

Report of Financial Inclusion Manager

Report to Director of Communities and Environment

Date: 25 July 2017

Subject: Mitigating problem gambling and gambling related harm.

Are specific electoral wards affected? If yes, name(s) of ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-in?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, access to information procedure rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

1. An integrated approach between the Council, advice partners and the Gambling Industry is required to raise awareness of how to recognise, help, signpost and support those suffering from or at risk of gambling related harm.
2. In order to progress this work, the Problem Gambling project group was established and brought together the local problem gambling counselling service, partners from the gambling industry, third sector advice agencies and a cross section of departments from the Council.
3. Together, this group is working on three broad actions to mitigate problem gambling. Firstly to implement a marketing campaign to raise awareness of current support services available to people suffering from gambling related harm, and to reduce the stigma associated with talking about the issues. Secondly to improve referral links between the general advice network and the specialist problem gambling counselling service through frontline training. And thirdly to explore opportunity for improving support services in Leeds including the possibility to host the first problem gambling addiction clinic outside London.

Recommendations

1. The Director of Communities and Environment is asked to agree payment of £170,000 from the SIF reserve to support the work developed in consultation with the Problem Gambling Project Group, to mitigate problem gambling and gambling related harm.

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To seek approval to provide up to £170,000 from the Social Inclusion Fund reserve in on actions to mitigate problem gambling and gambling related harm.

2. Background information

- 2.1 At Executive Board in March 2014, members approved a report on the management of the Social Inclusion Fund (SIF) and examples of the type of projects to be funded. The example projects provide guidance to potential applicants on the type of projects that would support the city's anti-poverty agenda. In particular, the report described how SIF should be made available to projects that mitigate problem gambling.
- 2.2 In April 2016 the Council commissioned a team from Leeds Beckett University (LBU), to conduct a study into the prevalence of problem gambling in Leeds to help understand the issues involved and inform how SIF could be used to mitigate problem gambling.
- 2.3 The research concluded that there could be over 10,000 people in Leeds who could be identified as problem gamblers and a further 30,000 people who may be 'at risk of harm' from it.
- 2.4 The LBU study found that gambling opportunities in Leeds are widespread, mixing gambling, gaming and social and leisure activities in diverse and widely distributed premises. While the supply side of gambling opportunities is well developed in Leeds, the study suggests provision for support services for those at risk of gambling related harm is under-developed and fragmented.
- 2.5 Support for problem gambling and gambling related harm is currently nationally funded via a voluntary levy on the gambling industry. GambleAware distributes the funding from the industry on education, prevention and treatment services and commissions research to broaden public understanding of gambling-related harm.
- 2.6 GamCare is commissioned by GambleAware and is the national provider of information, advice, support and free counselling for the prevention and treatment of problem gambling. They operate the National Gambling Helpline, provide treatment for problem gamblers and their families, create awareness about responsible gambling and treatment, and encourage an effective approach to responsible gambling within the gambling industry.
- 2.7 For the most severe cases of gambling addiction, which requires clinical support, clients are referred to the National Problem Gambling Clinic. This is based in London, funded by GambleAware.
- 2.8 The North East Council for Addictions (NECA) is a regional provider of specialist face to face advice counselling services related to gambling related harm and problem gamblers. NECA is the local specialist counselling provider for Leeds (together with York, Scarborough and Whitby) on behalf of GamCare.
- 2.9 The local provider has just the one counsellor providing support in Leeds, with waiting times for clients in the region of 6 weeks.
- 2.10 Separate from NECA, Leeds has a strong established independent advice network that would be well placed to provide some support and guidance in this area. Many of these services have some exposure to clients affected by gambling related harm,

usually when combined with other demands on debt management, alcohol or drug addiction and recovery support.

- 2.11 The advice service providers interviewed as part of the LBU study reported difficulties in accurately identifying problem gamblers among their mainstream client groupings. This was due to low levels of self-reporting, and what some regarded as avoidance or shame about the causes of gambling related harms such as debt and/or relationship breakdown
- 2.12 Dedicated support for problem and at risk gambling in Leeds was seen to lag behind the otherwise comprehensive and integrated approach taken in the city to address other addiction issues, poverty and homelessness. Many were unaware of the local specialist counselling service, those that were, reported few or no working relationships in contrast to cross-agency working in other areas.
- 2.13 Most service agencies interviewed expressed that they would be keen to offer further help but lack any screening or assessment tools which can identify gambling related harm at an earlier stage.

3. Main issues

- 3.1 The research highlighted key areas in which the Council and partners can work together to help mitigate gambling related harm in Leeds. This would require an integrated approach between the Council, advice partners and the Gambling Industry to raise awareness of how to recognise, help, signpost and support those suffering from or at risk of gambling related harm.
- 3.2 In order to progress this work, a project group was established which brought together the local problem gambling counselling service, partners from the gambling industry, third sector advice agencies and a cross section of departments from the Council.
- 3.3 The research and discussions with the Problem Gambling Project Group have highlighted work areas to focus on and it is estimated that £170,000 should be made available from the SIF to progress the following actions:
 - A marketing and communications campaign
To raise awareness of gambling related harm as an issue and reduce the stigma associated with talking about it. It is anticipated to be a high profile campaign, aimed at trying to get individuals who may be affected, to seek help and support.

The launch of the Leeds campaign is intended to coincide with national 'Responsible Gambling Week' being organised by the gambling industry on the 12 October 2017. The Financial Inclusion Team is liaising with the national campaign about this. The cost of this city wide campaign will be in the region of £75,000.

