

SUMMARY OF DECISIONS

Meeting:	General Purposes Committee	
Date:	Thursday, 13 January 2022	
Place:	Council Chamber, Daneshill House, Danestrete	
Members Present:	Councillors:	Maureen McKay (Chair), Doug Bainbridge, Rob Broom, Adrian Brown, Teresa Callaghan, Graham Lawrence CC, Lin Martin-Haugh, Margaret Notley, Claire Parris, Loraine Rossati and Graham Snell.

1	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	
	<p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Jody Hanafin, Liz Harrington and Andy McGuinness.</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p>	
2	MINUTES - 27 FEBRUARY 2020	
	<p>It was RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 27 February 2020 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.</p>	
3	GAMBLING ACT 2005 - REVIEW OF STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES	C. Walker-Wells x2247
	<p>The Committee considered a report in respect of the proposed draft Gambling Act 2005 Statement of Principles 2022 - 2025. The existing Statement had been adopted by the Council in July 2019 and was therefore due for a review.</p> <p>Members' comments and questions centred on the proposed new Local Area Profile (LAP), and the following points were raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> it was confirmed that two of the three consultation responses were received from gambling industry operators, and that with the exception of the reply from POhWER (a charitable membership organisation that provided information, advice, support and advocacy to people who experienced disability, vulnerability, distress and social exclusion), no responses had been 	

received from other stakeholders, such as national or local charities;

- the LAP would be an evolving document, but would require strengthening once further work was undertaken on evidence gathering from various sources, including the Gambling Commission, Citizens Advice Bureau, the Police and Housing providers. HCC Public Health was keen to move forward with a collaborative approach to tackling gambling issues, which would include the establishment of a robust evidence base. It was hoped that this would also cover child protection and any data relating to “hidden” gambling issues;
- the evidence base should also include any relevant data to be gleaned from local gambling operators, as well as from the online gambling industry;
- the Chair considered that it may require primary legislation to address the potential harmful risks associated with gambling, particularly amongst vulnerable groups;
- it was clarified that “ensuring that gambling was conducted in a fair and open way” was essentially to ensure that operators abided by legal stipulations and in accordance with the Gambling Commission’s Code of Practice;
- it was confirmed that the Licensing Team received very few complaints in respect of the gambling organisations/premises operating in the Borough. There would be routine inspections of premises by the Licensing Team and each would be risk-rated, meaning that there would be a more regular inspection regime for those premises rated towards the higher levels of the risk range. In terms of enforcement, this included a worst case scenario of licence revocation, but could also involve a requirement for improvements and restrictions of certain activity;
- in terms of the process for logging complaints, Members were advised that complaints could be registered through the Council’s website, and that gambling operators were required to display their licence at their premises (which included the contact details for the SBC Licensing Team);
- although the HCC Public Health Team was encouraging a collaborative approach towards tackling gambling issues, the Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire Local Authorities Licensing Managers met every 6-8 weeks to share feedback and good practice on licensing and gambling matters; and

- it was confirmed that the representation received from POhWER contained a series of queries and questions which would be responded to separately and did not affect the Statement of Principles. However, Members felt that consideration should be given to inviting a representative(s) from a charitable organisation to a future meeting of the Committee in order to hear their views on gambling issues.

The Committee supported the Licensing Officer’s proposed amendments to the Statement of Principles in response to issues raised during the consultation process, as set out in Paragraphs 3.15 to 3.24 of the report.

It was **RESOLVED:**

1. That the proposed Stevenage Borough Council Gambling Act Statement of Principles 2022 – 2025, as attached at Appendix A to the report, and with the inclusion of the amendments proposed by the Licensing Officer in response to issues raised during the consultation process set out in Paragraphs 3.15 to 3.24 of the report, be agreed.
2. That the amended draft Statement of Principles be recommended to the Executive, for onward recommendation to Council.

4	URGENT PART I BUSINESS	
	None.	
5	EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC	
	Not required.	

6	URGENT PART II BUSINESS	
	None.	