



SURREY HEATH BOROUGH COUNCIL

BID FOR THE RIGHT TO LICENSE A LARGE CASINO

Submitting Chief Officer:

Mr Barry Catchpole, Chief Executive

Contact Name:

Mr Alan Charman, Licensing Manager

Telephone Number - 01276 707383

E-mail - alan.charman@surreyheath.gov.uk

Fax Number - 01276 707446

Statement of the Basis for the Application:

Application is made for the right to license one large casino in Surrey Heath on the basis that the area is affluent and would be eminently suitable for testing the social impact of the casino in such an area. The Borough is well located to serve a much wider area and a large casino would, in addition to providing a major entertainment facility, help to diversify the range of employment opportunities available within the Borough.

March, 2006

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TYPE OF AREA

Description

1. The Borough of Surrey Heath covers 36.5 square miles (9509 hectares/23360 acres) and is comprised of two former local authority areas, one of which was urban and the other rural. Located in the northwest corner of Surrey, the Borough is home to over 80,000 people. The area is affluent and largely residential with the price of some residential properties being amongst the highest in the country. 31.9% of the domestic properties within the Borough are within Council Tax Bands F, G and H whereas only 1.6% of properties are in Band A.
2. Camberley town centre is the largest shopping and business area within the Borough and the largest cluster of entertainment venues is situated in this town area. This shopping area is being further developed to include increased shopping facilities, restaurants a multi-plex cinema, ten pin bowling and a quality health and fitness suite.
3. Much of the rural area, formerly used for agriculture and farming and nursery activities for which it was renowned, remains undeveloped with the majority covered by the Metropolitan Green Belt, Sites of Special Scientific Interest and The Thames Basins Heath Special Protection Area. The area is popular with new technology businesses and has strong commercial and industrial centres providing a vibrant economy. The Borough has strong military connections, with the Staff College, Camberley and the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst and the headquarters of the Royal Logistics Corp at Deepcut and the Army Medical Services at Keogh Barracks these all being situated in the Borough.
4. Despite significant residential development during the 70's and 80's there remain large tracts of heathland and open green spaces. Nursery, agriculture and farming activities are now virtually non-existent with many nurseries being converted to garden centres and areas formerly used for agriculture and farming activities now being used for outdoor recreational activities. This includes equestrian pursuits including polo, and golf courses. Some areas formerly used for agriculture purposes remain uncultivated and unused.
5. There are a number of leisure centres in the Borough and 5 nightclubs, one of which is complemented by two hotels and recreational facilities on site. The latter premises are used to host an international darts championship which attracts visitors from all over the world over a two week period at the beginning of the year. In addition there are numerous public houses, restaurants, clubs, community centres and halls in the Borough where alcohol is sold or entertainment is provided on a regular or occasional basis. One of the hotel/leisure/spa complexes in the Borough is recognised to provide five star facilities and is a home of the English Rugby Team for training purposes and a rugby pitch and golf course are provided within the grounds.

6. There are 17 major open spaces offering opportunities for various sports as well as informal recreation. There are three natural major attractions in the Borough and these are Lightwater Country Park (58 hectares), Frimley Lodge Park (24 hectares) and Chobham Common (688 hectares). The threatened heathland landscape is preserved at Lightwater Country Park and a Heathland Visitor Centre is provided in the Park explaining and promoting the value of the heath. Frimley Lodge Park provides a mix of formal playing fields, parkland and meadows and gives excellent access to the Basingstoke Canal.
7. Chobham Common, situated at the eastern end of the Borough is a National Nature Reserve and a top (Grade 1) Site of Special Scientific Interest. The Common is managed by the Surrey Wildlife Trust on behalf of Surrey County Council. Chobham Common is one of the largest heathland areas in Surrey and has been recognised as one of the finest examples of lowland heath in Europe - see www.chobham.info/common.htm The Common is a major attraction for people living not only in the Borough but also in the region. Activities on the Common include walking, horse riding, bird watching, nature study, orienteering and model flying
8. There are some 5 hectares of water areas at Tomlins Pond, Watchetts Lake, Alphington Pond and Chobham Round Pond. Although not owned by Surrey Heath Borough Council, stretches of the River Blackwater and the Basingstoke Canal also pass through the Borough.
9. Other open space is administered by 4 parish councils and community groups.
10. Blackwater Valley which overlaps the western part of Surrey Heath is a sub-division of the Western Policy Area. Other local authorities straddled by the Blackwater Valley are Bracknell Forest, Guildford, Waverley, Hart and Wokingham. The only Borough that is completely within the area is Rushmoor. The bid to obtain the right to license a large casino in the Borough of Surrey Heath is supported by Rushmoor Borough Council in a letter received from the Chief Executive for that authority.
11. Blackwater Valley area has seen rapid growth in the past 25 years. The buoyancy of the local economy, allied to business park and further development at Farnborough Aerodrome in Hampshire, has given rise to pressures for continued economic development. Pressures on the transport infrastructure are significant.

