

**BUSINESS SUPPORT
OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
25 AUGUST 2016
UPDATE ON RESPONSIBLE GAMBLING**

Report from: Perry Holmes – Chief Legal Officer

Author: Perry Holmes – Chief Legal Officer

Summary

The purpose of this report is to update the Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the voluntary partnership relating to the promotion of responsible gambling in Medway through the Medway Responsible Gambling Partnership.

1. Budget and Policy Framework

- 1.1 Medway Council's Statement of Gambling Policy was approved by the Council on 21 January 2016.
- 1.2 The Licensing & Safety Committee has responsibility for Gambling Act 2005 matters.

2. Background

- 2.1 This Committee received an update regarding the work of the Medway Responsible Partnership at its meeting of 3 December 2015. That report set out Medway's involvement at the forefront of a self-exclusion pilot that had influenced a national scheme that was implemented from April of 2016.
- 2.2 A voluntary partnership agreement between the Council, the Association of British Bookmakers and gambling and gaming operators in Medway was signed 10 November 2014.
- 2.3 The Partnership set itself two key targets. Firstly, to establish a self exclusion scheme. Secondly, to agree a protocol for the reporting of crime and anti-social behaviour at betting shops, with the Community Safety Partnership and Kent Police. Both of these targets were achieved.
- 2.4 A new single-form multi-operator self-exclusion scheme started in early December 2014 based in Chatham. It concluded in December 2015 but any

self exclusion (which last for 12 months) will be honoured until December 2016. The scheme, the only one of its kind in the country, helped 33 individuals.

- 2.5 The Voluntary Partnership which includes the Council, local Gambling Operators, the Association of British Bookmakers (the ABB), the Police, the Community Safety Partnership and Safer Medway Partnership maintained quarterly meetings to assess the progress of the self-exclusion pilot scheme. Learning from the Chatham scheme has been used to design the national self-exclusion scheme due to launch in April 2016.
- 2.6 Chatham became an early adopter of the national scheme in December 2015. This involved a website pointing customers to a telephone helpline. The helpline is managed by trained staff that assist those seeking to self exclude. Learning from the Chatham pilot scheme included the importance of this early human interaction. Also it became clear that it is important, when setting the terms of the self-exclusion, to choose betting shops near a customer's home, work and socialising areas rather than a blanket ban of all shops.
- 2.7 The Medway Responsible Gambling Partnership last met in January 2016 to formally review the self-exclusion scheme and leave open the option of further collaborative work.
- 2.8 No further initiatives have been identified and meanwhile there have been some developments nationally in the area of responsible gambling and player protection.

3. Responsible Gambling initiatives – an update from the ABB

- 3.1 The ABB has helpfully provided an update on some of the other responsible gambling initiatives that have taken place since January 2016:

Gamble Aware Week

- The second Annual Gamble Aware Week was held during week beginning 18th July. The week marked the implementation of new points at which mandatory alerts are displayed on gaming machines. Where previously mandatory alerts were shown after £250 spent and at 30 minutes, they now appear at £150 and 20 minutes of play.
- The week also marked the introduction of revised Responsible Gambling messaging on gaming machines developed in consultation with problem gambling experts.

Player Awareness System (PAS)

- The PAS builds on findings from comprehensive research into B2 (Fixed Odds Betting Terminals) gaming machines and problem gambling published in December 2014. The research showed it is possible to distinguish between problem and non-problem gambling behaviour. Data algorithms were developed based on 'markers of harm' and applied to customer gaming machine data. Where markers are triggered, customers are engaged by an escalating

series of interventions. Customers are also signposted to gambling support services.

- An evaluation is ongoing of the processes involved in PAS. The ABB is now moving towards a standardised approach and set of messages.

Multi-operator self-exclusion

- The Multi-Operator Self-Exclusion Scheme (MOSES) went live across the UK (excluding Northern Ireland) in March this year ahead of the 6 April deadline as set out in the Gambling Commission's Licence Conditions & Codes of Practice (LCCP).
- Administration of the scheme has passed over to the Senet Group (<http://senetgroup.org.uk/>) who will run the scheme going forward.
- The Responsible Gambling Trust has agreed in principle to complete an evaluation of the scheme and are currently looking at potential suppliers.

Public Health

- The demographic of a typical betting shop includes a traditionally hard-to-reach group for public health messaging including an older male demographic in what have always been community hub environments. Staff and customers often know each other well and are a natural environment for "healthy conversations" to take place.
- In practice, the industry is already doing many recommended activities suggested by bodies such as the Royal Society for Public Health (RSPH) including signposting customers to support charities, such as GamCare and the National Gambling Helpline.
- The initiation of a specific public health programme aims to formalise the activity already ongoing and provide a collective focus.
 - Ladbrokes, on behalf of the wider industry, has started an initial pilot scheme comprising:
 - Community boards in 100 Ladbrokes LBOs for 6 months (2 x 3 month periods)
 - Including A5 posters on cancer prevention and community fundraising to populate boards (see example attached at Appendix 1)
 - Fundraising posters allow space to detail local events relevant to local communities
 - Posters changed after 3 months to test alternate approach and messaging
 - Training and support for community ambassadors via completion of a massive open online course (MOOC) on *Talking about Cancer*
 - Feedback from staff and customers will be used to assess progress and wider industry roll-out.

- The ABB and Ladbrokes will work with the Cancer Research UK team to evaluate the pilot programme activities.

This could be an area for potential collaboration with Medway Council in the future.

