

27<sup>th</sup> April 2021

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Gambling License Application for 40 Deptford High Street

We, as a school are very concerned that Lewisham Council has received a gambling licence application for the above address. We object to the licence being issued due to specific concerns under the following 2 categories:

- To prevent gambling from being a source of Crime & Disorder
- To protect children & other vulnerable persons from being harmed or exploited by gambling

Our primary school is based in Deptford, which is one of the most deprived and disadvantaged areas in the country, falling within the 2<sup>nd</sup> most deprived decile (bottom 20%) in the Indices of Deprivation for England (2019).

Within the Evelyn ward, 30% of children live in low-income families and 47% of our children are in receipt of the PPG (Pupil Premium Grant). These families are already living in difficult financial circumstances. We support a high percentage of these families by making referrals to the Food Bank, providing food hampers, clothing vouchers as well as referring to other charities for grants for beds, bedding and white goods. During the last year, our support in these areas has had to increase as families have found themselves in more need.

In Deptford High Street, there are already four gaming/gambling shops, which we believe is an imbalance and is not supportive of families managing financially. Parents who are struggling can see these shops as a way to try to boost their finances. However, the reality is that the loss of any income will have a significant negative impact on their children and their wellbeing. Furthermore, we are concerned that our children may come to see gambling as normalised and not recognise the impact this has on their families.

Outside of our school, the children and families already see and witness anti-social behaviour; street drinking and can see and smell the use of other substances. They experience people begging and hear them being abusive when people who are struggling themselves refuse them. Some of our students have voiced their concerns about their own and others safety when making their way home after school. Pupils have made contact with the local MP, Vicky Foxcroft.

We do not believe that the introduction of another gambling/gaming establishment would make a positive contribution to the environment and would risk significant negative impact on our children and families.

Yours sincerely,

Lorraine Stewart  
Headteacher

Jacqueline Vincent  
Family Liaison Officer