

I am writing to register a personal objection to the above licence application which, as a Lewisham resident I hope the council will reject. My son went to school in Deptford and both as a parent and a frequent shopper on the high street I am deeply concerned about a gambling arcade opening on a prime site in this very special high street. I believe it will be very damaging for both the image of the high street as a whole, for the businesses and for frequent users of the high street as well as those living nearby.

My grounds for objecting are as follow:

1. **Normalisation of gambling.** This is a prime site on the high street, highly visible to passersby and with 3 schools nearby. The high street provides access to these, and it is (under normal circumstances) busy with children walking to and from school, buying lunch etc at certain times of day. A further gambling establishment, and especially one that involves gaming, gives these young people a very bad impression and would normalise gambling. This is a family shopping area!
2. Damage to reputation of Deptford High Street. This is a popular high street, and a family destination, yet there is already a proliferation of betting shops. The presence of gambling establishments should be kept to a minimum or it will threaten the image and desirability of the high street as a shopping destination (with cafes and the market). A reduction of gambling establishments, rather than an increase, is what the council should be seeking to support. Shopping in an agreeable environment, where everyone, and families in particular feel safe will suffer if this goes ahead and the high street will be deprived of the potential for a more community focussed shop or amenity.
3. Increasing anti-social behaviour. The high street already struggles with some anti-social behaviour and encouraging more gambling will further add to these problems.
4. Adding to pressures of high levels of poverty. There are some high levels of deprivation in this area, including child poverty, (likely to worsen in the foreseeable future due to the impact of covid), casual gambling in the form of gaming, will cause further harm and deprivation to those who can least afford it.

Thank you for this opportunity to put forward these points. I sincerely hope that you take note of the grave concerns of locals who support the high street and the majority of hard-working business owners who make it what it is.