

Statement of Proposal

Gambling Venue Policy

We are reviewing our rules on local pokie machines and the TAB, and want to know what you think.

**HAVE
YOUR SAY**

Tell us by midday,
Monday
7 September
2026

TIMARU



DISTRICT COUNCIL

Te Kaunihera ā-Rohe
o Te Tihi o Maru

Find out more
timaru.govt.nz

What is this consultation about?

Council is reviewing its Gambling Venue Policy.

The proposed changes relate to:

- the maximum number of pokie machines allowed at a venue
- updates to planning zone names following the Proposed District Plan

No other significant policy changes are proposed.

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*the track changes are relative to the current policy

Summary

The Gambling Venue Policy primarily sets rules for the number of Class 4 (commonly known as pokie) gaming machines and venues, and where they may be located. It also contains our approach to TAB venues within the District. It allows for pokie and TAB settings in the Timaru District to be set with regard to local perspectives.

Timaru District Council has reviewed its policy and is proposing that it is renewed with amendments. These amendments are to increase the permitted number of pokie machines per venue from seven to nine, and to update zone references to reflect the Proposed District Plan.

This Statement of Proposal seeks to inform public feedback on these changes. We invite your views and feedback via the submission process outlined in this document.

This Statement of Proposal includes:

- The draft policy and its rationale;
- An outline of other reasonably practicable options, and their perceived advantages and disadvantages, and;
- A description of the consultation and submission process.

Submissions are invited until Monday 7 September at midday.

At the end of this period, Council will:

- Conduct hearings for anyone who wishes to speak in support of their submission;
- Consider all written and oral submissions, and;
- Decide on the final policy.

Find out more at:

www.timaru.govt.nz/gambling-review-2026.

Why does Council need this policy?

Every council in New Zealand is legally required to have a Gambling Venue Policy. It sets rules for where pokie venues and stand-alone TAB venues can be located in the district.

Background

The Gambling Act 2003 and the Racing Industry Act 2020 require all territorial authorities (city and district councils) to have a policy relating to Class 4 gambling venues and TAB New Zealand venues in their district. Council's current policy combines both Class 4 and Agency venues.

This policy must be reviewed every three years, taking into account the social impacts of gambling. For this review cycle, Council has updated the Social Impact Assessment (SIA) prepared for the last review; there has been a focus on what has changed in the intervening period. The SIA update can be read on the Council website at: www.timaru.govt.nz/gambling-review-2026

The oversight of Class 4 Gambling venues and Agency (TAB) venues sits with the Department of Internal Affairs (DIA). However, territorial authorities are responsible for issuing consents to venues that wish to provide Class 4 or TAB gambling services. Essentially, DIA may issue a licence to a venue once Council has issued consent for that particular venue in accordance with this policy.

Quick Facts

What is Class 4 Gambling?

Class 4 gambling covers gaming machines (commonly known as pokie machines) in venues that are not casinos.

What are Agency venues?

This deals with stand-alone TAB venues, where TAB gambling is the primary purpose of the facility.

The policy does not cover TAB outlets, where TAB machines are part of, but not the primary purpose of, a facility.

Gambling in the Timaru District

As of December 2025, DIA statistics indicated that there were 12 pokie venues and 156 pokie machines in the Timaru District, predominately located in Timaru. This is a decrease of one venue and 10 machines from the previous policy review. Council gave TLA consent to apply for a licence for a new venue to obtain seven pokie machines at a meeting in July 2026. At the time of writing, the Department of Internal Affairs is yet to receive the application from the applicant and no licence has yet been granted. If it is granted, there would be the same number of venues and three fewer machines compared to the previous policy review."

There are currently no TAB venues in the District.

The policy proposes to continue a permissive approach to pokie venues and TAB venues being established, subject to some conditions such as zoning.

What does the Policy cover?

Under the Gambling Act 2003, Council's policy:

- Must specify whether or not Class 4 venues may be established and, if so, where they may be located within the District;
- May specify any restrictions on the maximum number of gaming machines that may be operated at a venue, and;
- May include a relocation policy.

The Gambling Act 2003 sets a maximum number of nine machines for new venues. Council is able to set a lower limit through its policy.

Under the Racing Industry Act 2020, Council's policy:

- Must specify whether or not new TAB venues may be established and, if so, where they may be located within the District.

What does the Policy not cover?

