

<b>Report on</b>	Update on Gambling Reform / Legislation
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	5 <sup>th</sup> July 2023
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Kieran Gordon, Assistant Director Health, Leisure & Wellbeing
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<b>Is this report restricted for confidential business?</b>  If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	Yes	
	No	x

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	To provide an update to Members on the reform of gambling legislation within Northern Ireland.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Background</b>
2.1	In Northern Ireland gambling (other than the National Lottery) is regulated under the Betting, Gaming, Lotteries and Amusements (NI) Order 1985 (the 1985 Order)
2.2	This complex legislation regulates a wide range of betting, gaming, lotteries and amusement activity within Northern Ireland. The 1985 Order (as amended) regulates the following activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Betting in bookmaking offices and on tracks;</li> <li>• The use, supply and maintenance of gaming machines;</li> <li>• gaming in bingo clubs;</li> <li>• small scale amusements with prizes; and</li> <li>• Lotteries (other than National Lottery)</li> </ul>
2.3	The 1985 Order sets out the procedures for the licensing of gambling activities and the offences and penalties for breaches of associated licensing conditions.
2.4	Whilst Council undertakes some limited administrative and permitting roles under the 1985 Order, the primary responsibility for enforcement under gambling law in Northern Ireland, lies with the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI).
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	In May 2021, the Minister for Communities announced plans for a two-phased review of existing gambling law in Northern Ireland. The first phase of that review was completed in 2022.
3.2	Following this initial review of existing legislation, an amendment, namely - the Betting, Gaming, Lotteries and Amusements (Amendment) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 (the Act) was introduced:

- (i) To address anomalies contained within the original 1985 Order, and
- (ii) To give the 'Department for Communities' more power in certain areas to encourage and promote socially responsible practices.

3.3 The amendment to the legislation received Royal Assent on 26 April 2022 and all but four parts of it became law in Northern Ireland. The excluded provisions covered: - the new offence around inviting, causing or permitting an individual under the age of 18 to play a gaming machine other than a lower limit machine; the revised definition of cheating; the power for the Department to issue Codes of Practice; and the proposed industry levy.

3.4 Mid Ulster District Council received a letter from The Department for Communities on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2023 (Appendix A) confirming the intention to commence three of these remaining provisions on 1 October 2023.

3.5 Therefore, from 1 October 2023, the following provisions of the Act are operational: -

- the new offence around inviting, causing or permitting an individual under the age of 18 to play a gaming machine other than a lower limit machine;
- the revised definition of cheating which makes it an offence for any person to either cheat at gambling or do anything to enable or assist another person to cheat at gambling; and
- the Department has the power to issue one or more Codes of Practice about the manner in which facilities for gambling are provided.

3.6 In relation to the proposed industry levy, there are no plans to commence this provision at this time. Any decision to impose a levy will be a matter for a future Minister and Assembly.

3.7 Further reform to gambling legislation, including changes to stakes and prizes for gaming machines and changes to society lottery rules, cannot be progressed in the absence of a Minister.

3.8 Although the power has been commenced which allows the Department to issue Codes of Practice, there is no intention to issue any codes until a Minister is appointed. Any such codes will be consulted upon in accordance with the requirements set out in Article 180A.

3.9 The Department for Communities' website content has been updated now includes further detail on relevant helplines and websites that offer support and advice to those affected by gambling. See link below, for more information:

<https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/topics/law-and-legislation/betting-gaming-lotteries-and-amusements>

3.10	<p>There has also been an update to the Department for Communities' 'Law on Lotteries in Northern Ireland' leaflet, with section 6.5 being updated in respect of selling societies' lottery tickets.</p> <p><a href="https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/publications/leaflet-lottery-law">https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/publications/leaflet-lottery-law</a></p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Other Considerations</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Financial, Human Resources &amp; Risk Implications</b>
	Financial: None anticipated at this juncture.
	Human: None anticipated at this juncture.
	Risk Management: Considered in line with relevant policies and procedures.
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Screening &amp; Impact Assessments</b>
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: None anticipated at this juncture.
	Rural Needs Implications: None anticipated at this juncture.
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Recommendation(s)</b>
5.1	Members are asked to note the contents of this report.
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached &amp; References</b>
6.1	Appendix A – Letter from Department for Communities – update on gambling reform (3.5.23)
6.2	Appendix B –Department for Communities' 'Law on Lotteries in Northern Ireland' revised leaflet