



Coinslot

INTERNATIONAL

June 26 - July 2, 2026 • No. 2999 • www.coinslot.uk

From Burnham would, to what Burnham could: how can the Prime Minister in waiting deliver change?

POLITICS

As rapid as the Great British coup has been, **Andy Burnham's** impending anointment from King of the North to kingpin of the UK will have far reaching consequences, not least for the gambling industry. Just how far, only time will tell. But the baggage Burnham brings to Number 10 Downing Street has anti-gambling stickers plastered all over it. Coinslot takes a quick look at what Burnham would, and possibly could do.

Three weeks ago, immediately following Andy Burnham's by-election victory in Makerfield, Coinslot ran a short story entitled "Burnham signals danger ahead for the industry?"

In it, the paper quoted an interview the new Prime Minister in waiting gave to the Mirror: "It's about giving more control over the high street," he told the red top. "I'm a very big critic of adult gaming centres, you can see they're open 24/7 and all the social harms that come from that. Again, councils need stronger control to stop the spread of those things."

The question then was simple: what? The councils and the Gambling Commission don't have enough control already?

It seems to be a message that has still to make its mark on the self-professed anti-AGC advocate heading towards the Prime Ministerial office.

Whether Burnham is one for turning, the next few weeks might tell. But with radical change now the vision of the soon to be coronated MP, one must expect that objective to be applied to all the departments affecting the gambling industry.

DEALING THE INDUSTRY NEW HANDS?

There will be disquiet around the industry that change is almost inevitable at DCMS.

Secretary of State Lisa Nandy is a very close ally of Burnham, she will almost certainly be set for higher office.

In that scenario, history shows a secretarial move will likely lead to ministerial changes.

Given that Baroness Twycross holds the post on a part-time basis, and knowing



Burnham's strong anti-gambling leanings, he may well look to a more zealous occupant.

That would certainly be a waste of two years invested in a minister finally understanding the febrile nature of the portfolio she holds.

But, given his canny political instincts, Burnham might see that as an option too far at this particular moment - an economic reprieve may well

suit his growth requirements better. Although some argue that rolling his sleeves up for a fight with the gambling industry will rally the backbench troops.

Irrespective, it is not a good look for UK politics that in the seven years since the Gambling Act Review process started, the industry still has no Gambling Act 'fit for the digital age'; and the political stage has seen 5 Prime Minis-

ters, 6 Gambling Ministers and 7 Secretary of State at DCMS.

WHAT WILL NEW LEADERSHIP MEAN FOR THE GAR?

Most analysts currently suggest there is little Andy Burnham could or would probably do with the GAR.

Gambling may be high on the emotional stakes, but very low on the real problems the

new government will need to address. The economy, borrowing, defence, prices and affordability are the immediate concerns at No 10.

His key intervention, and this is a concern, could be to intervene on the pace of the introduction of Gambling Impact Assessments currently under discussion - and worse still withdrawing Aim to Permit from the statute.

Politically good for rallying radical backbenchers, but economically concerning, Burnham may wait this one out and let democracy do its job through the parliamentary procedures; after all, he is facing personal criticism for taking the Prime Minister's role without being elected either by the public or his party and with no policy scrutiny.

THE ECONOMICS OF A NEW LEADER

Growth will almost certainly be the cornerstone of Burnham's programme. Regulatory restrictions on busi-

ness will have to be lifted not least because the government needs money as much as UK plc which is under intense strain.

And that will require tax increases: the gaming and gambling industry will obviously be in the cross hairs.

The new chancellor - or even the current one with a new remit - will have the tough balancing act of raising Treasury income through taxation whilst ensuring enough room for businesses to maintain jobs.

And yet, from Burnham would, to what Burnham could: that will remain the crucial question.

The new PM has to deliver immediate change and an instant joined up strategy for growth - in an economy that isn't motoring.

And for the amusements, gaming and gambling sector, another change at DCMS will result in no change and no growth - just new faces on the same tired old learning curve.

Seven years of a botched GAR is clear evidence of that.

Peter Hannibal:
"You cannot tax businesses on the high street into growth. You cannot over-regulate businesses into growth..."



Peter Hannibal, Chief Executive of the Gambling Business Group, is acutely alert to the uncertainty that the current political upheaval brings. "I think the land based gambling industry will be watching proceedings with the same sense of alarm as every other business sector in the country. True, we have our own very specific issues with a Gambling Act Review that's heading into its eighth year and is effectively driving our sector back to the beginning of this century rather than looking forward to a progressive new framework," he told Coinslot.

"But, every one of our membership and those of all our trade group colleagues, are businesses first and foremost, many are traditional family businesses and international companies investing in the UK. And they are struggling to drive their local economies because of the failure of central government to manage a clear strategy for growth and development."

And, like the soon to be anointed Prime Minister Andy Burnham, Hannibal said it straight: "You cannot tax businesses on the high street into growth. You cannot over-regulate businesses into growth. And you cannot drive an economy to growth through policy of emotion over policy led by evidence."

And there was a direct message to the Burnham project with regard to the new government's gambling policy: "Licenced Gambling is currently the most highly regulated sector on the high street, answerable to the regulatory control of both the Gambling Commission and the local authorities. Every business pays into an annual levy totalling £100m plus for protective measures for players and every business pays local and central taxes to keep their high streets alive. And all the while, the number of gambling operators on UK high streets has declined to their lowest level in decades. If this pattern continues, the high street will be deci-

imated and players will move to unlicensed online sites where there is no protection at all. We need a progressive approach: one that will protect our businesses, our high streets, our employees and our players. That is the progressive framework needed for growth."

And Hannibal was quick to add a positive note: "The legitimate, regulated land based industry is so important to the high street economy. And there is so much it can do to revive our towns and their prosperity. The industry wants to be part of the conversation and the collaboration - and it's being blocked out. We need to do more ourselves in raising the profile of the excellent service and customer care that the legitimate land-based businesses provide, in many cases far better than the businesses that we sit alongside on those high streets. And if they are not playing machines and bingo with us Mr Burnham, where would you prefer them to be playing?"