

Objection 1

Dear licensing team,

I'm writing to object to the license for yet another gambling business at No.40 Deptford High street which has applied for bingo license (which is obviously not going to be bingo but rather slot machines with extra gambling games accessible through the site's tech devices).

I, my husband and business partner Dan, and many of our customers believe this is the worst possible thing for the high street right now. As a high street business owner who's business is situated a few doors down from the site I fear of what it will bring to the street and how it will affect our business. We already have issues with so many beggars, homeless, addicted and drunks on the high street that affect the safety of the community and our business. We've had our business directly affected by them, to mention a few - stolen goods from shop, indecent exposure, verbal abuse on many occasions, urinating on shopfront, disruption of our evening customers when asking them for money. We can see they congregate around existing betting shops and there's a lot of fights and shouting happening almost on a daily basis. Bringing yet another business that is going to encourage gambling and draw these types of people into the high street is in my eyes very irresponsible and quite surprising that the council would allow such a business to open, knowing all it knows about poverty and crime in Deptford.

We live in Deptford and rent our flat from Bench, which is a charity trying to tackle homelessness and addiction in Deptford. We've been chatting to them often and they said this issue has been getting worst over the past years in Deptford and the surrounding area. There's a few charities around Deptford that aim to help with these issues and yet there are so many betting betting shops on the high street doing the exact opposite of help. These charities bring a lot of vulnerable people into the area, many of whom are trying to better their life but the presence of these shops must make it impossible. These are highly addictive & vulnerable people and I believe bringing another business like it to the area will make things much worst for the people that have addiction issues, the kids that pass this site a few times a day and think it's absolutely fine to play games for money and for the community as a whole. The fact that they want to open 24/7 is just scary. How is this suppose to be safe??? Who's going to monitor it? I can't imagine 2 people (which is the company's usual number of staff on site) will be able to manage the violence, crime and possible disruption this is likely cause. Who's going to protect the staff? There's going to be a lot of money on site, this will bring more criminals to the street and our business could also become a target (robbery/fake notes/stealing). It could bring even more drug dealing and knife crime, there's been so many stabbings in the area the past two years.

All businesses are restricted with their opening hours - and we as license holders have to make sure we do our best to keep everyone safe, this responsibility must be taken seriously. I don't believe this business should be allowed to open at all. We have enough to deal with with the existing sites. If for some reason it will, then the opening hours must be regulated and reduced to reasonable hours (opening not too early or late) and the visibility of the interior from the outside not to be able to be seen by passers by, restricted advertising on windows. This could help protect the children and vulnerable people, which is the one of the license's main objectives. But please do not let it go ahead, let's start changing the area so that its safe and it's economy has a chance to recover.

I really hope the council will see sense and not allow this license or any other license application from this business to be granted. Life after pandemic is going to be so much harder for the vulnerable, there's going to be increase in crime numbers and we should be making sure we do our best to avoid it as much as possible. And not let it happen if we have the choice.

I'm happy for you to contact me if there's anything else you need from me or you think might help with this issue.

Objection 2

To Whom It May Concern,

I am a local resident, I live in Deptford for over 9 years, the last 3 of them on the High Street at the mention address.

I am aware of an application that has been submitted for a new gambling premises at 40 Deptford High Street, which intends to be open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

I would like to express my concern about this new business so close to the property I live. I strongly oppose to the opening of this new business in a neighbourhood that has already too many social problems and enough gambling shops.

I can see daily how people with addiction struggles around the streets, how the crime had increased considerably over the last years. Recently I myself was victim of a thief who stole my phone from my hands on the high street just a couple of meters away from my home at daylight, I am aware that this happens constantly, another similar crime happened only couple of minutes after I gave my statement to the police and a couple of days after another person was stabbed because he tried to hold to his phone, this is a problem that is happening now on daily basis and the police hasn't been able to manage this situation. I think the last thing the police needs now is more crime in the area and I think another gambling shop will bring crime, insecurity and disorder to this streets.

