

**Glasgow City Council****Wellbeing, Equalities, Communities, Culture and Engagement City Policy Committee****Report by Michelle Booth, Head of Policy and Corporate Governance****Contact: Fiona Moss, Health of Health Improvement and Equalities, Glasgow City Health & Social Care Partnership****Report of the Glasgow Gambling Harms****Purpose of Report:** To provide the Committee with a progress report on work to reduce Gambling related harms**Recommendations:**

The Wellbeing, Equalities, Communities, Culture and Engagement City Policy Committee is asked to:

- Note the background to the Gambling Levy funding received for the Glasgow Project; and
- Note the Glasgow Project Development Phase Time line and Implementation.

Ward No(s):

Citywide: ✓

Local member(s) advised: Yes ▪ No ✓

consulted: Yes ▪ No ✓

1. Background

- 1.1 Members have received progress reports on the multiagency work to address gambling harms in Glasgow over the last five years [Wellbeing, Equalities, Communities, Culture and Engagement City Policy Committee on 17th April 2025](#). Gambling remains a significant issue for the economic and social well-being of the city;
- Glasgow has the highest estimated fiscal cost of gambling harm in Scotland (over £15m per year).
 - 42% of betting shops are in the most deprived quintile of the city.
 - Online gambling has increased rapidly, compounding inequality-driven harm.
 - Gambling-related harms are strongly linked to debt, mental ill-health, family breakdown, and suicide risk.
- 1.2 In April 2025 a statutory Gambling Levy was introduced by the UK Government, requiring licensed gambling operators to contribute a proportion of their profits to fund independent action to address gambling-related harm. The levy replaced previous voluntary industry measures and is collected and administered by the Gambling Commission under government direction. Levy income is ring-fenced for research, prevention, and treatment purposes, with funding allocated to appropriate bodies across the devolved nations.
- 1.3 The introduction of the Gambling Levy has been a major focus of local multi-agency work over the past year. This followed a Scottish Government invitation for funding bids in autumn 2025 to address the gaps and needs identified in Public Health Scotland's Gambling Health Needs Assessment.
- 1.4 Glasgow City Council, on behalf of Glasgow Community Planning Partnership, submitted a substantial bid and has now been successfully awarded £3.44m over three years (2026-29) to deliver 'The Glasgow Project', a citywide public-health response to gambling harms.

2. The Glasgow Project

- 2.1 The previous Glasgow Gambling Harms Group worked collaboratively to develop a whole-system approach to reducing gambling harms—known as 'the Glasgow Project'. Supported by three years of funding from the UK Gambling Commission settlement and Public Health Scotland (PHS), two part-time posts grew the partnership and action plan. This foundation enabled wide engagement across partners, the trialling of a number of initiatives, and set the local plans for a future levy income.
- 2.2 The 'Glasgow Project' made significant strides in addressing gambling harms through an early action plan with nine work streams, including awareness raising, stigma reduction, youth risk education, and peer-led initiatives. A refined Theory of Change and Systems Map were created with PHS, while a small grant scheme supported eight community projects focused on priority groups. Collaborative efforts led to some training for frontline staff via partnerships with Citizen's Advice and RCA Trust, and gambling harms education was promoted in schools.
- 2.3 The new award enables partners to build on the previous work and adopts a whole-system, prevention-focused model, embedding gambling harm prevention within existing services

and community infrastructure rather than creating parallel systems. The award will fund.

- ✓ a multi-agency partnership and team led by Health Improvement on behalf of the Community Planning Partnership
- ✓ gambling harm education embedded in schools and youth services.
- ✓ an enhanced Multiple Risk Service provision through the Youth Health Service for young people developing gambling issues
- ✓ specialist financial inclusion support for people affected by gambling-related debt.
- ✓ workforce training across health, community, and public services
- ✓ lived experience voice.
- ✓ a placed based investment in three neighbourhoods with the highest density of gambling outlets and related unhealthy commodities e.g. alcohol outlets
- ✓ a small grants programme to support community-led responses.
- ✓ robust evaluation and shared learning locally and nationally and some investment in analytics to support this

3. Scottish Gambling Levy developments

- 3.1 Two Integration Authorities (Clackmannanshire and Edinburgh) are award recipients, alongside several national bodies including Public Health Scotland, COSLA, the Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) and the Scottish Ambulance Service and two other territorial health boards (NHS Grampian and NHS Lanarkshire). This indicates that the Levy will be used to support local, regional, and Scotland-wide developments.
- 3.2 The third sector plays a substantial role in the Levy portfolio, with 15 voluntary organisations funded (Betknowmore, Cyrenians, Fast Forward, Gambling with Lives, Gracemount Mansion, MECOPP, RCA Trust, Simon Community Scotland, Space Scotland, TCA Dundee, Voluntary Action East Renfrewshire, Young Scot, Citizens Advice Scotland, GamCare and the Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland (The ALLIANCE)). A further award has been made to an academic institution (Dundee and Angus College).
- 3.3 These award recipients span prevention, early intervention, specialist support, financial inclusion, clinical professional leadership, research, and national coordination. Collectively recognising the critical role of the charitable sector in reaching affected communities, delivering trauma-informed support, and amplifying lived-experience voices alongside public services.
- 3.4 The Gambling Levy funding will enable and support the re-establishment of a Glasgow Project Partnership—one that is collaborative, informed by lived experience, and rooted in public health principles. Many of the other fund recipients across Scotland will seek to include Glasgow in their developments, which will be coordinated through the re-established partnership.
- 3.5 There remains strong commitment across partners who were previously involved to reconvene and build on the foundational work. These partners bring extensive expertise across prevention, treatment, support, research, and evaluation.
- 3.6 The diversity of partners also enables an intersectional response to gambling harms, particularly within the context of poverty. This includes collaboration with financial inclusion

