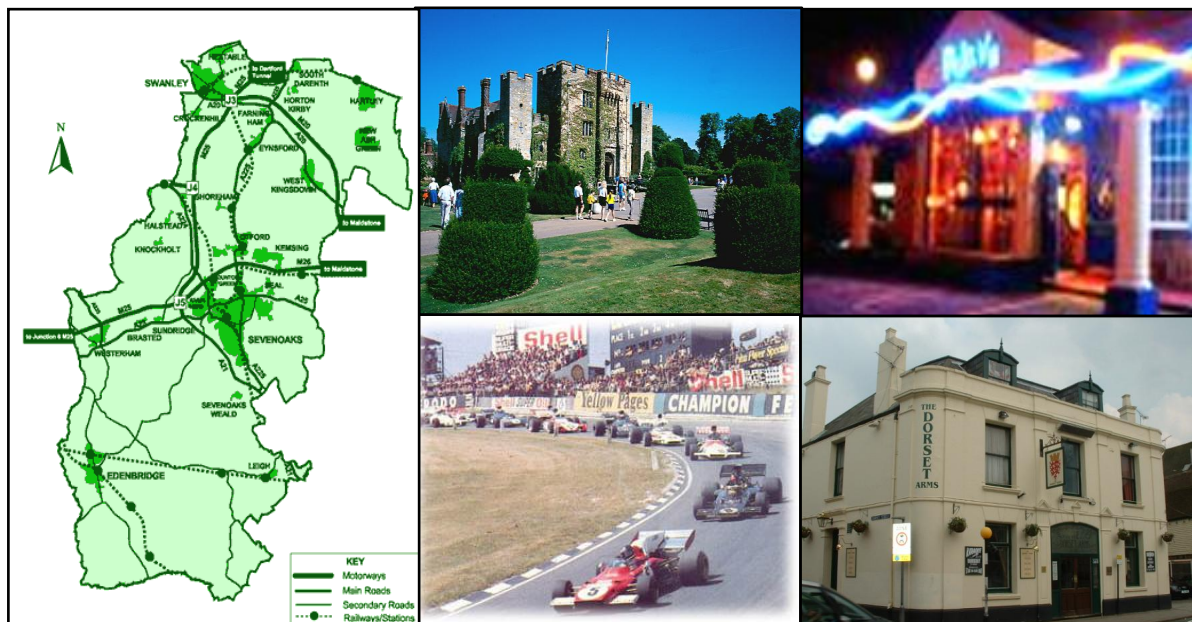


Sevenoaks District Council



Proposal for Casino
Advisory Panel
March 2006

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Type of Area

The Council's Core Values

The Council's core values are fundamental to the progress of sustainable development in Sevenoaks District. To achieve the objectives there must be a large degree of co-operation between Councillors, Officers and outside organisations to work in partnership to improve the environment in which we live and the quality of services we provide.

Sevenoaks District aims to be recognised by all as a place with:

- Safe and Caring Communities
- Green and Healthy Environment
- Dynamic and Sustainable Economy

Sustainable development is also considered in the effective management of Council resources. Many of the Council's other plans, policies and strategies have a significant impact on sustainable development and play an important part in contributing to the well-being of our communities.

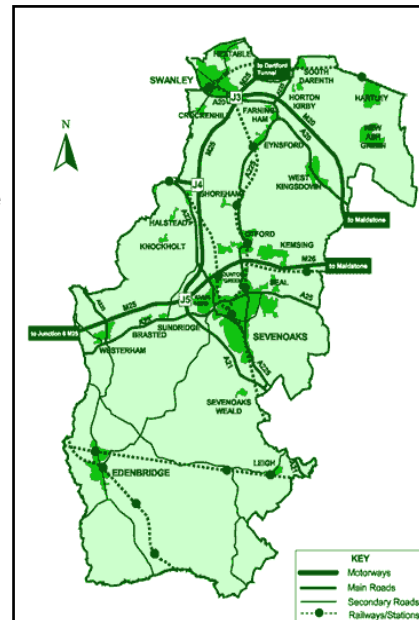
The core value most suited to this particular proposal is it adds to the district's dynamic and sustainable economy

Dynamic and sustainable economy

We want Sevenoaks District to be a place where businesses thrive and local people have a broad range of skills. To achieve this we want to increase the number of job opportunities and improve the business environment. A casino would positively effect delivery of this core value.

The District

In Sevenoaks District many of the towns and villages are outside the Green Belt. Much of the area is rural in character and it includes many picturesque villages and large areas of beautiful countryside.



Each of the major towns has its own character. Edenbridge is a popular point of call for visitors to the area, while Sevenoaks offers a range of small to medium sized shops in a traditional high street setting. Swanley's market attracts shoppers from a wide area every Wednesday morning.

