

Motion for Council - 22 October 2026

Motion No. 1

Proposer – Councillor Sexton

Seconder – Councillor Geach

Motion
Since 2020, the Government has relaxed the planning regulations to allow commercial units to change to a much wider range of uses without the need for planning permission. Under Use Class E (Commercial, Business and Service) of the Use Classes Order, it is possible to change to a variety of different types of shops, offices, cafes, restaurants, and other uses, without planning permission. Consequently, the Council does not have any control over the future use of these units. That this Council: 1. Recognises residents’ concerns about the changing mix of businesses in Spelthorne. 2. Welcomes Andy Burnham’s proposals to strengthen local powers over high-street planning and business mix. 3. Supports strengthening these proposals to give councils greater control over changes of use and help create thriving, diverse high streets. 4. Calls on Government to adopt these measures swiftly. 5. Asks the Leader to write to Government in support and report back to Council.
Background Information
"PM vows to save “hollowed out high streets” with crackdown on vape and betting shops High streets that have been hollowed out by the unchecked spread of vape stores, betting shops, and rogue businesses that do little to serve local communities are set to face a crackdown under new powers announced by the Prime Minister today [Tuesday 11 August]. Prime Minister's Office, 10 Downing Street • Local people to get a real say over what opens on their high street as Prime Minister hands new powers to communities and councils • Planning loopholes closed and outdated “Aim to Permit” rule to be scrapped to stop unwanted vape and betting shops taking over high streets • Dodgy businesses linked to organised crime to be shut down for longer under tougher powers for police and local authorities • Part of the Prime Minister’s plan to put power back in the hands of local communities and to bring back hope High streets that have been hollowed out by the unchecked spread of vape stores, betting shops, and rogue businesses that do little to serve local communities are set to face a crackdown under new powers announced by the Prime Minister today [Tuesday 11 August]. The measures will put communities back in control of their high streets by giving local people a real say over what businesses can open in their town centres and how local high streets should

look, as well as tougher powers for the police and local authorities to crack down on rogue operators.

As part of the PM's plans to save Britain's high streets, the Government intends to revoke the Gambling Act's outdated "Aim to Permit" rule, which currently restricts the ability of councils to refuse new betting shops and 24-hour slot machine shops even where there are strong local concerns.

The change would give communities and councils a stronger say over whether new betting shops are right for their area, helping stop them spreading unchecked across struggling high streets.

The government will also require planning permission for vape shops to finally give local people and councils a say over whether they open and to stop them opening near schools. The definition of a vape shop will also be tightened to stop businesses getting around the new rules by claiming to be a general convenience store or retailer.

Adult Gaming Centres (AGCs), which are adult-only venues offering up to 24-hour access to gambling machines such as slot and fruit machines, will also require planning permission under proposals due to come into effect at the start of next year.

The changes come as vape shops and adult gaming centres have spread rapidly across many town centres. Unlike most businesses that communities raise concerns about, they can currently open without planning permission under the same rules that apply to coffee shops and clothing retailers.

Analysis by the Centre for Social Justice has found that Britain has lost nearly 1,800 pubs and bars, while the number of vape and tobacco shops increased to almost 2,200 since 2016. Similar concerns have been raised about the clustering of gambling premises in local communities, particularly in more deprived areas. In the London Borough of Brent alone, there are more than 80 gambling venues, including in Harlesden where there are 10 betting shops within a 10-minute walk.

The maximum length of Closure Orders will also double from six to 12 months, giving police and local authorities more time to investigate premises linked to organised crime, pursue prosecutions, and prevent rogue businesses - from illegal vape shops, and dodgy barber shops - reopening before investigations are complete.

High streets sit at the heart of communities across the country, but too many have been hollowed out by years of decline. The loss of shops, services and community spaces has left many people feeling like the places they grew up in are changing beyond recognition and the decline of our high streets has mirrored a wider sense of decline across Britain.

The Government is taking practical action to give local people a real say over the future of their high streets, including shaping how the new measures will work in practice.

Prime Minister Andy Burnham said:

"For many people, the high streets they grew up with have been hollowed out and become unrecognisable over decades of decline. The rise of vape shops, betting shops and rogue operators have replaced the shops, services, and community spaces that people are crying out for.

"That's not on. I said we would improve Britain's high streets, and that's exactly what we are starting to do. We're putting communities back in control and giving local people a real say over what opens on their high street. Local councils will be given the powers they need to rein in unwanted shops and bring town centres back to life.

"High streets are the beating heart of local communities, but for too long Westminster has stood by while they have been in decline. This government is committed to restoring our high streets and bringing back hope across Britain."

Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government Angela Rayner said:

"People know when their high street isn't working for them. Whether it's the vape shop or betting shops that's opened with no say from locals, the shopfront that's seen better days, or the sense that nobody's in control.