People will gather at the entrance of this place as they do on the other gambling shops, many of them with drugs, gambling and alcohol problems. If this business will open 24 hours they will be there 24 hours! I am sure this is fine under daylight with the street full of people, but what happens when everyone has gone home and the

street is nearly empty at night and early mornings; will I have to be afraid every time I am back home from a late shift at work or from a night out?

As a woman of this community I feel frustrated and defenceless, I feel that none think about us. We are already going through hard times, a young lady was raped recently not far away from here during the daytime, it is the council responsibility to avoid creating environments where these awful crimes can be committed again!

Will I ever feel safe again if you open a 24 hours gambling shop, Not I won't; I will be scared to do an early shift at work and walk by myself to the station, I will feel afraid to go to the supermarket for something at night time.

It horrifies me the idea that this gambling shop will be creating just a new meeting point for people with addiction, just under my house, where the shop at 36 leaves their fruit stands, they will probably just sit there, as they used to do at the anchor pedestal that was removed; this will probably happen because it is just next to the new 24 hours gambling shop and I will be afraid to go out, scared to even open my front door and deal with people that don't have boundaries and under the influence of certain substances don't have most of the time even respect.

It really concerns me how this all can affect, not only me but everyone who works, lives, shops or has business on the high street. As I said before this gambling shops are a source of crime and disorder, I believe Deptford High Street has enough of it! I see every day how the security forces from Asda, Tesco and Iceland have to deal with this situation constantly! Drunk people coming, stealing from the shops; I saw it just a few hours ago, that is what pushes me to write to you, to ask you not to accept this business request.

Kids on their way home from the Addey and Stanhope school, watching this environment, keeping this in mind on their young minds, is that the example we want to set for future generations? For them to believe that certain types of behaviour are right?

I don't think it is fair to the community, to these vulnerable people with addiction that will have one more reason to stay up all night huddled around the new 24 hours attraction, increasing their intake of substances and falling into the addiction of gambling, that can be as complicated as the others and most of the times are linked to each other, what they need is help, what this community, this neighbourhood needs is more places where to improve their life skills, where to help them to recover; not one more place to drag them into something worse and this time open 24 hours.

So I please ask you one more time, not only asking, I beg you not to follow with the process of approval for the opening of this new premises.

Please don't give us, the community one more reason to be afraid at night, don't give the vulnerable people one more reason to complicate more their life.

Objection 3

To Whom It May Concern:

The management of Bench Outreach objects to the above proposal. Bench Outreach is a charity working with vulnerable people in Lewisham, especially with residents of the Evelyn and New Cross wards, who will be immediately and adversely affected by this development. Our objections are raised on the following grounds:

- **It contravenes Lewisham Council's aim of protecting children and other vulnerable persons from being harmed or exploited by gambling.**

According to the council's own Joint Strategic needs Assessment, Lewisham has one of the highest proportion of working-age residents on out-of-work benefits at 9.1%. This contributes to extremely high levels of child poverty, estimated at over 35% in the Evelyn and New Cross wards. A business that exists solely to encourage gambling would not be a welcome addition in an area in which poverty is already highly visible.

- **It contravenes Lewisham Council's aim of protecting vulnerable adults from abuse and exploitation.**

The premises are close to three local charities working with people with mental health issues, substance use issues and alcohol dependence – all of whom are vulnerable to exploitation. The premises are also adjacent to a pawnbrokers shop, and across the road from CEX, another business that gives cash for goods. Approving a gambling licence for premises close to shops which provide high-interest cash loans is inappropriate and will put those already in difficult circumstances at risk of increased debt.

I look forward to your response,

Objection 4

Dear sir or madam

We object to the application by Merkur Slots for a bingo licence at 40 Deptford High Street on the following grounds:

1. Preventing gambling being a source of crime or disorder.

The proposed premises is in New Cross ward - this ward already suffers levels of anti-social behaviour that are almost twice the level recorded overall in Lewisham borough, and more than twice the national average.

<https://www.observatory.lewisham.gov.uk/crime-and-community-safety/report/view/30a1abb2a53f42fa87dea33c0c73c342/E05000449>

Recorded crimes of every type except shoplifting are consistently much higher in New Cross than the average across the borough, and it has the third highest level of crime of all the borough's wards.