See: http://www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/southeastplan/key/study_areas/draft_strategies/western_corridor/western_corridor_draft_strategy.pdf

A letter from The Rt Hon David Milliband for the Office of Deputy Prime Minister, dated 16th January, 2006 circulated to Blackwater Valley Members Strategy Group recognised the important role of smaller towns and larger cities. The letter indicated the intention to give all towns and cities the opportunity to maximise their potential. The total number of places, towns and cities to which this letter was sent was 69.

Demographics of the Borough Based on 2001 Census

See <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001/profiles/43uj.asp>

12. Within the 36.5 square miles of the Borough for the purposes of rating there are 33,560 domestic dwellings, 1679 commercial premises and 258 industrial properties and 281 other properties which are currently rated but do not fit within any of the above categories.

Population Base

13. Population - 80,314 comprised of 39,701 males and 40,613 females. (Estimate for total at April, 2004 - 82,305)

Ethnicity

(Percentage figures in brackets in paragraphs 14, 15 and 16 below relate to proportion of the population of the Borough)

14. White 76,600 (95.37%); largest minority ethnic group – Indian 818 (1.02%).

Religion

15. Christian 61,319 (76.35%); Muslim 940 (1.17%); Hindu 524 (.65%); Buddhist 272 (.33%); Sikh 235 (.29%); Jewish 148 (.18%); Other 194 (.24%); No religion 11,344 (14.12%); Religion not known 5,338 (6.63%).

Educational Attainments and Work (figures relate to all people aged between 16 and 74)

16. Employment - 41,165 (51.25%) employed; 947 (1.17%) unemployed.
Travel to Work - By car 30,810 (38.36%); by public transport 2,822 (3.51%).
Qualifications - 15,873 (19.76%) qualified at degree level or higher; 10,798 (13.44%) no qualifications.

Household Income

17. In the Indices of Deprivation 2004, Surrey Heath was ranked at 353 out of 354 local authorities in England, where 1 was the most deprived area and 354 the least deprived. (Source: Neighbourhood Statistics) In 2000 the average gross household income was £35,900 as compared with the UK average of £23,200 and was one of the highest in Surrey. (Source: a Surrey Study on Affordable Housing)

Tourism

18. In addition to numerous business visitors many people are attracted to the area by the outdoor recreational facilities, the heathland, the restaurants, clubs and hotels. There are 9 conservation areas in the Borough and parts of the villages of Bagshot, Chobham and Windlesham come within these conservation areas as also do Bagshot Park and the Royal Military Academy. These conservation areas are of historical interest. The scenic views from Lightwater Country Park over the Thames Valley and

from Chobham Common towards the Surrey Hills attract many local visitors to these areas and Chobham Common is frequently used for shooting scenes to be shown on films and television dramas.

