

BRANSBY JANE

From: Graham Nelson [Graham.Nelson@eera.gov.uk]
Sent: 05 January 2006 10:07
To: BRANSBY JANE
Subject: RE: role of regional assemblies in relation to casinos

Jane,

I hope you have had a good Christmas break. Further to the e-mail I sent you before Christmas I have written to all local authorities in the region trying to gain an understanding of the number and nature of the proposals likely to be coming forward from within this region. To date I am aware of five areas who would like to be considered for the regional casinos and there may well be others.

On reflection I thought it may help your consideration at the next Panel meeting if in addition to posing the questions I previously suggested (see below), I made some positive suggestions about how we may best be able to assist you in your deliberations.

With regard to question 1, I think it should be possible for the RPB to express a view on the relative merits of proposals for regional and large casinos proposed within its region. This should clearly involve having regard to the primary criteria laid down by the Secretary of State and any other criteria you wish the RPB to have regard to, but it should also allow the RPB to have regard to existing and emerging local and regional planning policy and other relevant policy documents (such as the regional economic strategy) provided the matters that have been taken into account in reaching the view are made clear.

With regard to question 2, if you follow the approach suggested above, then clearly the RPB will not be able to express its view at the same time as submission of the proposals. However, it should be possible to reach this view within a couple of months submission of the proposals (by summer 2006). This should enable you to report to the Secretary of State in line with the timetable set out in your letter dated 11th November.

On the related matter of selection criteria I think it is important that the ability of casinos to support other aspects of government planning policy is taken into account in the selection of sites. As you may be aware the Government's Sustainable Communities Plan identifies 4 broad areas where considerable additional growth is proposed. Out of these 3 lie partly or wholly within the East of England Region. Recent publications also allow for the possible identification of further growth points in future.

One of the problems we are coming across in implementing the Sustainable Communities Plan is that to create sustainable communities, employment growth needs to keep pace with housing growth in order to avoid unsustainable patterns of commuting building up. In a number of instances it is questionable whether sufficient employment will come forward to support housing proposed. Therefore I think it would be advantageous in your consideration of proposals if you took into account not only the potential of casinos to support the employment/regeneration needs of an area but also took into account the potential impact of the casino on more general development of area, including residential and social development.

I hope you find this helpful. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you think I can help further.

Graham

From: Graham Nelson
Sent: 21 December 2005 17:38
To: 'jane.bransby@culture.gsi.gov.uk'
Subject: role of regional assemblies in relation to casinos

Jane,

Many thanks for being so helpful in our recent telephone conversation concerning the above and your letter dated 11th November.

As I explained on the phone the amount of attention that the East of England Regional Assembly (as Regional Planning Body) has been able to give this matter to date has been limited due to the pressures of work

04/04/2006

associated with the ongoing Examination in Public into our emerging Regional Spatial Strategy. The emerging Regional Spatial Strategy contains a policy addressing regional or nationally significant facilities for leisure and recreation so we do have a basis on which to comment on the potential acceptability/desirability of such facilities at broad locations within the region from the perspective of the Regional Planning Body (RPB). From our understanding of interest within the region we would anticipate that several proposals for various scales of facilities will be generated from this region.

The RPB would be keen to maximise the benefits that could be offered from the development of Casinos within the region as this is in line with policies for developing the economy in a manner which is needed to underpin the considerable level of growth the region is currently planning for. Any additional advice you may be able to give us on how you are looking at the Regional Assembly inputting into your task would be helpful in assisting us to do this. In particular it would be helpful to know:

- 1) whether it would be advantageous for the RPB to express a view on the relative merits of the proposals coming from within the region or whether a simple view on if the broad location proposed would be acceptable in planning terms is preferred? Under the emerging RSS policy many of the potential locations that may be put forward may be acceptable; and
- 2) when, within the timetable set out in your letter of 11th November, will you be looking for the RPB to input into the process? Following our discussion I assume you will be looking for input towards the summer rather than to coincide with the closing date for formal submissions.

Any help you can give us on these matters would be appreciated. In the meantime I hope you have an enjoyable and relaxing Christmas and New Year.

Graham Nelson
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East of England Regional Assembly
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