Deptford High Street has existing high levels of anti-social behaviour and ongoing problems with street drinking and drug dealing. The detrimental impact this has to our community is keenly felt by residents and traders, so much so that officers from the local Safer Neighbourhoods Team have told us they conduct a monthly walkabout on Deptford High Street with licensing officers from Lewisham Council to try and address the problem. This clearly indicates the direct relationship between these problems and existing licensed activities.

Street drinkers and drug dealers regularly congregate outside existing gambling premises (Paddy Power and Jennings in particular) The disorder and anti-social behaviour that this generates has a severe impact on nearby shops, and traders are of the clear opinion that further gambling establishments will exacerbate this problem.

Despite many years of hardship, Deptford High Street, with its regular market, has clung on to its reputation as a family-friendly shopping destination, but local business owners are concerned that the presence of what would be a fourth gambling business in a run of just thirty shops will further undermine this positive reputation and be a backward step for local businesses and the community as a whole. The Deptford Society supports this view and asks the committee to also consider this in the light of the added vulnerability that Covid now brings to the resilience of local businesses and community.

2. Protecting children and other vulnerable persons from being harmed or exploited by gambling.

The premises is based in New Cross ward, very close to the border with Evelyn ward. Both wards have extremely high levels of deprivation and child poverty.

In Evelyn ward, 30% of children live in low income families, and in New Cross this figure is 28%; this is double the figure reported across Lewisham borough and the national average, both of which are around 15%. In both of these wards, 22% of children under 16 live in families with absolute low income, compared to 15.5% across the borough. A business that exists solely to encourage gambling, and that has the potential to operate on a 24/7 basis, would not be a welcome addition to an environment in which poverty is already highly visible.

The proposed premises is in close proximity to two primary schools and a secondary school; another secondary school and a college are within a short walk of the site. During lunchtime

and after school, large numbers of unsupervised pupils from both secondary schools come to the High Street for refreshment and to socialise.

Regarding the protection of children and young persons, the Gambling Commission states in their Adult Gaming Centre guidance for licensing authorities:

21.3 Licensing authorities will wish to have particular regard to the location of and entry to AGCs to minimise the opportunities for under-18s to gain access. This may be of particular importance in areas where young people may be unsupervised for example, where an AGC is in a complex, such as a shopping centre or airport. Licensing authorities should consider whether their statement of policy can be used to reflect such locally based considerations.

The proposed premises is at a high-profile location on the high street and the young people of the area will pass it at least twice a day, on their way to and from schools and nurseries. The presence of such a business in the middle of a popular shopping street will lead to gambling being normalised in the eyes of these children and young adults.

Deptford is also a focus for organisations that provide important support services to vulnerable adults; at least seven different organisations and charities are based on Deptford High Street or adjoining streets. The help that these places provide means that Deptford is either home to or each day brings a population of adults who are already experiencing severe difficulties in managing their affairs. Aside from the obvious risk to the lives of these vulnerable adults and any dependent children they may have, granting this licence would do a considerable disservice to the efforts of these organisations to rehabilitate their clients.

The social deprivation detailed above is, in itself a form of vulnerability with debt being a well known result of poverty. The fact that the proposed premises is on a road with no less than three pawnbroker shops and a long established money lenders providing short term high interest cash loans, proves that this is an area with above average susceptibility to negative gambling and will put those already in difficult circumstances at risk of increased and uncontrolled debt. The developing economic effects of Covid 19 are likely to make these issues even more acutely felt in the local area

Objection 5

Dear sir/madam,

I would like to object to the application for a gambling licence at 40 Deptford High Street. I also object to the change of use application for the same reasons.

I am a local resident, my details are below. I object to the application for the following reasons:

To prevent gambling from being a source of crime & disorder:

Adult gaming centres require staff to mingle with customers which makes them more vulnerable to robbery, often involving weapons. As well as making them a magnet for crime, it puts staff at high risk.

