

## **Summary Statement by Cardiff Council to the Casino Advisory Panel August 2006**

### **Capital City Status**

Cardiff, Capital of Wales, is recognised as a major regional and international destination<sup>1</sup> and is acknowledged as one of the most dynamic and forward-looking cities in the UK. Cardiff and its city-region offer an exceptional set of circumstances which we believe are the best in the UK on which to test the social and economic impacts of a regional casino development.

### **Commitment to Develop**

Cardiff has an outstanding track-record of delivering major regeneration projects - on time and on budget. The redevelopment of Cardiff Bay and landmark projects including the Millennium Stadium, Wales Millennium Centre, the St. David's 2 development in the city centre and now the International Sports Village will give Cardiff the prestige and profile to continue to attract visitors from around the world.

A regional casino in Cardiff now will bring forward the completion of the ISV to 2010 to support the 2012 Olympics. This will provide a unique range of sport, leisure and entertainment facilities including a world class swimming, snow and ice complex, Olympic standard canoe course, luxury and family hotels and restaurants, and a multi-purpose arena suitable for a range of sporting events, major concerts and conferences. This will reinforce Cardiff as a major visitor and tourist destination and will have a significant impact on the city-region economy. A regional casino in Cardiff will provide the ability and means to bring forward and deliver a host of facilities that would enable Cardiff, as a core UK city, to play a full and active role in supporting, from 2010, the 2012 Olympics.

The regeneration of the site will unlock a major investment and deliver crucial jobs for the wider city-region. In doing so the development will support a wide range of complimentary regeneration activities across Cardiff and its region.

The ISV will create one of the most exciting visitor destinations in Europe. Creating 5,000 new jobs, 1,500 directly related to the regional casino, and attracting over 3.25m visitors each year. This will secure an annual boost to the regional economy of £265m. This will provide renewal and regeneration where most needed, uplifting neighbouring land values and stimulating associated investment and development, boosting renewal of the surrounding urban environment and affording wider economic benefits to the city-region.

Cardiff Council is fully committed to plans for a regional casino and outline planning permission was granted in 2003. In 2005 this commitment was reinforced by a decision of the Council that ISV was the only location supported for a regional casino. In March 2006 the Council's Licensing Committee recommended that it would give favourable consideration to an application for a licence for a regional casino at the ISV.

Support for the proposals has also been received from respected Olympic athletes including Sir Steve Redgrave, Colin Jackson, Lynn Davies and Jamie Baulch, and Para-Olympians Dame Tanni Grey Thompson and John Harris.

The Council has worked throughout the delivery of ISV with the Welsh Assembly Government who have fully supported the total project and with it the regional casino for Wales.

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<sup>1</sup> Cardiff: A Competitive European City? Professor Michael Parkinson and Jay Karecha, European Institute for Urban Affairs, July 2006

## Community Benefits

Good relations between the casino and local communities will be critical to the success of a regional casino. Aspers, the selected casino operator, is committed to working in partnership with the Council and local communities to enrich the lives of local people and an ongoing dialogue has already commenced with community stakeholders.

The Council have researched and evidenced that the casino operator has a long history of not just delivering successful casinos but also of bringing real and tangible community benefits. They have a proven track record and many years experience of working closely with local residents and stakeholders to ensure that the benefits of their casino go far beyond the casino itself.

