

**SANDWELL METROPOLITAN
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

GAMBLING ACT 2005

STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

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SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

GAMBLING ACT 2005

STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

Introduction

Sandwell is one of the larger metropolitan boroughs located at the centre of the West Midlands conurbation and is predominantly urban in character. The Borough is composed principally of 6 towns rather than a single, dominant centre and these form the basis of the Council's community focus. The towns are Oldbury, Rowley Regis, Smethwick, Tipton, Wednesbury and West Bromwich.

At the last count the population of the borough was just under 300,000. As far as the economy is concerned, Sandwell is still heavily reliant on manufacturing although service industries now form almost 60% of total employment within the borough.

Sandwell is also a densely populated area and has the highest number of residents per unit of residential land in the West Midlands. In contrast, the Borough also has the highest proportion of parks and open spaces amongst the 7 metropolitan districts in the area.

Gambling Act 2005

This Statement of Principles is intended to meet the Council's obligations under Section 349 of the Gambling Act 2005 (referred to in this Statement as "the Act").

In carrying out its licensing functions under the Act, ~~particularly with regard to premises licences~~, the Council will act in accordance with the relevant legislation, adopt the principles of better regulation, regulate gambling in the public interest and aim to permit the use of premises for gambling as it thinks fit **so long as it is** :-

- in accordance with any relevant Codes of Practice issued by the Gambling Commission
- in accordance with any relevant Guidance issued by the Gambling Commission
- reasonably consistent with the licensing objectives, and
- in accordance with this Statement of Principles

There are 3 licensing objectives which are central to the regulatory regime created by the Act. These are :-

- preventing gambling from being a source of crime or disorder, being associated with crime or disorder, or being used to support crime
- ensuring that gambling is conducted in a fair and open way
- protecting children and other vulnerable persons from being harmed or exploited by gambling

The Act provides for 3 categories of licence :

- operating licences
- personal licences
- premises licences

The Council ~~will be~~ is responsible for issuing premises licences. The Gambling Commission ~~will be~~ is responsible for issuing operating and personal licences.

~~The Council consulted widely upon this Statement before finalising and publishing. A list of those persons consulted is provided at the end of this Statement.~~

Declaration

In producing this final Statement, the Council declares that it has had regard to the licensing objectives of the Act, ~~the any~~ Guidance issued by the Gambling Commission, and any responses ~~received~~ from those consulted ~~on prior to the preparation of~~ this Statement. ~~A full list of those persons and organisations consulted is to be found at the end of this Statement.~~

The Gambling Commission

The Gambling Commission regulates gambling in the public interest. It does so by keeping crime out of gambling; by ensuring that gambling is conducted fairly and openly; and by protecting children and vulnerable people.

The Commission provides independent advice to the government about the manner in which gambling is carried out, the effects of gambling, and the regulation of gambling generally.

The Commission has issued Guidance under Section 25 of the Act regarding the manner in which local authorities exercise their licensing functions under the Act and, in particular, the principles to be applied by local authorities.

The Commission ~~will also issue one or more~~ has issued a number of codes of practice under Section 24 of the Act about the manner in which facilities for gambling are provided, ~~which may also include provisions and about including~~ the advertising of gambling facilities.

The Gambling Commission can be contacted at:

www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk

Authorised Activities

'Gambling' is defined in the Act as either gaming, betting, or taking part in a lottery.

- gaming means playing a game of chance for a prize
- betting means making or accepting a bet on the outcome of a race, competition, or other event or process; the likelihood of anything occurring or not occurring; or whether anything is true or not
- A lottery is where persons are required to pay in order to take part in an arrangement, during the course of which one or more prizes are allocated by a process which relies wholly on chance

The main functions of the Council are to:

- licence premises for gambling activities
- grant permits for gambling and gaming machines in clubs
- regulate gaming and gaming machines in alcohol licensed premises
- grant permits to family entertainment centres for the use of certain lower stake gaming machines
- grant permits for prize gaming
- consider notices given for the temporary use of premises for gaming
- consider occasional use notices for betting at tracks
- register small societies lotteries

Spread betting is regulated by The Financial Services Authority

Remote Gambling is dealt with by the Gambling Commission

The National Lottery is regulated by The National Lottery Commission

General Statement of Principles

The Council recognises the wide variety of premises which **will** require a licence or a permit. These include casinos, betting shops, bingo halls, pubs, clubs and amusement arcades.

