

DCMS consultation on proposals for changes to Gaming Machines and Social Responsibility Measures

City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council – Licensing Authority

Q1 Do you agree that the maximum stake of £100 on B2 machines (FOBTs) should be reduced? If yes, what alternative maximum stake for B2 machines (FOBTs) do you support?

The Licensing Authority supports Option 4; the maximum stake be reduced to £2 on all B2 content, to bring FOBT's in line with other gaming machines and remove the easy availability of 'hard gambling' facilities from easily accessible locations.

It has been noted by Licensing Enforcement Officers that documented evidence held by betting shop staff challenging customers spending large amounts of money mainly relate to B2 gaming machines. It was noted by Officers that amounts spent prior to staff speaking to customers range from £500 per session to over £5,000. Recorded incidents of anti-social behaviour also predominantly occur following losses on B2 gaming machines.

At a Full Council meeting held in October 2017, Bradford Council noted the proliferating number of FOTB's across the Bradford District of which there are currently up to 248 across 62 betting shops. National research indicates there are four times as many betting shops with FOTBs in areas of high unemployment than in places where unemployment is low.

Bradford's economy is showing growth and improvement, however, significant pockets of above average unemployment remain and wages are relatively low compared to other parts of the country. Councillors across all political parties are concerned about the negative impact of increasing numbers of FOTBs on vulnerable and low income individuals and families. The Council resolved that should this review not recommend a ban on FOBT's, it requests that Government implements a reduction in the maximum bet per spin on FOBTs to £2.

Q2 Do you agree with the government's proposals to maintain the status quo on category B1?

Yes

Q3 Do you agree with the government's proposals to maintain the status quo on category B3?

Yes

Q4 Do you agree with the government's proposals to maintain the status quo on category B3A?

Yes

Q5 *Do you agree with the government's proposals to maintain the status quo on category B4?*

Yes

Q6 *Do you agree with the government's proposals to maintain the status quo on category C?*

Yes

Q7 *Do you agree with the government's proposals to maintain the status quo on category D?*

Yes

Q8 *Do you agree with the government's proposals to increase the stake and prize for prize gaming, in line with industry proposals?*

Yes

Q9 *Do you agree with the government's proposals to maintain the status quo on allocations for casinos, arcades and pubs?*

Yes

Q10 *Do you agree with the government's proposals to bar contactless payments as a direct form of payment to gaming machines?*

Yes. The Licensing Authority strongly agree with this proposal.

Q11 *Do you support this package of measures to improve player protection measures on gaming machines?*

The Licensing Authority does not have access to the impact of current industry measures and so cannot comment on proposed measures.

However, Licensing Officers inspecting premises have been approached by customers in recent years who have expressed concern at the ease of gambling large sums of money within a short period of time on B2 gaming machines. These customers have stated that measures to address problem gambling have limited impact. Customers have also made reference to loyalty schemes, which they feel increases their risk of problem gambling.

Q12 *Do you support this package of measures to improve player protection measures for the online sector?*

No comment - Online gaming is not within the remit of the Licensing Authority.

Q13 *Do you support this package of measures to address concerns about gambling advertising?*

No comment - Gambling advertising is not within the remit of the Licensing Authority.

Q14 Do you agree the Government should consider alternative options including a mandatory levy if industry does not provide adequate funding for RET?

Yes

Q15 Do you agree with our assessment of the current powers available to local authorities

No

Independent research indicates that local betting offices are clustering in areas of higher deprivation. The Bradford district has 62 betting offices, 20% of which are located within Bradford City Centre with many being located in adjoining properties. Customers have openly stated to Licensing Officers that clustering of betting premises has an adverse effect on their gambling behaviour.

Licensing Authorities are unable to take into consideration clustering of premises when determining licence applications and in reality have very limited grounds on which to refuse premises licence applications. Where licensing authorities have refused applications, they have been successfully challenged in the Courts.

It is understood that in 2017 the Planning Inspectorate in England has considered at least five appeals by bookmakers against Local Authority planning decisions and in every appeal the decision to refuse planning permission was overturned. Bradford has also had two earlier planning decisions overturned by the Inspectorate.

Q16 Are there any other relevant issues, supported by evidence, that you would like to raise as part of this consultation but that has not been covered by questions 1-15?

No

Contact:

