



Licensing Committee minutes

Minutes of the meeting of the Licensing Committee held on Wednesday 2 February 2022 in The Oculus, Buckinghamshire Council, Gatehouse Road, HP19 8FF, commencing at 6.30 pm and concluding at 6.55 pm.

Members present

D Barnes, J Baum, R Gaster, N Rana, B Stanier Bt, G Wadhwa, H Wallace, D Watson and A Wood

Agenda Item

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr T Green, Cllr C Jones, Cllr J Rush and Cllr D Town.

2 Declarations of interest

There were none.

3 Minutes of the previous meeting

RESOLVED

The Minutes of the meeting held on 20 October 2021 were AGREED as an accurate record.

[Post meeting update – figures quoted under item 5, Draft Statement of Licensing Policy under the Gambling Act 2005, were found to be incorrect after this meeting. The correct figures, as per the report circulated with the 20 October 2021 agenda were 39 betting premises and 9 other gambling premises.]

4 Draft Statement of Licensing Policy under the Gambling Act 2005

S Gallacher, Principal Licensing Officer, referred to the report and appendices circulated with the agenda.

In accordance with the Gambling Act 2005 (the 'Act'), Buckinghamshire Council, in its role as Licensing Authority, was responsible for authorising certain gambling activities at premises used for gambling purposes by the issue of premises licences and permits.

The Council's licensing service was currently operating under separate legacy policies and fees, reflecting the four former district council areas. Under the terms of the transitional legislation, Buckinghamshire Council had two years to prepare and implement a new single policy under the Act and align service provision. The

deadline for implementation of the new Policy was no later than 1 April 2022. The new policy must be published at least four weeks before it was effective, the deadline for publication of the policy was therefore 4 March 2022.

On the 20 October 2021 the Licensing Committee approved a new draft policy for consultation purposes. The consultation ran from 1st November until the 10 December 2021. Nine responses were received and were included in the report. The following changes were made as a result of the consultation:

- Section 4 - Policy amended to include reference to consultation with ward councillors and town and parish councils.
- Section 20 - Policy amended to better reflect statutory guidance.
- Section 20 - Policy amended and relevant part of sentence removed in light of significant reduction in stakes for fixed odds betting terminals.

The following points were discussed following questions from Committee Members:

- A Member of the Committee asked for confirmation of the number of licenced premises within Buckinghamshire. [Post meeting update – the figures quoted at the meeting were incorrectly repeating an error to the minutes of 20 October 2021, now amended. The correct figures, as per the report circulated with the 20 October 2021 agenda were 39 betting premises and 9 other gambling premises.]
- The letter from Gosschalk solicitors on behalf of the Betting and Gaming Council (BGC) (appendix 2), suggested very low levels of problem gambling nationally with a continued decline in numbers. Officers stated that figures quoted in the letter were from the Gambling Commission and they had not sort to independently verify them. Several local organisations offering gambling support had been involved in the consultation and none had identified a significant problem locally. However, it was noted that using these figures there could still be approximately 1,200 problem gamblers (0.3% of the adult population of approximately 400,000) within Buckinghamshire needing support. Officers explained that the policy sought to do this through rules and regulations for licensed premises providing licensees with information on safeguarding and support signposting.
- A Committee Member noted that the quoted figures on problem gambling for the UK compared favourably to those for the EU. It was also considered positive that the BGC were committed to ongoing research, education, and treatment support.
- Item 11 (decision making) of the draft policy (appendix 4), states “The Licensing Authority will not take into account demand for gambling premises or representations based on moral objections when making decisions.” A Committee Member queried this statement. Officers explained that this was not a new addition to the policy but a requirement set out in the Gambling Act 2005 and the Gambling Commission statutory guidance. Therefore, its inclusion in the policy was outside of Buckinghamshire Council’s control.

On a vote being taken (proposed by Cllr Baum and seconded by Cllr Wood) it was unanimously RESOLVED to:

- 1. AGREE the final draft of the Statement of Licensing Policy under the Gambling Act 2005.**
- 2. RECOMMEND the Statement of Licensing Policy under the Gambling Act 2005 to Full Council for approval and adoption with an implementation date of 1 April 2022.**

- 5 Date of next meeting**
13 April 2022, 6.30pm.

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