

Draft Class 4 Gambling Venue Policy and Board Venue Policy - Statement of Proposal

About the policy

Council has reviewed its Class 4 Gambling Venue Policy and Board Venue Policy which regulates any new class 4 gambling machines or new board venues in the District. All district and city councils must have these policies in place.

Class 4 gambling venues are places where gambling activity uses a gaming machine (also known as 'pokie machines'), other than a casino, takes place. In the Thames-Coromandel district these venues are clubs (i.e. bowling clubs and RSAs) or hotels and taverns. These pokie machines are owned by gaming societies for community fundraising.

Board venues are places where the main business carried out is providing racing betting or sports betting services (also known as 'TAB venues').

This policy provides Council and the community an opportunity to have a say in whether any new class 4 gambling venues or TAB venues may establish in the district, and if so, where they go. It cannot cancel an existing licence. The New Zealand Government, through the Department of Internal Affairs, has the ability to suspend or cancel a licence.

Council's proposal

The 2013 amendment of the Gambling Act 2003 required councils to undertake a social impact assessment, and taking this into account when the policies were next reviewed. This assessment is available in a separate document on Council's website www.tcdc.govt.nz, or by requesting a copy from Council by calling 07 868 0200.

At present, Council has a 'sinking lid' approach which means that it does not allow for any new class 4 gambling machines or class 4 gambling venues in the District. It does allow for new TAB venues, subject to Council consent. These new TAB venues are not able to have pokie machines as per the sinking lid approach.

Based on the social impact assessment, Council is not proposing any changes to the sinking lid approach.

The changes

Council is proposing the inclusion of relocations and mergers in the Class 4 Gambling Venue Policy. No substantial changes have been made to the Board Venue Policy.

The changes ensure that a local business is not unduly affected through circumstances outside their control such as fire or natural disasters, as well as allowing clubs to merge. The proposed changes maintain the District's sinking lid approach, with the number of gaming machines staying the same or decreasing.

The current policies have also been updated for clarity and have been simplified to only include relevant information.

1. Relocations

Council is proposing that a new relocation clause be included in the policies, as provided for in the 2013 amendment of the Gambling Act 2003. This relocation is subject to strict conditions. A relocation would only be applicable if the class 4 gambling venue was affected by natural disaster, fire, or if the property was purchased under the Public Works Act 1981.

If the class 4 gambling venue met this criteria, the new location would need to be an appropriate distance away from educational facilities, places of worship and other community facilities, as well as other licensed class 4 gambling venues and TAB venues. There would also be an opportunity if possible for the venue to eventually re-locate to the original site, for example after repairs or similar.

The relocated venue would only be able to operate less than or the same number of gaming machines than the previous venue.

2. Mergers

Council is proposing to allow class 4 venues to merge. This will allow two or more class 4 gambling venues to combine into one. In reflecting the existing sinking lid policy, the total number of machines in the new venue will be limited to whatever is the least of:

- the total number of machines from the venues prior to the merger, or;
- the number of merging venues multiplied by 9 (so for two merging venues, this number would be 18).

Have your say

The submission period for the Draft Class 4 Gambling Venue Policy and Board Venue Policy is open from 4pm on 9 February 2015 and closes at 4pm on 9 March 2015.

There are many different ways for you to tell us what you think about this policy.

- Electronically using our online consultation portal at www.tcdc.govt.nz ,
- email customer.services@tcdc.govt.nz,
- post to Thames-Coromandel District Council, Private Bag, Thames,
- fax to (07) 868 0234, or
- drop off your submission at one of the Council offices in Thames, Coromandel, Whitianga or Whangamata.

Hearings

Please tell us if you would like to attend a hearing to speak to Council in support of your submission, and include a telephone number and email address to ensure we can contact you to arrange an approximate time for your presentation. Hearings will be held in Thames on 15 April 2015.

What happens next?

After the hearings, the Council will consider all the submissions received and make decisions on any amendments to the policy as a result. You will be notified of Council's decision in writing. Council will then adopt the final policy in May 2015.

Submission form

Will be designed and completed once details of the policy are confirmed.

Questions

1. Council is proposing to continue with its sinking lid approach in respect to class 4 gaming machines.

Do you agree with this proposal?

Y/N

Comments:

2. Council is proposing a new relocation policy for class 4 venues.

Do you agree with this proposal?

Y/N

Comments:

3. Council is proposing a new merging policy for class 4 venues.

Do you agree with this proposal?

Y/N

Comments:

4. Please record any further comments you have on this policy.