



MBPJ vetoes sports betting

By Leven Woon

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MBPJ will move to freeze all premises that conduct sport betting within its municipality, in vocal objection against the issuance of sport betting licenses by the federal government.

MBPJ councillor and PKR information chief Latheefa Koya said under the Local Government Act Section 101, the local council is empowered to deal with issues concerning the municipality's safety, health and convenience.

“We are very serious on the issue.... On top of that, if any current licensed premise is found to also conduct sport betting, we will consider revoking their license.

“It concerns the public’s ‘mental health’ and we are witnessing something healthy (sport) being turned into something very unhealthy (gambling),” she said at a press conference held after the council’s full board meeting.

Councillor Derek Fernandez said sports betting could eventually affect all households.

“We are not stopping people from carry out lawful betting in the existing outlets, but our concern is this form of betting uses television as a center of betting and to monitor games, in another word coming to our home.”

“Just like how the government does not allow weekend horse-racing to be telecast until today, this (sport betting) is about telecasting a gaming show into the home albeit (as a) sport, which is rather bad.

“If you legalise betting, you destigmatise the sport. There are no clear (guidelines) on sport betting licenses (being) issued.”

The councillors said they are against the introduction of sports betting at the wake of World Cup, which mainly targets youngsters.

“You don’t want our teenagers to stay up until 3am just because they have put a RM50 bet in the game.”

Latheefa meanwhile refuted the allegation made by Perkasa that Selangor and MBPJ has issued additional gambling premise licenses, saying only the federal government had the jurisdiction.

“Such licenses are issued by the ministry of finance at federal level,” she said.