Sevenoaks District is a popular place to live. Due to its proximity to London, there is considerable pressure for development and local planning policies attempt to achieve a balance between legitimate development needs and conserving the District's environment. We believe that a casino could have beneficial impacts on the economic development of the area

In mid-2003 Sevenoaks had an estimated 109,800 residents. This compares with the 2001 Census figure of 109,305 residents. The 2001 census also reported that Sevenoaks has 44,364 households.

The following table details the percentage of resident population in each group (April 2001):

| Ethnic Group | Sevenoaks | South East | England and Wales |
|------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| White | 98.0 | 95.1 | 91.3 |
| Mixed | 0.8 | 1.1 | 1.3 |
| Asian | 0.6 | 2.3 | 4.4 |
| Black | 0.2 | 0.7 | 2.2 |
| Chinese /other Ethnic Group | 0.5 | 0.8 | 0.9 |

Sevenoaks is located in the Local Education Authority of Kent, part of the South East region. In the academic year 2003/04, 56% of pupils in Kent achieved 5 or more GCSEs graded A* to C, compared with an average for England of 54%.

The following tables shows the percentages of people aged between 16 and 74 and their academic achievements

| | Sevenoaks | South East | England and Wales |
|--|------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| No qualifications | 24.0 | 23.9 | 29.1 |
| Highest Qualification attained* | 22.2 | 21.8 | 19.8 |

Tourism

The district is situated in the High Weald of Kent, surrounded by some of the loveliest countryside in South East England. Tucked around every corner is a wealth of quaint and attractive villages, country lanes, old market towns, vineyards, and some of the best heritage and garden attractions to be found.

The bustling towns with their eclectic mix of shops and restaurants rub shoulders with some of the finest historic houses and castles in England, such as Knole House in Sevenoaks which is one of the largest private homes in England with its 52 staircases and 365 rooms. Nearby Westerham is the location of the beautifully preserved Chartwell, former home of Sir Winston Churchill, and Squerries Court, still the home of the Warde family who have lived there for 270 years.



Just outside Swanley is the village of Eynsford where Lullingstone Castle and Lullingstone Roman Villa, dating back to circa AD100, can be found. Edenbridge is home to the Eden Valley Museum, and just a stones throw away from the lovely Hever Castle - the childhood home of Anne Boleyn and Penshurst Place - ancestral home of the Sidney family for 400 years and surrounded by 10 acres of Tudor gardens, Penshurst Vineyard and Chiddingstone Castle.

Add to this the horticultural splendor of Riverhill House Gardens, Emmetts Garden, many private gardens open to the public to complete the picture of a destination that has

something for everyone. With all parts of Sevenoaks District within an hour's journey of central London it's an ideal place to return time and again.

There are a number of B&Bs in the local area which offer quaint rural retreats, such as the Hever Hotel, the Royal Oak Hotel, the Kings Arms and the Moorings Hotel as well as larger hotels such as the Best Western Donnington Manor and the two hotels at Brands Hatch (Brands Hatch Place and the Thistle). Accommodation of this nature is rather limited, however, and it is thought that, should a casino be sited in the district, private investment of this nature would help provide local jobs for local people.



The Hever Hotel

Main communications and transport links

The M25, M20 and M26 motorways are easily accessible as they cross the District. Gatwick, Stanstead and Heathrow airports and the Channel Ports and Channel Tunnel Rail Link are all within easy reach. The railway service to London is very good with regular services to London's Charing Cross Station and other London stations. The average journey time is 30 minutes. This would enable customers to reach the district quickly and easily using a variety of transport.

In the North of the district we have a nighttime economy with the district's only nightclub. Sevenoaks is another lively night-time destination with many late night pubs and bars as well as a number of popular restaurants entertainment facilities and transport access, origin of tourism and overall vision for tourism.

Location of any development should meet the sustainability objectives of this Council as set out in the Local Plan and other emerging documents (e.g. Kent & Medway Structure Plan & South East Plan). It would be difficult to justify the development of a casino away from public transport facilities, which means it would need to be in a town/village, close to a station, or provide transport services as part of the development. Sevenoaks District Council are likely to ask for a Transport Plan if we were to receive a planning application.

Social Impact

Whilst we have a variety of initiatives to support community cohesion, well-being and crime reduction, we have no projects specifically aimed at gambling. There are no local studies of the impact of existing gambling in the area.

It is understood from research at Nottingham Trent University that additional access to gambling facilities is likely to increase the amount of gambling and that addiction to gambling is more likely through casinos which provide a continuous gambling opportunity than through, for example the national lottery, which provides a non-continuous gambling opportunity.

We would test for changes in social impact through the Citizens' Advice Bureau. They already deal with clients in serious financial difficulty through their debt counselling service.

