



Draft Gambling Policy (2027-2030)

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

October 2026

Below are questions and answers we have anticipated may be asked about the draft of our new Gambling Policy (2027- 2030).

We recommend that this document is read alongside the [draft Gambling Policy \(2027-2030\)](#) and the [Local Area Profile which can be found on this webpage](#). ahead of completing the consultation questionnaire.

Should you require this document in an alternative format please contact us via email: licensing@lewisham.gov.uk or via telephone: 020 8314 6505.

What is the Gambling Statement of Principles?

The Statement of Principles is the name in law of the Council's Gambling Policy.

It explains how Lewisham Council will carry out its responsibilities under the Gambling Act (2005). It is used by gambling businesses, residents, Council officers and councillors who make licensing decisions.

The Council must review and publish this policy at least once every three years.

Why is the Council reviewing it now?

The current policy covers 2024 to 2027. The Council is preparing the next version.

The review is an opportunity to make sure the policy:

- reflects current law and Gambling Commission guidance;
- uses up-to-date information about Lewisham;
- responds to local concerns and priorities;
- sets clear expectations for gambling businesses; and
- supports effective licensing, inspections and enforcement.

What is the Council proposing?

The Council wants the new policy to be stronger, clearer and more closely based on local needs. It will make better use of Lewisham's local evidence and explain more clearly how existing legal and Gambling Commission requirements apply locally. This includes risks relating to gambling-related harm, inequality, children and vulnerable people, staffing, supervision and the area surrounding each gambling premises.



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Has the Council already made its decision?

No. The Council has identified the direction it would like to take, but it has not decided on the policy.

It will consider the consultation responses, relevant evidence, legal requirements and possible equality effects before making a final decision

What are the three gambling licensing objectives?

The Gambling Act sets three objectives:

- preventing gambling from being connected with crime or disorder;
- making sure gambling is run fairly and openly; and
- protecting children and other vulnerable people from harm or exploitation.

The Council must consider these objectives when carrying out its gambling licensing responsibilities.

What does “aim to permit” mean?

Section 153 of the Gambling Act currently says the Council must “aim to permit” gambling premises if an application:

- complies with relevant Gambling Commission rules and guidance;
- is reasonably consistent with the three licensing objectives; and
- complies with the Council’s gambling policy.

This is the legal test the Council must currently use when deciding applications.

Can the Council refuse a new gambling premises?

Yes, but only where the evidence and the legal tests (see above) support refusal.

The Council cannot introduce a complete ban on new gambling premises. It also cannot set a fixed limit on the number of premises or refuse an application simply because gambling is unpopular.

Every application must be considered separately and on its own facts.



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Can the Council decide that an area already has enough gambling premises?

Not on that basis alone.

Under the current Gambling Act, the Council cannot refuse an application because it believes there is no demand for another gambling premises.

However, the Council can consider evidence about risks in the area and how the proposed premises may affect the licensing objectives.

The number or concentration of gambling premises may form part of that evidence, but it does not automatically mean that an application must be refused.

Will this policy stop new gambling premises open in my area?

No, the Gambling Policy won't stop new gambling premises opening in parts of Lewisham. The Council must comply with requirements set out in section 153 of the Gambling Act (2005) but it can still introduce an enhanced local policy, with more requirement for evidence and making our decision making more evidence based. For example, the policy aims to:

- identify Lewisham's local risks and priorities;
- explain the information businesses are expected to consider;
- set clear expectations for local risk assessments;
- provide a sound basis for inspections and enforcement; and
- support decisions about individual applications where there is relevant evidence.

What is the Local Area Profile?

The Local Area Profile brings together information about Lewisham's neighbourhoods and communities. This may include information about:

- deprivation and financial hardship;
- health inequalities;
- schools and youth facilities;
- services used by vulnerable people;
- gambling-harm treatment and support services;
- crime and anti-social behaviour;



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- regeneration and transport hubs; and
- the number and location of gambling premises.

It helps businesses understand local risks when preparing their risk assessments. It can also help the Council make informed licensing decisions.

Why will the Local Area Profile proposed as a separate document?

Local areas and evidence can change.

Keeping the profile separate means the Council can update it without having to rewrite the whole gambling policy. The policy will explain how businesses and decision-makers should use the profile.