"These problems have built up over years, but this government won't leave councils and communities powerless to crackdown on everyday eyesores that blight our high streets.

"That's why we're giving local leaders the power to say no to what doesn't belong on their high street, and the tools to fix it themselves."

East Midlands Mayor Claire Ward said:

"Our local shops and high streets hold a mirror up to our economy. If that mirror shows us nothing but vape shops, gambling shops, and crime, it destroys pride in place. People, councils, and local businesses should be able to work together to shape their high streets, but as things are, they lack the levers to ensure that everyone plays fair."

"This announcement gives places the chance to take back control, ensuring that no one type of business can monopolise the high street and that flagrant criminality can be dealt with. Local powers given to locally accountable councils, together with investment led by regional Mayors will help diverse high streets to flourish."

Joshua Nicholson, Head of Housing and Communities at the Centre for Social Justice said:

"Britain's high streets have been hijacked by a growing number of dodgy vape shops, mini marts, and barbers, many of which are linked to organised crime.

"The Government is right to give councils new powers to say no to these dodgy shops. High street renewal is vital to restoring security within our communities."

The Government will also work with councils to improve the appearance of high streets and help restore pride in local town centres. In too many places, poor-quality shopfronts, garish neon signs, and oversized logos have prompted complaints from local people and contributed to high streets feeling less welcoming, at a time when the rise of online shopping has already put increasing pressure on town centres.

To help turn this around, the Government will set clearer expectations for the design and appearance of high street shopfronts. Working with the Planning Advisory Service, it will identify the best examples of attractive, thriving town centres from across the country and provide councils with practical guidance on improving the look and feel of local high streets.

Over the next six months, councils will be supported to improve local high streets, drawing on successful examples such as Cross Street in Oswestry and Keynsham High Street. Building on this, the government will set out further action to tackle the long-term decline that has hollowed out town centres and make high streets places people want to visit, shop, and spend time in again.

The measures build on wider action to tackle rogue businesses linked to organised crime, including a £30 million crackdown on money laundering, tax evasion, and illegal working, backed by raids, shop closures and cash seizures.

It also builds on action the Prime Minister has taken in his first weeks in office to back local communities and town centres, including a 20% cut to business rates for pubs, social clubs and live music venues across England from next year – changes which are fully funded including through reviewing reliefs for businesses that do not make a positive contribution to their communities, like vape shops. The government will also return to the commitment to reform the wider business rates system, including Small Business Rates Relief, at the Budget.

It forms part of the Government's wider drive to restore pride in local places, shift power out of Westminster and back into communities, and bring more people back to town centres."

Link to report:

<https://gbr01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.spelthorne.gov.uk%2Freport&data=05%7C02%7CCommitteeServices%40spelthorne.gov.uk%7C377b7200fb3d4b9acca508df17ae0a58%7C77d64243483a43b8a9120fe80eb82f90%7C0%7C0%7C639255708438062565%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUsIlYiOiIwLjAuMDAwMCIsIlAiOiJXaW4zMilslkFOljoiTWFpbCIsIlIdUljoyfQ%3D%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=DKzRPsA9dN3cPixryLXzX2U9QEuOcrOIY1RXP4J5aJQ%3D&reserved=0>

Motion No. 2

Proposer – Councillor Williams

Seconder – Councillor Button

Motion
I propose that the Council joins the Coalition to End Gambling Ads (CEGA) to help end gambling advertising, to help protect the residents of Spelthorne Borough.
Background Information
The Coalition to End Gambling Ads (CEGA) is a group of organisations committed to protecting public health by stopping gambling from being promoted. As of June 2026 CEGA's members include 15 local authorities, the Association of Directors of Public Health, the Royal Society for Public Health, the Faculty of Public Health, leading gambling harm and mental health groups; charities, campaign groups, a housing association, credit unions, and several football clubs. CEGA's position on the need to end gambling advertising to protect the population is based on the best available academic evidence. In addition in 2025 CEGA commissioned More in Common to poll the British public's attitudes to gambling and gambling advertising, and can confidently say that a majority of the public would like all gambling advertising to be banned. CEGA's aim in 2026 is to create a groundswell of backing for changes to gambling advertising that will support the Government to change policy in this area. Membership is free. Expectations of members are limited to being publicly displayed in CEGA materials and on the website, and to what each member is able to offer and take part in beyond that.

Motion No. 3

Proposer – Councillor Barker

Seconder – Councillor Bateson

Heathrow Third Runway Motion
This Council opposes the proposed third runway at Heathrow Airport due to the significant detrimental impact it would have on our local communities, including increased traffic and congestion, air pollution, noise and the wider environmental impact, including the contribution of air travel to climate change.”