After receiving three quotes and undertaking interviews, Leeds based creative communications agency Magpie have been appointed to undertake the creative and design work for the campaign. In addition Clear Channel will be providing the majority of the advertising space. Clear Channel are the only suppliers of advertising on bus shelters, garage forecourts, pub screens, and geolocations in Leeds and therefore a tendering exercise to procure this service was not appropriate.

- Frontline Training

The campaign will likely increase demand for a limited service, but plans are also in place for better integration and referral flows between the local counselling service and Leeds' advice network.

Training of frontline staff on how and when to refer to the local counselling service is also being organised. Interest in training has been expressed from across the council directorates including Communities and Environment, Adults and Health, Children's and Families and Resources and Housing. There has also been interest from partners external to the Council, including the universities, the credit union and advice network.

In order to integrate the local problem gambling counselling service with Leeds' existing advice network, work has begun to train frontline staff on how to spot signs of people at risk of gambling related harm and offer brief intervention and signposting services. This will allow a referral flow of clients between specialist counselling and general advice, so that each party can help the client according to their area of expertise.

- Improving Support Provision in Leeds

The current level of support in Leeds is low relative to the city population. Discussions are ongoing with the national providers to ensure that provision is in keeping with the needs of the city and that waiting times for the service are at a reasonable level. This is particularly important given the communications campaign which could generate additional demand on the service. Currently, severe cases of gambling addiction, which requires clinical support are referred to the National Problem Gambling Clinic. This is the only clinic in the UK and is based in London, funded by GambleAware.

A further area of support is being explored with GambleAware to develop a northern centre for gambling addiction based in Leeds. This centre would look to offer full medical support for people suffering with severe gambling addiction problems that require a service beyond counselling and advice. Leeds and York Partnership Foundation Trust are currently working on a proposal.

2. Corporate considerations

2.1 Consultation and engagement

- 2.1.1 The final research by Leeds Beckett University was launched in early 2017, and disseminated at a national conference held in the city in March 2017. In addition to the researchers, the event included speakers from Responsible Gambling Strategy Board, National Casino Forum, GambleAware and Young Gamblers Education Trust.
- 2.1.2 The event was well attended and partners from across Leeds' advice network and the Council's directorates demonstrated an interest to work together with the local counselling provider and develop a co-ordinated approach to improve and strengthen the support available to problem gamblers and at-risk groups in Leeds.
- 2.1.3 The Problem Gambling project group has been established to take forward actions from the conference and resulting research. The group brings together partners

from the gambling industry, third sector advice agencies and a cross section of departments from the Council.

2.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration

2.2.1 An Equality and Diversity/ Cohesion and Integration screening has been completed on the proposals to form the SIF and has previously been reported to the Executive Board. This highlights that the formation of the SIF can have positive impacts on local communities, particularly for socially and economically excluded citizens in the city. Citizens who may benefit positively from the SIF include low income households, whilst research has shown that lone parents (particularly female) and citizens with mental health problems are more likely to encounter financial exclusion.

2.3 Council policies and best council plan

- 2.3.1 SIF contributes positively to the Best Council Plan 2017/18 with its over-arching aim to tackle poverty and reduce inequality. SIF will continue to support projects that link in with the Best Council Plan's priorities around Resilient Communities which aim to build strong communities, raise aspirations and reduce financial hardship.
- 2.3.2 SIF will also continue to support projects that support the city's aims of being the best city for health and wellbeing contributing to outcome 5, 'People will live in healthy and sustainable communities'

2.4 Resources and value for money

- 2.4.1 The Executive Board has previously agreed that:
- 2.4.2 The SIF will be a fund in its own right within the council's budget. Finance officers have advised that under accountancy regulations no part of the payment will be classified as a capital receipt, as the council is not selling an asset. Rather, the council is receiving financial payments for granting a licence it has the powers to grant.
- 2.4.3 It is proposed that the SIF be treated as a revenue fund as an earmarked revenue reserve. Funding can then be drawn down as and when required. Budgeting in this way will also ensure that funding is ring fenced for SIF activities. Funds from the SIF will be allocated and approvals sought for investments of SIF resources, in accordance with Financial Procedure Rules.
- 2.4.4 The Fund will attract an appropriate rate of interest, as determined by the Director of Resources that is consistent with the Council's treasury management strategy. Allowing the fund to acquire interest will enable unspent moneys to grow accordingly.
- 2.4.5 In terms of staffing, the administration of the SIF will be undertaken by existing resources in the Communities and Environment directorate and any administrative costs will be paid for from within the SIF.

2.5 Legal implications, access to information, and call-in

2.5.1 The allocation of funding is in accordance with the approvals agreed by the Executive Board on 5th March 2014 with the Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens

and Communities) being authorised to allocate funding. Following reorganisation of Council functions this authority now rests with the Director of Communities and Environment.

2.5.2 Approval by the Director of Communities and Environment will be deemed as a Significant Operational Decision and is not subject to call in.

2.6 Risk management

2.6.1 There are no identified risks associated with the issues under consideration.

3. Conclusions

3.1 As agreed at Executive Board March 2014, and in accordance with the licensing agreement, SIF is to be used on projects that support the Council's Anti-poverty agenda and that mitigate problem gambling.

3.2 The actions in this report outline how SIF will be used to mitigate problem gambling through a high level marketing campaign, to both raise awareness of the issue and encourage clients to seek help and support at an early stage. Actions are also looking to strengthen the current support offer through frontline training, improved referrals and exploring opportunities to implement greater local support including the possible establishment of a northern clinic for gambling addiction in Leeds.

4. Recommendations

4.1 The Director of Communities and Environment is asked to agree payment of £170,000 from the 2017/18 SIF reserve to support the work developed in consultation with the Problem Gambling Project Group, to mitigate problem gambling and gambling related harm.

5. Background documents¹

5.1 None

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.