



**GBG Licensing Group
By Teams
28 October 2025**

Attendees:

Simon Reynolds (Buzz Bingo)	Debbie Bollard (Hough & Bollard)
Sam Moore (Buzz Bingo)	David Lucas
Elizabeth Varley (Poppleston Allen)	Peter Hannibal (GBG)
Antony Denby (Leisure Electronics)	Charlotte Meller (GBG)

Apologies: Andrew Cotton

Item 1 Minutes from July 2025 meeting

1. The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the discussions.

Item 2 The “Sheffield Case”

2. Discussed the recent [Spelthorne Licensing Committee](#) decision not to grant an AGC, reflecting on similarities with some of the points made in the Royal Amusements vs Sheffield Council Magistrates decision (“the Sheffield Case”) about invisible harms, despite the fact that Spelthorne’s legal counsel had told the Committee they could not consider the representations from Public Health, nor use the same arguments as in Sheffield.
3. There were errors in the legal process leading up to the Hearing and delays in providing the decision. Additionally no inspections had been carried out for over 5 years, and the LA policy statement was out of date (since updated).
4. Noted there have been other applications around the country where arguments from the Sheffield case were being used and whilst licences had still been granted, it was usually with conditions for things that the operator would be doing anyhow, and therefore were not hindering the operation of the premises, but wouldn’t normally be added as a condition.
5. Concern expressed that the Commission is actively promoting the Sheffield case to LAs and that this would become more of a trend.
6. Noted that Nick Arron and Dan Waugh would be speaking at the IOL conference in November about the concerns with the Sheffield case.
7. **ACTION: DB to advise on the outcome of her engagement with Three Raymond Buildings.**

Item 3 DCMS Bingo/Cat D Consultation

Bingo licensing proposals:

Queries raised to date by Members include:

- Clarity over what is the total area- does it include toilets/lobby etc
- Distance between bingo areas and machines – can the distance be less if there is a brick wall in between
- Can bingo be played in a machine area
- What if there is bingo variant machine next to a table
- Some clubs have mixed areas of lounge/machines/EBTs

Matters raised during the meeting included:

- Disproportionate costs for making the changes or applying to vary
- What safeguards will be in place to prevent LAs from refusing what will be a technical variation to meet the legislative requirements
- If representations are made/hearings required, this will add to the costs
- Should it apply retrospectively or just to new applications
- Implementation timescales for this versus the potential timing of the introduction of CIAs
- What about guidance – will this be issued in advance and will LAs have sufficient information to deal with applications
- Is there a simpler solution e.g. minimum number of seats, or a split like small and large casinos

Noted that the last thing that LAs want is more hearings as resources are already tight for LAs.

Category D proposals:

- Already seeing some LAs refusing to grant UFEC permits if intend to have reel-based Cat D machines as they concerned about the potential to attract young people into gambling.
- Will be implications for some premises if they do have to move the machines into an over 18s areas. **ACTION GBG to discuss with DB.**

Item 4 Cumulative Impact Policies

8. Stil unclear what legislative vehicle will be used to introduce CIAs for gambling. Noted that there the concerns about the benefits of CIAs under LA03 (“blunt instrument”) and that their numbers are reducing.
9. Discussions with DCMS about the role of Public Health & CIAs.

Item 5 [“Reforming the licensing system – call for evidence”](#)

10. GBG will be submitting a short response regarding some of the gambling in pubs related recommendations that were included in the original licensing sprint and suggesting that some of the proposals would equally be welcomed in relation to GA05. **ACTION: let us know if there are other issues we should be including.**

Item 6 Casino Guidance

11. Andrew Cotton has ensured that the errors and omissions in the GC's casino guidance have been corrected but there are still a few more to be addressed. **ACTION let us know of any other points requiring clarification.**

Dates for 2026 (all by Teams, 10 – 11.30)

- Tuesday 27 January
- Tuesday 21 April
- Tuesday 28 July
- Tuesday 3 November

A Team invite will be sent out after each meeting for the next meeting, but you may want to pencil these in your diaries now.