

GATESHEAD METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL
COMMUNITIES AND PLACE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
MEETING

Monday, 6 March 2017

PRESENT: Councillor P Dillon (Chair)

Councillor(s): T Graham, B Clelland, D Davidson, S Dickie,
K Dodds, J Graham, M Hood, K McCartney, C McHugh,
J Simpson, J Turnbull and A Wheeler

APOLOGIES: Councillor(s): L Caffrey, P Craig, D Duggan, H Haran and
J McClurey

CPL22 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 30 January 2017 were approved as a correct record.

CPL23 OSC REVIEW - THE IMPACT OF GAMBLING ON THE BOROUGH, INTERIM REPORT

The Committee received the interim report which sets out the initial findings of the Communities and Place OSC in relation to a review of the impact of Gambling on the Borough.

As a result of the evidence gathering sessions the following issues were identified:

The number and distribution of licensed gambling premises in Gateshead

There are a relatively small number of premises licensed for gambling in Gateshead. There are no casinos, 3 bingo premises, 42 betting premises, 11 adult gaming centres and 1 family entertainment centre. The number of premises has remained largely stable since the Gambling Act 2005 came into force. They are however a prominent feature of the main shopping areas of the borough which is a common theme across the country.

Other gambling in the borough

Certain numbers and categories of gaming machines are permitted in premises licensed for the sale of alcohol. There are also 82 registered small society lotteries in Gateshead.

It was recognised by the Committee that a huge amount of gambling goes on in the borough which is outside of the control of the Council as licensing authority. This includes the National Lottery, scratch cards and online gambling. The potential

amount of money that goes out of the borough through this route is a matter of concern. The amount of promotion and advertising of gambling on television is also a matter of concern.

The problem with Fixed Odds Betting Terminals (FOBTs)

The review highlighted the increase in the prevalence of FOBTs and identified that there are potentially 168 of these in Gateshead's 42 licensed betting premises. It also highlighted the concerns from many different bodies around these machines – that it is possible to lose large amounts of money playing on them and the associations between these machines and problem gambling and gambling addiction.

The review examined the national debate around the limitations of the evidence available to establish casual links between FOBTs and problem gambling and addiction to gambling and highlighted the reluctance of Government to curtail the availability of these machines in the absence of clear correlations and associations.

The review also highlighted the wide range of initiatives, schemes, research and inquiries which are currently being carried out to further understand the concerns raised.

The lack of evidence about the scale of harm caused by problem gambling in Gateshead

The review examined the available data sources about problem and at-risk gambling and their relation to the borough of Gateshead. It also highlighted to members the known risk factors associated with problem and at-risk gambling and the kinds of harm they are more likely than other people to experience.

Members were advised however that while a wide range of local agencies, services and bodies were approached to provide evidence on the extent of gambling related harms in Gateshead there was simply no available. It is apparent that there does not currently exist a mechanism to record and measure problems caused by gambling in our local community, and none were able to provide local statistics about specific problems, not the number of individuals or families affected by them.

The role of the Gambling Commission and the relevance of local area profiles

Members heard a presentation from Rob Burkitt, the lead for Shared Regulation and Better Regulation at the Gambling Commission. Rob set out the role of the Gambling Commission and an overview of its priorities for 2016/17.

In particular Rob drew members attention to the expectation of the Commission that gambling operators have an understanding of the locality in which their premises are situated and any impact their premises may have on persons in the area who may be more vulnerable to gambling related harm and should carry out local risk assessments to ensure that they have a full understanding and awareness of their local surroundings.

Members were advised that gambling operators have been contacted by the Commission regarding the need to accelerate the pace at which they are putting customers at the heart of business decisions. It was also highlighted that the harmful effects of gambling will be picked up as part of Public Health campaigns in the future as it is recognised that this is a feature of a wider issue.

Members recognised the importance of the working relationship between the Commission and the Council and were keen for it to continue.

Recent research into the way local authorities can protect vulnerable people from gambling related harm by improving the understanding of local area risk

Members were informed about some work commissioned in 2015 by Westminster and Manchester Council to explore what area-based vulnerability to gambling related harm might look like.

The study firstly identified the groups in society that are potentially most vulnerable to harm from gambling and then brought this information together to create local risk indices and visually display them, showing areas with greater concentrations of people who are more likely to be vulnerable to harm.