In carrying out its licensing functions the Council will have regard to any guidance issued by the Gambling Commission from time to time.

The Council will not seek to use the Act to resolve matters more readily dealt with under other legislation.

To ensure the licensing objectives are met the Council **will** **has** established a **close good** working relationship with **the police**, the Gambling Commission and, **where appropriate, will continue to conduct joint inspection visits with the Commission and other responsible authorities as appropriate.**

Where children, young persons and other vulnerable people are allowed access to premises where gambling takes place, the Council may take whatever steps are considered necessary to either limit access generally or by introducing measures to prevent under age gambling where it believes it is right to do so for the prevention of their physical, moral or psychological harm, especially where it receives representations to that effect.

Applicants seeking premises licences are encouraged to propose any prohibitions or restrictions of their own in circumstances where it is felt that the presence of children would be undesirable or inappropriate.

However, the overriding principle is that all applications and the circumstances prevailing at each premises will be considered on their own individual merits.

Preventing gambling from being a source of crime or disorder

The Gambling Commission ~~will~~ plays **a the** leading role in preventing gambling from being a source of crime and ~~will~~—maintains rigorous licensing procedures that aim to prevent criminals from providing facilities for gambling.

Anyone applying to the Council for a premises licence will have to hold an operating licence from the Commission before a licence can be issued, (**unless the premises is a 'track' for which an operating licence is not necessary**). Therefore, the Council ~~will~~ **is** not generally **be** concerned with the suitability of an applicant and where concerns about a person's suitability arise the Council will bring those concerns to the attention of the Commission.

If an application for a licence or a permit is received in relation to premises which are in an area noted for particular problems with organised crime, the Council will, in consultation with the police and other relevant authorities, consider whether specific controls need to be applied to prevent those premises from being a source of crime. This could include conditions being put on the licence, such as a requirement for door supervisors, although this would only be considered in cases where there is clear evidence that the premises in question are not being adequately supervised and door supervision is considered both necessary and proportionate.

As far as nuisance is concerned, there are already powers in existing anti-social behaviour and other licensing legislation to deal with measures designed to prevent nuisance, whether it arises as a result of noise from a building or from general disturbance once people have left a building. The Council does not therefore intend to use the Act to deal with general nuisance issues, for example, parking problems, which can easily be dealt with using alternative powers.

Issues of disorder ~~should~~ **would normally** only be dealt with under the Act if the disorder amounts to activity which is more serious and disruptive than mere nuisance, and it can be shown that gambling is the source of that disorder. A disturbance might be serious enough to constitute disorder if police assistance was required to deal with it. Another factor which could be taken into account is how threatening the behaviour was to those who could see or hear it, and whether those people live sufficiently close to be affected or have business interests that might be affected.

When making decisions in this regard the Council will give due weight to any comments made by the police.

Ensuring gambling is conducted in a fair and open way

The Gambling Commission does not expect local authorities to become concerned with ensuring that gambling is conducted in a fair and open way as this will either be a matter for the management of the gambling business or will relate to the suitability

and actions of an individual. Both issues ~~will be~~ are adequately addressed by the Commission through the operating and personal licensing regime.

Because betting track operators do not need an operating licence from the Commission the Council may, ~~in certain~~ if the circumstances warrant it, require conditions of licence relating to the suitability of the environment in which betting takes place.

Protecting children and other vulnerable people from gambling

With limited exceptions, the intention of the Act is that children and young persons should not be allowed to gamble and should therefore be prevented from entering gambling premises which are 'adult-only' environments.

In practice, steps ~~will are generally be~~ are generally taken to prevent children from taking part in, or being in close proximity to, gambling especially with regard to premises situated in areas where there may be a high rate of reported truancy. There may also be some restrictions on advertising so that gambling products are not aimed at children or advertised in such a way that makes them particularly attractive to children. ~~In relation to casinos only, the Gambling Commission will be issuing a code of practice about access to casino premises for children and young persons.~~

When considering whether to grant a premises licence or a permit the Council will consider whether any measures are necessary to protect children, such as the supervision of entrances, the segregation of gambling from areas frequented by children and the supervision of gaming machines in non-adult gambling specific premises, such as pubs, clubs, betting tracks etc.