Under the Gambling Act 2003, Council's policy cannot:

- Reduce the number of machines in existing venues;
- Control the hours of operation for gambling venues;
- Close down an existing gambling venue;
- Control what happens to the proceeds of gambling, i.e. where and to whom the proceeds are distributed, and;
- Regulate casinos, internet gambling, or Lotto outlets.

What's proposed to change?

All other amendments not listed below are considered non-material. For example, the definitions have been removed from the appendix to the body of the policy.

Proposed material amendment

Increase the maximum permitted number of pokie machines in new or existing venues

Current
7 machines



Proposed
9 machines

Why?

Council considers increasing the number of permitted machines could increase the funds available to support community organisations, via the funding mechanism in place under the Gambling Act 2003. It is deemed that this may be able to be achieved with no or negligible impact on gambling harm.

Nine machines is the legal maximum under legislation. Under this proposal, new venues could have up to nine pokie machines and existing venues could increase the number of machines they have up to nine, if they currently have less. Because the industry is subject to market forces, any permitted increase does not directly mean that new venues will be established or that existing venues will necessarily take advantage of the increased limit. Of the current venues, two have less than nine machines currently, and one has less than the permitted seven under the existing policy. This means that the practical effect on existing venues is limited.

Location in draft policy

Clauses 17 and 18.

Proposed material amendment

Update zoning references

Current
District Plan



Proposed
District Plan

Why?

The policy utilises the District Plan zones to state where new venues may be located; for example, in commercial areas but not residential areas. Council is in the final stages of updating its Plan, which governs land use; this means that the current Plan (Operative District Plan) is being replaced with a new Plan (Proposed District Plan).

The new Plan has different zone names, and – for the relevant zones for the policy – zones with similar intentions and similar but not identical geographic boundaries to the existing. For example, the Commercial Zone in the Operative Plan has been substituted for the City Centre Zone, Town Centre Zone, and others.

It is deemed that the existing zoning rules are suitable, and it is therefore necessary to utilise these updates in the revised policy by directly substituting the names of the nearly equivalent zones. This means that the changes will have relatively little material impact on where new venues may be situated.

To help submitters understand the impact of the new zones (for example if an area or street has changed zones), refer to the digital tool on www.timaru.govt.nz/gambling-review-2026 (recommended as it allows more detailed searching) and the static maps on the following pages (allowing a side by side direct comparison). For the static maps, each of the four town centres is mapped (left hand side is Operative and right hand side is Proposed Plan).

Location in draft policy

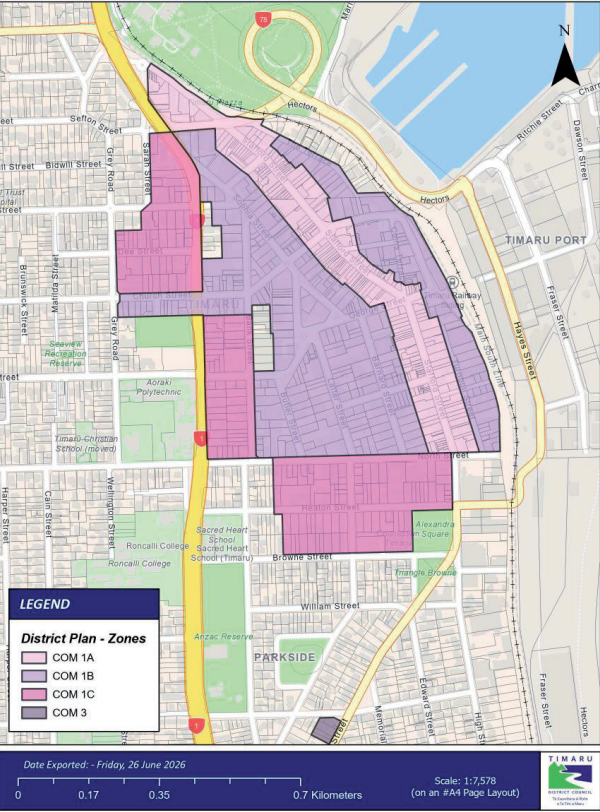
Clauses 11 and 12.

