



Glasgow City Council

Wellbeing, Empowerment, Community and Citizen Engagement
City Policy Committee

Report by Chief Executive

Contact: Louise MacKenzie

TACKLING GAMBLING RELATED HARMS IN GLASGOW

Purpose of Report:

The report provides an overview of recent work carried out to progress the development of a Strategy to tackle gambling related harms in Glasgow. It also comments on the UK Governments proposed review of the Gambling Act 2005 and seeks members input to shape and finalise the Councils response.

Recommendations:

Members are asked to:

- (i) Note the update provided;
- (ii) Consider and comment on the UK Governments proposed review of the Gambling Act 2005; and
- (iii) Consider options for supporting the development of an initial consultation response and further input to the Review.

Ward No(s):

Citywide:

Local member(s) advised: Yes No consulted: Yes No

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 Gambling is increasingly recognised as a public health issue, where the impact on individuals, families and communities is exacerbated by existing health and financial inequalities.
- 1.2 In August 2019, a [development session](#) was held for members of this Committee and the General Purposes City Policy Committee supported by academic experts, the third sector and council officers. A series of actions were identified following this and subsequently noted by committee. In particular, the Committee agreed that the Council should host a Gambling Summit to examine further how gambling related harms impact on the lives of Glaswegians and learn from effective approaches elsewhere.
- 1.3 For some time the Council has been an active participant in city wide work to develop a local action plan to prevent and mitigate gambling related harms in Glasgow. The work is led by ScotPHN and the Council is represented by senior elected members as well as the Director of Community Empowerment and Equalities on the Advisory Group developing the action plan.
- 1.4 The Advisory Group is supported by an Operational Group, council officers from Chief Executives and the Health and Social Care partnership working with the lead Public Health specialist.

2 Tackling Gambling Related Harms - Progress

- 2.1 The meetings of the Advisory Group restarted late Spring 2020. Due to the pandemic and national lockdown, activity has not progressed as initially planned, however, some significant milestones have been achieved. These were:
 - In May 2020 a short electronic survey of local frontline services in the third and statutory services was carried out to understand what they were seeing in relation to gambling harms and how they could be better supported, This was accompanied by [a blog for the ALLIANCE](#) written by Bailie Christie. The response rate was low (n=15) possibly due to the limited capacity of front-line services responding to an issue that did not have a significant profile in the City pre-COVID-19.
 - In June 2020 a stakeholder mapping exercise was carried out to inform the development of a multi-agency communication plan. A review of relevant local and national strategy and policy in relation to the causes and consequences of gambling harm was undertaken.
 - In August 2020 a virtual engagement event with people with lived experience of gambling related harms was hosted by the

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ALLIANCE. Key themes began to emerge from this particularly around knowledge of and access to help, support and treatment for people experiencing harm from their own, or someone else's, gambling.

- In December 2020 Glasgow City HSCP hosted a roundtable discussion, chaired by Bailie Christie. This was an opportunity to hear directly from people with lived experience of the challenges they had faced accessing help, support and treatment and for front line services to consider their current approaches to identifying and supporting people experiencing harm from gambling; a supplemental survey of front-line services was carried out for those unable to attend. The session confirmed that few of the services from the wide range of stakeholders attending routinely screen people for gambling harms, knowledge of available services to support people experiencing harm from gambling was low; lack of a visible City-wide pathway to help, support and treatment and lack of awareness of gambling harms as an issue were identified as barriers.
- In December 2020, the Glasgow team - Glasgow City Council, the Glasgow Centre for Population Health and Scottish Public Health Observatory - hosted a national roundtable discussion with representation from across the devolved nations, the Gambling Commission and ABSG. The event recognised limited local data and a clear gap in national metrics to understand, measure and monitor gambling harms. It generated interest, capacity and agency to adopt a strategic approach to public health surveillance of gambling harms in Scotland. A scoping exercise began of local and national data intelligence on the scale and impact of gambling harms in association with local analysts.
- Opportunities are being sought on an ongoing basis to raise awareness of gambling harms, consider the causes and consequences and reflect on local solutions. For example, members of the Community Activist Panel participated in a full discussion around gambling harms which was built on at a meeting of the Poverty Leadership Panel on 02 February.
- On 11 February 2021 a virtual seminar hosted by Community Justice Glasgow provided an opportunity for stakeholders from the justice system to hear from an expert by experience, reflect on their experiences and consider the challenges and opportunities of preventing and reducing gambling harms in justice settings.
- On 26 February 2021 Glasgow's Strategic Suicide Prevention Partnership Group will host a virtual seminar at which Gambling with Lives, a charity founded by parents bereaved by gambling related suicide will input.

