

Casino Advisory Panel —Project Outline, 31 January 2006

Introduction

1. The Casino Advisory Panel ('the Panel') has the duty to advise the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport in the exercise of her order making powers under section 175(4) of the Gambling Act 2005 to determine the geographical distribution of casino premises licences. For this purpose, she is required to specify in an order which licensing authorities should be permitted to issue casino premises licences of a specified kind, and how many of each type of casino premises licence each specified local authority (in Scotland, Licensing Boards) should be permitted to issue. Section 175 (1-3) of the Act sets out the overall limits for casino premises licences as no more than one regional casino, eight large casinos and eight small casinos.
2. The Government expects that the regional casino will have a minimum total customer area of 5,000 m², and be permitted up to 1,250 Category A jackpot machines, which will be able to offer unlimited stakes and prizes. Large Casinos will have a minimum total customer area of 1,500 m², and be permitted up to 150 Category B gaming machines, with a maximum jackpot of £4,000. Small casinos will have a minimum total customer area of 750m², and be permitted up to 80 Category B gaming machines, with a maximum jackpot of £4,000. The one regional and eight large casinos will be permitted to offer bingo, and all three categories will be permitted to offer betting.
3. The Government also expects that a regional casino will be a major development, offering clear potential for regeneration. It will provide not just a range of gambling activities, but may include hotel accommodation, conference facilities, restaurants, bars, areas for live entertainment and other leisure attractions, gambling activities and non-gambling leisure facilities. The Government believes that it will have the potential to bring in major investment and economic regeneration to the area where it is located.
4. The criteria against which the Panel will assess submitted proposals were set out in a national policy statement on casinos which was published by the Government on 16 December 2004. This statement is at Annex A of the 'Call for Proposals' document. The Panel's Terms of Reference also state that the primary consideration will be to ensure that locations satisfy the need for the best possible test of social impact. Subject to this, the criteria will also be:
 - to include areas in need of regeneration (as measured by employment and other social deprivation data) and which are likely to benefit in these terms from a new casino;
 - to ensure that those areas selected are willing to license a new casino.
5. The geographical remit of the Panel is all of Britain, that is Scotland, Wales and England. The Secretary of State is required by s.175 of the 2005 Act to consult Scottish Ministers and the National Assembly for Wales before making an order under this section.

6. This paper sets out the general programme which the Panel has adopted for its work. It takes account of the likely workload for the Panel, so far as it can be ascertained toward the end of the scoping phase.
7. Further background details regarding the Panel, its activities, frequently asked questions, and latest news, can be found on the website:

<http://www.culture.gov.uk/cap/index.htm>

Outline and duration

8. The Panel may well find that it has to adapt or modify this programme in the light of their workload and other considerations, but at the present time the Panel expects its work to fall into four phases:
 - Phase 1 was a scoping phase, in which an impression of the volume of work before the Panel is gained, and background research is undertaken.
 - In Phase 2, submissions are invited from local authorities,
 - In Phase 3 the submitted proposals are considered and sifted against the basic policy criteria and other material considerations, and then selected proposals are further examined.
 - Phase 4 is the decision and reporting phase.
9. The Panel's work began in October 2005 and must be completed by the end of 2006. This programme of work concludes with an outline of programming milestones.

Phase 1— Scoping

10. Seven activities were included in this phase. All are either complete or underway at the present time. They were:
 1. a search of available DCMS material and informal expressions of interest already on file or in the Press.
 2. a library search of research material on casinos and their community/regeneration effects
 3. circulation to all local authorities of a non-committal request as to whether interest is to be expected,
 4. consultation with the Scottish Executive, the National Assembly for Wales, Regional Assemblies (including the Mayor of London) and Regional Development Agencies,
 5. enquiring whether strategic environmental assessment (SEA) is needed,

6. developing the set criteria for selection and decision,
 7. devising the form, etc of a structured call for proposals.
11. In a circulation to all local authorities of a non-committal request as to whether interest is to be expected some 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.