Understanding the proposed zoning changes

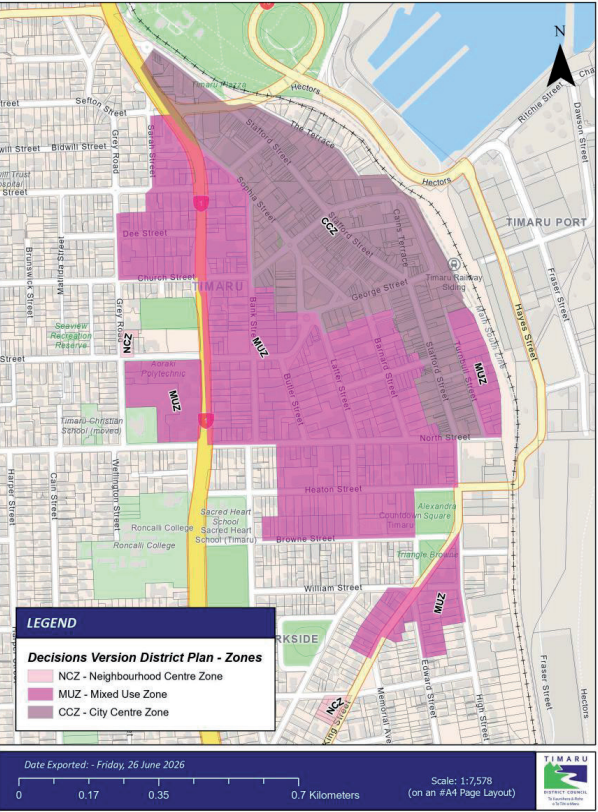
The Gambling Venue Policy uses District Plan zones to determine where new gambling venues may be located. These maps compare the current and proposed zones of each town centre.