The project will deliver the following benefits:

- Cardiff has a diverse and cosmopolitan population and the highest proportion of ethnic minority residents in Wales. The communities living adjacent to the casino site are some of the most deprived in Wales and the UK. Residents will benefit from the development of a regional casino through training and employment opportunities. Economic studies show that the casino alone will create 1,500 new jobs. Local people will have opportunities to learn important life-long skills, and a commitment has been made to work with local further education colleges to maximise the quality and overall provision of training facilities for tourism and hospitality. The Council and operator have a proven track record of working directly with the long-term unemployed and economically inactive to ensure that job opportunities are available for all.
- Building on the success of its local Enterprise Centres the Council has established a Skills Network to ensure that the local workforce has the appropriate skills for the range of development opportunities in the Cardiff city-region. This partnership, involving private sector developers, neighbouring Local Authorities, the Employment Service and the National Assembly, also have considerable experience in undertaking labour-market assessments which will play an important role in evaluating the impact of a regional casino in Cardiff.
- A Community Trust Fund will be established and managed by a Trust Board including representatives from Cardiff Council to ensure that social benefits to the local community are maximised. The Trust will benefit from a one-off community contribution of £2.5m at the start of the project supported by annual contributions of £0.5m.
- Community facilities and the urban environment will be greatly enhanced. In preparation for the start of the construction phase of ISV work is currently underway to put in place new infrastructure and to further improve access from the trunk road network. When Cardiff is awarded the licence for a regional casino the operator will make an initial payment to the Council of £22.5m on receipt of an operating licence with further additional payments with a capitalised value of £54m – a total of some £76.5m.
- These payments will be utilised to contribute to the development other key elements of the ISV including the multi-purpose Arena, Snow, Ice and Olympic Canoeing Centre – all of which will bring additional benefits in terms of employment opportunities and attracting visitors to the area.

## Evaluating Impacts

A regional casino in Cardiff will provide a robust opportunity to evaluate economic and social impacts. Cardiff is a diverse capital city with established communities and large areas of urban regeneration, and an equally diverse city-region. This provides an excellent opportunity for a regional casino in Cardiff to act as a meaningful pilot, enabling the social and economic impact of the development to be examined and understood on a range of diverse communities, thereby acting as an immediate test-bed and template for regions throughout the UK.

The proposed site for the regional casino is a self contained destination as an integral part of the ISV and will provide the opportunity for the social impact to be evaluated together with the unique issues in the development of social infrastructure in relation to sport and its effect on healthy living.

## Social Responsibility

Whilst recognising that the regional casino licence has not yet been awarded, proactive steps have already been taken to address social issues. Cardiff has established CARG (Community Action for Responsible Gaming). This group, made up of the casino operator, faith representatives and other organisations including the police and the Council will ensure that a coordinated action plan is in place to respond to any social issues.

The operator is fully committed to minimising the negative effects of gambling and has an excellent track record of delivering this commitment in their other operations. They have a formal *Responsible Gambling Programme* that includes a *Policy for Identifying Problem Gamblers* and a *Customer Care Code of Conduct*. The policies have been formulated to ensure that gambling is conducted in a sustainable, safe and socially responsible manner and are well documented and regarded as international best practice. These policies would be implemented in Cardiff and give a commitment to deal constructively and proactively with any problem gambling.

## A Compelling Case for Cardiff

Cardiff Council note that the Casino Advisory Panel's Terms of Reference state that the primary consideration will be to ensure that locations satisfy the need for the best possible test of social impact; to include areas in need of regeneration, as measured by employment and other social deprivation data; those which are likely to benefit in these terms from a regional casino; and to ensure that those areas selected are willing to license a regional casino.

Based on these criteria we consider Cardiff to be the best placed city-region to pilot a regional casino in the United Kingdom: -

- A truly unparalleled site has been identified;
- Planning permission granted in 2003;
- A well established private sector operator appointed following a rigorous competitive tendering process;
- A comprehensive funding package in place;
- A proven track record of delivering major projects – on time and within budget;
- Substantial, social and economic benefits to communities;
- A cosmopolitan and culturally diverse population;
- Innovative training and employment programmes; and
- 100% probability of implementation.

This opportunity is available immediately. Cardiff, and Wales, have available an unique development opportunity which is ready for immediate delivery, with a site, planning permission, an operator and entirely financed from the private sector therefore requiring no additional public funding or assistance. An exceptional destination, ready to be fully delivered by 2010.