of the meeting was the importance of Primary prevention - Taking action to prevent the onset of at-risk gambling behaviour, either through whole population measures or those targeting vulnerable groups.

Summary of information provided:

1) Information and awareness – Steve Watts, Chief Executive at GamFam

- A presentation was delivered by Steve Watts, outlining the Gaming and Gambling Harms information and awareness sessions delivered by GamFam in Essex, Suffolk and Norfolk to young people and parents.

Key points raised in the presentation included:

- GamFam is a charity set up by those who have experienced first-hand the devastating effects that gambling can have on family and friends. Its vision is to empower individuals and families to alleviate the impact of gambling harms and move towards a positive future.
- GamFam delivers CPD accredited information and awareness sessions to help understand gaming and gambling related harms and the impact on health and wellbeing.
- The objectives of the information and awareness (I&A) sessions are:
 - To change perception about gambling harms
 - To feel more confident offering support to anyone affected by gambling harms (directly or indirectly)
 - To be able to signpost individuals and families to specialised support and services.
- GamFam deliver CPD accredited I&A sessions in Norfolk, Suffolk & Essex to schools, colleges, professionals and other support services. They have recently launched a Key Stage 2 programme and a grassroots football programme is launching in February 2025. Having people with lived experience opens doors.

- Feedback demonstrates significantly increased awareness and understanding of gambling harms following the sessions.
- Delivering I&A sessions in schools and colleges can be challenging. Work needs to be done to support teaching staff to be able to spot the signs. If the sessions are delivered by teachers through PSHE (Personal, Social, Health and Economic education) lessons it can result in an inconsistent message. It should be delivered by a specialist.
- In Southampton PSHE leads have discussed gambling harms and some secondary schools have accessed support (lesson plans and guidance for teachers) from GamCare on gambling harms.
- The I&A sessions are in addition to the peer support programmes run by GamFam.
- GamFam work in partnership with all 15 of the NHS Gambling Clinics, including the NHS Southern Gambling Service, and deliver Peer Support on behalf of the 6 NGS clinics and from February the London Clinic.
- GamFam want to grow and will seek funding via the statutory levy. Keen to work across the South of England.

2) Greater Manchester Gambling Harms Update - Odds Are: They Win campaign – Ellie Caddick, Senior Communications and Engagement Manager at Greater Manchester Combined Authority

- Ellie Caddick delivered a presentation introducing the gambling harms awareness campaigns being delivered by Greater Manchester Combined Authority.

Key points raised in the presentation included:

- Odds Are: They Win was the first gambling harms prevention campaign in Greater Manchester (GM) and one of the first in the UK. Step away from personal responsibility messaging - 'safer gambling'.
- It initially ran before, during and after the Football World Cup 2022 with a target to reach men aged 18-40 with harms messaging and to raise awareness of work taking place in GM. The campaign utilised outdoor advertising and social media.
- GamHive, a lived experience group, provided feedback on the advertising campaign.
- Metrics – Social media: +1.4 million reach; Unique clicks to the campaign landing page: +16,000; The first 6 weeks of 2023 saw the same number of people seek gambling addiction support on the GMCA website as for the whole of 2022; 122 social media toolkit downloads.
- Some organic content performed better than paid for advertising.
- When resources reduced a new evidence informed approach to the Odds Are: They Win campaign was used. There was an increased focus on gateway events, In-play betting, online slots, gamblers attempting to make money from gambling, gambling sponsorship – ad hoc when opportunities arise.
- Small pots of money can be used in a very cost effective way.
- [Chapter One](#) – Came about as a result of: The fragmented treatment and support provision, most information resources are funded by the gambling industry; Partnership with Gambling with Lives to pilot an integrated treatment

and support pathway in Greater Manchester; Only 1 in 200 people who would benefit from support are accessing information or treatment (OHID report, 2024).