Timaru Town Centre

Current



Proposed

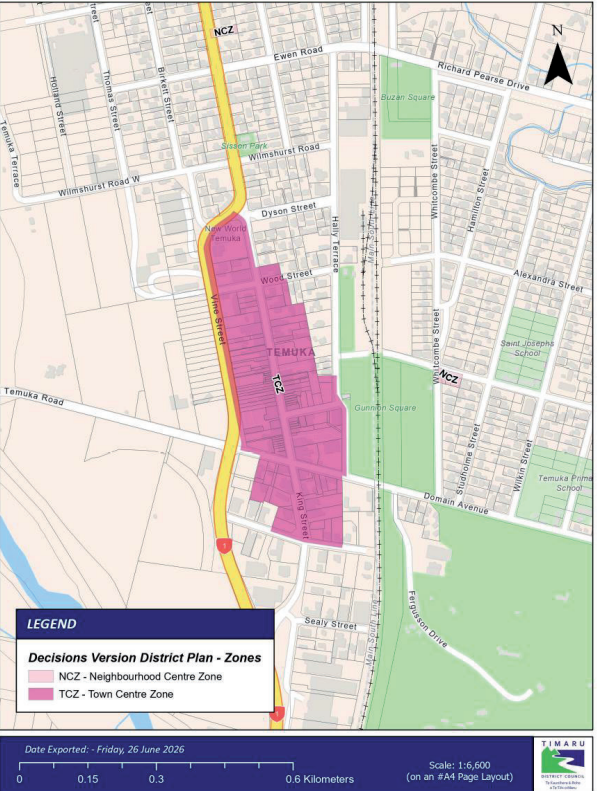


Temuka Town Centre

Current

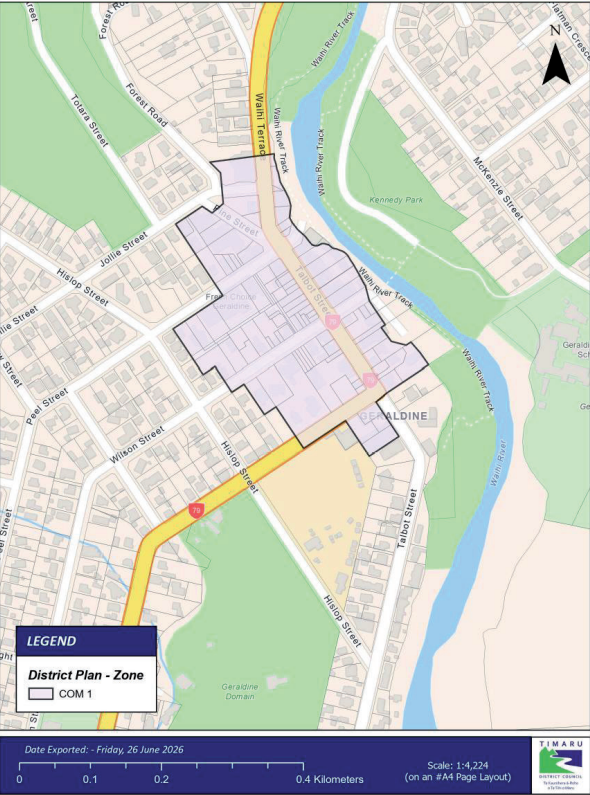


Proposed

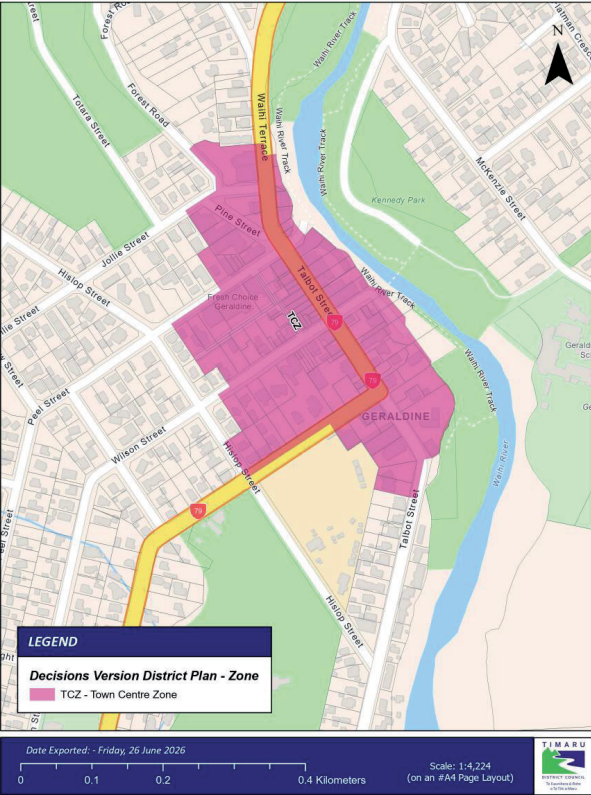


Geraldine Town Centre

Current

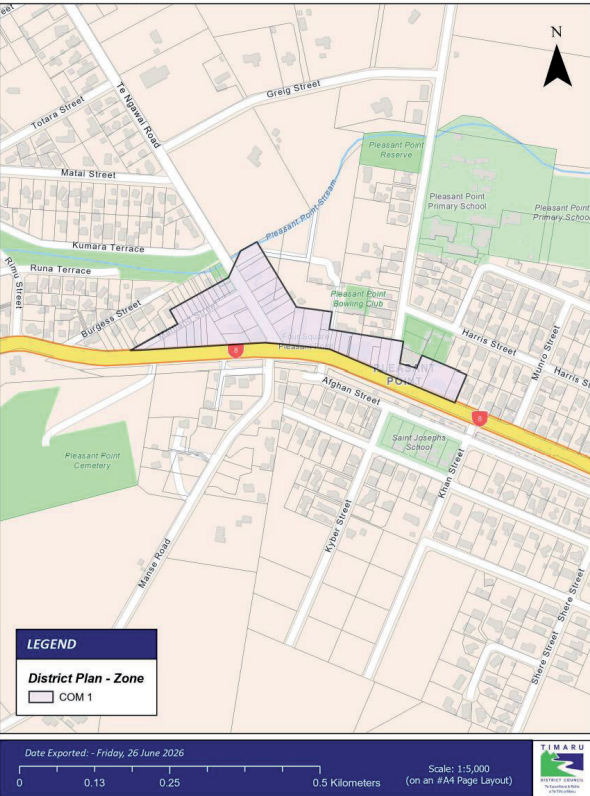


Proposed

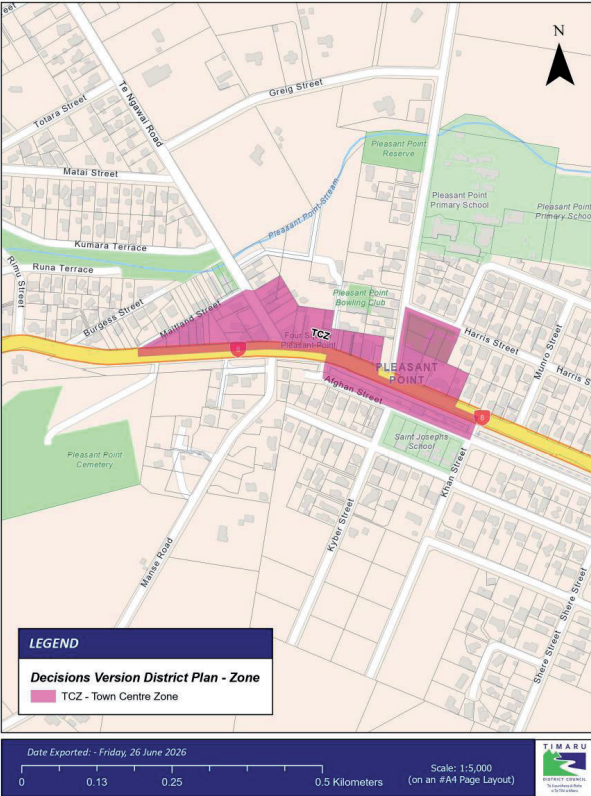


Pleasant Point Town Centre

Current



Proposed



The following pages contain the full wording of the proposed policy. If you'd like an overview of the proposed changes, refer to the "What's changing?" section on page 5.

Gambling Venue Policy

Approved by:	Timaru District Council
Group:	Environmental Services <u>Regulatory Development and Growth</u>
Owner:	Environmental Compliance Manager <u>General Manager Regulatory Development and Growth</u>
Date adopted:	6 December 2022 <u>TBC</u> The policy becomes effective immediately upon adoption, unless otherwise specified
Review:	Every 3 years; earlier if deemed necessary This Policy does not cease to have effect because it is due for review, or being reviewed
Consultation:	Required – Special Consultative Procedure (Gambling Act 2003: S102 , Racing Industry Act 2020: S97)

Policy Purpose

1. The purpose of this policy is to:
 - (i) Detail Council's policy with regards to consent applications for new Class 4 gambling venue and TAB New Zealand venue licences, in accordance with the Gambling Act 2003 and the Racing Industry Act 2020.
 - (ii) Recognise that gambling can be a serious problem for people in our community.
 - (iii) Ensure Council and the community has influence over the provision of new gambling venues within the Timaru District.
 - (iv) Allow those who wish to participate in controlled gambling to do so within the Timaru District.
 - (v) Minimise harm to the community caused by gambling.

Scope

2. This policy applies to all new consent applications for Class 4 Gambling and TAB New Zealand venues in the Timaru District.
3. The Policy will not be applied retrospectively to venues with current licences.
4. This Policy takes effect from the date it is formally adopted by Council.

Definitions

~~5. Definitions of the terms used in this policy are attached as Appendix 1.~~

Class 4 Gambling: means any activity that involves the use of gaming machines (i.e. pokies) in pubs and clubs (i.e. outside a casino) which may only be conducted by a corporate society and only to raise money for an authorised (i.e. community and non-commercial) purpose.

