

SCRUTINY BOARD (ENVIRONMENT, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES) - CONSULTATIVE MEETING

FRIDAY, 20TH JANUARY, 2023

PRESENT: Councillor in the Chair

Councillors J Akhtar, B Anderson,
K Brooks, P Grahame, A Khan, S Lay,
A Maloney, E Thomson and J Tudor

7 Declarations of Interests

No interests were made at the meeting.

8 Introductions and Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Carlisle, Finnigan, Smith and Wadsworth.

9 Reducing Gambling Harm

The report of the Chief Officer (Elections and Regulatory) provides an update on the council-wide approach to gambling harm and the Council's responses to the Gambling Commission document named "10 questions to ask if you are scrutinising gambling harm".

Appended to the submitted report included the "10 questions to ask if you are scrutinising gambling harm" document, as well as a briefing note on gambling harms.

In attendance at the meeting were:

- Councillor Harland, Executive Member for Communities
- Councillor Marshall-Katung, Scrutiny Board Chair – Adults, Health, and Active Lifestyles
- Sue Duckworth, LCC Principal Licensing Officer, Entertainment Licensing
- Grace Lawrenson, LCC Senior Policy Development Officer, Financial Inclusion
- Nicola Raper, LCC Section Head, Entertainment Licensing
- Matt Gaskell, NHS Northern Gambling Service

The Principal Licensing Officer introduced the report and provided some context in relation to the regulation of gambling and explained how the regulation of gambling is split between the Gambling Commission and local authority. It was noted that the local authority does not have as many powers as the Gambling Commission and can only apply conditions to applications submitted to the local authority, to ensure that applications do not negatively impact the locality. It was also confirmed that the number of applications the local authority considers each year, is minimal, typically receiving 1-2

applications per year, if any. The local authority is being proactive in terms of researching, campaigning, and working in partnership to help those affected by gambling.

The NHS Northern Gambling representative provided an overview of how his service responds to gambling harm; the service opened in September 2019 and is commissioned by NHS England. The service also covers Yorkshire and Humber, as well as Northwest England and has other regional clinics in Sunderland and Manchester. The representative explained how workers in the service are multi-skilled and will often focus on an individual gambler, including those affected by that individual, as well as treating co-occurring mental health issues associated with gambling. The service receives between 500 – 600 referrals per year, and research shows that 70% are male, between the ages of 20 – 30 years of age. The most common type of gambling is reported as slot machines, in-play sports betting, and scratch cards; the most continuous forms of gambling being the most problematic gambling. The representative concluded by explaining preventative work is the most proactive and there is work to be done around reducing advertisement across the city to prevent the harm 'before it happens'.

In responding to questions from members, the following was confirmed:

- There is a strong relationship between LCCs Public Health and Licensing Department. Public Health established a 'risk tool' that is used in Licensing specifically for alcohol harm when making representations to applications and helps apply conditions to licences.
- Leeds Community Gambling Service's engagement team has previously undertaken work with supermarkets and local retailers who are selling scratch cards. There are 2 officers covering the city - they are keen to undertake proactive work in hotspot locations. Further to a question regarding the number of outlets with whom engagement is taking place, officers committed to provide this information at a later date.
- Mechanisms through which the Board could articulate its concerns include established lobbying groups and through existing contacts at the Gambling Commission.
- Board members discussed the prevalence of advertising linked to gambling firms. Restricting advertisement is considered an important tool in preventative work. It was reported that Bristol is the first city to be free of gambling advertisement on council-owned assets. It was noted that Leeds council do not promote gambling products on any council owned-platforms, for example billboards and social media, nor any other commercial products or services. There is a key piece of work being undertaken by LCC's Public Health team in terms of (sub-)contracted advertising of "health-harming" and high carbon products such as foods high in fat, sugar and/or salt, alcohol, formula milk, as well as gambling. It was also noted that Transport for London has banned junk food (i.e. high fat, sugar, salt foods) advertisements.
- LCC's Public Health team undertakes focussed work on young people and gambling. The 'My Health, My School Survey' includes gambling-related questions and has been undertaken with secondary pupils to

understand activities they take part in and frequency of participation, the gaps of knowledge and needs across young people in Leeds. The council are working with a charity named Gambling with Lives who have created a bespoke package for Personal, Social, Health Education (PSHE) leads in Leeds secondary schools and will be rolled out on a pilot basis. Members felt that there is a new trend with teenagers gambling and sought clarity on the work being done across primary and secondary schools to take preventative measures. In response, it was confirmed that there is a particular focus on secondary schools via target engagement work and social media messaging. School and social care staff have been provided with the opportunity to receive training on gambling-related harms and on gaming.

- The council can provide members with materials to put in their surgeries for people to self-refer and provide initial assistance.

Councillor Marshall-Katung confirmed that the Adults, Health, and Active Lifestyles Scrutiny Board can take this matter forward as part of that Board's remit.

The Board collectively agreed on the importance of lobbying for national change. It was agreed that the Board will seek to endorse a formal statement at its next meeting, setting out the concerns of members and a proposed route to progress them.

The Chair thanked those in attendance.

RECOMMENDED –

- To note the contents of the submitted report including comments raised during discussion
- PSA to draft a formal statement for consideration by the Scrutiny Board, setting out the concerns of members and the mechanism to address those concerns.

10 Date and Time of the Next Meeting

The next formal meeting will take place on Thursday, 2nd February 2023 at 10:30 a.m. (there will be a pre-meeting for Board members at 10:00 a.m.)

The meeting concluded at 11:30 a.m.