



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

Chair
Licensing Boards

Room T3.60
The Scottish Parliament
EDINBURGH
EH99 1SP

Direct Tel: (0131) 348 5223
(RNID Typetalk calls welcome)
Fax: (0131) 348 5600
(Central) Textphone: (0131) 348 5415
emma.johnston@scottish.parliament.uk

23 November 2015

Dear Chairs,

INQUIRY INTO FIXED ODDS BETTING TERMINALS

You may be aware that the Local Government and Regeneration Committee of the Scottish Parliament is currently undertaking an inquiry into the provisions set out in clause 49 of the Scotland Bill. These propose to devolve powers to Scottish Ministers to limit the number of fixed odds betting terminals (known as FOBTs) when new betting licences are granted.

Further information relating to the Committee's inquiry can be found on the [Committee's web pages](#).

A number of witnesses who gave evidence to the Committee on this issue highlighted the difficulties faced by local authorities when trying to limit the number of retail betting shops within their communities in order to prevent 'over-provision', or clustering, of shops and, in particular FOBTs within a specific locality. The underlying reason for this difficulty we understand is due to the classification of betting shops falling within the 'financial, professional and other services' class of use, which leaves local authorities powerless to restrict betting shops from opening when they move into premises also categorised in this class.

It has been suggested that retail betting shops should be placed in a distinct planning class so that planning permission must be sought when a betting company takes on new premises in order to open a retail betting shop, regardless of what those shop premises were used for previously.

The Committee has written to the Chair of the Planning Review setting out the Committee's concerns and asking that this issue be considered within the Review. I have attached this letter for your information.

The Committee also agreed to write to you to draw your attention to the Planning Review and your opportunity to make representations. I hope that you will take up this suggestion and write to the Review to support this request.

If you require any further information relating to this letter or inquiry in the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact Emma Johnston, Assistant Clerk to the Committee, for further information.

Yours sincerely

Kevin Stewart MSP
Convener



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

Crawford Beveridge
Chair
Review of the Scottish Planning
System

Room T3.60
The Scottish Parliament
EDINBURGH
EH99 1SP

Direct Tel: (0131) 348 5223
(RNID Typetalk calls welcome)
Fax: (0131) 348 5600
(Central) Textphone: (0131) 348 5415
emma.johnston@scottish.parliament.uk

19 November 2015

Dear Mr Beveridge,

INQUIRY INTO FIXED ODDS BETTING TERMINALS

You may be aware that the Local Government and Regeneration Committee is currently undertaking an inquiry into the provisions set out in clause 49 of the Scotland Bill. These propose to devolve powers to Scottish Ministers to limit the number of fixed odds betting terminals (known as FOBTs) when new betting licences are granted.

Further information relating to the Committee's inquiry can be found on the [Committee's web pages](#).

Over the course of our evidence taking, the question of the 'over-provision', or clustering, of betting shops has been discussed extensively. It has been suggested that these betting machines are highly addictive and that the number of betting shops have proliferated, or clustered, in some areas as the betting industry has sought to maximise revenue from the communities most likely to play these machines.

Local authorities in particular have expressed concern that, because betting shops fall within the 'financial, professional and other services' class of use, they are powerless to restrict betting shops open when they move into premises also categorised in this class.

It has been suggested that retail betting shops should be placed in a distinct planning class so that planning permission must be sought when a betting company takes on new premises in order to open a retail betting shop, regardless of what those shop premises were used for previously.

The Committee agreed to bring this to the attention of the review panel immediately.

The Committee also agreed to write to the 32 licensing boards to encourage them to write to you on this issue. I will enclose a copy of this letter when I write to them.

The Committee will publish its report on its inquiry into fixed odds betting terminals in December and I will write to you again then with a copy of our report, as I'm sure that some of our conclusions and recommendations will relate to this issue.

If you require any further information relating to this letter or inquiry in the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact Emma Johnston, Assistant Clerk to the Committee, for further information.

Yours sincerely

Kevin Stewart MSP
Convener

CC: Chairs, 32 licensing boards