

From the Chairman of the Casino Advisory Panel

2-4 Cockspur Street  
London SW1Y 5DH

31<sup>st</sup> January 2006

To: The Rt. Hon. Tessa Jowell MP  
Secretary of State for Culture Media and Sport

Madam

I have the honour to present the first progress report of the Casino Advisory Panel.

As you are aware, our work began in October 2005 and must be completed by the end of 2006. So far as we are able at the present time to foresee the work before us, we have divided our programme of work into four phases. This report is submitted at the conclusion of the first phase, which has been a scoping phase, in which an impression of the volume of work before the Panel has been gained, background research has been undertaken, and preparations made for the next phase.

We are just beginning Phase 2, in which proposals for casinos of the various kinds are being invited from local authorities. We expect that it will be followed by Phase 3 in which the submitted proposals will be considered and sifted against the basic policy criteria and other material considerations, and then selected proposals will be further examined. Phase 4 is to be the decision and reporting phase.

We now report on the completion of Phase 1.

This has been a scoping phase, in which an impression of the volume of work before the Panel has been gained, and background research has been undertaken. Seven activities were included in this phase and all are now complete. They were:

a search of available DCMS material and informal expressions of interest already on file or in the Press.

a library search of research material on casinos and their community/regeneration effects

circulation to all local authorities of a non-committal request as to whether interest is to be expected,

consultation with the Scottish Executive, the National Assembly for Wales, Regional Assemblies (including the Mayor of London) and Regional Development Agencies,

enquiring whether strategic environmental assessment (SEA) is needed,

developing the set criteria for selection and decision,

devising the form, etc of a structured call for proposals.

Additionally, we have set up an independent website (linked with the DCMS website) which will be used to publish all relevant information (<http://www.culture.gov.uk/CAP>).

So that we had a clearer idea of the workload to plan for, in November 2005 we asked all local authorities on a non-committal basis whether interest was to be expected. At the last count, 131 local authorities responded. Of these, 52 authorities said that they were not interested and 4 said that they could not give an indication at the present time. Potential interest may be gauged from the following table. (a full list of the Expressions of Interest can be found at **Annex A**)

Type of Casino	Number of expressions of interest
Regional (including indeterminate responses)	47
Large	6
Small	8
Additional Mixture of the above	5
Additional One of the above	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>75</b>

In preparation for Phase 2, the invitation of proposals from local authorities, we developed the criteria set in our Terms of Reference into a list of the information we would need to consider local authority proposals on a fair and equal basis. We also consulted with regional planning bodies and development agencies, and their equivalents in Scotland and Wales, both for initial views on the whole process and then for specific input into the draft documentation to accompany the call for proposals. DCMS and ODPM were similarly asked to contribute their views. We acknowledge with gratitude all who assisted us in these consultations.

The Panel has additionally taken legal advice from the Treasury Solicitor who has commented on the process as a whole and on the specific documentation to date.

Proposals have now been invited from local authorities who are licensing authorities (as defined in Section 2 of the Act) in England and Wales, and in Scotland, licensing boards. A copy of the formal Call for Proposals is included at **Annex B**, along with the Press Notice which accompanied it at **Annex C**)

Authorities making proposals are being asked to submit information under each of the headings listed in the following sections,

Type of area

Social Impact

Need for regeneration

Willingness to licence

Probability of implementation

Regional Context

Community benefits

Unique characteristics

We are expecting all proposals to be with us by Friday 31st March 2006, thereby allowing two months for submissions to be prepared. We think this period sufficient bearing in mind both our overall programme to the end of 2006, and our expectation that much work and consideration will already have been given to serious proposals.

When we get proposals, we will consider all of them carefully in the light of our set criteria and other Government policy, and in so doing sift them and thin them down to a short-list for further examination. While detailing our programme must await our receipt and initial consideration of proposals, we expect on the basis of present information that the greatest burden will be the examination of bids for the one Regional Casino. Here, we anticipate that a short list of selected proposals will be subject to examination in public, that is a round table conference based on the procedures used in the town planning field for the testing of regional spatial strategy. While of course we are working on the detail of our future programme, we consider it unwise for the present to commit ourselves beyond the outline of the basic process which we have advised to local authorities. (**Annex D -Project Outline**).

Our next report will be soon after the closing date for proposals at the end of March when we will report on the number of proposals received and explain in greater detail than the present on how we will be evaluating and examining them.

I have the honour to be

Madam,

Your obedient Servant

Prof. Stephen Crow CB

Chairman of the Casino Advisory Panel