

## **Gambling in Devon**

Report of the Head of Scrutiny

### **1. Introduction**

Whilst the majority of gambling activity in the UK is not harmful, when gambling becomes a problem, the impact on individuals, families and communities has the potential to be significant.

### **2. A Public Health perspective**

The attached paper provides an overview of gambling and associated harm from the perspective of Public Health.

### **3. Fixed Odds Betting Terminals**

The availability of Fixed Odds Betting Terminals (FOBTs) and the significant losses gamblers can experience in a very short period of time has been widely reported in the media and highlighted by campaign groups.

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport closed its consultation on proposed changes to gaming machines, including a proposal to lower the maximum single bet from £100 to as low as £2. The consultation closed in January but the Government has yet to announce any firm plans for change.

### **4. Role for Scrutiny**

Although the relationship between gambling and potential harm is not well understood, problem gambling clearly has the potential to impact upon a number of county council and other public services, and have a damaging effect on families and communities across Devon.

As such, the Corporate Infrastructure & Regulatory Services Scrutiny Committee could choose to undertake a piece of work examining some of the issues including:

- The prevalence of problem gambling in Devon
- Links between problem gambling and other health and wellbeing issues such as alcohol misuse, mental health, housing etc
- Licensing and the location of places to gamble
- The prevalence and impact of online gambling
- Partnership working between the public sector and the third sector to support people affected by problem gambling
- The national picture – how this issue being addressed by Government

**Camilla de Bernhardt Lane**  
**Head of Scrutiny**