

Report back on Class 4 Gambling

Council Briefing 8 July 2020

Background

Council reviewed and adopted a Class 4 Gambling Venues Policy on 25 July 2019

As part of the resolution, Councillors requested that:

“the Chief Executive to investigate substantive amendments to the Class 4 Gambling Venue Policy to be reported back for consideration within 1 year.”

Background

- Council is required to have a policy that states whether or not class 4 venues can be established in their district, and if so, where they may be located.
- Class 4 gambling means venues with non-casino electronic gambling machines, commonly known as 'pokie machines'. These venues can include pubs, hotels, clubs (but not casinos).
- Under the legislation councils can control new venues, the relocation or merger of existing venues and (in certain circumstances) increase the number of machines at a venue.
- Councils are required to review their class 4 gambling venues policies every three years. The last review was completed in 2019. The next review is timetabled for 2022.

Social Impact Report and Options Analysis

In response to Councils resolution, two reports have been prepared for consideration by Council (attachments A and B of the agenda item).

Attachment A: Social Impact Report

This report assesses the current state of gambling in Whangarei and the associated social harms and social benefits.

Attachment B: Options Analysis Report

The report provides Council with potential options (including substantive amendments) to consider in the next review of the Class 4 Gambling Policy.

High-level findings

- The Social Impact Report finds a decrease in venue and electronic gaming machine numbers, but an increase in gambling expenditure.
- Electronic gaming machines remain prevalent in Whangarei's more deprived communities, and the occurrence of gambling harm continues to sit with a small proportion of the population (which is responsible for the majority of the spending).
- The Options Analysis Report identifies five possible policy options. For each of the options the impacts, costs, benefits and risk were identified.
- The two reports give a more up to date picture of the social impacts of gambling and a broad suit of policy options available to Council.
- No material / new circumstances since the current policy was adopted in 2019 have been identified.

Next steps

There are two options for the next steps following consideration of these reports:

Option 1: Incorporate both the Social Impact Report and Options Analysis into the 2022 review of the Class 4 Gambling Venues Policy.

Option 2: Provide direction to staff to bring forward the review of the Class 4 Gambling Venues Policy.

Next steps

Staff advice is that Council proceeds with Option 1, for the following reasons:

- Nothing substantive has changed since the last review in 2019.
- Bringing forward a review of the Class 4 Gambling Venues Policy would divert resourcing from other areas.
- If Council did review the Class 4 Gambling Venues Policy this year, we would still be required to undertake a further review in 2023 resulting in three reviews of the Policy over a four year period.

If Council is in favour of bringing the review forward direction is sought on which options from the Analysis Report are supported.