Members were informed about the results of the study for Manchester and Westminster and the range of different factors which contributed to the heightened risk in their areas.

The recommendations of the study were shared with Members.

The role of the charity Gamcare in providing information, advice, support and counselling for the prevention and treatment of problem gambling.

Members received a presentation from the learning and development Manager of Gamcare an independent national charity providing information, advice, support and free counselling for the prevention and treatment of problem gambling.

The following points summarise the key findings from the OSC's review of the impact of gambling in Gateshead:-

- The Council should use every opportunity to contribute to the national debate about the harms that can be caused by irresponsible and problem gambling.
- The Council should continue to develop its productive working relationship with the Gambling Commission.
- The Council should contribute to the continuing debate and proposed consultations on the harms associated with fixed odds betting terminals
- The Gambling Commission's introduction of Local Area Risk profiles represents a new opportunity for Gateshead Council to think more deeply about the protection of vulnerable people from gambling related harm. The Council should develop Local Area Risk Profiles for the borough.
- Gateshead Council as a licensing authority should examine the range of data available locally and evaluate how this can be used in Local Area Risk Profiles.

- Gateshead Council as a licensing authority should also begin to consider what data and evidence is missing and establish closer working links with other services within the Council and with partner agencies to develop a better knowledge base and a better range of data.

- RESOLVED -
- i) That the information be noted.
 - ii) That further update reports be provided to Committee on a regular basis.
 - iii) That a letter be sent from the Chair of the Committee to the Department of Communities and Local Government expressing concern about the lack of consideration given to the impact of gambling premises when determining planning applications.

CPL24 FLOOD & WATER MANAGEMENT ACT 2010 - ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

The Committee received the Annual Progress Report on the implementation of the duties and responsibilities of Gateshead Council as lead local flood authority.

The key implications for local authorities are:

- Preparing, maintain and publishing a local Flood Risk Management (FRM) strategy to link to the Environment Agency's (EA) national and local strategies;
- Preparing, maintaining and publishing a register of third party FRM infrastructure assets;
- Investigating reported flooding incidents and publishing a register of investigations;
- Statutory consultee to the Local Planning Authority (LPA) for sustainable drainage systems (SuDS);
- Consenting of ordinary watercourse works (diverting, culverting, restricting flow etc);
- Cooperation with and oversight of other FRM bodies

- RESOLVED
- i) That the statutory responsibilities of Gateshead Council for local FRM and the measures taken to comply with those duties are noted.
 - ii) To receive an annual progress report in March 2018.

CPL25 GATESHEAD LOCAL PLAN ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT 2015/16

The Committee received the Gateshead Local Plan Annual Monitoring Report 2015/16. Local Planning Authorities are required to publish information annually on the progress of Local Plan preparation, implementation of the existing policies in the adopted development plan, and performance in terms of housing provision. The Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) fulfils these requirements, and also provides a valuable mechanism for collating and presentation information on development activity, which can inform the preparation of the emerging policies of Gateshead's Local Plan.

Gateshead's 2015/16 AMR includes a number of land-use and socio-economic indicators to present an overview of development activity in the Borough over the reporting year. Gateshead Council adopted Planning for the Future Core Strategy and Urban Core Plan for Gateshead and Newcastle upon Tyne (CSUCP) on 26 March 2015. This AMR is therefore the first to monitor the implementation of policies contained in the CSUSP, and reflects the indicators contained within the monitoring framework within the CSUCP.

In addition to reporting on the progress of Local Plan preparation, the AMR is structured around the key topic areas of: Economic Prosperity, Homes, Transport and Accessibility, People and Place, and Minerals and Waste.

Key findings include:

- Around 10,600 sqm of employment floor space was completed in 2015/16. This is a significant increase compared to the quantity of completed floor space in 2014/15, and represents a level of development that more closely reflects the average rate of delivery over the past five years.
- There were 415 gross, and 251 net additional dwellings completed in the Borough.
- 82% of new-build residential completions were on previously developed land
- There were 98 affordable housing completions in the reporting year
- Around 16% of units in Gateshead's town and district centres were vacant in 2015/16. This is a slight increase compared to the previous year.
- The amount of municipal waste arising in Gateshead in 2015/16 increased by around 1,100 tonnes, or around 1% compared to the previous year.

RESOLVED – that the information be noted.

Chair.....