6. Community Facility: any building, place or facility which provides for the physical, social, cultural or intellectual development or welfare of the community, including but not limited to; public playgrounds; recreational halls; community centres; community halls; libraries; museums; and public swimming pools.
7. Gambling Venue: any Class 4 gambling venue or TAB New Zealand venue.
8. Sensitive Site: any childhood centre, kindergarten, school, permanently situated place of worship or community facility.
9. TAB New Zealand Venue: means premises owned or leased by TAB New Zealand and where the main business carried on at the premises is providing racing betting, sports betting, or other racing or sports betting services. This does not include TAB outlets or terminals.
- 5-10. Zones: as defined in the Operative or Prospective Timaru District Plan.

Policy Statements

Gambling Venue Locations

- 6-11. Within the boundary of the Timaru Township, Gambling Venues may be established in ~~Commercial 1, 2 and 3 Zones~~ a City Centre Zone, Town Centre Zone, Mixed Use Zone, Local Centre Zone, Large Format Retail Zone or Neighbourhood Centre Zone subject to:
- (i) Meeting application and fee requirements;
 - (ii) Being no closer than 200 metres, by public access way, to any Residential Zone;
 - (iii) Being no closer than 100 metres, by public access way, to any sensitive site ~~(as defined in Section 3 of this policy);~~
 - (iv) Being no closer than 100 metres, by public access way, to another Gambling Venue; ~~excepting that TAB venues may, on application be exempt from this requirement, and;~~
 - (v) Not being a venue that is associated with family or children's activity unless the activity is in a room separate from gaming machines.
- 7-12. For all areas outside the boundary of the Timaru Township, Gambling Venues may be established in ~~Commercial 1 Zone~~ a Town Centre Zone subject to:
- (i) Meeting consent application and fee requirements;
 - (ii) Being no closer than 25 metres, by public access way, to any Residential Zone;
 - (iii) Being no closer than 25 metres, by public access way, to any sensitive site ~~(as defined in Section 3 of this policy);~~
 - (iv) Being no closer than 25 metres, by public access way, to any other gambling venue ~~excepting that TAB venues may, on application, be exempt from this requirement, and;~~

- (v) Not being a venue that is associated with family or children's activity unless the activity is in a room separate from gaming machines.

