

29 November 2016

CITY OF
WOLVERHAMPTON
COUNCIL

Gambling Act 2005
Call for evidence high stake gaming machines

Within Wolverhampton there are 42 Betting premises operating across the City. Wolverhampton is a City that has a high unemployment rate from the national average.

Anti-social behaviour is also reported locally as a cause for concern within the vicinity of several betting premises, particularly associated with the consumption of alcohol. Whilst Wolverhampton has adopted a designated public place order, there is still a concern that these types of premises are attracting groups to congregate resulting in anti-social behaviour.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that many customers within a betting premise are attracted to the FOBT's. Our understanding is that significant sums of money are gambled on these machines. Operators of betting premises have previously suggested that the FOBT's are the main source of income at such shops. We have been advised anecdotally that Wolverhampton is a profitable area for betting premises particularly in some of our poorest districts. This in itself suggests that the most vulnerable are being targeted by operators. It is also worth noting that within the districts of higher income and lower unemployment rates there are no betting shops located.

Wolverhampton would welcome the introduction of any legislative change in order to reduce the most vulnerable people being targeted and, without any change, the trend of the vulnerable being targeted will only increase.

Over the last 9 years, since the implementation of the Gambling Act 2005 the number of betting premises has increased by 27%. It is clear that operators have successfully lobbied the government for changes with no regard for the problems that this has raised within the local areas. Local Authorities now need the tools to be able to make improvements to their local areas to protect residence from any disruption caused by FOBT's.

Within a district of Wolverhampton there is a betting premises located, since April 2015 there have been 6 offences linked to this premises, 3 of those relating to violence incidents.

If you wish to discuss further please contact Jo Till, Section Leader, Licensing, 01902 550189, joanne.till@wolverhampton.gov.uk

Yours Sincerely

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