The Act seeks to protect what are termed as 'vulnerable people'. Although there is no specific definition of this term the Council ~~will want to include~~ includes in this description, among others, people who gamble more than they want to, people who gamble beyond their means, and people who may not be able to make informed or balanced decisions about gambling, perhaps due to a mental impairment, alcohol or drugs.

The Council is required by Regulations to state the principles it ~~will apply~~ has applied in exercising its powers under Section 157(h) of the Act to designate, in writing a body which is competent to advise the Council about the protection of children from harm. These principles are :-

- the need for the body to be responsible for an area covering the whole of the Council's area and
- the need for the body to be answerable to democratically elected persons rather than any particular vested interest group.

The Council has therefore designated the Local Safeguarding Children Board of Sandwell MBC for this purpose.

The Council will always treat each case on its own individual merits and when considering whether specific measures are required to protect children and other vulnerable people will balance its considerations against the overall principle of aiming to permit the use of premises for gambling.

Premises licences

A premises licence can authorise the provision of facilities at the following :

- casino premises
- bingo premises
- betting premises, including betting tracks
- adult gaming centres
- family entertainment centres

Premises can be 'any place' but the Act generally prevents more than one premises licence applying to any one place. A single building could be subject to more than one premises licence provided they are for different parts of the building and those parts can be genuinely regarded as being separate 'premises'. **It is recommended that applicants familiarise themselves with paragraphs 7.12 to 7.20 of the Commission's Guidance in this respect.**

With regard to 'splitting' premises the Council has particular regard to paragraphs 7.21 to 7.29 of the Commission's Guidance. Applicants will need to satisfy the Council that premises are genuinely 'different' and 'separate' in each case.

~~A particular requirement might be for~~ Any entrances and exits from parts of a building covered by one or more licences **need** to be separate and identifiable so that the separation of the premises is not compromised and that *people are not allowed to 'drift' accidentally into a gambling area **from one licensed activity to another.**

Applicants will need to satisfy the Council that, in the case of 'split' premises, the mandatory conditions can be complied with at all times. Where the Council has concerns about the use of premises for gambling these will generally be addressed through **additional licence conditions of its own.**

Other than an application for a betting premises licence in respect of a track, the Council is not able to issue a premises licence unless the applicant holds the relevant operating licence from the Gambling Commission.

When considering applications for premises licences the Council will consider each case on its own individual merits without regard to demand. **With regard to primary gambling activity issues the Council will take into account any representations made by the Commission.**

~~The Council will maintain a register of premises licences issued and will ensure that the register is open for public inspection at all reasonable times.~~

***The Council will maintain a Register of premises licences issued which will be available for public inspection on request.**

Responsible Authorities

These are generally public bodies that must be notified of all applications and who are entitled to make representations to the Council if they are relevant to the licensing objectives.

Section 157 of the Act defines those authorities as:

- The Gambling Commission
- The Police

- The Fire Service
- The Local Planning Authority
- Environmental health
- Local Safeguarding Children Board
- HM Revenue and Customs
- A licensing authority in whose area the premises is situated

Any concerns expressed by a responsible authority in relation to their own functions cannot be taken into account unless they are relevant to the application itself and the *licensing objectives. In this regard the Council will not **generally** **generally** take into account representations which are deemed to be irrelevant, ie :

- there are too many gambling premises in the locality
- **Planning permission has not been obtained for the premises**
- the location of the premises is likely to lead to traffic congestion
- the premises will cause crowds to congregate in one area causing noise and nuisance

Each representation will, however, be considered on its own individual merits.

Interested Parties

Interested parties can make representations about licence applications, or apply for a review of an existing licence.

An interested party is someone who :

- lives sufficiently close to the premises to be likely to be affected by the authorised activities, or
- has business interests that might be affected by the authorised activities, or
- represents persons in either of the two groups above

The Council is required by Regulations to state the principles it will apply in exercising its powers under the Act to determine whether a person is an Interested Party. Each case will be determined upon its merits. The Council will not apply a rigid rule to its decision making.