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
Total	75

Progress Report

12. A progress report will be made following the end of this scoping stage.

Phase 2 — proposals invited

Call for proposals

13. Along with the development of the set criteria, this is to be one of the most important activities in the programme. Proposals are to be invited from Licensing Authorities (as defined in Section 2 of the Act); that is, in England and Wales, specified local authorities and in Scotland, Licensing Boards.
14. As the Panel's view of the form of a good proposal is one that is concise, relevant and focussed on providing sound evidence about the most important issues, the Panel will expect makers of proposals not to exceed 20 pages of A4 in their submitted statements, excluding a cover sheet. Reference may be made to published material, however, sources of published information and statistical data must be clearly referenced and there should be no need for additional appendices attached. The Panel will ask for additional information if it

is needed. All submitted material will be in the public domain, and therefore evidence of a confidential nature will not be accepted.

15. The Panel will expect all proposals to be with them by Friday 31st March 2006.
16. It is expected that the call for proposals will be made toward the end of January, thereby allowing two months for submissions to be prepared. This period is considered sufficient bearing in mind both the Panel's overall programme to the end of 2006, and the expectation that much work and consideration will already have been given to serious proposals.
17. The output of this activity will be a list of proposals which will need to be sifted and thinned down to a short-list for further examination, having regard to the set criteria and Government policy generally.

Phase 3 — Examination and testing

Consultation

18. Paragraph 13 of the December 2004 Ministerial Statement commits the Panel to consulting Regional Planning Bodies in England. The Panel will:
 - a. " ... invite them to identify a list of broad locations for Regional Casinos emerging from their work on the Regional Spatial Strategies" (RSS). (Each of the Regional Planning Bodies are known to be at a different stage of this work).
 - b. "Before the Advisory Panel finalises its recommendations on areas for Regional Casinos it will need to ensure that these areas are compatible with the broad locations identified in England in RSS or in any draft revisions of RSS before the Secretary of State".
19. Stage a. above is to be undertaken after the closing date for proposals, once the proposals are all in the public domain and regional Planning Bodies are able, if they wish, to make decisions as to their respective merits. Stage b. will be undertaken at the beginning of the Panel's reporting phase. The National Assembly for Wales and Scottish Executive will be consulted at this time also.

Sifting

20. The examination of proposals will begin with their consideration with a view to their sifting and thinning down to manageable numbers for further examination, having regard to the set criteria and Government policy generally. During this process of consideration and sifting, additional information may be sought from the makers of proposals and others as needed, and consultancy may be sought as needed. Such additional information and advice will, like the proposals themselves, be in the public domain. The output of this activity will be a short-list for further examination, having regard to the set criteria and Government policy generally.

21. Before final decisions are made on the selection of proposals for further examination, consultation will be made with Regional Planning Bodies, Regional Development Agencies and comparable bodies in Wales and Scotland, and representations for further consideration will be invited.
22. A brief statement will be made and published on the Panel's website, giving the reasons why each of the submitted proposals has been or not been selected for further examination.

Further examination

23. In addition to the seeking of further information in writing, the Panel will test the strength of selected competing proposals. This may be done either through the medium of public "round table" conferences based on the method of examination-in-public (EiP) or through the examination and consideration of written representations and other material. EiPs are likely to take place from the end of August to the end of September and will be limited to proposals for the regional casino. Proposals for large and small casinos will be examined on the basis of written evidence.
24. A progress report will be made at the conclusion of this phase setting out what has been done. It will not speak as to the merits of any proposals.

Phase 4— Decision and Reporting

25. This phase will begin with a further consultation with Regional Planning Bodies, the National Assembly for Wales and the Scottish Executive.
26. The Panel will then go on to decide on its reasoned conclusions and recommendations, and write its report. The Panel's duty is to present its report by the end of December 2006.

Milestones

27. The milestones by which progress may be noted are:
 - report of Phase 1, scoping, (mid February 2006)
 - invitation of proposals (end January 2006)
 - receipt of proposals (March 31st 2006)
 - notification of selections for further examination, arrangements for EiPs etc. (from May 2006)
 - holding of EiPs (end August to end of September 2006)
 - final report (early or mid December 2006).

These milestones are illustrated in an indicative timetable at Annex A