What is a local risk assessment?

The Gambling Commission's Licence Conditions and Codes of Practice already require relevant gambling businesses to assess the local risks connected with each of their premises.

Businesses must consider relevant matters identified in the Council's gambling policy. They must also review their assessment when:

- applying for a new premises licence;
- applying to change an existing licence;
- there is a significant change at the premises; or
- local circumstances change significantly.

Lewisham's revised policy and Local Area Profile will help businesses understand the local information and risks they should consider. They do not replace the existing Gambling Commission requirements.

Will the proposed revised policy be aligned with national policy?

Yes. The Council cannot replace the Gambling Act or Gambling Commission requirements.

However, it can explain what it expects businesses to do in Lewisham and what local information they should consider. It can also place conditions on an individual premises licence where those conditions are lawful, necessary and reasonable.



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Why is the Council reviewing its model conditions?

The current policy contains a long list of possible conditions for premises licences. Some repeat requirements that already exist under national law or Gambling Commission rules.

The Council is considering whether a shorter and more focused set would make its expectations clearer.

Conditions cannot be added automatically to every licence. Any condition must be appropriate to the particular premises and the risks involved.

What role does Public Health have?

Public Health can provide evidence about gambling-related harm, health inequalities and vulnerability in Lewisham.

The Council's Licensing service remains responsible for its legal gambling functions. However, better joint working between Licensing, Public Health, safeguarding services, Planning, the Police and community organisations can improve the information available to the Council.

Is the gambling licensing process the same as the planning process?

No. They are separate legal processes with different rules.

A business may need both planning permission and a gambling premises licence. A decision under one process does not automatically decide the other.

This consultation is about the Council's policy under the Gambling Act.

Does the Council regulate online gambling?

The Gambling Commission is responsible for licensing online gambling businesses.

Lewisham Council is mainly responsible for gambling premises within the borough, along with certain permits and other local functions under the Gambling Act.



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Is the law going to change?

The Government has announced that it intends to remove the current “aim to permit” rule. New legislation also contains provisions for gambling impact assessments.

These changes cannot be used until the relevant legal provisions have been brought into force.

Until then, Lewisham Council must continue to make decisions using the law that currently applies.

If the law changes, we’ll review the policy and consider whether to seek further views.

What is a gambling impact assessment?

A gambling impact assessment would allow a council to publish evidence about the effects of certain types of gambling premises in a specified area.

Subject to the final legal requirements, it may support a presumption against further licences of the type and within the area covered by the assessment.

A gambling impact assessment is not the same as the Local Area Profile. The Council cannot use it as if it were already in force.

Will the new policy affect existing premises?

Existing businesses will continue to be subject to the Gambling Act, Gambling Commission requirements and any conditions on their premises licences.

The new policy will guide future licensing, inspections and enforcement. Any action involving an individual premises must follow the correct legal process and be based on the evidence in that case.



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Who can respond to the consultation?

Anyone can respond. The Council particularly welcomes responses from:

- Lewisham residents;
- community and voluntary organisations;
- people affected by gambling-related harm;
- health and safeguarding services;
- the Police and other public services;
- gambling businesses and trade bodies; and
- organisations with relevant evidence or experience.

How will the council use the responses?

The Council will review all the responses and decide whether changes should be made to the draft Policy, Local Area Profile or equality assessment.

It will consider the relevance and quality of the information provided, as well as the views and impacts expressed.

Can I comment on a particular gambling premises?

The consultation is about adopting the Council's overall policy. It is not the process for:

- deciding a current licence application;
- making a complaint about a premises; or
- asking the Council to review an existing licence.

The Council will provide separate contact details for anyone who needs to raise a concern about an individual premises or application.

What information should I avoid including?

Please do not include confidential, medical or personal information about another person.

You can describe relevant experiences without naming the people involved. The Council's consultation privacy notice will explain how it will use and protect the information it receives.



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What happens after the consultation?

The Council will analyse and report on the responses. We will then put forward recommendations about any potential changes to draft documents. Documents will be presented to decision makers alongside legal, equalities and governance checks ahead of decision making at the Full Council meeting on 28 January 2027.