

**Council**

**30 January 2024**



**Reading**  
Borough Council  
Working better with you

<b>Title</b>	Review of the Statement of Gambling Licensing Principles
<b>Purpose of the report</b>	To make a decision
<b>Report status</b>	Public report
<b>Report author</b>	Rob Abell
<b>Lead Councillor</b>	Cllr Karen Rowland, Lead Councillor for Environmental Services and Community Safety
<b>Corporate priority</b>	Thriving Communities
<b>Recommendations</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. That the updated Statement of Gambling Licensing Principles 2022-25 be approved, as attached to the report at Appendix 1.</li><li>2. That the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport &amp; Public Protection Services be authorised to make minor amendments to the Statement</li></ol>

## **1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to agree a slightly revised Statement of Gambling Licensing Principles.
- 1.2. The minor recommended change to the Statement of Gambling Licensing Principles is to refer to the new section about gambling premises in the proposed update to the Local Area Plan. This will help ensure that the Statement of Gambling Licensing Principles and the Local Area Plan remain aligned and cross-reference readers to both policies.
- 1.3. The amendment is being made now as the update to the Local Area Plan had not been made when the latest three-year Statement of Gambling Licensing Principles was approved at Licensing Applications Committee on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2022.

## **2. Policy Context**

- 2.1. The Gambling Act 2005 (the 'Act') requires that the Council review its Gambling Policy every three years. The policy typically runs for a three-year period starting and ending in January with the first appointed day under The Gambling Act 2005 (Licensing Authority Policy Statement) (First Appointed Day) Order 2006 being 31<sup>st</sup> January 2007.
- 2.2. The Statement of Gambling Licensing Principles has been reviewed and updated every three years since January 2007. The latest Statement is set to run until January 2025.

## **3. The Proposal**

- 3.1. Under the Gambling Act, Reading Borough Council, as the licensing authority, has responsibility for:
  - Licensing premises for gambling activities (and temporary use) e.g. betting shops & casinos.
  - Regulating gaming and gaming machines in clubs and miners' welfare institutes.
  - Granting permits to family entertainment centres for the use of certain lower stake gaming machines.
  - Regulating gaming and gaming machines on alcohol licensed premises such as pubs.

- Granting permits for prize gaming.
  - Registering small society lotteries.
  - Producing a local area profile for the Borough of Reading and ensuring that applications are consistent with the licensing objectives and policy of the Council.
  - Enforcing the provisions of the Act.
- 3.2. The gambling framework must center around the 3 licensing objectives:
- to protect children and other vulnerable people from harm;
  - to prevent gambling being a source of crime or disorder; and
  - to ensure that gambling is conducted in a fair and open way.
- 3.3. The licensing authority may review and alter its policy statement during the three-year period for example, licensing authorities will need to consider if their policy statement should be reviewed in the event of a change of policy, such as a change in local planning policy.
- 3.4. Therefore, the Policy Statement is being reviewed to coincide with a new section about gambling premises in the proposed update to the Local Area Plan. The changes are set out below:

**Para 11.1.5(d) ADD:** It is strongly advised that Applicants and Licence Holders be aware of the Council's planning policy, particularly the Reading Borough Local Plan which deals with clustering of gambling premises, before making an application under the Gambling Act 2005 to ascertain whether their proposal conflicts with the Local Plan.

**Para 22 AMEND:** to read: There are currently 3 Casinos operating within the Borough. In addition to this there is a further premises currently licensed, but not operating. There are no plans under section 166 of the Act to limit or restrict the number of casinos operating within the Borough.

**Para 28 ADD:** It is strongly advised that Applicants and Licence Holders be aware of the Council's planning policy, particularly the Reading Borough Local Plan which deals with clustering of gambling premises, before making an application under the Gambling Act 2005 to ascertain whether their proposal conflicts with the Local Plan.

- 3.5. The updated version of the Statement of Gambling Licensing Principles is attached for approval at Appendix 1.

#### **4. Contribution to Strategic Aims**

- 4.1. This policy and its implementation contribute to the following strategic aims in the Council's Corporate Plan 2021-22:
- Protecting and enhancing the lives of vulnerable adults and children.
  - Securing the economic success of Reading.
- 4.2. The aim of the policy is to find a balance between securing the safety and amenity of our residential and business communities and responsibly maintaining and developing Reading's role as a major entertainment and cultural centre.
- 4.3. The policy considers the Gambling Commission's aim to strengthen social responsibility and to ensure that operators of gambling premises are risk assessing their operation in line with the local area profile drawn up by the Licensing Authority. The policy also aims to ensure that all gambling is conducted with a view to promoting the licensing objectives and to encourage operators to promote responsible gambling, in line with the relevant codes of practice and guidance issued by the Gambling Commission.

#### **5. Environmental and Climate Implications**

5.1. There are no specific environmental or climate implications to this policy.

## **6. Community Engagement**

6.1. Consultations regarding the review of the Council's Gambling Policy were sent prior to approval of the Policy in February 2022, to various bodies within the gambling industry, groups who deal with the effects of gambling and responsible authorities stated within the Gambling Act.

## **7. Equality Implications**

7.1. An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is not relevant to this decision as it won't have a differential impact on people with protected characteristics.

## **8. Other Relevant Considerations**

8.1. There are none.

## **9. Legal Implications**

9.1. The Gambling Act 2005 requires Local Authorities to review, consult and publish a Statement of Gambling Licensing Principles every three years.

9.2. The Statement must be prepared in accordance with [s349 of the Gambling Act 2005](#) and is a matter reserved to Council to determine under s154(2)(c) of the Act.

9.3. Local Authorities may attach such conditions to certain categories of licences as they may consider reasonably necessary, in accordance with the Act. All applications for premises licences will need to demonstrate that their application is reasonably consistent with the licensing objectives; in accordance with any relevant code of practice under s.24 of the Gambling Act 2005; in accordance with any relevant guidance issued by the Commission under s.25 of the Gambling Act 2005 and in accordance with Reading Borough Council's statement of licensing policy.

## **10. Financial Implications**

10.1. There are no financial implications resulting from adopting the amended Statement of Gambling Licensing Principles.

## **11. Timetable for Implementation**

11.1. The amended Statement of Gambling Licensing Principles will come into immediate effect, if approved by Council.

## **12. Background Papers**

12.1. There are none.

## **Appendices**

### **1. Statement of Gambling Licensing Principles 2022-25**