

9 November 2021

Hutt City Council
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Tēnā koe

Re: Submission on Class 4 Gambling Venue and Board Venue Policy

Regional Public Health (RPH) is the public health unit for the greater Wellington region (Wairarapa, Hutt Valley and Capital & Coast District Health Boards). Our purpose is to improve and protect the health of the population in the greater Wellington region with a focus on achieving equity.

RPH would like to formally support Option 1 outlined in your Statement of Proposal. This adopts a wellbeing approach through a sinking lid policy and consists of:

- No new Class 4 licenses will be granted by the Hutt City Council
- Venues licences would not be allowed to be transferred to another location
- Once a venue is closed for more than 6 months, it cannot be reopened by another operator.

RPH commends Council for taking a public health approach in preventing and minimising gambling harm. We believe Option 1 is most likely to create significant, long-lasting and equitable contributions to the health of our people.

RPH recommends implementing this approach within a prompt time frame. Prolonging this process can increase inequities by further harming vulnerable communities who are disproportionately affected by gambling, namely Māori and Pasifika living in high deprivation neighbourhoods.

RPH understands the need to change the current policy which has contributed to the proliferation of gambling harm in the Hutt. Therefore, we do not see Option 2 as a tenable approach.

RPH notes Option 3 would only be partially tenable. Despite keeping funds available to local organisations in the medium-term, maintaining the ability to relocate gaming machine licenses is counterintuitive to reducing the accessibility of gambling, and therefore, to reducing gambling harm.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback.

Nāku noa, nā

Dr Stephen Palmer
Medical Officer of Health

Peter Gush
General Manager