

Business Safety & Licensing
Doncaster Council
Civic Offices
Waterdale
Doncaster
DN1 3BU

28th August 2015

Dear Sir

Consultation on Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council's Statement of Licensing Policy – Gambling Act 2005

Coral Racing Limited is most grateful to be given the opportunity to respond to this consultation exercise. Coral was one of the first national bookmakers to be licensed under the Betting and Gaming Act of 1960, and so has been operating the length and breadth of the UK for over 50 years. Its premises comprise locations in the inner city, on the high street, in suburbs and in rural areas, and in areas of both high and low deprivation. It now operates 1850 betting offices across Great Britain, which comprise about 20% of all licensed betting offices. It is, therefore, a highly experienced operator.

We have detailed below our response:-

Coral Racing Limited are generally supportive of the document but do have concerns, especially relating to the prescribed approach it appears to take regarding risk assessments. The document correctly notes that the Board when considering applications are still required to 'aim to permit gambling' where this is 'reasonably consistent with the licensing objectives'. We kindly point out that it is possibly suitable to include that the decisions made by following the guidance, should not take into account any moral objections to gambling either.

The document indicates areas which suggest may not be suitable for a premises application (details contained within section 1.7) and Coral wish to clarify our position in this regard. Whilst each application will correctly be judged on its merits, the document raises concerns for licensed betting shops located within the proximity of 'schools, vulnerable adult centres or residential areas where there may be a high concentration of families with children'.

Coral Racing Limited recognise the requirement to supply risk assessments with future applications and variations following the consultation completion (section 9), however, Coral knows of no evidence that the location of a licensed betting office within the proximity of schools, accommodation for vulnerable people and similar locations mentioned in the statement causes harm to the licensing objectives.

- Coral knows of no evidence that children coming from schools are gaining access to betting offices. Coral's general experience, in common with other bookmakers, is that children are not interested in betting, and in any case the Think 21 policy operated by Coral is adequate to ensure that under-age gambling does not occur in their premises. There are very many examples of betting offices sited immediately next to schools and colleges and no evidence whatsoever that they cause problems.



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 a company



1800+ shops



mobile



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The reason for Coral's caution against making such perceptions, which we anticipate is similar to that of the other main bookmakers, is that it already operates systems which ensure that the licensing objectives are strongly promoted across its estate.

For example:

- Coral benefits from an operating licence granted by the national regulator, the Gambling Commission. Therefore, its corporate systems for the promotion of the licensing objectives have been approved by the Commission, which continues to exercise vigilance in this regard through inspections and examination of regulatory returns.
- Coral is subject to the Licence Conditions and Codes of Practice, which are effectively the national code of operation to ensure that the licensing objectives are promoted.
- It carries out health and safety risk assessments pursuant to its legal obligations. These assessments are shortly to be extended so that formal compliance assessments are conducted.
- It conducts risk assessments in relation to Exposure to Violence, Aggression and Conflict (EVAC assessments).
- It operates the assessment principles of the Safe Bet Alliance, the national code for safe premises. It was one of the architects of the code.
- It operates the ABB's Code for Responsible Gambling, and again was one of the architects of that code.
- It operates an extensive compliance manual, upon which all staff members are trained. Copies are available for your inspection if required.
- It contributes to the Responsible Gambling Trust, which seems to promote responsible gambling who in-turn contribute to GamCare, the national problem gambling charity.

Coral's experience is that, through all it does, it achieves an exemplary degree of compliance, and attracts negligible evidence of regulatory harm. Through the additional local risk assessment to be introduced with future premises licence applications from April 2016, Coral believe that these should be a) to assess specific risks to the licensing objectives in the local area, and b) to assess whether control measures going beyond standard control measures are needed. In other words, there should be no requirement to list specific locations e.g. schools (as there is no evidence that there is a link between such venues and a betting office).

Additionally, the multiple lists of risk assessment criteria stated (over 50) are significantly dis-proportionate to the business involved and appear to position such a traditional and highly regulated establishment as a licensed betting office, on the edge of acceptable businesses. Notwithstanding this, such locations if necessary would automatically be included with the operators risk assessment submitted when the application is considered.

If we can provide any further information, we would be pleased to do so.

Yours faithfully,



John Liddle
Director of Development – Coral Retail