19. There are no casinos currently located in the region, the nearest being situated 19 miles away in Reading. Surrey Heath is situated 35 miles from London and 50 miles from Southampton which is the nearest coastal resort. The provision of a casino in Surrey Heath would therefore provide a nearby facility for both residents in the Borough and the surrounding areas in the region without the need to travel long distances. The “high tech” businesses in the area also attract numerous visitors to the area for business reasons, both from other parts of the country and also from overseas. Many of these visitors remain in the area overnight or longer and use the hotels and guest houses located throughout the Borough. The “Economic Profile of Surrey” shows that high tech manufacturing in Surrey Heath in percentage terms is twice as high as that in any other local authority area in Surrey. The high percentage of knowledge based services in Surrey Heath (28%) also attracts business visitors to the area. Please see:

<http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/sccwebsite/sccwspages.nsf/LookupWebPagesByTITLERTF/Economic+Profile+of+Surrey?opendocument>

20. The table in the “Economic Profile of Surrey” from which these figures have been extracted indicates that these sectors together with consumer services and employment are the sectors most capable of sustaining local competitive advantages both in terms of high value output and providing a broad range of employment opportunities. The assumption is that it will be the knowledge intensive economy information sectors plus those driven by increasing consumption, such as tourism and recreation, that are likely to make up the strongest future growth within the county.

Strategies for Development of Tourism, Leisure or Gambling

21. There are no strategies dealing specifically with the development of tourism or gambling in Surrey Heath. South East England comprises the largest tourism market in the UK outside Greater London. Tourism is, therefore, important to the economy of the South East Region and this is reflected in a number of documents including Section D10 of the South East Plan. Please see:

http://www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/southeastplan/plan/part_1_july05/section_d10-tourism_and_related_sports_and_recreation.pdf

22. Surrey Heath Borough Council recognises the importance of the tourist industry and on page 3 of a Core Strategy Sustainability Appraisal Report prepared for Surrey Heath Borough Council reference is made to the need to encourage tourism and protect tourist attractions – see

http://www.surreyheath.gov.uk/admin/documents/retrieve.asp?pk_document=1947

23. The Council’s Leisure and Culture Strategy does not address entertainment, tourism or facilities for gambling activities as provided for by the private sector and is mainly

concerned with the provision of cultural and leisure activities with which the Council is directly involved - see

http://www.surreyheath.gov.uk/admin/documents/retrieve.asp?pk_document=203

Principal Needs of Regeneration in the Area.

24. Whilst Surrey Heath is not generally recognised to be an area in need of regeneration, and there is very little unemployment within the Borough (1.6%) its position adjacent to Hampshire and Berkshire means that less affluent areas look to Surrey Heath for employment opportunities.
25. The statistics published by the Office of Deputy Prime Minister for vacancy rates in commercial and industrial properties show that Surrey Heath had the 7th highest level of vacancies in England in 2003/04. It is likely that much of this is located within Camberley and Frimley with many vacant units known to be within existing industrial estates. In addition there is an identified need to regenerate the London Road (A 30) within Camberley which contains many run down properties and has a high turnover in tenants. Much of this area is suitable for redevelopment but the complex land ownership patterns, high existing land use values and small size of the sites make them unattractive to developers.

Suitability of Area for the Testing of Social Impact

26. Many professional and affluent people reside in the Borough of Surrey Heath and in neighbouring areas - see
<http://www.surreyheath.gov.uk/business/EconomicDevelopment/>
27. Although the siting of a casino in the Borough could have some benefits in relation to regeneration and maintaining the level of employment, the main test of social impact would be to establish the advantages and disadvantages, if any, of siting a casino in an affluent area. Gambling in such an area is more likely to be for recreational purposes and not driven by a need to acquire money, which may be the case where regeneration is required, unemployment is high or earnings are below average.
28. The “high tech manufacturing” and “knowledge based services” within the Borough and adjoining areas attract numerous business visitors to the Borough and their have been expressions of interest by some members of the business community in using the facilities provided at a casino for hospitality purposes. A number of American and Japanese concerns own companies or have business interests in this area and the siting of a casino in this area may have a particular interest for visitors from these countries where casinos are part of their modern cultures.