In determining whether someone lives sufficiently close to a particular premises so as to be affected the Council will take into account, among other things :

- the size of the premises
- the nature of the premises
- the distance of the premises from the person making the representation
- the nature of the complainant
- the potential impact of the premises

In determining whether a person has a business interest which could be affected the Council will consider, among other things :

- the size of the premises
- the catchment area of the premises, and
- whether the person making the representation has business interests in the catchment area that might be affected

If an existing gambling business makes a representation that it is going to be affected by another gambling business starting up in the area the Council would not consider this, in the absence of other evidence, as a relevant representation as it does not relate to the licensing objectives and instead relates to demand or competition.

The Council may, in certain circumstances, consider a representation to be either frivolous or vexatious. This will generally be a matter of fact given the circumstances of each individual case but, before coming to a decision the Council will normally consider :

- who is making the representation and whether there is a history of making representations that are not relevant,
- whether it raises a 'relevant' issue or not, or
- whether it raises issues specifically to do with the premises which are the subject of the application

Conditions of licence

The Council will not generally impose conditions that limit the use of premises for gambling unless it is deemed to be necessary as a result of the requirement to act in accordance with the Gambling Commission's guidance, any codes of practice issued by the Commission, this Statement of Principles or in a way that is reasonably consistent with the licensing objectives.

Any conditions imposed by the Council will be proportionate to the circumstances they are intended to address. In particular, the Council will ensure that any conditions are :

- relevant to the need to make the premises suitable as a gambling facility
- directly related to the premises and the type of licence applied for
- fairly and reasonably related to the scale and type of premises
- reasonable in all other respects

Examples of some conditions which are likely to be attached in certain circumstances include those relating to opening hours, age limits, or keeping children and young persons away from gaming machines.

The Council will not consider imposing conditions :

- which make it impossible to comply with an operating licence condition imposed by the Gambling Commission
- relating to gaming machine categories, numbers or method of operation
- which specify that membership of a club or other body is required and
- in relation to stakes, fees, winnings or prizes

Duplication with other statutory or regulatory regimes will be avoided as far as possible. Each case will be assessed on its own individual merits.

Conditions relating to the good conduct of gambling premises will primarily be set as mandatory or default conditions by the Secretary of State. The Council will only consider imposing conditions in this regard in the light of local circumstances, especially where there are specific risks or problems associated with a particular locality, a specific premises or class of premises.

Casinos

The Council has passed a 'no casino' resolution on the basis of all material considerations including the responses received during the consultation process and in order to promote the power of well being of the people it represents, to promote the health of the people it represents and to promote the prevention of crime and disorder within the Borough. The resolution comes into effect on the same day as the Statement of Principles.

Existing casino operators ~~will effectively~~ have 'grandfather' rights and **are** entitled to a casino premises licence **under the Act** issued by the Council.

The Gambling Commission ~~will be~~ **are** responsible for issuing ~~at least one code~~ **codes** of practice about access to casino premises by children and young persons, which would mean that no one under 18 would be able to enter casino premises and entrances to the casino or gambling area would be required to be properly supervised.

The Gambling Commission ~~will be issuing~~ **may issue** further guidance to local authorities generally regarding licence conditions in respect of casino premises.

Betting

Anyone wishing to operate a betting office will require a betting premises licence from the Council. Children and young persons will not be able to enter premises with a betting premises licence.

Betting premises will be able to provide a limited number of gaming machines and some betting machines.

The Council has ~~the power~~ **powers** under the Act to restrict the number of betting machines, their nature and the circumstances in which they are made available. It will not generally exercise this power unless there is clear evidence that such machines have been, or are likely to be used in a way, which adversely affects the promotion of the licensing objectives. In such cases the Council will consider, among other things, the size of the premises, the level of management and supervision especially where children, young persons and vulnerable people are concerned, and also the ability of staff to closely monitor the use of such machines.

In all cases, each application will be considered on its own individual merits.

Only one premises licence can be issued for any particular premises at any time unless the premises is a 'track'. A track is a site where races or other sporting events take place.

Track operators are not required to hold an 'operators licence' granted by the Gambling Commission. Therefore, premises licences for tracks, issued by the Council ~~are likely to~~ ~~may~~ contain requirements for premises licence holders about their responsibilities in relation to the proper conduct of betting. Indeed, track operators ~~will~~ have an important role to play, for example in ensuring that betting areas are properly administered and supervised.

