

Full Council, 12 December 2017

Opposition Motion in the name of Cllr Barry Rawlings

Preventing the proliferation and clustering of betting shops in Barnet

Council notes the recent planning application for a Paddy Power betting shop at The Edition development in Colindale, even though there is already another Paddy Power betting shop only a few minutes' walk away on the A5.

Council also notes the two recent planning application hearings for this betting shop which resulted in the application being refused both times.

Council further notes that an appeal may be lodged by Paddy Power to challenge the refusal.

Council is concerned that it is becoming increasingly difficult to prevent the proliferation and clustering of betting shops in the borough, despite the removal of permitted development rights for this type of business.

Council notes that in July 2016 the Local Government Association referred to research conducted by Geofutures for the Responsible Gambling Trust, which found that rates of "problem gambling" were higher in areas with clusters of betting shops:

- Analysis of betting shop loyalty card holders shows that 28 per cent of those living within 400 metres of a cluster of betting shops are problem gamblers, compared with 22 per cent of those who don't live near them.
- Those living in areas with a higher number of bookmakers were also more likely to be problem or at-risk gamblers compared with those in areas with fewer betting shops. However, the increased risk of being a problem or at-risk gambler was greater among those living near a cluster of betting shops.
- This suggests that clusters themselves may be associated with particular risks.

Council therefore supports the Local Government Association's call for Government to introduce a 'cumulative impacts test' to enable councils to reject applications for new betting shops where there are already existing clusters of shops, and is disappointed that the Government has ruled out such a test in its recently published 'Consultation on proposals for changes to Gaming Machines and Social Responsibility Measures'.

Council wishes to ensure the viability and vitality of Barnet's town centres, and supports local residents who oppose the proliferation and clustering of betting shops in our communities.

Council also notes the Government's intention to reduce the maximum stake for Fixed Odds Betting Terminals (FOBTs) - described as the 'cocaine of gambling' - from £100 to between £50 - £2, but believes this range does not go far enough.

Council continues to support the position that the maximum stake should be reduced to £2.

Council asks officers to respond to the Government's consultation on behalf of LB Barnet, setting out Council's support for the maximum stake for FOBTs to be reduced to £2, and for the introduction of a 'cumulative impacts test' as proposed by the LGA.

In the meantime, Council asks the relevant committee to ensure LB Barnet as a planning authority has an up-to-date plan with robust and detailed policies in place in respect of the number and location of betting shops in Barnet.

[Under the relevant FCPR I request that my motion is voted on at the meeting.]