SOCIAL IMPACT

Likely Impact of Proposal

29. The siting of a large casino would provide a recreational facility for many residents and attract other visitors from surrounding areas who currently have to travel to

London for such facilities. A casino provided in the Borough could therefore reduce the need for journeys to be undertaken by people wishing to enjoy this entertainment facility. Many people living in the Borough have a large disposable income and this also applies to people living in surrounding districts. A large casino would provide employment for a large number of people who are not attracted to the service based and high tech industries in the area and who may possibly be seeking first time employment, who wish to enter the hospitality and entertainment industry. A casino located in the Borough would help to diversify the choices available to people wishing to work in the area and this may be of importance if there should be any downturn in established businesses, within the Borough.

Possible Negative and Positive Aspects and How These Would be Addressed

30. There are many residential areas in the Borough, and a large casino in one of these areas could be obtrusive and give rise to disturbance. Sites are, however available in both the urban and rural parts of the Borough where a casino could be located without giving rise to these problems.
31. The Provisional Surrey Local Transport Plan for Surrey makes reference to the road traffic problems in the region and the need for volumes of traffic to be reduced. The number of drivers commuting to and from work during the rush hour periods result in many roads becoming congested at these times. This problem is not peculiar to Surrey Heath and will apply equally to many other areas in the region. The provision of local employment is recognised to be one means of reducing traffic problems, especially that related to London and Heathrow commuting.
32. Journeys to surrounding areas and London can be made by train from Camberley, Frimley and Bagshot but the preferred option of many commuters is to travel by car. Surrey Heath is, in this respect well served by easy access to the M3, with two access junctions in the area, the M25 with easy access from the eastern part of the Borough and to the A3(M) via the Blackwater Valley Road. The siting of a large casino is unlikely to contribute to traffic problems during rush hours as the hours of operation would not coincide with normal working hours and finishing times would be late in the evening or early morning. A prospective casino operator would be required to provide links to public transport facilities although it is unlikely that this would be the preferred mode of travel for people patronising this facility.

Impact on Social Cohesion and Impact on Existing Gambling in the Area

33. A well sited casino in the Borough is unlikely to have any adverse impact on social cohesion in the area. The only provision for gambling in the area at present is at betting shops and by means of amusements with prizes machines provided in public houses, clubs, and other premises including a small amusement arcade. It is unlikely that the provision of a casino would have any impact on the betting shops or the small scale provision of amusement with prizes machines in the Borough. There have been no complaints arising in respect of the use of these premises. There is no evidence to suggest that gambling in the Borough gives rise to any crime and disorder problems and it has not been felt necessary to carry out any assessment on the current impact of gambling in the Borough. As previously stated it is anticipated that gambling in the

region would be for social purposes rather than as a perceived means of acquiring additional income.

Current Monitoring Arrangements and Assessment of Impact

34. Any premises used within the Borough for entertainment purposes are monitored by authorised officers of the Council and the police. Records are also kept of any complaints received. Surrey has the lowest crime rate in the country and Surrey Heath has the second lowest crime rate out of the 11 districts within the County. There is no reason to believe that the siting of a large casino in Surrey Heath would adversely affect this situation.
35. The Council has an excellent working partnership with Surrey Police and one aspect of this partnership is the joint liaison that takes place with local public house licence holders through pubwatch schemes.

Initiatives to Test Social Impact of Other Activities

36. There are no initiatives in place to manage social impacts from other activities.

Planned Job Creation and Training Programmes

37. The rate of unemployment within the Borough is extremely low and is currently estimated to be 1.6% of the working population. This places Surrey Heath 367 out of 376 districts in England and Wales

See: <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001/profiles/43uj.asp>

38. As a consequence there are no job creation and training programmes within the Borough and none are planned. The skills and knowledge of people residing in the Borough tends to be of a specialised nature and consequently there are no general training programmes which are considered to be relevant. It is hoped that a casino would offer new job opportunities to local residents currently commuting out of the Borough and help improve sustainability.

