

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Licensing Committee **DATE:** 30th September 2015

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WARD(S): All

PART I

FOR DECISION

GAMBLING ACT 2005: REVIEW OF ‘NO CASINO’ POLICY.

1. Purpose of Report

To inform the Committee of the outcome of the public consultation on the Council’s ‘No Casino’ policy to assist the Committee in deciding whether to recommend to Full Council to pass a new resolution for a ‘No Casino’ policy.

2. Recommendation/Proposed Action

The Committee considers the results of the public consultation to resolve as to whether or not to pass a new resolution for ‘No Casino’ policy.

3. The Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy, the JSNA and the Five Year Plan

As the report outlines a 3 yearly review and consultation of the ‘No Casino Policy’ has been conducted and consulted upon. As the review and consultation have been conducted, it is a matter for the Licensing Committee to decide if a new resolution should be passed and to make recommendations to Full Council.

3a. Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy Priorities –

The Licensing Authority is responsible for administering all functions under the 2005 Act. If a resolution is made to renew the ‘No casino’ policy, this would contribute to the following wellbeing priorities:

Priorities:

- Health (gambling addiction)
- Safer Communities

Cross-Cutting themes:

The report highlights the need to review the ‘No Casino Policy’.

Therefore the review will contribute to the cross cutting theme of **Improving the image of the town.**

3b. Five Year Plan Outcomes

The report outlines the requirement to conduct the review of the current policy under the 2005 Act. In doing so, this contributes toward the Five Year Plan with the specific outcome of:

- All people who live and work in Slough feel safe.

4. Other Implications

(a) Financial

There are no financial implications of the proposed action.

(b) Risk Management

Recommendation	Risk/Threat/Opportunity	Mitigation(s)
For the report to be noted	It is a matter for the Council as a whole as to whether the 'No casino' policy should be renewed taking into account the responses to the public consultation.	The review and consultation are a 3 yearly statutory requirement.

(c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

There are no direct Human Rights Act or other implications.

(d) Equalities Impact Assessment

The Equality Impact Assessment has been reviewed following the formal Consultations and the conclusions are that there are no adverse or negative impacts on equality for one particular group or any other.

5. Supporting Information

- 5.1 A major reform of gambling laws was introduced by way of the Gambling Act 2005. Amongst a range of other changes, The Act introduced 3 new types of casino that could operate. The number of each type of casino was set by central government. The Act allowed the establishment of more casinos than were allowed under the previous legislation (Gaming Act 1968), with the introduction of eight large and eight small casino's in 'permitted areas'. There was also a proposal for a super casino, however the Government subsequently decided not to proceed with this.
- 5.2 Section 166 of the Gambling Act 2005 provides that a licensing authority may resolve not to issue a Casino Premises Licence. The decision must be taken by the authority as a whole and cannot be delegated to the Licensing Committee. In passing such a resolution, the authority may take into account any principles or matters, and not just the licensing objectives. Where a resolution is passed, it must be published by the authority in its three year Statement of Policy and Principles.

- 5.3 The resolution must apply to casino premises generally. The authority cannot limit its effect to geographical areas or categories of casinos. The resolution must specify the date it comes into effect. The authority may revoke the resolution by passing a counter-resolution. The resolution will however lapse after 3 years, when if it wished to do so, the authority would be required to pass another resolution to keep the policy in place.
- 5.4 A resolution, if passed, would mean that no application for a Casino Premises Licence would be considered. Any application received would be returned with a notification that a “No-Casino” resolution was in place.
- 5.5 The Council adopted a “No Casino” policy in July 2006. The policy has to be reviewed after 3 years. The policy was fully reviewed in 2012 and has now been reviewed further.
- 5.6 A public consultation was conducted between 3rd August and 4th September 2015 to find out whether the people of Slough want a further resolution to be passed for a ‘No Casino’ policy. The consultation included writing to residents associations, all Elected Members of the Council, a press release and a full public survey on the Council’s website.
- 5.7 A total of 10 responses were received to the consultation, which are detailed at **Appendix A**, with the consensus being that a further ‘No Casino’ resolution should be passed.
- 5.8 In considering whether to recommend a further resolution of a ‘No Casino’ policy to Full Council, the Committee may wish to consider the following.
- 5.9 In 2012/2013 Parliament considered proposals put forward by ‘South East England Council’s Partnership’, the National Casino Industry Forum and others to increase the portability of existing casino licenses granted under grandfather rights as an existing licence granted prior to the implementation of the Gambling Act 2005. It has now been confirmed that the proposals were considered by Parliament and a decision was made that there would be no relaxation in the portability of those existing licenses or any new licenses.
- 5.10 As previously mentioned, with the introduction of the 2005 Act, the Government introduced eight new large casinos and eight new small casinos. As a result 16 local authorities applied to be selected to be able to grant the new licenses. Not all licenses have been applied for or granted and it has been confirmed that the Government will not be reviewing the current position.

