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Sent: 12 July 2021 19:54
To: Licensing <licensing@shropshire.gov.uk>
Subject: Gambling Act Consultation 2021

I respond to the above as a Shropshire resident and local and national taxpayer.

Gambling, other than at a very modest and personal level, for example friendly games of cards or bridge clubs, charity raffles, a few pounds a week on National, People's Postcode, or Health Lotteries, which support good causes, and so on, is a source of enormous harm to many vulnerable individuals and families and entire communities, particularly in those more economically and/or socially disadvantaged.

The organized gambling industry is dominated by a few large companies, the beneficial ownership of which is often unclear, which with very few exceptions are domiciled offshore, often paying little or no tax within the UK despite generating enormous profits from the gullibility of its citizens.

It is no coincidence that betting shops and the like tend to proliferate in the areas of greatest economic deprivation.

Local authorities, both under numerous statute laws relating to health, economic wellbeing, child protection, human rights and so on, and as a general moral principle, have an absolute duty to exercise up to the limits of the law, and beyond, in accordance with the considerable discretionary leeway permitted by the democratic planning decision system, all possible power to suppress the evil consequences of tolerating gaming establishments of all kinds.

Any minuscule financial "benefit" from rent and business rates paid on such establishments is outweighed one thousandfold by the costs to the taxpayer and wider society of the crime, illness, drug and alcohol abuse, domestic and child abuse, educational, social and health disadvantage, and numerous other societal damages inflicted on the public purse, as has been demonstrated beyond any dispute by the government's own, and many other bodies of verified research and investigation.

Shropshire Council therefore has both the right and the absolute duty within existing law and procedure to suppress and drive out all organized and commercial gaming activities from the county. This strategy has been proven to be possible and beneficial in other local authority areas.

The organised gambling industry has demonstrated its preparedness to break the law outright in pursuit of profit, ruining many lives in the process, and the Gambling Commission has been shown to be utterly toothless and ineffective in discharging its statutory responsibilities.

Shropshire Council must therefore do all that is necessary to protect its citizens in this regard.

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