Relationships With Other Organisations

39. The Council works with the Local Strategic Partnership and the Safer Surrey Heath Partnership on local issues. Other partners include the Surrey Police, the Surrey Police Authority, Surrey County Council, Surrey Heath and Woking Primary Care Trust, Frimley Park Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, Surrey Fire and Rescue Service, Surrey Education Service, Surrey Heath Voluntary Services, the Ministry of Defence, Faith and Community Groups and Government Offices South East. The Safer Surrey Heath Partnership deal with issues in relation crime and disorder problems in the Borough and this includes problems arising in respect of the use of entertainment venues particularly within Camberley town centre.

NEED FOR REGENERATION

40. As previously stated, the Borough and surrounding areas are not generally recognised to be in need of regeneration. There are, however, isolated pockets within the Borough that are in need of redevelopment and this includes areas where it may be appropriate to locate a casino. Statistics regarding the employment status and activity rate within the area have been included under the heading Type of Area. The town centre is currently being further developed and this involves a level of investment from the private sector. The regeneration of the town centre will achieve an increase in retail floor space but not significantly. The purpose is to maintain vitality and viability as a town centre of sub-regional importance by improving the retail “offer” and the range of activities in particular leisure uses.
41. There are at least two current entertainment venues which could benefit from regeneration and these are both likely to be suitable for the location of a large casino. In addition, there are a number of office buildings which are currently vacant which could be adapted or redeveloped for use as large casinos. The regeneration of any of these premises including the vacant office premises would attract additional people to the area which is likely to be beneficial to other commercial interests within the Borough.

WILLINGNESS TO LICENSE

Council Resolutions and Minutes

42. The Council has been encouraged to bid for the right to license a casino by local commercial interests and this matter has been considered at two full meetings of the Council. At a meeting held on 14th December, 2005 the Council expressed an interest in bidding for the right to license a casino and at a subsequent meeting held on 22nd February, 2006 it was agreed that a bid to license a large casino would be submitted. Members were advised that such a bid had cost implications and consequently it is an indication of the Council’s commitment to making this bid by taking this decision at a time when local government finances are challenged by competing priorities. The decision to proceed with the bid was agreed by a substantial majority of the Members of the Council. Council minutes can be viewed at:

<http://www.surreyheath.gov.uk/council/Committees/minutes.htm>

Consultation

43. Prior to expressing an interest in submitting the bid the Council conducted a local consultation. Approximately 2000 letters were sent out inviting comments and efforts were also made to publicise this consultation through the media. Press releases were issued and comments were invited from all sections of the community in radio and television interviews. The outcome of this consultation was that 295 responses were received, 90 in favour and 205 against. In addition the Council has received two petitions containing 920 and 1233 signatures respectively supporting the proposal to submit a bid to license a casino within the Borough. The Council has not attached undue weight to these petitions as they relate to one particular premises within the Borough and a number of the signatures on one of the petitions are not genuine. The

signatures in these petitions do, however, indicate that such a bid is supported not only by people residing in the area but also people living in other parts of the country and overseas.

44. The basis of the reasons for opposing or supporting the submission of a bid has been analysed and details of this analysis are as follows:

The following table shows responses in favour – total 90

(More than one reason has been given by some respondents)

Control of Gambling	Benefit to Economy	Employment Opportunities	Suitability of Particular Premises	Additional Leisure Facility	Miscellaneous	No Reason Given	Raising Profile of Borough
3	42	28	24	23	22	1	5

The following table shows responses against – total 205

(More than one reason has been given by some respondents)

Increase in Anti Social Behaviour	Not Ethical	Particular Premises not Suitable	Miscellaneous	No Reason Given	Noise	Personal Reasons	Planning Issues	Effect on Transport - Roads
59	102	56	16	6	18	14	15	66