~~Although there will, primarily be a betting premises licence for the track there may be a number of subsidiary licences authorising other gambling activities to take place.~~ Unlike betting offices, a betting premises licence in respect of a track does not give an automatic entitlement to use gaming machines.

When considering whether to exercise its power to restrict the number of betting machines at a track the Council will consider the circumstances of each individual application and, among other things will consider the potential space for the number of machines requested, the ability of track staff to supervise the machines, especially if they are scattered around the site, and the ability of the track operator to prevent children and young persons and vulnerable people betting on the machines.

Bingo

The holder of a bingo operating licence will be able to provide any type of bingo game including cash and prize bingo.

Commercial bingo halls will require a bingo premises licence from the Council.

~~In each of the above cases it~~ It is important that where children are allowed to enter premises licensed for bingo, ~~in whatever form,~~ they are not allowed to participate in any bingo game. When considering applications of this type the Council will therefore take into account, among other things, the location of the games or machines, access to those areas, general supervision of the premises and the display of appropriate notices.

A limited number of gaming machines may also be made available at bingo licensed premises.

Bingo is ~~a class of~~ ~~classed as~~ equal chance gaming and will be permitted in alcohol licensed premises and in clubs provided it remains below a certain threshold, otherwise it will be subject to a bingo operating licence which will have to be obtained from the Gambling Commission.

~~Adult Gaming Centres and Family Entertainment Centres may provide equal chance gaming without the need for a prize gaming permit.~~

Gaming

A gaming machine can cover all types of gambling activity ~~which can take place on a machine,~~ including betting on 'virtual' events.

The Act itself prescribes the number and category of gaming machines that are permitted in each type of gambling premises.

Subject to the provisions of the Act, gaming machines can be made available in a wide variety of premises, including :

- casinos
- bingo premises
- betting premises, (including tracks)
- adult gaming centres
- family entertainment centres
- clubs
- pubs and other alcohol licensed premises
- travelling fairs

A machine is not a gaming machine if the winning of a prize is determined purely by the player's skill. However, any element of 'chance' imparted by the action of the machine would cause it to be a gaming machine.

The Council will, where appropriate, seek to encourage permit and premises licence holders to adopt **and adhere to** any codes of practice which may be introduced by the amusement **trade** industry from time to time.

The Council will treat every application for a permit on its own merits, regardless of the number of machines applied for. Applicants for permits in respect of alcohol licensed premises may, where the number of machines applied for is 3 or more, be asked to provide additional information, **for example in the form of a plan**, in order to satisfy the Council that the premises are suitable for the purpose and will not result in the 'primary' use of the premises being changed to one of gambling.

For general information about the issue of permits to relevant premises, including alcohol licensed premises, please direct your enquiries to the Licensing Team by telephone to (0121) 569 6744 or by e mail to : Licensing_Team@sandwell.gov.uk

Lotteries

All lotteries are unlawful unless they are run in accordance with an operating licence issued by the Gambling Commission or it is an 'exempt' lottery as defined by the Act.

One of those exemptions is in respect of what are termed "small societies lotteries" and the Council is responsible for registering these 'small' lotteries.

A society will be allowed to register with the Council if it is a 'non-commercial' lottery, in other words, it is established and conducted :

- for charitable purposes ;
- for the purpose of enabling participation in, or of supporting, sport, athletic or a cultural activity ; or
- for any other non-commercial purpose other than for private gain.

The Council maintains a register of small societies lotteries.

Exchange of Information

The Council is required by Regulations to state the principles it will apply in exercising its functions under the Act with respect to the exchange of information

between it and the Gambling Commission, and the functions under the Act with respect to the exchange of information between it and the other persons listed in Schedule 6 to the Act.

The principle that the Council applies is that it will act in accordance with the provisions of the Act in its exchange of information, which includes the provision that the Data Protection Act will not be contravened. The Council will share any information it receives, through the application process with the Gambling Commission. In doing so the Council will have regard to the Act itself, any guidance issued by the Commission from time to time and any Regulations issued by the Secretary of State.

