

Outcome of the Draft Statement of Gambling Principles 2025 to 2028 Consultation

Background

We, along with all other licensing authorities, are required to prepare, adopt and publish a "Statement of Gambling Principles" (SoGP) setting the approach to applications under the [Gambling Act 2005](#) (hereafter known as The Act) and the information applicants are expected to provide.

The SoGP seeks to promote the guidance set out by the Gambling Commission and the three licensing objectives of:

- 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 policy guides the administration of licensing under The Act and helps to ensure that an appropriate balance is drawn between the interests of those wishing to provide and take part in legal gambling, and those who might be adversely affected by such activities.

Under the Act, we are required to review our policy at least every three years or when we believe the policy requires updating. The current policy period ends on Friday, 31 January 2025.

The [current SoGP](#) has not been the subject of any legal challenge or complaint. It is therefore considered that the current Statement of Gambling Principles remains fit for purpose and only minor amendments are proposed. However, s.349 (3) Gambling Act 2005 requires a licensing authority to consult when "preparing a statement or revision".

Changes Proposed to the Existing Policy

The current SOGP was comprehensively reviewed in 2022 to reflect the updated Guidance published by the Gambling Commission. No substantive changes have been made, only the figure for the district's population data has been amended and definitions around gaming machine classifications have been added to the glossary.



Why We Wanted Your Views

We'd like your views on our draft policy. It's by hearing from local people that we can make the changes needed to ensure our policy is fit for purpose and reflective of the needs in our local area

Who and How we Consulted

- The consultation was posted on the West Berkshire Council's Consultation Hub on the 18 July 2024 and on the Public Protection Partnership's website on the 18 July 2024.
- A notification was also sent out to the 2483 people on the Community Panel on the 18 July 2024
- A Facebook message was posted on the 18 July 2024 and a reminder that the consultation was closing on the 10 September 2024.
- A press release was issued on the 18 July 2024
- The consultation ran from the 18 July to 12 September 2024.
- A notice was placed on the noticeboards at Theale Library and Market Street Reception
- We wrote to the individuals and organisations listed in Appendix A to the report.

What you Told Us

The Council received six responses to the consultation which is a slight increase on the two responses received in relation to the consultation on the previous policy. The comments are set out below.

RESPONSE
<p><i>Thames valley Police</i> I have reviewed in particular detail the area on crime and disorder – no notes/observations from me, generally happy to support.</p>
<p><i>Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership</i> I've had a look back through the report, I have no comments to make. I'll add this to one of our local area meetings in West Berkshire in early September which involves children social services.</p> <p>Today, 10 September, we had our quarterly scrutiny multi agency meeting, involving Childrens social care representatives in West Berkshire, Probation services, Thames Valley Police, Health (Integrated Care Board, Royal Berkshire Hospital and Berkshire Health Foundation Trust).</p>

The conclusion was that none of the agencies disagreed or felt the need to amend the document in question.

Officer

In relation to the Exempt Lottery in the Glossary suggest that we just add in brackets (requires to be registered with the local authority as per page 33) to avoid any ambiguity.

Licence Holder

Thank you for including me in this consultation. I have read the attached document and agree with your proposed amendments.

Councillor

Perhaps we could add wording to the penultimate paragraph of 2.4 (emphasis in bold) to the effect of *“The Licensing Authority will consider, in relation to particular premises, whether any special considerations apply in relation to the protection of vulnerable persons, **noting that people who struggle with gambling addiction may not necessarily or automatically be defined as vulnerable**”*.

Town/Parish Council

In regard to the below correspondence and the Gambling Act 2005- Statement of Principles Consultation, this was discussed at last night's TTC Planning and Highways Committee and a couple of responses were raised by our committee members, which are outlined below.

The responses raised are in relation to 2.4 Protecting Children and Other Vulnerable People From Gambling and especially the last 3 paragraphs.

The consensus was that the word 'Vulnerable Persons' seems a little ambiguous and that assumptions should not be made to describe a person who is struggling with addiction with possibly more safeguarding measures to be considered?

What are the Authority's objectives to permit the use of premises for gambling?

"Best practice' is for staff working at licensed premises to undergo training on identifying and assisting vulnerable persons" - Is this not something that staff working in the gambling sector, should be undergoing mandatory training anyway? And not described as 'best practice'?

What We Are Proposing To Do

Your feedback will be used to inform the final policy when it is submitted for consideration by elected members at the Licensing Committee on Monday, 4 November 2024. The Licensing Committee will then recommend that Full Council adopt the policy, with or without revisions, at their meeting on Thursday, 28 November 2024.

The revised policy must be published before Friday, 31 January 2025 and will be available on our Strategies, Policies and Plans webpage: [Strategies, policies and plans - West Berkshire Council](#) and will also be published on the PPP's webpage: [Gambling premises licences](#)

[- PPP \(publicprotectionpartnership.org.uk\)](#)