

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the

**Licensing Committee**

Held in the Committee Room I, Council Offices, Woodgreen, Witney, Oxfordshire OX28

INB at 10.00 am on **Tuesday, 19 November 2024**

PRESENT

Councillors: , David Jackson (Vice-Chair), Andrew Lyon, David Melvin and Tim Sumner

Officers: Mandy Fathers (Business Manager - Environmental, Welfare & Revenue Service), Andrea Thomas, (Environmental Resident Services Officer), Anne Learmonth (Democratic Services Officer), Maria Harper (Democratic Services Assistant).

Other Councillors in attendance: None

**15 Apologies for Absence and Temporary Appointments**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mark Walker, Jane Doughty, Edward James, Dan Levy and Paul Marsh.

**16 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest made by members of the Committee.

**17 Minutes of Previous Meeting**

Councillor Tim Sumner proposed that the minutes of the previous Committee meeting, held on 24 September 2024, be signed by the Chair as a true and accurate record. This was seconded by Councillor Andrew Lyon, was put to the vote, and was agreed by the Committee.

The Committee **Resolved** to:

- I. Agree the minutes of the previous meeting, held on 24 September 2024, as a true and accurate record.

**18 Participation of the Public**

There was no public participation at the meeting.

**19 Gambling Act 2005 Statement of Principles (Policy) Review 2024**

Mandy Fathers, Business Manager for Environment, Welfare and Revenue Services, introduced the report which provided details of the proposed revisions to the Council's Statement of Principles (Gambling Act 2005), based on legislative requirements, statutory guidance and any amendments following public consultation.

Section 349 of the Gambling act 2005 (the "Act) requires licensing authorities before each successive period of three years to:

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- a) Prepare a statement of the principles that they propose to apply in exercising their functions under this Act during that period, and
- b) Publish the statement.

The next successive period would start on 31 January 2025. However the statement needed to be adopted by 31 December 2024 as it must be published at least 4 weeks before the date on which it would come into effect on the authority's website and also be available for inspection by the public.

Before the Policy could be determined, the Authority was required to consult with the police, persons who represented the interests of the gambling businesses and those who represented the interests of persons who were likely to be affected by the gambling businesses.

The draft statement of principles had been subjected to a 6-week consultation period which ended on Friday 8 November 2024. All consultees were written to and were invited to make written comments. The consultation was advertised on the Council's website. There were no comments made during the consultation period by any of the consultees.

Under section 166 of the Act the Licensing Authority is empowered, to make a 'no casino' resolution if it wished to do so. This would mean at this time the Council did not wish to have a casino in its area. The decision had to be reviewed every 3 years. Full Council had resolved not to issue licences to casinos in 2006, and this had been reviewed at meetings in 2009, 2012, 2015, 2018 and 2021.

The benefit of making a 'no casino' resolution if it wished to do so would mean that any applications for a casino in West Oxfordshire District area would be determined by Full Council. If a 'no casino' resolution was not renewed, then if the operator had the necessary planning permission, it would be likely that the application for a casino would automatically be granted.

The Business Manager for Environment, Welfare and Revenue Services recommended the report be submitted to Full Council.

Members asked for clarification on the consultees. The Business Manager for Environment, Welfare and Revenue Services confirmed that all consultees had had the opportunity to comment, however no comments were submitted.

Councillor Andrew Lyon proposed that the Committee agree the recommendations as set out in the report. This was seconded by Councillor David Melvin, was put to the vote and was unanimously agreed by the Committee.

The Committee **Resolved** to:

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1. Approve the Statement of Principles; and
2. Agree that the Council continues to adopt a “no-casino resolution” for inclusion in the published Gambling Act 2005 Licensing Policy Statement.

The Meeting closed at 10.06 am

CHAIR