45. The response to the consultation carried out by the Council has been limited and in terms of the total population of the Borough has been insignificant. The summary of the responses received as set out in the tables above shows that the main reason for opposing the proposal to license a casino in the Borough is on ethical grounds. The other factors that cause most concern relate to the effect on transport and roads, the increase in anti-social behaviour and particular premises not being suitable.
46. Ethical reasons for not issuing casino licences were expressed at national level and in both Houses of Parliament when consideration was given to introducing the new gambling legislation. This is therefore, not just a local issue although it may have some relevance when deciding the location of a casino.
47. The affect on transport and roads and the suitability of particular premises are matters that will need to be addressed when consideration is given to selecting a site for the casino. As previously stated it is not anticipated that people travelling to and from a casino in the Borough would add to problems during rush hour periods. The sustainability of road use is not confined to Surrey Heath and the use of public transport would be encouraged.
48. With regard to anti-social behaviour it is anticipated that crime and disorder would not be increased as a result of licensing a casino that attracted a mix of age groups and provided a range of entertainment/recreational facilities. This is, however, a matter that would need to be monitored to assess the social impact, if any, of licensing a casino.

Local Strategic Partnership

49. Initial consultations took place with the Local Strategic Partnership in October, 2005 prior to the Council deciding to submit a bid. No comments or formal resolutions in respect of the proposal have been made at this stage but consultation with the Local Strategic Partnership is being pursued.

Tourism and Leisure Strategies

50. The tourism strategy for the region supports initiatives for attracting additional tourists to the area and this does include entertainment venues. This document can be viewed on <http://www.industry.visitsoutheastengland.com/tourismstrategy/index.aspx> The strategy recognises the importance of tourism for the region both for tourists, one day visitors and for people coming into the area to visit friends or on business. Surrey Heath is well placed for tourists wishing to visit major attractions in the vicinity. The Borough is well provided with a number of quality hotels which in themselves are an attraction for visitors and give easy access to airports, well known golf courses and horse racing tracks in the region. These include include Sunningdale and Wentworth golf courses where internationally acclaimed golfing events are held and Ascot and Kempton racecourses. The addition of a large casino in the borough would complement these facilities.

PROBABILITY OF IMPLEMENTATION

Market Demand

51. In view of time constraints a market demand analysis relating to both resident and tourist demand has not been possible. The demand for recreational facilities and the use, which is made of other entertainment facilities within the Borough, does, however, indicate that a large casino located within the Borough would attract a substantial demand.

Catchment Area and Customer Base

52. In view of the location of Surrey Heath it is felt that the catchment area would include residents from much of Surrey and Hampshire and there is good access to the area via the M3, the A3(M) via the Blackwater Valley Road and the A30. The petitions which have been submitted also indicate that a large casino sited within the Borough could attract people from a far larger area throughout the country.
53. Rushmoor Borough Council which adjoins the western boundary of Surrey Heath has submitted a letter from its Chief Executive to this Council stating that “Rushmoor appreciates the positive impact that a casino could have on the Blackwater Valley sub-region, particularly in relation to employment and economic activity. We are, therefore, pleased to support your bid in principle and wish you well with the application”.
54. Farnborough airfield in Rushmoor is situated close to the Borough boundary and many large and high technology businesses attracting visitors from overseas are located in that area. A bi-annual trade airshow of international importance is held at

this airfield and many of the visitors to this show make use of the hotel and guest house accommodation in Surrey Heath.

55. Any large casino sited within the Borough would have to be easily accessible via existing road and rail links and be situated in an area that would not cause undue disturbance to residents living within the Borough. The use of green field sites is not considered to be appropriate and the Council would be looking for any prospective operators of casinos within the borough to use existing buildings or to develop land which is already occupied by those buildings.

Existing and Proposed Transport Infrastructure

56. The existing and proposed transport infrastructure for the area is set out in the provisional Surrey Local Transport Plan. However this document deals with the situation throughout Surrey and although reference is made to the Camberley area the Surrey Local Transport Plan mainly deals with the county as a whole. The Transport Plan does not deal with problems associated with motorways which are dealt with by the Highways Agency and not Surrey County Council and as stated above it is the motorways which give good access to the Borough. The Blackwater Valley Road and the M3 are both congested during rush hour periods but there are generally no traffic problems on these roads outside these rush hour periods and peak holiday periods. Similarly there are no traffic problems on these roads late in the evening. The provisional Surrey Local Transport Plan can be viewed at:

http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/sccwebsite/sccwspages.nsf/LookupWebPagesByTITLE_RTF/Local+Transport+Plan?opendocument

Impact of Competition on Existing Casinos and Other Leisure Based Activities

57. There are no existing casinos within the Borough or in adjoining areas and the location of a casino within the Borough should not result in undue competition with those casinos which are situated at some distance from the Borough. As previously stated the nearest casino is located 19 miles away at Reading. With regard to competition with other leisure placed activities within the Borough it is anticipated that the provision of the casino would complement the existing leisure based activities within the borough particularly those involving outdoor recreational activities.

