

East Herts Council Report

Council

Date of Meeting: 22 October 2025

Report by: Cllr Vicky Glover-Ward, Executive Member Planning and Growth

Report title: Consideration of the draft Statement of Licensing Principles under the Gambling Act: 2025-28

Ward(s) affected: All

Summary – The Gambling Act 2005 requires each local authority to adopt and publish a Statement of Licensing Principles under the Gambling Act (herein ‘the Statement’) and review it at least every three years. The purpose of the Statement is to set out the principles the council will apply when carrying out its licensing functions under the Gambling Act.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL:

(a) That, following the public consultation, the draft Statement of Licensing Principles under the Gambling Act, including any amendments be adopted.

1.0 Proposal

1.1 That the draft document is considered by Members of the Executive and a final version, with any amendments made by the Executive, recommended to Council for adoption.

2.0 Background

2.1 Regulation of non-remote gambling activities such as betting, prize gaming (including bingo and poker), provision of gaming machines and promotion of lotteries under the Gambling Act 2005 (herein ‘the Act’) is a matter for which the council has statutory responsibilities.

2.2 The Act requires licensing authorities (district councils or unitary authorities) to publish a written policy, setting out how they intend to exercise the licensing and enforcement powers conveyed to them, the principles that they will follow and their expectations of licensees. The Statement must be reviewed every three years, so as to ensure that it reflects the current legislation and is relevant to the issues arising in the authority's area. The council's last Statement was published three years ago, hence the need to review and republish it.

2.3 Currently, and historically, East Herts has low numbers of licences and authorisations issued under the Act and low numbers of complaints.

2.4 To give the context for East Herts, the following table sets out the current licences held in comparison with previous years.

Type of Licence	Issued in 2018	Issued in 2021	Issued in 2025
Adult Gaming Centre	0	0	0
Betting Shop	15	15	13
Bingo	0	0	0
Club Gaming Permit	0	0	2
Club Machine Permit	11	9	6
Gaming Machines (up to 2 machines)	113	119	124
Gaming Machines (3 or more machines)	15	11	11
Small Society Lotteries	75	47	75
Track Betting	0	0	0
Totals	229	201	231

2.5 A draft Statement was approved for consultation by the Executive on 8th July 2025. The necessary six-week consultation ran from 21st July 2025 to 31st August 2025.

3.0 Reason(s)

- 3.1 As the licensing authority, East Herts Council is required to have a Statement of Licensing Principles under the Gambling Act and review and republished this every three years.
- 3.2 The Statement is an important document which sets out the principles the council will apply when carrying out its licensing function.
- 3.3 Since the last Statement was adopted there have been no substantive changes to either the law or guidance in relation to the areas of gambling for which the council is responsible. As a result, no substantive changes were proposed to the draft Statement for consultation.
- 3.4 During the consultation period, two responses were received, both from members of the public. These are attached as **Appendix A**.
- 3.5 Neither response commented on policy but raised general points regarding matters beyond the control of this authority. Thus, the responses have not led to any proposed amendments to the Statement. They have, however, been included in this report to the Executive for completeness. The matters raised by the two respondents were:
- concerns about advertising by gambling premises near high schools
 - the need for all gambling to be banned
 - the adverse impact of gambling in that it can drive people to poverty.
- 3.6 The final comment from the second respondent states:
- So while I appreciate that banning gambling can only be undertaken by through national legislation, I would like to see EHDC doing as much as is legally possible to protect people from the harms caused by gambling.*
- 3.7 It is the purpose of the Statement to set out how the council will

do this, and the proposed Statement does as much as possible to support the licensing objectives within the existing regulatory framework.

- 3.8 Given the above, no changes are proposed to the draft Statement of Licensing Principles under the Gambling Act following the consultation. The proposed version is attached at **Appendix B**.

4.0 Options

- 4.1 The Executive may endorse the version of the Statement of Licensing Principles under the Gambling Act included at Appendix B for adoption by Council.
- 4.2 Alternatively, the Executive may make changes to the version of the Statement at Appendix B and recommend the amended version to Council for adoption.

5.0 Risks

- 5.1 Should East Herts Council not published a reviewed Statement, even one without any amendments to the existing version, there is a risk that the council could not successfully defend a challenge of its licensing and/or enforcement action on the grounds that the council has not observed the requirements of the Gambling Act 2005. Publishing a renewed Statement following consultation strengthens the council's ability to defend any challenge, however remote the prospect of such a challenge may be.

6.0 Implications/Consultations

Community Safety

The Statement of Licensing Principles under the Gambling Act promotes the licensing objectives and therefore promotes community safety.

Data Protection

None arising from this report.

Equalities

The proposed Statement of Gambling Principles remains unchanged from the previous version. The council is not aware of any socio-demographic changes in the district that would result in residents with protected characteristics now becoming disproportionately impacted by the contents of the Statement.

Environmental Sustainability

None arising from this report.

Financial

None arising from this report.

Health and Safety

None arising from this report.

Human Resources

None arising from this report.

Human Rights

None arising from this report.

Legal

It is a statutory requirement under the section 349 of the Gambling Act 2005 for licensing authorities, such as East Herts Council, to publish a Statement of Licensing Principles and keep it updated under the terms of the Act. This report will enable the council to fulfil this requirement.

Specific Wards

None arising from this report.

7.0 Background papers, appendices, and other relevant material

7.1 Appendix A – Consultation responses

7.2 Appendix B – Final proposed wording for the Statement of Licensing Principles under the Gambling Act: 2025-28

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