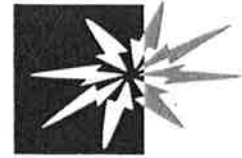


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**Haringey Council**

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5<sup>TH</sup> April 2013

**RESPONSE TO DCMS TRIENNIAL REVIEW ON GAMING MACHINE STAKE AND PRIZE LIMITS**

The London Borough of Haringey would like to take the opportunity to raise the following matters for consideration by the DCMS.

We would support the Government's preferred option – Package 4 with regard to the way forward on gaming machine stake and prize limits.

However in doing so we would first wish to submit our concerns around the proliferation of Fixed Odd Betting Terminals (FOBTs) in our High Streets. FOBTs are having a disproportionate impact on crime and the viability of our high streets.

Currently a betting office premises can install four FOBTs on a licensed premises. FOBTs provide a very different form of gambling experience to normal track and field type gambling. They are designed to be addictive and they generate a disproportionate percentage of the profit for average high street betting offices.

These machines are also particularly susceptible to criminal damage in part because they also can result in very large accumulative losses for the player who then may take out their frustration on the machine.

We would request that the DCMS consider whether FOBTs should be restricted and not automatically permitted as ancillary to a premises licence. The facility should exist for a Local Authority to limit or refuse to allow FOBTs where there is a record of relevant crime or disorder linked to premises, or in areas of deprivation.

In July 2010 we established a joint problem solving group with the Police because of evidence linking betting shops to crime and disorder. We identified that betting shops in Haringey had resulted in 262 crimes over a 1 year period; equating to 5 crimes a week. Due to the tendency for betting shops to cluster, this meant that crime was noticeably increasing in an area that already had significant crime issues.

This data showed that criminal damage accounted for 74.4% of offences reported and 'Gaming Machines' were damaged in 80% of reports for criminal damage offences. Rowdy / inconsiderate behaviour was raised in 42.4% of incidents

There is clear evidence that the betting industry targets areas of deprivation and communities where addictive gambling behaviours can be cultivated. We believe that the installation of Fixed Odds Betting Terminals (FOBTs) in these locations is a specific approach taken to draw in and retain those customers likely to display addictive gambling behaviours. Because it is the industry norm to cluster, the impact is that targeted locations will suffer disproportionately from any impact on crime or disorder.

The betting industry will always wish to champion an increase in the capacity of B2 machines in betting shops as they have become the main source of income for betting shops. We would urge the DCMS to commission research that investigates the impact of FOBTs on problem gambling and addictive behaviour. These machines feed the addictive behaviour of people that are eager to give it another try in the hope of the next spin being their answer to quick money. Inevitably they lose their money and make no gains, for some families that money would have been destined for groceries or bills that will now not be met, pushing families further into deprivation.

The Betting Industry themselves has shown their figures within this consultation as to the amount of turnover for betting shops through FOBT alone.

Questions need to be asked as to what are the benefits of having such high concentrations of betting premises in areas with high deprivation. These machines are known to yield on average £168,000 for each betting shop per year alone. This is money gained through low income families and people in the deprived areas who feel they have nothing to lose in chasing their hope of making some quick money.

We would urge the DCMS to make the availability of FOBTs a further requirement of a licensing process separate to the betting shop premises license. This would make operators consider the wider ramifications of opening a further betting shop in deprived areas that are already saturated with betting shops and FOBTs, in which they are happy to gain their guaranteed market share of income through these machines.

We also consider a significant way to deal with FOBTs so as to not make them such an addiction to the man in the street is for a £2 cap on stakes for these machines. The maximum stake should be reduced and would be beneficial in eradicating the issue of clustering and discourage the type of gambling addiction associated with these machines. The Government are in a position to act now to make a difference in peoples lives, such a cap would not require any Primary Legislation to be amended. The Minister responsible has the power to do this immediately.

Haringey has a high proportion of social clubs that cater to our Turkish community. These clubs have been a source of illegal machines being sited in an attempt to be able to have high payout machines available for their businesses. The increase in B4 machines will be welcomed by these clubs and will no doubt encourage further modified machines to appear.

We would also speak against any increase in limits on B3 and B4 machines. Haringey has significant problems with social clubs that are used for machines of an illegal nature

Yours sincerely,



Cllr Nilgun Canver  
Cabinet Member for the Environment