Need for Regeneration

Employment levels vary across the district, with a larger proportion of the population being out of work in the north of the district. The benefits of any investment in a Casino / Hotel would clearly benefit the local community.

This investment would clearly generate revenue for regeneration and investment in the local community and surrounding areas. These amenities would potentially have the aim of kick-starting wide-ranging investment and reversing the process of decline.

We have between 20-25% of the population who commute to London to work; this could redirect the some of this skill base to work within the district, resulting in their quality of life being enhanced through considerably less commuting time.

Regeneration:

A planning application to redevelop Horton Kirby Paper Mill in South Darenth was made valid by Sevenoaks District Council.

The application by Fairview Homes is for a mixed use development of:

Two-hundred and thirty-six, one and two bedroom homes (some existing buildings will be converted and others will be new build) of which 48 will be affordable homes

Four live/work units Commercial floor space (part conversion including a Listed Building and new build)

Alterations to the existing access off Horton Road and associated highway works

Removal of an existing culvert and re-instatement of an open river channel and associated works

The retention of and works to two Listed Buildings

Three-hundred and sixty car parking spaces, areas of public and private amenity space and landscape works

Some demolition works

Willingness to Licence

Sevenoaks District Council has a Portfolio holder resolution proposed and signed by Cllr Keith Loney, Portfolio holder for licensing.

Sevenoaks District Council will be holding three seminars across the district in July, being held at Edenbridge, Swanley and Sevenoaks. At these seminars we will be presenting an overview of the Gambling Act 2005, and inviting people from all areas of the community to attend.

In addition to the seminars we are indenting to place a set of market research question specifically of Gambling and Casinos within our Citizens panel questionnaire.

Probability Implementation

Sevenoaks District Council would consider each application for a Casino on its own merits.

This is clearly an opportunity for regeneration, and for enhancing the viability of the local economy .

The transport infrastructure is very strong in the north end of the District, with the M25 / M20 running through the district.

The current provision for gambling in the District is:

Sevenoaks District Council will encourage private investment into such a proposal for Casino, and is currently not in a position to invest public money.

There has been interest from Casino operators, and any development would attract people from a very large South East catchments area.

| Bookmakers Permits | Betting Office Licences | Bookmakers Permits Per Million Population | Betting Office Licences Per Million Population |
|--------------------|-------------------------|---|--|
| 51 | 146 | 54 | 190 |

The table below shows the numbers of Bookmakers Permits and Betting Office Licences in Kent and their proportion per million population

Regional and Local Context

Apart from its national significance, the early and successful development of the **Ebbsfleet** area around the CTRL international and domestic passenger station is a core element in the overall regeneration of Kent Thameside and a vital component in the strategy for the eastern part of the Gateway. The development aims to produce a high quality dense development that builds on the international and domestic connections (17 minutes to St Pancras, 2 hours 15 minutes to Paris). The policy aim, as set out in RPG9a, is to provide a development node of sufficient scale to provide a counter attraction to the economic pull of central London.

The Ebbsfleet development will be on a city scale. Specific elements (apart from international and domestic railway stations) include 790,000 square meters of development (i.e. up to 3,200 homes and 470,000 square meters for other uses) and associated road and public transport infrastructure, open spaces forming part of the regional Green Grid, and community facilities. It is estimated that the site has the capacity to create some 20,000 new jobs. Such a development in the area around the Sevenoaks District opens up the opportunity.

Community Benefits

Sevenoaks District Council would anticipate strong community benefits from investments in respect to a Casino / Hotel conference facilities:

- ◆ This would embrace sustainable economic and commercial reality within the local community
- ◆ Regenerate key targeted area
- ◆ Enhance the Tourism through more visitor spend and fulfilment. Tourism and entertainment facilities like a Casino would work hand in hand, complementing each other, to encourage people to plan more active breaks, embracing gambling, entertainment and in visiting many places of natural and historic interest.

Unique Characteristics

London International Airports Gatwick, Heathrow and Stansted are within easy driving distance of the district as are the Channel Ports in Kent. Also in close proximity is London's only business airport, Biggin Hill which is equally well known for its illustrious history as its convenience as South London's local airport, from where a flight can be chartered to anywhere in the world. An ideal point of arrival for business visitors to London and 'home base' for many corporate, private and charter aircraft owners, it is a thriving business centre with great scope to grow.

Biggin Hill has 1,800m / 6,000ft runway that is long enough to accommodate bizjets up to and including GV, Global Express, Airbus A319CJ and Boeing Business Jet (BBJ) and no runway slots are needed.



The Airport enjoys a prime location just 12 miles from Central London and within easy reach of the motorway network and all of the Major towns in Sevenoaks.