



CASINO ADVISORY PANEL

EXAMINATION IN PUBLIC

SUMMARY STATEMENT – LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

1. This statement summarises the London Borough of Brent's submission to the Casino Advisory Panel dated March 2006. It is not intended to replace our full statement of case. A separate written response to a series of additional questions raised by the Panel has also been prepared.
2. The London Borough of Brent is situated in North West London, and is most famous as the home of football – Wembley. The building of the new National Stadium has stimulated an unparalleled opportunity to transform Wembley into one of the world's premier leisure destinations. There are ambitious plans to regenerate some 238 hectares of land adjacent to the new Stadium, capitalising on the Wembley 'world brand', the new and improved transport facilities and favourable market conditions.
3. Brent is a borough of contrasts. The Borough has a total population of 278,810 and is home to one of Europe's most diverse communities. The north of the Borough is largely affluent suburbia, whilst in the south neighbourhoods such as Harlesden, Stonebridge, Church End, St Raphaels and South Kilburn rank in the 10% most deprived nationally. Across the Borough as a whole incomes are lower than the national averages, whilst unemployment is higher.
4. It is within this context that Brent is promoting a regional casino, with a preferred location within the Wembley regeneration area. The proposals have the support and commitment of all key regional stakeholders, including the Mayor of London, the Greater London Authority, the London Development Agency and London First.

5. Brent, and specifically Wembley, have the following unique characteristics that when combined make it an outstanding candidate for piloting a regional casino:
 - **Clarity of vision** – we are absolutely clear that the prime motivator for a casino is the regeneration benefits that it will bring to local communities. None of the land within the Wembley regeneration area is within Council ownership, and therefore Brent has no direct financial interest in the development. If our application is successful we can fully commit to an open and transparent competition to identify the most suitable operator, site and developer.
 - **International destination** – Wembley is a genuine international brand, already recognised the world over as a leisure destination for football and music. We are located in close proximity to Heathrow airport, the UK's premier international gateway. It is inconceivable that a regional casino can be successfully piloted without testing its impact as a truly international facility.
 - **International conferencing** – A regional casino at Wembley would deliver high end, international scale conferencing for London (at least 17,000sqm, suitable for a plenary for 3000 to 5000 people) without the need for public subsidy.
 - **Social Impacts** – Wembley is located within the most diverse Borough in the country. It is immediately north of some of the most deprived communities in London. By piloting a regional casino in Wembley it will be possible to undertake sophisticated tests of social impact on an unprecedented range of different communities. Brent Council has a first class regeneration service, which has achieved Beacon Council status for its work on both 'Neighbourhood Renewal' and 'Removing Barriers To Work', demonstrating our real ability to make the positive connections between local people and new opportunities.
 - **Commercial Case** – Wembley is in a prime commercial location, both in the short and long term. Locating a regional casino within a well established leisure destination will ensure that as and when further regional casinos are introduced at a future date the facility will still be commercially viable. By piloting a regional casino here it will be possible to maximise both the commercial benefits and the regeneration benefits of such a facility. Brent has a long track record of negotiating significant public benefit from high profile and difficult developments, including the National Stadium.
6. The regeneration case for Wembley is exceptionally strong. Specifically the Council wants to negotiate two categories of community benefits through the planning and licensing processes. Firstly, areas of new investment that will improve local people's quality of life, through for example job opportunities, new facilities or transport improvements. The second category is a package of measures to mitigate any potential

adverse impacts of a casino on local people, in particular in relation to problem gambling and traffic.

7. The following community benefits are the minimum that Brent would want to secure. This list will be refined as part of ongoing consultation work.
 - Diversifying and increasing the visitor potential of the Borough through provision of an international conference and convention venue, providing high end, state of the art plenary and break out space for worldwide and large scale conferencing events for up to 5000 delegates.
 - Provision of an additional five star hotel facility to further diversify the hotel offer in Wembley.
 - Provision of a range of other cultural and community facilities consistent with 'Our Vision for a New Wembley', ensuring appropriate access for all sections of Brent's diverse community.
 - Commitment to local training and recruitment programmes for both job entry and subsequent career development opportunities, as well as a commitment to on-going positive employee relations protocols. Given the hours of operation of a casino we anticipate that childcare will be a particular barrier to employment which will need to be addressed. Our focus will be very much on securing employment for residents of those neighbourhoods and communities who presently are disadvantaged in the labour market.
 - A transport, traffic and car-parking solution which mitigates any potential adverse impact on nearby residential properties. This is likely to require a site which facilitates direct access to the North Circular Road and a package of public transport measures based on detailed transport assessments.
 - A package of measures designed to prevent problem gambling, based on best practice from around the world, close monitoring of the extent of problem gambling and associated social and health issues, and a commitment to an ongoing funding mechanism to support additional public and voluntary preventative and support services.
8. Brent is committed to evidence based decision making. To this end full and independent economic and social impact assessments have been commissioned to highlight the potential positive and negative impacts of a casino within the Borough. Headline findings from these assessments include:
 - A new regional casino could increase the number of visitors to the Borough by 55%, bringing an additional 6,145,000 people into

Wembley. Three quarters of these will be day visitors, leaving 1.6million new overnight visitors, most of whom will be foreign tourists.

- A new regional casino would directly create over 2000 new jobs from day one of operation. When the impacts of indirect job creation, job transfers from existing employers into the casino, jobs displaced by existing local employers closing and the leakage of jobs to people from outside of the Borough is all taken into account, the net number of jobs likely to be filled by Brent residents is estimated at 1,250 in year 1, out of a total of 1,501 across London.
 - It is probable that a new regional casino will directly increase levels of problem gambling, although this is against an already upward trend in problem gambling across the Borough. The analysis shows an increase of between 600 and 1,200 problem gamblers which may be casino related.
9. Brent is also fully committed to public consultation and dialogue. Every resident within the Borough has had the opportunity to comment on a regional casino by way of a questionnaire survey, and a specific public debate has been held. The full results of this consultation work will be available to the Panel at the Examination in Public.

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