6. **Conclusion**

The Committee is therefore asked to consider the results of the public consultation, and to recommend to Full Council as to whether or not a further ‘No Casino’ resolution should be made.

7. **Appendices**

Appendix A – Responses to the consultation

8. Background Papers

The current Gambling Act 2005 Slough Statement of Principles (2012).

'No Casino Policy' (2012)

Gambling Commission Guidance to Local Authorities (September 2012)

APPENDIX A

Response / Comment	
I am content with the current policy.	SBC Elected member – Email Response
Please keep the No casino policy continue as before.	Local Resident – Email response
<p>I understand that you have to review the casino policy every three years. But I hope it won't take long to say no, no, no to a casino.</p> <p>Clearly, as you set out on your website, there is a distinct danger to vulnerable people and families and there are concerns that it will encourage criminal activity. These fears are not to be underestimated.</p> <p>Also, religious beliefs must be considered in this town of many faiths. What kind of madness is it that makes anyone, except those with vested interests, think it might be a good idea to have a casino? If such an establishment adds to the town's income, it is income we don't want.</p> <p>It is tainted money. Casinos are meretricious and tawdry. They are operated by shady characters whose raison d'etre is pure greed. These people don't give any thought to the harm they will cause. They may offer all manner of blandishments and promise any safeguards you seek, while sniggering behind their hands. Those safeguards will quickly evaporate a few months down the line.</p> <p>On top of that, Slough has enough trouble with its reputation without having people laugh at us because our council has been stupid enough to be gulled into accepting a casino. Surely Slough's councillors aren't that daft.</p> <p>No, we don't want a casino. Full stop.</p>	Local Resident – Email response
I am in favour of as existing policy and continuation of No Casino policy.	SBC Elected member – Email response
I think personally this should be bottom of the councils list and more focus should be placed on getting decent	Local Resident – Response on Streetlife

shops back on to the high street it's a pound land, carpet selling, 99p, store jamboree at the moment and giving the street a good power wash would go a miss either	
I don't think casinos should be allowed. Will read and comment	Local Resident – Response on Streetlife
I do agree with Kris S. The council need to start prioritising what is important in Slough. For example cleaning and improving our high street, finishing the bus station and getting on top of fly tipping. In my opinion the creation of a casino will do nothing to tackle these issues, only add fuel to the fire of gambling, crime and unemployment.	Local Resident – Response on Streetlife
Personally i dont agree with gambling as that causes lots of problems in society. However to regenerate Slough and bring more business maybe if a 5* hotel was granted a licence for a casino? Where business/affluent people stay and can spend their disposable income this may attract businesses to the area and maybe more exclusive shops and better restaurants may then come to slough town?	Local Resident – Response on Streetlife
Allowing licences for casinos would not limit it to a 5* hotel and it would be terrible for Slough. We need to work to make Slough a safer cleaner and desirable place to live allowing casinos will do the opposite	Local Resident – Response on Streetlife
Agree with Slough Council that the status quo should be maintained for the reasons outlined. I don't think a casino would make a significant difference to much-needed employment in this area. (Check the number of croupiers who are registered at the Jobcentre	Local Resident – Response on Streetlife
I doubt anyone would want to open a casino in Slough. But just in case someone with a little spare cash can see a potential investment opportunity I would urge the council not to reverse its policy. Casinos enrich casino owners only - everyone else gets fleeced, including their employees. Anyone who can make money at a casino soon finds himself banned. Any benefit to the town would be hard to justify on moral grounds when gambling takes such a toll on those who can least afford it - and	Local Resident – Response on Streetlife

especially their families. We accept the ban on smoking in public places, despite the impact that has had on pubs, because of the greater good to the nation's health. So it would be hypocritical to tolerate gambling because of some perceived financial gain for Slough. Plus the town has a bad enough name as it is. I can't see that a casino is going to enhance its reputation. Most important of all, I never win anything.