- Chapter One outputs - Training and resources for professionals (intermediaries and HCPs); Impartial and independent information for the public; Campaign to raise awareness of support available.
- Chapter One awareness campaign - Showing gambling harm as something that can affect anyone, Digital campaign – Google, YouTube, Snapchat, TikTok targeting people aged 18-35. It signposted people to support and information and provided posters and leaflets for public and professionals.
- Outcomes of the Chapter One campaign - Showed that social media channels can be effective at reaching target audiences; Successfully exceeded targets and industry averages; Showed that Snapchat was the most cost-effective channel in this campaign. Result - 44,481 clicks at 34p Cost per click.
- Conclusions - Chapter One was a successful partnership pilot programme and campaign. The website met a need for clear, unbiased, and direct information while also providing urgent help, scope for getting more people to see it.
- A mixed-media, digitally focused campaign was effective in raising awareness and helping people access information quickly.
- Work in GMCA was supported by a [language guide](#)
- Before you launch an awareness campaign you need a Public Health Team that cares about gambling harms in the same way that it does about tobacco and alcohol. It needs support from the Director of Public Health but there is a community out there that are willing to help you and share resources.
- If you are to commence an awareness campaign it is important to have resources ready for when people ask for help.
- New levy – Expect a commitment to a public health campaign that takes a step away from the gambling industry narrative – safer gambling & be gamble aware. Need to reduce stigma, provide high value communications that signposts people to high quality support services.

3) A lived experience perspective – Bryan Dimmick

- A statement was provided by Bryan Dimmick, a Southampton resident with lived experience of gambling harms, outlining the value in restricting the number of gambling premises in Southampton and ensuring that those in the city comply with their code of conduct to protect customers from gambling harm.

4) Haringey's Gambling Harms Programme – Marlene D'Aguilar, Health in All Policies Strategic Lead at the London Borough of Haringey

- Marlene D'Aguilar delivered a presentation providing an overview of gambling harms in Haringey with a focus on how the council are using licensing and planning policies to reduce gambling related harms/risk in the borough.

Key points raised in the presentation included:

- In Haringey 8,000 residents experience direct gambling harm and up to 25,000 affected others from gambling harm. Approximately 1 in 7 residents in Haringey are affected by gambling harms.

- There are 65 gambling premises with 7 in the West and 58 in the East of the borough which is more deprived. Out of 330 local authorities for the number of people per gambling premises – it has the 13th highest concentration of gambling premises relative to population.
- Licensing – Gambling Act 2005 has ethos of ‘Aim to permit’. Applications cannot be refused purely on the grounds of proximity to existing premises, moral grounds, residents’ preference.
- Licensing objectives - Gambling Act 2005: Preventing gambling from being a source of crime and disorder; Ensuring that gambling is conducted in a fair and open way; Protecting children and vulnerable persons.
- Public Health respond to all licensing and planning applications in Haringey for gambling premises and have been successful in having applications refused.
- For license applications Public Health’s response is always based on the Licensing Objectives on the Gambling Act 2005 (usually protecting children and vulnerable residents). In Planning the response will tie in with planning policy. For both, priorities in the Corporate Plan and Health & Wellbeing Strategy are referenced and they use Business Intelligence Teams, Public Health Intelligence, Crime data Management, Mapping and Benefits data to support the response.
- GLA School Superzone Projects - School Superzones aim to protect children's health and enable healthy behaviours, using local authority powers and place-shaping potential to implement environmentally based actions. Haringey Use Superzones in Planning Application responses and Licensing Representation around Gambling Premises.
- Haringey are working with universities to get students to improve local data about gambling in Haringey.
- Licensing & Planning - Challenges and learning:
 - If the application is new the applicant has to apply for both planning and licensing - If you are not successful at getting the restrictions you need to safeguard your community via licensing, go for this in planning.
 - Importance of updating and adding to data and evidence - the closer you can get to high street data, super output areas, ward data the better. Include data from gambling services, local treatment centres and vulnerability.
 - If conditions are applied at planning and on the licence eg Adult Gaming Centre to restrict hours the applicant will often return 6 months to a year later to get that licence extended on the basis of good behaviour.
 - Applicants may employ Barristers and King’s Council (KC) for licensing hearing, former high level police officers who usually carry out the surveillance reports of the location. Just be clear with the evidence and data you are presenting and the impact on residents.
 - Invaluable support of Cllrs at submitting representations and giving evidence from their constituents at hearings. Haringey has identified a Cabinet Member as the champion for reducing Gambling Harms.
- New Haringey Local Plan in development and it will feature a strengthened approach to reducing gambling harms. Work is underway with Licensing on new Gambling Policy & Local Profile & Needs Assessment.
- Haringey are utilising the Health in All Policies Approach in their development of Haringey’s Gambling Harms Reduction Programme - A collaborative approach to improving the health of all people by incorporating health considerations into decision making – that is delivered through six core elements:



