



29 March 2026

London Borough of Croydon

Streets & Environment Department, Licensing Team
3rd Floor, Zone B
Bernard Weatherill House
8 Mint Walk
Croydon, CR0 1EA

Ref: APPLICATION FOR AN ADULT GAMING CENTRE PREMISES - 1393 LONDON ROAD, NORBURY SW164AN

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am writing on behalf of **Resistance Kitchen**, a community kitchen and food bank based in Norbury that supports homeless individuals and families living in poverty. In the last three years, the number of people turning to us for help has **tripled**. Just last week, we served **96 families** - a stark reflection of how deeply hardship now runs in our community.

At a time when Croydon residents are struggling to afford food and shelter, it is deeply troubling that the Council is considering approval for another **predatory gambling venue** on our high street. Rather than alleviating poverty, this decision would directly **fuel the conditions that cause it**.

The evidence of harm is unequivocal. The **2023 Office for Health Improvement and Disparities** report, *"The Economic and Social Cost of Harms Associated with Gambling in England,"* exposes the scale of the issue:

- Among London's homeless, gambling problems are **29 times more common** than in the general population (11.6% compared with 0.4%).
- Over **82%** developed gambling disorder **before** becoming homeless.
- People with gambling addictions face a **significantly higher risk of death** from any cause, in a given time period, relative to the general population.
- The link between gambling and suicide has also been well established with **more than one suicide everyday** directly related to gambling - **496 deaths a year**.

The **2021 University of Bristol** study confirms that gambling outlets are **ten times more likely** to be located in deprived areas than in affluent ones, while only 10% of food shops serve those same struggling communities. According to the **Gambling Commission**, London already has the highest number of gambling premises in the country - and **Croydon ranks among the worst**, with **55 registered sites** as of March 2026.

The proximity of existing venues also reveals a shocking density within a few short metres of the proposed location. Starting at the former NatWest Bank building (the site in question), there is a **Paddy Power** betting shop just **three doors away**. **Across the street, three doors further**, sits **William Hill**. Move only **two more doors down**, and you reach **Betfred**. Roughly **a dozen doors beyond that**, the old **Barclays Bank** building is already being converted by the same company, **Merkur Slots Ltd**, into yet another gambling venue - and just **three doors beyond that**, on the opposite side, stands **Ladbrokes**.

In the span of a short walk, residents encounter **five separate gambling outlets**, each feeding off the vulnerability and desperation of the same small community. This saturation is not coincidence - it is **systematic targeting** of the poor.

As the Bristol study concluded, *“Rather than having greater access to the facilities, services and opportunities that help people to improve their lives, those in more deprived communities are disproportionately faced with choices that can often prove harmful.”*

Approving another gambling licence here would be an unconscionable act - one that prioritizes private profit over public welfare. It would deepen addiction, accelerate homelessness, and undo the hard work of countless local groups trying to keep people afloat.

We therefore **urge the Council to reject this application without hesitation**. The people of Croydon deserve protection, not predation.

We await your firm and principled response.

Yours sincerely

Abbas Ali

Resistance Kitchen

www.ResistanceKitchen.uk