The nature of the business means that large amounts of cash are present on site, adding to their attraction for criminals.

Recorded crimes of every type except shoplifting are consistently much higher in New Cross than the average across the borough, and it has the third highest level of crime of all the borough's wards.

Deptford High Street already suffers existing high levels of drug dealing, anti-social behaviour and street drinking.

To protect children & other vulnerable persons from being harmed or exploited by gambling:

Both New Cross ward and Evelyn ward have extremely high levels of deprivation and child poverty. In Evelyn ward, 30% of children live in low income families, and in New Cross this figure is 28%; this is double the figure reported across Lewisham borough and the national average, both of which are around 15%. In both of these wards, 22% of children under 16 live in families with absolute low income, compared to 15.5% across the borough. A business that exists solely to encourage gambling, and that has the potential to operate on a 24/7 basis, would not be a welcome addition to an environment in which poverty is already highly visible.

The proposed premises is very close to two primary schools and a secondary school; another secondary school and a college are within a short walk of the site. During lunchtime and after school, large numbers of young people visit the High Street for refreshment and to socialise.

Deptford is a focus for organisations that provide support services to vulnerable adults; at least seven different organisations and charities are based on Deptford High Street or adjoining streets. Some of the people they seek to support are already struggling with addiction issues and many are in difficult financial circumstances. Granting this licence would seriously undermine the efforts of these organisations to rehabilitate their clients.

I have volunteered at Deptford Reach and seen the impact gambling has had on vulnerable individuals in the area first hand. I object to this application and urge the council not to add another gambling premises to the high street.

Objection 6

Hello

I would like to strongly object to a 24 hr gambling Licence being granted to Mekur Slots for the following reasons.

1. Deptford High Street already has a culture of street drinking and drug dealing, this would further be exacerbated as anyone selling drugs would have a legitimate reason to be in the area if they were in the vicinity of the Mekur Slots.
2. Numerous school students use the High Street for lunch and could be subjected to influence and harassment from the people loitering outside the premises.
3. Deptford High Street is a residential area and having a 24 hour gambling establishment would not be justified as the area is already stricken with poverty and addiction. These premises would most likely affect the most vulnerable and poor of the borough.

Objection 7

To whom it may concern,

I am a local resident living very close to the High Street with a young family and I wish strongly to object to the proposed licence on the following grounds:

1. Deptford High Street is not just a commercial high street but a thriving residential street. Neither the proposed use nor the proposed operating hours are compatible with such residential occupation.
2. The inevitable noise and disturbance caused by gamers arriving and leaving the premises 24 hours a day is not compatible with the many flats above High Street premises. The availability of gambling throughout the night is surely premised on a ready supply of customers - from the bars along the High Street, which are also pushing for longer and longer operating hours. These two phenomena are obviously not unconnected. The effect, in combination, on the levels of disturbance in the High Street will be unacceptable. There are many families with young children living on and around the High Street.
3. The cumulative impact of the increasing number of gambling sites along the High Street in an area of extreme poverty and deprivation will be fundamentally negative and damaging to the local community.
4. There are many High Street organisations that provide support services to vulnerable adults. At least seven different organisations and charities are based on Deptford High Street or adjoining streets. Some of the people they seek to support are already struggling with addiction issues and many are in difficult financial circumstances. Granting this licence would seriously undermine the efforts of these organisations to rehabilitate their clients

5. The premises are very close to two primary schools and a secondary school and nearby there is another secondary school and a college. The High Street becomes a popular place for young people to congregate before and after school. Actively promoting gambling along the High Street sends out a dangerous message to these young people.

6. Being a regulated, closed-door activity, the proposed use offers the opposite of what in urban design terms is called an 'activated frontage'. Active, permeable, transparent frontages are encouraged as a source of vitality and interest along walkable streets. Gambling premises have an entirely negative impact in this regard, being effectively 'dead spots', detrimental to the bustling nature of a historic market street. These premises in particular are of significant historical value within the Deptford High Street Conservation Area even though they have been woefully mistreated in recent years. The nature of the proposed operation does not offer much hope that the historic frontage will be restored, so granting this licence will only help accelerate the decline of a Conservation Area already designated 'At Risk' by Historic England - the only High Street CA so designated in Lewisham.