- The programme addresses the needs through co-producing with residents and people with Lived Experience and Affected Others. The programme has not received funding via a regulated settlement.

4) Gambling Related Harms and Licensing – Phil Bates, Licensing Manager at Southampton City Council and Ian McGuinness, Senior Licensing Officer at Southampton City Council

- Phil Bates and Ian McGuinness delivered a presentation that provided an overview of gambling premises in Southampton and the Council’s approach to regulating gambling through licensing.

Key points raised in the presentation included:

Licensing

- There has been a reduction in the number of gambling premises in Southampton from 2018 figures. There are concentrations in the city centre and Shirley Road/High Street. There are smaller clusters in District Centres and the remainder tend to be pubs and clubs with gaming machines.
- Guidance to LAs on enforcement is to ensure compliance and legal duty to aim to permit. Applications are carefully examined to ensure they are compliant, and premises inspections are carried out.
- Statement of Licensing Principles - Latest document increases influence of Public Health; Identifies and re-emphasises areas of risk for operators; Working with Public Health and partners on identifying areas where there is gambling harm within the city. The new policy is much stronger at protecting children and vulnerable people from gambling harms.
- A risk assessment has to be completed by each venue in relation to the local area profile which Public Health contributed significantly to. This is the key document for Licensing Officers when they inspect premises.
- Southampton has a strong history of obtaining compliance. We currently have no information to support illegal gambling activity is taking place. When we have found illegal activity, it is nearly always out of ignorance and resolved quickly.
- Venues operate exclusion schemes and share this with similar premises. Staff regularly intervene with players and check on welfare. Machines are monitored and players can set limits. This can be in stark contrast to on-line controls.

- The Gambling Harms Needs Assessment is a valuable resource but it does highlight the limited local data available on harmful gambling that can be utilised to inform policies - Need to improve how we obtain data on harmful gambling within the city.
- Intention to work closer with venues on identifying risks and highlighting support services.

Planning

- Attached as Appendix 1 to the report was a briefing paper on the role of planning in determining the location of gambling premises. The paper identified that it is possible to create targeted planning policies that seek to control the proliferation of gambling premises such as betting shops, amusement arcades and bingo halls, in a similar manner to policies that seek to control other Sui Generis uses such as hot food takeaways. However, such policies can only address the opening of new outlets and cannot retrospectively control existing ones.
- Such a policy would also need to be adopted as part of the new Local Plan for the city, known as the Southampton City Vision, in order for it to be used in deciding planning applications.
- The current suite of Local Plan documents does not include such a policy and one cannot be retrospectively added.
- For new policy controlling the proliferation of gambling outlets to be adopted it would need to be justified through a robust evidence base. This is a requirement for all policies in a Local Plan. In addition to being justified, the policy would also need to meet other tests of soundness in order to be adopted.
- Notably, there are examples of other local authorities having successfully adopted a policy controlling the proliferation of specific types of gambling outlets. Whilst these policies take different approaches there are some commonalities. For example, specifying that there must be a certain number of units with other uses between the types of gambling outlet they are seeking to control.
- Analysis of SCC's 2023 centres surveys indicates that the percentage of gambling outlets in each centre is relatively low. As such, a percentage threshold would likely not be the most effective option. However, further detailed analysis would be needed before reaching any firm conclusions or decisions as to which approach should be taken, if a policy is deemed necessary.
- Likewise, if a policy is deemed an appropriate response, the approach proposed will need to be developed in consultation with Development Management officers who would ultimately be using the policy to determine planning applications.