Exemptions

~~8-13.~~ Where a proposed new venue is unable to comply with the location requirements of this policy the application will be referred to ~~the Environmental Services Committee~~ Council (or a suitably delegated Committee/ Subcommittee), which has discretion to approve or decline ~~by resolution and~~, subject to the application meeting all other requirements of this policy.

Relocation of Venues

~~9-14.~~ Applications for the relocation of existing venues to a new site will be referred to ~~the Environmental Services Committee~~ Council (or a suitably delegated Committee/ Subcommittee), which has discretion to approve or decline the application by resolution.

~~10-15.~~ Any application, and the proposed new venue, must comply with all other conditions and provisions of this policy.

~~11-16.~~ The maximum number of gaming machines permitted to operate at the new venue is the same as the maximum number of gaming machines permitted to operate at the venue before relocation.

Number of Gambling Machines to be Allowed

~~12-17.~~ New Class 4 gambling venues shall be allowed a maximum of ~~seven~~ nine gaming machines.

~~13-18.~~ Existing Class 4 gambling venues operating fewer than ~~seven~~ nine gaming machines, shall be allowed to increase the number of machines operated at the venue to ~~seven~~ nine.

Primary Activity of Venues

~~14-19.~~ The primary activity of any Class 4 gambling venue shall be:

- (i) For the sale of alcohol, or the sale of alcohol and food; or
- (ii) For private club activities.

~~15-20.~~ The primary activity for TAB New Zealand venues, as defined by section 5 of the Racing Industry Act 2020, shall be providing racing betting, or sports betting services.

Application

~~16-21.~~ Applications for Council consent must be made on the correct form, accompanied by all required documentation and fees.

~~17-22.~~ Application forms are available on Council's website, www.timaru.govt.nz, and at all Council service centres.

Application Fees

18-23. Application fees will be set by Council from time to time with the intention of recovering full costs from applicants/operators, and shall include consideration of:

- (i) The cost of processing the application, including any consultation and hearings involved;
- (ii) The cost of triennially reviewing the Gambling Venue Policy;
- (iii) The cost of inspecting Class 4 gambling and TAB New Zealand venues on a regular basis to ensure compliance with consent or licence conditions; and
- (iv) A contribution towards the cost of triennial assessments of the economic and social impact of gambling in the District.

19-24. Council will comply with section 150 of the Local Government Act 2002 in setting such fees.

Monitoring

25. This policy will be monitored in line with Council's Policy Framework.

26. Indicators of whether this policy is achieving its stated purposes include:

- (i) The inflation-adjusted gambling machine profit per capita (18+ population in the Timaru District).
- (ii) The number of gambling machines per capita (18+ population in the Timaru District).
- (iii) The extent that the policy is deemed to align with the purposes of the Gambling Act 2003 and the Racing Industry Act 2020 (including their amendments and/or successors).
- (iv) Feedback received from internal or external stakeholders.
- (v) Recommendations from internal or external audits.

20-27. Council will utilise a Social Impact Assessment to assess the effectiveness of this policy and the extent of gambling harm in the Timaru District.

28. The Social Impact Assessment – either a full review or an update of the previous Social Impact Assessment, as required – will be undertaken every three years when the policy is reviewed.

Reporting

29. A summary of the performance of this policy will be reported to Council as part of the regular Policy Update (when new information is available).