7. However well managed the operators may claim their premises to be, adult gambling sites such as this are inevitably associated with increased levels of drug dealing, anti-social behaviour and drinking. New Cross already has crime levels twice as high as the borough average. Granting this licence would only exacerbate that situation.

Objection 8

As a Deptford resident I would like to formally object to the licence application for a proposed new gambling premises at [40 Deptford High Street](#) submitted by Merkur Slots (and change of use planning application at the same address).

As a local resident I am concerned about the impact another gambling establishment will have on the community. Whilst I respect a person's choice to gamble (i.e. I am not opposed to gambling), I am concerned that another shop opens the door for vulnerable persons in the community to be further exploited by gambling. We already receive branded betting slips (with brand names of the already existing local gambling businesses) through our post box which we believe are trying to entice us to bet. Given already existing high levels of deprivation and poverty in Deptford and the wider Lewisham area, I believe a further gambling establishment (especially one that could be open 24/7) would contribute further to this hardship by encouraging locals to gamble.

Further, given that gambling is known to be addictive, I think that opening another gambling establishment would fly in the face of all the good work done locally by organisations who work with vulnerable adults experiencing addiction and financial issues.

Lastly there are already high levels of drug dealing, anti-social behaviour and street drinking and participants of such activities tend to congregate around the gambling establishments. I

believe we should be moving towards making Deptford a safer, more empowered and healthier community, not encouraging businesses that put those goals at risk.

Objection 9

I would like to lodge my strong objection to the application submitted by Merkur Slots for a 'bingo' license at 40 Deptford High Street.

The reasons for my objection are as follows:

1. **High likelihood that this will increase levels of crime in the area due to:**
 - Large amounts of cash onsite. This is likely to make it a target, as well as a high risk factor for staff, especially those who are working there overnight.
 - An increase in already prolific drug dealing, anti social behaviour and open drinking. An additional gambling site that operates for 24 hours a day will undoubtedly draw people who are already involved in the aforementioned activities.
 - High levels of deprivation in the area, driving people to desperation.
2. **Another gambling site will contribute to vulnerable people, particularly young people, being exploited by gambling**
 - This is an area with very high levels of deprivation and child poverty. A business that is open 24 hours a day and that exists to promote gambling will likely exacerbate this
 - Many of these young people go to school near the proposed site and socialise on the high street at lunchtime. There is a risk that this site, along with the many others in the area that have been granted licenses, normalises gambling
 - We have a network of brilliant charities living locally that support those in vulnerable situations, e.g. the 999 Club. Addiction issues are a key aspect that they look to support people with - granting another gambling license of this sort risks undermining that work.

I am surprised that this application is being considered at all as we should not be adding to the already unacceptably high number of gambling sites in the area. This area has been historically deprived and we should be granting licenses and premises to those who will contribute positively to the lives of those in the area, rather than exacerbate entrenched issues.

Objection 10

I would like to object to the application submitted by Merkur Slots for a 'bingo' license at 40 Deptford High Street.

I am an interested party because I live locally - . I live within a one minute walk of the proposed license.

I want to object because of two key reasons:

1. **There is a good chance that this license will contribute to further crime and disorder in the local area**
 - Gambling sites have large amounts of cash onsite and this is likely to make it a target, as well as a high risk factor for staff
 - The area already suffers from high levels of drug dealing, anti social behaviour and open drinking - an additional gambling site (especially one open 24 hours a day) is only likely to contribute to this - while shoplifting levels are already higher in this ward than average across the borough, and I worry this will contribute
 - This area has a high level of deprivation
2. **Another gambling site will contribute to vulnerable people, particularly young people, being exploited by gambling**
 - This is an area with very high levels of deprivation and child poverty - nearly double the percentage of households in Evelyn and New Cross Ward have children living in low income families compared to Lewisham more broadly. A business that is open 24 hours a day and that exists to promote gambling has the potential to exacerbate this
 - Many of these young people go to school near the proposed site and socialise on the high street at lunchtime. There is a risk that this site, along with the others that have been granted licenses, normalises gambling
 - We have a network of brilliant charities living locally that support those in vulnerable situations, e.g. the 999 Club. Addiction issues are a key aspect that they look to support people with - granting another gambling license of this sort risks undermining that work

Objection 11

I am a resident living within a few hundred metres of the High Street.

