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Towcester sign bookies deal

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Towcester and its bookmakers have signed an agreement which enables the bookies to continue to use their list positions for the lifetime of the racecourse.

List positions - the spots where each bookmaker can stand and trade in the racecourse betting rings - have come under scrutiny in relation to how long they should last. The Government established a working party in 2008 to broker a solution.

The Towcester agreement also includes revised commercial terms between the racecourse and the bookmakers, but other British tracks are still at the discussion stage in what has been a contentious issue.

Gerry Sutcliffe MP, the Minister for Sport, said: "I am pleased that Towcester has reached a deal with its on-course bookmakers on the tenure of their list positions.

"I congratulate the racecourse and the Federation of Racecourse Bookmakers in securing a deal which clearly meets the needs and secures the future of both parties.

"Of course this is an important development in the overall dispute. It demonstrates to me that, with goodwill and perseverance, deals can be done for the benefit of everyone.

"It is also clear that the issue is a multidimensional one; it is not simply a question of 'how long'. All the boxes need to be ticked before agreements can be reached."

He added: "But there are 60 other racecourses in the United Kingdom and there is no certainty, and this must be remedied as far as I am concerned.

"This is a matter that has received a good deal of attention in both Houses and I want to see that an equitable solution is reached. I remain committed to this. My department is facilitating discussions, and it is right that we do so.

"In addition to this, all options remain under review, including the legislative option. It is an important step forward, but we must not be complacent. There is still a long way to go."

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