30. Full performance and monitoring data will be made available to Councillors when available.

Delegations, References and Revision History

Delegations

Identify here any delegations related to the policy for it to be operative or required as a result of the policy

Delegation Manual reference	Delegation
Delegation 5.18	Power to receive and process consent applications pursuant to the Timaru District Council Gambling Venue Policy

References

Include here reference to any documents related to the policy (e.g. operating guidelines, procedures)

Title	Document reference/ link
N/A	N/A

Revision History

Summary of the development and review of the policy

Revision	Owner	Date Approved	Approval By	Next Review	Doc Ref
<u>1</u>	<u>Regulatory Services Manager</u>	<u>4 May 2010</u>	<u>Council</u>	<u>2013</u>	<u>-</u>
<u>2</u>	<u>Regulatory Services Manager</u>	<u>23 April 2013</u>	<u>Resource Planning and Regulation Committee</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>#254825</u>
<u>3</u>	<u>Environmental Compliance Manager</u>	<u>22 November 2016</u>	<u>Environmental Services Committee</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>#1028191</u>
<u>4</u>	<u>Environmental Compliance Manager</u>	<u>10 December 2019</u>	<u>Council</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>#1305315</u>
<u>5</u>	Environmental Compliance Manager	6 December 2022	Council	By June 2025	#1547386
<u>6</u>	<u>General Manager Regulatory</u>	<u>TBC</u>	<u>Council</u>	<u>2029</u>	<u>TBC</u>

Appendix 1: Definition of terms used in this policy

Class 4 Gambling	Means any activity that involves the use of gaming machines (i.e. pokies) in pubs and clubs (i.e. outside a casino) which may only be conducted by a corporate society and only to raise money for an authorised (i.e. community and non-commercial) purpose.
Commercial Zones	As defined in the operative Timaru District Plan.

Community Facility	Any building, place or facility which provides for the physical, social, cultural or intellectual development or welfare of the community, including but not limited to; public playgrounds; recreational halls; community centres; community halls; libraries; museums; and public swimming pools.
Gambling Venue	Any Class 4 gambling venue or TAB New Zealand venue.
Residential Zones	As defined in the operative Timaru District Plan.
Sensitive Site	Any childhood centre, kindergarten, school, place of worship or community facility.
TAB New Zealand Venue	Means premises owned or leased by TAB New Zealand and where the main business carried on at the premises is providing racing betting, sports betting, or other racing or sports betting services.

Alternative Policy Options

Alternative options	Perceived advantages and disadvantages
Introduce a Sinking Lid ■ A sinking lid means that no new consents will be issued by Council, and that the number of venues and machines will decrease over time through attrition. ■ Venues will not be able to increase their number of machines. ■ Gaming machines will not be able to be transferred to another venue if one venue closes. ■ Consent will not be given for venue relocations.	■ Over time, this would lead to a decrease in the number of venues and machines in the Timaru District, potentially reducing the harm caused by problem gambling, while still allowing for existing venues to continue to operate. ■ If a venue is unable to continue operating in its current location (for example, due to fire or a building lease not renewed), the venue would not be able to relocate its machines to any other venue. ■ A sinking lid policy takes time to have an effect on the total number of gaming machines and is reliant on current venues closing down. ■ This may discourage some hospitality businesses from establishing within the District if they are unable to have gaming machines, and therefore may negatively affect employment opportunities in the hospitality industry. ■ A sinking lid may reduce over time the level of funding available in the Timaru District from charitable trusts operating gaming machines.
Employ other capping options ■ Capping the total number of gaming machines in the District. ■ Reduce the number of machines each new venue may operate. ■ Impose a density cap so that certain areas of the District may not exceed a certain number of venues or gaming machines.	■ A district-wide cap and/ or reduction in the permitted number of machines per venue may reduce the potential for problem gambling by minimising the potential proliferation of machines in the District. ■ This may discourage some hospitality businesses from establishing within the District if they are unable to have gaming machines and negatively affect employment opportunities in the hospitality industry. ■ Further, it may reduce over time the level of funding available in the Timaru District from charitable trusts operating gambling machines. ■ A density cap may help ensure that the temptation to gamble is limited in communities that are known to be more vulnerable to the effects of problem gambling. ■ It can be administratively difficult to create density rules that are effective and remain up-to-date. ■ A density cap may not be effective given the current proliferation of gaming venues.
Retain the status quo number of permitted gaming machines per venue ■ Retain the number of machines allowed at each venue at seven, instead of increasing to nine.	■ This approach would be less permissive for businesses relative to the proposed policy, and have no difference relative to the current policy. ■ This option might result in an decrease in the levels of gambling harm relative to the draft policy, however would likely reduce any benefits of gambling such as social enjoyment and the availability of community funding.

