

# GAMBLING ACT 2005 – UPDATE ON FIXED ODDS BETTING TERMINALS

Committee	Licensing Committee
Officer Contact	Stephanie Waterford 01895 27(7232)
Papers with report	None
Ward(s) affected	All

## HEADLINE

The Government have reduced the maximum stake of Fixed Odd's Betting Terminals to £2 following a consultation.

## RECOMMENDATION

**That the Committee note the information**

## INFORMATION

The Government carried out a public consultation in January of this year to seek views on proposed changes to the limits on gaming machine maximum stakes.

The Cabinet Member for Community, Regeneration and Commerce responded on behalf of the Council and recommended that the maximum stake be cut to £2.

On 17<sup>th</sup> May, the Government announced that the limits would be cut to £2 and released the following statement;

*"When faced with the choice of halfway measures or doing everything we can to protect vulnerable people, we have chosen to take a stand. These machines are a social blight and prey on some of the most vulnerable in society, and we are determined to put a stop to it and build a fairer society for all. Problem gambling can devastate individuals' lives, families and communities. It is right that we take decisive action now to ensure a responsible gambling industry that protects the most vulnerable in our society. By reducing FOBT stakes to £2 we can help stop extreme losses by those who can least afford it. While we want a healthy gambling industry that contributes to the economy, we also need one that does all it can to protect players."*

The change is being made by the introduction of secondary legislation which has been reported could take a maximum of 2 years to introduce. Further updates will be provided when the legislative timetable is announced.

Hillingdon currently has 51 Betting Shops and each one has 4 FOBT's located within it, totalling 204 machines borough-wide.

Research has shown that there were more than 230,000 FOBT sessions which resulted in losses of more than £1000 and the average FOBT user losing £192 per month. Research also shows that 43% of FOBT users are problem or at-risk gamblers.

The Gambling Commission statistics show that Betting Shop operators make over half of their profits from FOBT's compared with over the counter bets. The industry has responded to the reduction in stake limits by announcing that up to half of Britain's betting shops will face closure resulting in approx 20,000 job losses.

**Implications on related Council policies**

None at this stage

**Legal implications**

None at this stage

**Financial Implications**

None at this stage

**Background Papers / Further Reading Material**

None