



STAFF REPORT

TO: Environment & Planning Committee

FROM: David Lewis, Co-Ordinator Regulatory

REFERENCE: E503

SUBJECT: **REVIEW OF THE GAMING POLICY – EP07/02/08** - Report Prepared for 7 February Meeting

1. BACKGROUND

The Tasman District Council produced a Gaming Venues Policy under the Gambling Act 2003 that was adopted in May 2004. Under this Act there is a requirement to review the Policy within three years of its adoption.

The objectives of the Policy were to minimise the harm to the community caused by gambling. This was to be effected by controlling the growth of gaming machine gambling in the District and ensuring that the Council and the community had influence over the provision of new gambling in the District whilst allowing those who wished to participate in gambling to do so in a responsible manner.

At the time of adoption of the Policy there were 194 pokie-type gaming machines in the district giving a resident to machine ratio of 1 to 224. This ratio was the tenth lowest in the country. However, there had been a 29% increase in the number of machines (an extra 43) over the previous two year period which, if that trend had continued, would have been a matter of concern. (It was realised at the time that this was probably due to machines being installed at venues to try and beat the proposed restrictions.). Consequently, in setting the Policy, Council did not set a cap on the number of gaming machines but made provision for such a cap to be imposed if it was determined to be necessary. Other controls on the establishment of gambling venues and machine numbers were also imposed.

2. COMMENT

Since the adoption of the Gaming Policy there has been a net increase of two gaming machines in the district over the three year period. This has arisen from the installation of 27 new machines on three premises and the removal of 25 machines from two premises. Consequently, using the latest census figures, the resident to machine ratio has dropped to 1 to 234. It is not envisaged that there will be further significant increases in the near future in the number of gaming machines. In this respect the present Policy appears to be appropriate.

If there are no proposed changes to the present policy it appears in terms of Section 83 of the Local Government Act 2002 (Special Consultative Procedures) that the Council is not required to undertake the stipulated consultative procedures. However, for the review to be effective, public input should be considered.

3. RECOMMENDATION

It is therefore recommended that the Tasman District Council does not amend the Venues Policy under the Gambling Act 2003 but calls for and considers public comment on this Policy in terms of the Special Consultative Procedures under Section 83 of the Local Government Act 2002 as a review of this Policy.

David Lewis
Co-Ordinator Regulatory