Alternative options	Perceived advantages and disadvantages
Amend rules for sensitive sites ■ Increase or decrease the scope and number of premises or facilities which are defined as sensitive sites.	■ This option could be more protective of perceived vulnerable sites by expanding the definition of a sensitive site. A sensitive site is currently defined as, “any childhood centre, kindergarten, school, place of worship or community facility”. For example, marae could be included within this definition. ■ However, increasing the scope of the definition could be restrictive on businesses and reduce any economic benefits of gambling. ■ Making the definition of a sensitive site too prescriptive could reduce the ability of licencing officers to apply appropriate discretion and judgement to achieve the outcomes of the legislation and this policy.
Amend zoning rules ■ Make zoning rules more or less permissive than the draft policy.	■ It is possible to make the zoning rules more or less permissive relative to the draft policy, depending on views about where it is suitable for new gaming venues to be located within communities. ■ For example, it may be deemed desirable that venues can be established within residential areas to enable easier access to patrons. This may increase gaming harm. ■ On the contrary, it may be deemed that the current rules are too permissive and that, for example, new venues should be limited to city and town centre zones (excluding, in this example, the multi use and neighbourhood centre zones that the draft policy permits venues to be situated in).

Have your say

Let us know what you think about our draft policy.

You can do this by:

- Completing the online submission form at timaru.govt.nz/gambling-review-2026 (or scan the QR code); OR



- Completing the physical submission form at the end of this document and:

- FreePosting to:

FreePost Authority Number 95136
Policy Review Consultation
Timaru District Council
PO Box 522
TIMARU 7940

OR

- Scanning it and emailing to submission@timdc.govt.nz; OR
- Physically handing it into Council's Main Building or a library/ service centre.

All submissions need to be received by the close of the consultation – midday, Monday 7 September 2026.

Want more information?

More information is available on the Council website www.timaru.govt.nz/gambling-review-2026

If you have any questions about the policy or submission process, email submission@timdc.govt.nz

Alternatively, contact us via telephone: 07 687 7200 and ask to speak to Brendan Madley.

Timeline

Monday 3 August - midday Monday 7 September 2026
Consultation period

Tuesday 29 September 2026

Hearing, if required (as part of scheduled Council meeting)

Tuesday 27 October 2026

Council meeting to deliberate and make decisions on final policy

Note: This timeline may be impacted – and additional public consultation may be necessary – if the policy is amended as a result of submissions received (depending on the significance of any amendment/s).

Privacy Statement

All submissions are public information and will be included on Council's website and/or in public documents located at Council offices and Libraries/Service Centres. This will include your name and, if applicable, the organisation you represent.

The contact information (phone number and/or email address and/or postal address) that you provide at the beginning of the submission will be accessible to Council staff and used only for submission administration purposes. It will not be made publicly available. However, the content of the remainder of your submission (including any private information and attachments that you provide) may not be redacted. Please contact us via

submission@timdc.govt.nz if you have any questions about this, before making your submission.

Submissions received in the form of a petition or with multiple signatures attached will be processed as a single submission.

All information is held by Council in accordance with the Privacy Act 2020. You have the right to access and correct personal information. Nothing in this Privacy Statement overrides, or will prevent Council meeting its obligations under, the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987, or any other relevant legislation.

Gambling Venue Policy Submission Form

Complete this form to make a submission.

First name*:

Last name*:

Organisation (if applicable):

Phone (landline or mobile)*:

Email address*:

Postal address*:

.....

.....

*Required. We also require at least one contact detail (phone, email or postal address)

Your feedback

Do you want to speak about your submission at a Council Hearing?
(tick a circle)**:

☐

Yes

☐

No

**If you do not answer the question, we will assume you do not wish to speak.

Do you support the draft policy as presented? (tick a circle).
Please explain below:

☐

Yes

☐

No

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.....

.....

.....

What changes, if any, would you like to see to the draft policy?

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Need more room?

Please use the other side of this page, or extra paper, and attach these and any supporting documents with your submission.

How to return this form once completed.

- Free Post it back to Council

FreePost Authority Number 95136

Policy Review Consultation

Timaru District Council

PO Box 522

TIMARU 7940; OR

- Scan it and email to
submission@timdc.govt.nz; OR

- Physically hand it into Council's Main
Building or a library / service centre.

Additional comment space

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2 King George Place
PO Box 522, Timaru 7940
T (03) 687 7200
E enquiry@timdc.govt.nz

Temuka Service Centre
72-74 King Street, Temuka
T (03) 687 7591

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