I strongly object to the above application for the following reasons;

I am very concerned that licensing activities such as this will encourage crime and disorder on and around the High Street; it is the case that there are already high levels of drug dealing and other anti-social behaviour on the high st and the large quantities of cash held on site would make the establishment a target for robbery putting staff and customers at risk.

I am concerned about the impact the proposal would have on the valued work being carried out by voluntary organisations representing and rehabilitating the homeless and other vulnerable adult groups 7 of such groups exist in the area and their efforts could easily be undermined by allowing this property to be used in the way.

I am concerned about the impact such an establishment might have on the younger people within our community; it is often the case that schoolchildren from the 2 primary and one secondary school nearby use the high street for socialising and to buy lunch and after-school snacks - the presence of this gambling establishment all normalise the activity of gambling which I believe would be extremely detrimental to the children's well-being.

Objection 12

Here we are trying to gentrify the area and make it suitable for families and then along comes another chancer trying to get in to corrupt the downtrodden and the vulnerable people of our society.

I am the opticians on the high street, and despite getting no help in the pandemic, i have soldered on and revamped my place to try to attract a more civil and caring set of individuals to come to Deptford.

What i have learnt is when you have gaming establishments such as these, there is a greater propensity for thefts and miscellaneous crimes such as drug dealing and muggings.

This used to be the case when Corals was near me, the hunger to get rich quick by any means necessary made my stretch of the high street a no go area for mums and children after school and the characters that hung around the shop and the constant smell of ganja was not a positive sign of improvement.

Now you are all clever people, tell me why these establishments dont open in affluent areas?

Simple, they feel they can play on the misery of the locals and it is left to us to pick up the pieces.

To feed their addictions, a large section need to steal, guess who they steal from?

If you are not part of the solution to make deptford better ten you are the problem.

I dont need to write this as you should know how vulnerable the folks are in Deptford and new cross.

Please stop this nonsense and make a stand and say this will not be actioned as consent.

Try doing something right for once for the people of Deptford and New Cross

Objection 13

I wish to object to the proposal to install yet another gambling outlet in Deptford High Street (at No. 40).

As a local resident, who lives just off the High Street, I can see that this is a bad idea on several counts. As regards vulnerable young people another gambling facility, open all hours, will just help to normalize gambling when the Council should be helping to do the opposite. The High Street is close to schools, is part of the route taken to and from school by many local schoolchildren, and would be an unwelcome example of how to spend leisure time. Such outlets also make parenting much harder – especially for those forced to work unsocial hours who find it difficult to supervise their children.

Another gambling outlet will also aggravate levels of petty crime and street drinking in the area. Many have lost their jobs as a result of the pandemic – the young have suffered most

– so we need schemes to help them to employment, not outlets that will encourage them into a life of crime.

I understand that the Council needs income and does not want shops to stand empty, but gambling outlets only exacerbate local problems (shop-lifting, tagging, litter etc.), which then require more money to be spent to alleviate them. There are already more than enough gambling premises in the High Street. Those living above shops there already suffer from street noise. It cannot be a wise course to make the street the gambling Mecca of Lewisham.

Objection 14

I would like to object the proposed planning application for 40 Deptford High Street.

Judging by the other gambling shops open around the area, it is a source of congregation for local dealers and also plenty of crime and disorder happens around them. People are often threatening and intimidating particularly at night and this would be a huge concern on what seems on already overly-populated gambling sector on the high street.

I am not opposed to gambling in the slightest, it's just there is no security or anything else like it to protect people in the area when these places are open and I would strongly advise against opening another for fear of the community and good people who already live here and who do not need another shop put up.

Regards,