

**Licensing Sub-Committee**  
**Thursday, 5 August 2021**

**Present:** Councillor Buston\*, Councillor Cope\*, Councillor Harris\*,

**Substitutes:** None

\*attended remotely

**63. Appointment of Chairman**

*RESOLVED* that: Councillor Buston be appointed Chairman for the Sub-Committee meeting.

**64. Alcohol Licensed Premises Gaming Machine Permit – Mersea Island Holiday Park**

Sarah White, Senior Licensing Officer, attended the meeting remotely to present the report. The Sub-Committee were advised that the application had been made by Away Resorts Limited for an alcohol licensed premises gaming machine permit for six machines at its premises at Mersea Island Holiday Park. The application had been referred to the Sub-Committee as the result of the requirements of Colchester Borough Council (the Council)'s Policy which required any application for more than four machines to be referred to the Sub-Committee, and not as a result of any objections having been received.

Christopher Grunert, of John Gaunt and Partners Solicitors, attended the meeting to represent the applicant. The Sub-Committee heard that the applicant was an operator of significant size which utilised gaming machine permits at its other sites without issue. The facilities at the site were restricted for the use of guests to the park only, and were not open to the general public. The application was for six machines, one of which would be an age restricted category C 'fruit machine', and the remaining five machines would be category D machines which were not age restricted, and which were open to all to use in an adjacent family room. The category C machine would be located in the bar of the premises, within clear line of site of staff working there and in accordance with guidance and the Council's own Policy. Members of staff would regularly monitor all areas in which the gaming machines were sited, and the category D machines would not be sited near to the category C machine.

The applicant had adopted a 'Challenge 25 Policy' in respect of all age restricted items, including alcohol and the use of the category C gaming machine, and all members of staff were trained in this as part of their induction and in addition attended an annual training course provided by the gaming machine supplier.

The holiday park was a family friendly environment, and it was not intended to create a focussed gambling environment. Guests were subject to a good behaviour clause which could potentially be utilised to exclude them from the area if it was felt that the machines were being abused for any reason.

The Sub-Committee heard that the applicant felt that the size of the application was appropriate for the location and its guests, and was compliant with the Council's own policy and guidance issued by the Gambling Commission.

Nathan Roots, General Manager of the park, advised the Sub-Committee that there were two hundred mobile holiday homes on the park, with one hundred and eighty of these owner by holiday homeowners. At a maximum there would be approximately eight hundred guests in the park at any one time. The request for the gaming machines was consistent with the applicant's brand, and was intended to provide a service to guests when they were relaxing. The Sub-Committee were assured that the category C machine would be sited directly opposite the bar, and that even when the bar area was busy, it would still be clearly visible to staff working there. The category C machine would carry signage for problem gambling support charities, and additional signage would be displayed in the bar itself.

*RESOLVED* that: the licensed premises gaming machine permit applied for by Away Resorts Limited in respect of the premises Mersea Island Holiday Park, Fen Lane, East Mersea, Colchester, CO5 8UB be granted. The permit authorises the provision of 1 category C gaming machine, and 5 category D gaming machines.

### **Reasons for the decision**

In reaching its decision, the Sub-Committee examined all the documents submitted, and considered all the representations made at the hearing.

The Sub-Committee was particularly assured by the policies and procedures that had been adopted by the applicant to mitigate against gaming harms, including staff training programmes, signage, and machine placement.