services, efforts to influence the regulatory environment, and the use of data mapping to target interventions in neighbourhoods with a high concentration of land-based gambling premises (and related commodities e.g. alcohol outlets, fast food and other health harming commodities etc.).

4. Glasgow Project Timeline and Implementation

4.1 The Glasgow City Integration Authority (GCHSCP) approved a report of the Gambling Levy funding on the 14th of May 2026 to manage the Gambling Levy resources on behalf of Glasgow Community Planning Partnership. A completed EQIA was also provided.

4.2 Priorities for 2026/7 are:

- Recruitment to the Prevention Team – between GCHSCP, Education, third sector, Glasgow Life and information services
- Re-establishment of the Multi-Agency Gambling Harms Partnership Group
- Agreeing key Performance Indicators and Reporting Mechanisms
- Developing an Evaluation Framework
- Discussions and agreement on developing a Specialist Financial Inclusion Service for those financially harmed by gambling
- Increasing the specialist capacity within the Youth Health Service
- Launching the year one small grant fund targeted to the previous eight funded small grant projects
- Beginning gambling harms training delivery

5. Policy and Legislative Developments

5.1 The Council has consistently called for reform of the Gambling Act 2005, arguing that it does not adequately reflect Scotland's legal and regulatory arrangements or provide sufficient powers to address gambling-related harm. Following the previous gambling harms report, the Council wrote to the UK Government seeking legislative reform and fair recognition of Glasgow's funding needs. In response, Gambling Minister Baroness Twycross confirmed in September 2025 that the UK Government intended to make technical changes to ensure certain licensing powers apply in Scotland as they do in England and Wales, subject to parliamentary time.

5.2 Glasgow's response to the 2021 Gambling Act Review highlighted a longstanding anomaly in Scotland whereby Gambling Premises Licenses are issued by Licensing Boards, but local authority enforcement powers remain unclear and limited. The Council argued that the lack of clear inspection and enforcement powers has hindered effective regulation and contributed to the absence of premises licence reviews in Scotland.

5.3 While the introduction of the statutory Gambling Levy and reforms such as the Gambling Commission's Financial Risk Assessments are welcomed, several key issues remain. These include the absence of an independent gambling ombudsman and the continued operation of the statutory "aim to permit" principle, which limits the ability of local decision-makers to refuse applications despite concerns about deprivation, health inequalities, cumulative impacts or community wellbeing.

- 5.4 Recent reforms in England have strengthened the use of local evidence and Gambling Impact Assessments, reflecting a greater focus on place-based harms. However, the regulatory distinction between Licensing Boards and local authorities in Scotland remains unaddressed, creating a risk that UK-wide reforms fail to reflect Scotland's different licensing arrangements. The Council therefore continues to advocate for legislative change to strengthen enforcement powers, increase local influence over gambling premises decisions, and recognise gambling harm as a public health issue. Through the Glasgow Project, opportunities will continue to be pursued with COSLA, Public Health Scotland and other national partners to influence future policy and regulatory reform.

6. Odds On: They Win

- 6.1 An opportunity to join a Global Football Tournament counteracting gambling harms campaign –‘Odds Are: They Win’ led by CAN Digital, (Council Advertising Network) was highlighted by Public Health Scotland. Through links and relationships across the wider partnership within Glasgow, a local agreement on a consistent approach to treatment and support information was established. Key messages from the campaign toolkit were selected and shared across partners and social media platforms which included:
- Late night matches increase the pressure to gamble
 - Stopping gambling can help you with the relationships that matter the most
 - Gambling products are designed to be addictive and hard to resist
- 6.2 30 Local Authorities across the UK took part in the campaign. COSLA hosted support information within the My Job Scotland website. Campaign analytics demonstrated the value of pooling resources and collaboration in counteracting the predatory industry messaging and confirmed the importance of timely intervention and being able to provide signposting in real time. The campaign had an estimated reach of 2.5 million with engagement across Meta, Reddit and Snapchat. Four campaign messages evaluated as having the highest engagement, included the three messages selected by Glasgow.
- 6.3 A priority to develop a communications plan has been raised by wider partners across Glasgow and the CAN Digital campaign involvement has the potential to support further learning and collaboration, whilst also considering regional approaches and different audiences. There is scope to build on this collaborative campaign with narratives and lived experience practice examples and for training to be provided to the Glasgow Project Prevention team to support campaign and communications development

7. Recommendations

The Committee is asked to

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- Note the Glasgow Project Development Phase Time line and Implementation.