

The First-stage Sifting Process

1. The objective of the sifting process was to reduce the initial 67 submissions down to manageable numbers for further detailed examination with respect to the Panel's remitted criteria and Government policy generally.
2. The sifting was based on examination of proposals against the remitted criteria by considering each proposal against the information sought by the Panel in its "Call for Proposals."
3. The "Call for Proposals" was sent out to all local authorities at the end of January. Authorities making proposals were asked to submit information under each of the headings, or key lines of enquiry, listed in the following sections below;
 - a. Type of area
 - b. Social Impact
 - c. Need for regeneration
 - d. Willingness to licence
 - e. Probability of implementation
 - f. Regional Context
 - g. Community benefits
 - h. Unique characteristics

Within each of these key lines of enquiry, specific types of information were requested. The headings and specific information were determined by the Panel as providing the information necessary to consider proposals fully against the remitted criteria, and of sufficient detail to allow comparisons between proposals in the same category of casino.

4. Each proposal was independently evaluated by two panel members, based on a scoring matrix in which each proposal could be marked out of 10 in respect of each key line of enquiry. The Panel deemed that each key line of enquiry carried equal weighting to the others. The 67 proposals were divided randomly among the pairs subject to a proposal not falling to be determined by a Panel member with an actual or possible perceived conflict of interest. Prior to this, a sample of proposals was assessed independently by all 5 Panel members, in order to calibrate their appraisal approach, identify areas where individual members could interpret proposals differently and test the robustness of the scoring matrix. Panel member pairs then liaised to agree an overall scoring against the key lines of enquiry. Where the two panel members in any pairing differed materially in their views, a third panel member appraised the proposal and then a moderated score based on that was used. The proposals were then ranked according to the moderated scores.
5. The proposals were then further discussed by the Panel, having due regard to any conflicts of interest. In this discussion detailed consideration was given to proposals which were on the margin of being shortlisted and to any top-ranked proposal where the Panel members who had not appraised that proposal sought clarification for its ranking from those who had appraised it. The object of this exercise was to ensure that the results which were indicated by the raw scores were robust and accurately reflected the members' views of the relative strengths of the proposals.

6. In the event this process, combining as it did both moderated evaluation and the detailed discussion that followed, produced a short list of eight proposals for the one regional casino that could go forward to consultation and further examination.
7. A similar process was used in respect of proposals for large and small casinos, bearing in mind that some submissions contained a fall back position proposing one or more casinos in a smaller category. The Panel were mindful of the need to include an adequate size of field in respect of each of the large and small categories and the policy considerations requiring a geographical spread and a range of type of area. This led to a review of the shortlist compiled solely on the basis of scoring to reflect that. This process yielded a shortlist of 31 competing proposals for the eight large casinos and eight small casinos.