Potential Critical Mass Effect

58. The Council anticipates that the large casino would form part of larger complex providing leisure/recreation, entertainment, restaurant and hotel facilities. This may be achieved by locating the casino in an area where these facilities are already provided by other proprietors in the vicinity or, on one site, where such facilities could be provided in one complex. Entertainment facilities clustered together in this manner are likely to attract a wide range of age groups to enjoy not only the casino facilities that are available but also the other forms of entertainment provided. Such an arrangement is less likely to lead to crime and disorder and provide a greater attraction for people with a wider range of tastes. The licensing of a large casino in isolation would, however, not be discounted.

Private and Public Sector Investment

59. It is not anticipated that there would be any public investment in respect of the provision of a casino and that the cost would be borne entirely by private sector investment.

Current Level of Investor Interest

60. There have been firm expressions of interest in providing a casino within the Borough by the following:

Aspers Casinos, 64, Sloane Street , London

Lakeside Country Club, Frimley Green, Surrey in conjunction with London Clubs International plc.

61. In addition there have been a number of other enquiries about the possibility of licensing premises in the Borough as a casino.

Anticipated Change in Gambling Spend

62. No statistics are available in respect of how the gambling spend in the Borough would change if a casino was provided but it is anticipated that there would be substantial interest in patronising the casino for recreational purposes.

REGIONAL AND LOCAL CONTEXT

Regional Context

63. Planning Policy Statement 6 identifies leisure use as an activity that may be appropriate in town centres. Casinos are not one of the named types of leisure use. Policy TC3 of the draft South East Plan identifies Camberley as a secondary regional centre which should be a focus for a wide range of commercial developments including large scale leisure developments. Major developments are sites of 10ha or more (10,000 square metres of gross floorspace). Policy TC3 identifies those issues that large scale new developments in town centres should take into account, as follows:

Policy TC3: New Development And Redevelopment In Town Centres

64. The strategic network of town centres will be the prime focus for large scale leisure, office and culture and retail developments to meet identified needs taking into account:
- i. The need to support the pre-eminent town centre's functions, viability and capacity to accommodate change and growth within each sub-regional catchment area.
 - ii. The need to respect the historic character, environment and cultural value of existing town centres.

- iii. Where it would assist the re-generation of vulnerable centres, new investment of the appropriate level and scale should be promoted.
 - iv. Where it would support sustainability objectives including the role of regional hubs.
 - v. The potential impact on the vitality and viability of nearby town centres.
 - vi. The impact on traffic and the need to minimise reliance on the car/lorry and promote public transport accessibility.
65. Local authorities should carry out further work to assess the development needs of town centres in the strategic network. Further guidance should be provided in Local Development Documents as well as criteria for the assessment of proposals for new developments.
66. Any application of a casino use would need to apply the sequential approach (see PPS6)in identifying the preferred location for new development. The Draft South east Plan identifies six main reasons why people come to town centres and thus the six uses that should be promoted in town centres.

