
PROPOSALS FOR CASINOS - GAMBLING ACT 2005

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report introduces the procedure by which proposals from local authorities for the siting of a casino in their area may be considered by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS).
- 1.2 It follows on from the concessions made by the Government to restrict the number of casinos in order to ensure passage of the Gambling Act 2005 prior to the last General Election.
- 1.3 The report seeks resolution of the question as to whether or not Members consider this a authority should submit a bid for consideration.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The Gambling Act 2005 received Royal Assent on 7 April 2005. A report will be submitted at a later date dealing with the full implications of that Act upon the Authority.
- 2.2 The Act provides for 17 new casinos to be built nationally, the geographical distribution of which has to be determined by the Secretary of State based upon recommendations of the Casino Advisory Panel.
- 2.3 Local authorities are Licensing Authorities, under the Gambling Act 2005, and are responsible for issuing premises licences in the same way as they are for the Licensing Act 2003.
- 2.4 Licensing Authorities will not be able to issue premises licences for casinos unless authorised by DCMS. In order to be considered, an authority must submit proposals to the Casino Advisory Panel by 31 March 2006.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 There are to be 3 new types of casino introduced and to which the proposals relate. Existing casinos are unaffected and will continue unchanged from their current format.
- 3.2 The 3 new types are to be known as regional, large and small casinos, the primary difference between them being floor size, the number of gaming machines and additional gambling functions that are permitted in addition to the core 'table games'.
- 3.3 Within the development of sites for regional casinos, it is envisaged that hotels, restaurants, bars, areas for live entertainments, conference centres and other leisure facilities will be included.
- 3.4 Regional casinos will have a minimum gambling area of 5000sq.m and up to 1250 machines, with unlimited stakes and prizes; large casinos will have a

minimum of 1500sq.m gambling area, up to 150 machines and maximum jackpot of £4000; small casinos will have a minimum gambling area of 750sq.m and up to 80 machines with a maximum jackpot of £4000.

- 3.5 It will be seen, therefore, that none of the premises will be small in size, whatever the designation as a casino.
- 3.6 There are to be 1 regional and 8 each large and small casinos, nationally.
- 3.7 Only 2 Essex authorities submitted earlier proposals for their areas to be considered for siting of a casino, they being Southend on Sea for a regional casino and Basildon for a large casino. If successful, Southend on Sea will have a total of 3 casinos and Basildon, 1.
- 3.8 In deciding whether or not to submit a bid to DCMS, Members will need to consider the 8 elements that make up the proposal content.

4 PROPOSAL CONTENT

- 4.1 The proposal will have to include supporting evidence in eight areas, as follows: -
- 4.2 Type of area – to include population base, e.g. size, socio – economic and ethnicity characteristics and levels of educational attainment; current levels of tourism infrastructure (hotels, entertainment facilities, transport); strategies for tourism, leisure and gambling; principal needs of regeneration; any other factors making the area a good ground for testing social impact of gambling.
- 4.3 Social impact – to include assessment of social impact if a casino is built; assessment of existing gambling; policies to counter any negative social impacts or optimise positive social cohesion, including approved budgets; initiatives to manage social impacts; existing/planned relationships with voluntary organisations to support impact policies.
- 4.4 Need for regeneration – to include how the proposal will assist regeneration; employment benefits; public and private investment levels and timing; economic value created by the proposal; identifying particular areas that would benefit, and why; how additional economic activity will offset potential leakage of money from the local economy; any other regeneration outputs being sought.
- 4.5 Willingness to licence – to include council resolutions in favour of licensing, including minutes of meetings; polling / market research / consultations to establish local support; support by Local Strategic Partnership; expressions of support by national / local organisations; objections.
- 4.6 Probability of implementation – to include feasibility of proposals; market demand analysis; catchment area / customer base; criteria to identify appropriate / sustainable localities for siting of casino; current provision for gambling; impact of competition on existing casinos; effect of a concentration

of casinos; analysis of investment potential; current level of investor interest; changes to gambling spend.

- 4.7 Regional context – to include relevant policy context of Regional Spatial Strategies and relationship with Local Development Framework; how achieving regional economic objectives for employment, skills and regeneration would be assisted.
- 4.8 Community benefits – to include what community benefits are expected from the licensing and town planning processes.
- 4.9 Unique characteristics – to include what aspects of the proposal are unique that would differentiate it from similar proposals in the locality.

5 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The competition for bids to be accepted will be intense with such a low number of developments to be allowed. It is reasonable to assume that the successful bids will contain exceptional and persuasive arguments concerning the need for regeneration, increased employment opportunities and the demonstrative acquisition of social benefits to the area.
- 5.2 Those bids will almost certainly have attracted potential investment from both the public and private sectors and be from authorities that have already addressed the subject in their strategic plans dealing with leisure, tourism and spatial planning and who have consulted with local businesses and residents and gained their support.

6 RECOMMENDATION

- 6.1 It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES**

That the Council does not submit a bid for a casino at this time.

G Woolhouse

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Background Papers: -

None

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