

Romford's Wetherspoon pub granted a seventh machine licence after a council debate says yes

PUB MACHINES

The Moon and Stars in Romford is responding to popular demand by adding a seventh gaming machine, after representatives from **JD Wetherspoon** won over Havering Council during a meeting last week.

JD Wetherspoon has been granted approval to add a seventh gaming machine at its Romford pub the Moon and Stars, less than six months after doubling its machine offer during a major renovation.

Havering Councillors had said they were "slightly concerned" by the proposals, but Wetherspoon representatives were able to allay fears by detailing the extensive customer protection measures it has in place.

"Representatives from the popular chain said more customers had been using the fruit machines since the refurbishment and it would be 'financially beneficial' to add another," reported The Havering Daily.

"Committee chair Philippa Crowder pressed the representatives on whether they could monitor them during peak hours, but was told all seven would be



'fully visible' to both bar staff and roaming floor managers."

Committee member Jane Keane added she was "slightly concerned" regarding the "cumulative impact" on South Street, stating the area is "very sensitive with older people with particular addiction problems of many

types."

"We do house many people like that in the South Street area, so I would like to see that addressed."

In response to the council's questions, Wetherspoon explained that under-18s do not have access to the machines and that all staff

are trained in Challenge 21, noting that there is also no ATM outside the pub.

Approving the application, Keane acknowledged the importance of businesses investing in their premises, adding "no one wants to see an empty high street."

Machine play

Havering Daily reported...

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Mega City sets opening date for new Slough site

FEC

Joel Grewal, Mandeep Dhanoa and John Dhanoa have confirmed their new Mega City FEC venture will open in Slough this October, as work begins on converting the former Wilko into a one-stop entertainment destination.

When finished, the 55,000 sq ft venue will offer "something for everyone," with an arcade, AR darts, bowling, bumper cars, karaoke, flashpads, VR experiences, batting cages, clay shooting simu-



Gambling Business Group outlines programme for workshops at ARE Expo

EVENTS

The Gambling Business Group has released preliminary information about its upcoming programme of workshops and seminars that it will be running during the inaugural ARE Expo on 29-30 April at the Workshops in Manchester.

Alongside the GBG's High Street Hub the influential trade group will be partnering with its members to provide the workshops series for the industry.

With safer gambling and the Gambling Act Review providing the backdrop of the regulatory landscape, GBG will focus on innovation in the gambling sector alongside legislative developments and the future of the industry.

Charlotte Meller, General Manager at the Gambling Business Group, explained: "I don't think anyone in the industry is under any delusion that the regulatory adjustments over the coming year



or two are going to be all-consuming. The latest round of consultations are a sign of that. We're planning to use ARE as a forum and timely opportunity to identify the big commitments and offer a

steer to the wider land-based sectors with the support of our members and partners who are experts in this arena.

With the industry seminars scheduled for the opening day (Tuesday 19 April), followed by workshops with local authority licensing officers and the Institute of Licensing on the Wednesday, GBG has identified a draft outline of topics.

Better Change will be discussing how to turn 'positive play' into a profitable play for operators; the mechanics and implications of forthcoming digital proof of age will be explored by Obi Udano of the Age Check Certification Scheme and the Team from Innovative Technology Limited; Betsmart Consulting will address how to raise the level of customer interaction and the typical pitfalls for the land based sector.

And a panel session on Martyn's Law is being organised taking in the legal, GDPR and security issues of The Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Bill which will have far reaching implications for customer facing businesses. Lending their expertise will be Ewen McGregor/ Piers Warne TLT, Richard Dutton, Elias Partnership, and Craig Murray, Link Integrated.

The workshops will run for 45 minutes including an interactive Q&A of circa 10-15 minutes. Further information on other workshops and seminars being planned for the event will follow.

lators and a laser tag arena.

And you feel the mood of excitement in the despatches. "Mega City provides unforgettable experiences for families, young adults, corporate teams, and partygoers," said a spokesperson.

"With bookable and non-bookable activities, late-night hours, and the capacity to host high-volume corporate events, Mega City truly offers something for everyone. Whether it's a kids' party, a date night, or a team-building day."

The Dhanoas and Grewal already operate Airport Bowl in Heathrow, and last month stated that Mega City represents "a wonderful opportunity to rejuvenate the High Street and create an exciting destination for the community."