Box TCI: Categories of activity linked to the use of town centres	
<p>Visit Leisure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cinemas/theatres • Pubs/restaurants/cafes • Amusement arcades • Casinos <p>Tourism/Culture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural or built heritage • Museums/galleries • Libraries • Accommodation if more than day trip <p>Access to personal services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health (doctors, dentists etc) • Beauty (hairdressers, nail bars etc) • Banking – post office, bank, building society <p>Access to transport services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bus or train station 	<p>Work and Study</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business accommodation • College, university or library • Health clubs • Easy access healthcare • Sandwich bars • Dry cleaners • Retailers <p>Live</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Live-work units • Affordable housing • Sports facilities <p>Shop</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple retailers • Enclosed shopping centres • Department stores • Independent stores • New formats

Surrey Structure Plan

67. Policy LO3 supports the role of Camberley as a major all-purpose centre.

Surrey Heath Local Plan 2000

68. The adopted Local Plan has no specific policies for casinos and the section on recreation does not address these types of uses. Similarly the chapter on retail uses does not address this type of leisure use. The strategy for Camberley town centre is as follows:
69. “It is recognised that Camberley town centre is facing competition from other centres and there is a need to maintain and where possible enhance the existing attractions of the town centre, particularly as a means to counter possible expansion in other nearby centres.”
- 13.18 The Camberley town centre strategy and objectives for this Local Plan shown at Diagram TC1 are therefore as follows:
- (a) To improve the quality of the town centre environment;
 - (b) To improve accessibility to the town centre;
 - (c) To encourage greater diversity of uses and town centre attractions, whilst resisting the loss of important facilities; and
 - (d) To direct proposals for major new retail, leisure and office developments to the town centre to meet established needs.

Policy Tc1: Maintaining And Enhancing The Role Of The Town Centre

70. The Borough Council will maintain and enhance the role of Camberley town centre as a focus for retail, business, leisure, community and residential uses, and ensure its future vitality and viability by:
- (a) Improving the quality of the town centre by promoting schemes for the enhancement of the environment;
 - (b) Improving accessibility to the town centre by promoting schemes which assist all modes of travel;
 - (c) Encouraging a diverse range of uses within the town centre through a combination of protection of important town centre activities and through encouraging development where this is in the interests of the town centre economy, and the social and cultural needs of the community; and
 - (d) Directing proposals for major business, retail and leisure development to the town centre, where a longer term need has been established.
71. Major new retail or leisure development will not be permitted outside of the town centre, whilst appropriate town centre opportunities are available or can realistically be made available.
72. In explaining how the policy will be implemented, the Local Plan, in paragraph 13.21 goes on to say that:
- 13.21 The Borough Council will therefore apply the “sequential test” to major retail and leisure proposals, whilst there are opportunities within the town centre, principally at the site known as Land West of Park Street. The sequential test may also apply to major office proposals whilst there are opportunities

available within the town centre. Policy S2 sets out how the sequential test will be applied.

- 13.22 For the longer term it is important that Camberley remains an attractive and accessible town centre and adopts a flexible approach to the use of premises which are vacant for any period of time. The Borough Council will, in partnership with others, promote schemes to enhance the environment, and will seek to make the town centre accessible for all modes of travel, including pedestrians, persons with disabilities, cyclists, public transport and for the car user, through a combination of traffic management, parking policies, security measures and signage.

COMMUNITY BENEFITS

73. The Council expects that the provision of a large casino within the Borough would provide a worthwhile recreational facility that would be expected to include provision for other entertainment activities as well as hotel facilities and restaurants. The Council would also expect inward investment to fund provision of facilities or activities for the benefit of the whole community.

UNIQUE CHARACTERISTICS

74. The Borough of Surrey Heath is situated between London and coastal resorts on the south coast and is well away from the entertainment and leisure facilities provided at these major locations. Surrey Heath is uniquely placed to attract custom from this mid region including parts of Hampshire and Berkshire. The Blackwater Valley Road passes along the western boundary of the Borough and this gives good access to areas situated north and south of the Borough. The M3 similarly gives good access from areas to the east and west of the Borough. Areas exist within the Borough which are capable of redevelopment which would be suitable for the provision of a large casino and it is possible that many of the facilities that will be required already exist within those locations.
75. Many people living within the Borough are affluent and this also applies to many adjoining districts. There is virtually full employment in the Borough but there is a need for business activities to be diversified and to attract more visitors to the area. The Borough has large areas of residential properties and there is need for the provision of both indoor and outdoor recreational facilities. For the purpose of testing the social impact of a large casino the unique character of the area would make it an ideal location to provide this facility.