Details of applications and representations which are referred to the Licensing Committee or a Licensing Panel may be published in reports that are made publicly available in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The personal details of those making representations may be disclosed to applicants and other parties to a hearing and will normally only be withheld on the grounds of personal safety where the Council is specifically requested to do so.

Enforcement Protocols

The Council is required by Regulations under the Act to state the principles to be applied by it in exercising the functions under Part 15 of the Act with respect to the inspection of premises; and the powers under Section 346 of the Act to institute criminal proceedings in respect of the offences specified.

The Council will have regard to the principles of better regulation and any **Regulatory Regulators'** Compliance Code in force at the time. In addition, the Council will act in accordance with the relevant legislation, be guided by the Commission's Guidance and will endeavour at all times to be:

- proportionate – the Council will only intervene when necessary: any remedies will be appropriate to the risk posed, and costs identified and minimised
- accountable – decisions will be justified and subject to public scrutiny
- consistent – any rules and standards will be joined up and implemented fairly
- transparent - the Council will be open and any licence conditions will be kept simple and user friendly and
- targeted – regulation will be focused on the problem with the aim of minimising side effects

Duplication with other regulatory regimes will be avoided as far as possible.

The main enforcement and compliance role for the Council ~~will be~~ **is** to ensure compliance with premises licences and other permissions, which it may authorise from time to time.

In general, the Gambling Commission will take the lead role on the investigation and, where appropriate, the prosecution of illegal gambling.

The Council will **continue to** work with the Commission, the police and other enforcing authorities to provide for the targeting of agreed problem or high-risk premises. A lighter touch will be applied to those premises which are shown to be well managed and maintained. Inspections will generally be undertaken on a reactive basis. The overall aim is to permit the use of premises for gambling. With that in mind it is intended that action will generally be taken against 'problem' premises through the review process.

The licensing process

The Council's licensing functions under the Act will be carried out by the Licensing Committee, supported by a number of **Licensing Panels** and by officers acting under the delegated authority of the committee.

Where there are no areas of contention it is considered that many of the functions will be largely administrative. In the interests of efficiency and effectiveness these will, for the most part, be carried out by officers.

Where there are relevant representations in respect of an application the matter will be determined by the Licensing Committee or one of its sub-committees, as will any application for the review of a licence.

This Statement is not intended to override the right of any person to make an application under the Act, and to have that application considered on its merits. Equally, this Statement of Principles is not intended to undermine the right of any person to make representations about an application or to seek a review of a licence where provision has been made for them to do so.

In preparing this Statement, the Council has had regard to any Guidance issued by The Gambling Commission and has given appropriate weight to any views received as part of the consultation process.

This Statement ~~will be kept under review. must be published at least every 3 years. The Statement must also be reviewed from 'time to time' and any amended parts re-consulted upon. The Statement must be then re-published.~~

LIST OF CONSULTEES

In preparing this policy, the following key organisations and agencies were consulted in accordance with Section 349(3) of the Act :-

A West Midlands Police

Chief Constable, West Midlands Police Headquarters, Lloyd House, Birmingham

South Sandwell Police K2 OCU

North Sandwell Police K1 OCU

B Other Key Agencies / Responsible Authorities

West Midlands Fire Service

Planning and Development Services

Local Safeguarding Children Board [formerly Child Protection Committee]

Sandwell Primary Care Trust [Director of Public Health]

Environmental Health and Trading Standards Division:-

Air Pollution/Noise Control

Trading Standards

Health and Safety

HM Revenue and Customs

C Persons / Bodies representative of the interests of persons carrying on gambling businesses in Sandwell

Chamber of Commerce

Licensing Solicitors

British Beer & Pub Association

Association of British Bookmakers

General Secretary Casino Operators' Association of the UK

BACTA

RIGT (Responsibility in Gambling Trust)

Gamcare

The Gambling Commission

The Bingo Association

The British Casino Association

Business in Sport & Leisure

BBPA Midland Counties

Breweries

Gaming Machine Companies

Operators of gambling premises in Sandwell

Amusement Arcades

Bingo Halls
Casinos
Betting Offices and/or their Registered Offices

D Persons representative of the interests of the local community, residents and others likely to be affected by the exercise of the Council's functions

All Members of the Council [Councillors]
Members of Parliament for the Sandwell area
MEPs for the Sandwell area