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2.1 In addition, planning is also underway for a virtual event/Summit to be held in late summer 2021. The focus of this will be to engage with local communities and stakeholders and raise wider awareness of gambling related harms. The engagement activity highlighted at 2.1 has helped to raise the profile and awareness of gambling as a public health issue and further engagement will continue in the lead up to the Summit.

2.2 A further workstrand relates to the support available to Glasgow City Council employees and their families who may experience gambling related harms. As a significant employer in the city, the Council can provide a lead on approaches to tackling and supporting employees impacted by gambling related harms. In November 2019, the [General Purposes City Policy Committee](#) agreed to establish a cross party members working group to review the current guidance in relation to gambling harms and support for Council employees and develop an action plan. Updated guidance has been drafted and the approach to consult on this is currently being considered.

3 Review of the Gambling Act 2005

3.1 On 8th December 2020, the UK Government published a policy paper setting out terms of reference for a [review of the Gambling Act 2005](#) and calling for evidence on whether the balance of regulation in the Act is correct. The call for evidence closes on 31st March 2021. The UK Government proposes to assess the evidence presented alongside other data with the aim of setting out conclusions and any proposals for reform in a white paper next year.

3.2 The call for evidence encourages respondents to answer only to those questions where they have particular experience, or evidence. There are 45 specific questions under the call for evidence grouped under 6 themes as follows:

- On line protections -players and products
- Advertising, sponsorship and branding
- The Gambling Commissions powers and resources
- Consumer redress
- Age Limits and Verification
- Land based gambling

3.3 The UK Governments policy paper highlights a number of changes in recent years to strengthen protections around gambling both land based and on line. Examples given include

- banning gambling with credit cards
- mandatory requirement for on line operators to be signed up to GAMSTOP
- agreed increase from operators to increase donations to gambling research, education and treatment.

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- 3.4 There is more limited data, evidence and research available on gambling compared to other public health issues. Services, ALEOs and 3RD Sector partners have been asked for their views and any new/recent evidence to support the development of an initial submission from Glasgow City Council to the review. In considering any available evidence and developing the Councils response, it is useful to note reports from both the All Party Parliamentary Group on Gambling Harms (APPG) and the National Audit Office (NAO) published in 2020. These are described briefly below.
- 3.5 The APPG published the outcomes of its year long [inquiry into on line gambling](#) in June 2020. It calls for a complete overhaul of gambling regulation in the UK, a new Gambling Act and the establishment of a Gambling Ombudsman. The report sets out around 30 recommendations including a ban on all gambling advertising , a ban on all VIP schemes and inducements, a £2 stake limit for on line betting and a mandatory smart levy paid by all gambling operators to fund independent research, education, prevention and treatment.
- 3.6 The National Audit Office published its [review of the role of the Gambling Commission](#) in February 2020. It concluded that “the way people gamble is changing, with new risks emerging in online and mobile gambling and other technological developments. The Commission’s ability to ensure consumers are protected from these new risks is constrained by factors outside its control, including inflexible funding and a lack of evidence on how developments in the industry affect consumers. The Commission is unlikely to be fully effective in addressing risks and harms to consumers within the current arrangements.”
- 3.7 Members are asked for their views on the review of the 2005 Act and any particular evidence that they may be aware of that could help develop a response. It is proposed that the final response would be circulated to Committee members prior to submission at the end of March.
- 3.8 It is also suggested that the Council and the Advisory Group should seek to establish a dialogue with the UK Government and continue to input to policy development around the reform of gambling legislation as further evidence emerges. For example the Summit referred to at paragraph 2.2 is likely to yield new and useful evidence about the impact of gambling on communities.

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4 Policy and Resource Implications

Resource Implications:

Financial: none

Legal: Report highlights proposed legislative reform

Personnel: none

Procurement:none

Council Strategic Plan: A Healthier City :38 support service redesign that will result in Glasgow becoming a healthier, empowered city

Equality and Socio-Economic Impacts:

Does the proposal support the Council's Equality Outcomes 2017-22

What are the potential equality impacts as a result of this report? no negative impact

Please highlight if the policy/proposal will help address socio economic disadvantage. As gambling related harms disproportionately impact on poorer communities, action to tackle this should have a positive benefit

Sustainability Impacts:

Environmental: none

Social, including Article 19 opportunities: none

Economic: none

Privacy and Data Protection impacts:
none

5 Recommendations

5.1 Members are asked to:

- (i) Note the update provided;
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