4. The wider national picture

- 4.1 The Committee sent a letter to the Minister for Culture, Media & Sport after its meeting on 8 October 2015 asking for a review of the minimum stake of £100 for Fixed Odds Betting Machines to be lowered. It was also suggested that a £50 limit after which customers have to seek authorisation to bet further should also be lowered. The Committee provided information about the impact in particular of human interaction it had gleaned from the Responsible Gambling Partnership:

“At our Business Support Overview & Scrutiny meeting on 8 October we heard from the Assistant Director for Legal & Corporate Services about some early statistics for the impact of the Gaming Machine (Circumstances of Use) (Amendment) Regulations 2015 which came into force on 6 April of this year. We learned that subject to certain provisions an individual must not be able to pay more than £50 without the permission of an authorised person. We noted the 69.1% decline in the number of plays over £50 and 67.3% decline in the amount staked by players over £50. This seemed to support the positive and perhaps preventative impact human interaction could have. “

2.9 A reply from the Minister in December 2015 thanked the Council for its work on self exclusion and indicated her interest in the human interaction impact the Committee had highlighted.

- 4.2 A report in the Sunday Times on 8 November 2015 suggested that a government review of Fixed Odds Betting Machines had been blocked. This followed responses given by the Minister in Parliament on 27 October 2015. An extract of this is set out below:

“Gaming Machines

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to paragraph 7 of his Department's Triennial Review of gaming machine stake and prize limits, published in October 2013, whether it is his policy that there is a serious case to answer in relation to the potential harm caused by category B2 gaming machines.

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Answered by: [Tracey Crouch](#)

Answered on: 27 October 2015

Following the last review, new measures were introduced in April 2015 to help players of fixed odds betting terminals (FOBTs) stay in control. Players of FOBTs who want to stake more than £50 in one play are now required to interact with staff over the counter or register a customer account card. My department are in the process of

conducting an evaluation of these measures and I will publish the results in due course.”

A report setting out the evaluation was published in January 2016 and can be found on the Department for Culture Media and Sport’s website with the following link:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/493714/Evaluation_of_Gaming_Machine_Circumstances_of_Use_Amendment_Regulations_2015.pdf

The report showed that the reduction in stakes over £50 had been larger than anticipated but that players increased the time they were betting for. The report referenced the Chatham self-exclusion pilot.

For a more in depth analysis of the whole issue Members might like to read a research paper from the House of Commons Library that was published in April 2016 and which can be found with the following link:

<http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN06946/SN06946.pdf>

The briefing indicates:

In response to a number of parliamentary questions on B2 machines, the Government has said that the evaluation of the 2015 Regulations “indicates that a large proportion of players of FOBTs may now be making a more conscious choice to control their playing behaviour and their stake level. We will now consider the findings of the evaluation before deciding if there is a need for further action”.

- 4.3 An finally an Early Day Motion was lodged with 67 cross-party MPs supporting it on 23 May 2016. An extract from the Parliament.uk website sets out the details:

“That this House welcomes the creation of the Fixed Odds Betting Terminals All-Party Parliamentary Group; acknowledges that there has been a widespread proliferation in the number of fixed-odds betting terminals (FOBTs) since the Gambling Act was passed in 2005; notes that more can and should be done by all stakeholders to prevent the social harm caused by these machines; further notes that there are nine known suicides related to FOBT use, including two tragic cases in the last 12 months; calls on the Government to further regulate FOBTs and act on a precautionary basis by substantially reducing the stake on these machines until evidence can be found that they are safe; and commits to ensuring that gambling is undertaken responsibly and with proper supervision. “

It is not clear whether the Motion will be debated, with many Early Day Motions never achieving an actual debate in Parliament.

4.4 A Triennial Review remains outstanding which means that the Government will be considering stakes and prizes at some stage.

4.5 The Gambling Commission has issued an updated Guidance to Licensed Authorities which can be found with the following link:

<http://www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk/Licensing-authorities/Information-for-licensing-authorities/Guidance-to-licensing-authorities-5th-edition.aspx>

4.6 Members may be interested to read a recently published report by an organisation called Geofutures which can be found here:

<http://www.geofutures.com/research-2/gambling-related-harm-how-local-space-shapes-our-understanding-of-risk/>

“The first aim of this study was to consider the types of people who may be at greater risk of harm from gambling and where they might be located. Based on review of existing research evidence, a previous report (called Exploring area based-vulnerability to harm: who is vulnerable?) concluded that youths, those affected by substance abuse / misuse / excessive alcohol consumption, poorer mental health, those living in deprived areas, from certain ethnic groups, those with low IQs, personality/cognitive impairments, those seeking treatment for gambling problems and those who are unemployed are potentially more vulnerable to harm from gambling.

Having identified these groups, this report brings this information together to create local risk indices, showing areas with greater concentrations of people who are more likely to be vulnerable to harm. Commissioned by Westminster and Manchester City Councils, this study used Westminster and Manchester as case study areas to develop local risk indices of gambling-related harm.”

5. Risk Management

5.1 There are no specific risks linked to the receipt of this report by the Committee.

6. Financial and legal implications

6.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report

6.2 The Council has produced its Statements of Policy as required by the Gambling Act 2005 and has signed the voluntary partnership agreement to encourage responsible gambling in Medway and provide a mechanism for those seeking help.

7. Recommendations

7.1. That the Committee notes this update report.

Lead officer contact

Perry Holmes, Chief Legal Officer

Telephone No: 01634 332133 Email perry.holmes@medway.gov.uk

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Example of community board poster

Background papers

None

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