



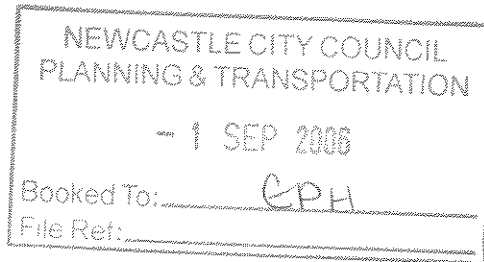
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Date: 31 August 2006  
Our ref: NE2429/CH  
Your ref:



Dear Mr Howe

**NEWCASTLE CITY COUNCIL: INDEPENDENT CASINO ADVISORY PANEL**

**FURTHER REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:  
RESPONSE ON BEHALF OF ISLE OF CAPRI CASINOS LIMITED**

I have pleasure in providing Isle of Capri Casinos Limited (hereafter referred to as 'the Isle') response to your letter dated 23 August 2006. The two matters raised are each addressed in turn below.

**Ensuring Newcastle's economically inactive, and those living in the most deprived areas, will benefit from employment opportunities generated by a Convention Centre and Regional Casino**

The Isle's company policy is that 90% of employees are from the local area; this applies at all facilities and the Isle is confident the policy can be achieved in Newcastle. This view is further reinforced by Asper's experience at the Gate, which, although on a smaller scale, is understood to have achieved 98% local employment.

Examples from the Isle indicate around 1,200 direct jobs would be created at the Regional Casino and Entertainment Centre with a further 2,000 spin off jobs generated within the region. In addition, construction is estimated to require around 650 persons on site at any time over an 18 – 24 month build period. This is significant and will need measures to be in place ensuring the scheme can be staffed by appropriately trained persons.

Once the Panel has recommended the location for a regional casino, and the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport has made her decision as to which City will host the first regional casino, significant work will then be required to put in place the education and training mechanisms required to service the regional casino. This will involve working jointly between the Isle and Newcastle City Council, together with training and education providers, to ensure employment opportunities are maximised. It is suggested that a working party be established to include, but not limited to the following:

- Existing and Potential Operators;



- Newcastle City Council;
- ONE North East;
- Business Link Tyne and Wear;
- The North East Chamber of Commerce;
- TyneWear Partnership;
- Learning Skills Council (adult and youth training);
- Get On North East – providing life skills such as enhanced reading, writing, maths and language;
- Job Centre Plus; and
- North East Food and Drink Network, particularly in association with secondary and tertiary suppliers.

This will ensure a sophisticated programme of education and training is provided to ensure that people have the maximum opportunity of securing employment at the development. Examples of measures that could be used include 'road-shows' whereby the Isle and its partners go into the community and provide an indication of the likely jobs that will be available, skills required and salaries. This will link with the Council's requirements that preferential recruiting targeted at local residents takes place, particularly focusing on those residents in deprived wards. To maximise the potential of bringing people into work, notwithstanding the salaries proposed, transport arrangements and childcare provision would also be incorporated.

In addition, Newcastle College, located centrally within the Discovery Quarter, the Council's preferred location for the Regional Casino and Entertainment Centre, already has an excellent reputation for training and education in the catering and hospitality industry. Subject to the selection of Newcastle this role could be expanded in partnership with the Isle to provide prospective employees with the skills and training necessary to work within a regional casino. This would form a training academy for the casino focusing on the following:

- Construction skills;
- Catering and hospitality;
- Travel, leisure and tourism;
- IT skills through the operation of computers and slot machines; and
- Developing skills for working life.

As other bids have suggested there would be the potential to create a national centre for training in the casino and hospitality industry at Newcastle. This could potentially be linked with the Universities of Northumbria and Newcastle both of whom enjoy excellent academic reputations.

Once operational the Isle is also committed to continued training of employees with annual programmes to ensure all staff have the requisite skills, notably in dealing with problem gamblers.



Through either the licensing or planning process it would be open to Newcastle City Council to require that the successful developer and operator enters into a Local Labour Agreement to secure the above. Indeed, on larger developments this is already commonplace, particularly in relation to construction employment (linked to the Construction Industry Training Board) but could equally apply to employees once the development is operational.

### **Providing other services and facilities that will benefit local communities and the Isle's track record**

As the City Council's bid to the Casino Advisory Panel sets down, the significant community benefit is the delivery of a Regional Conference Centre together with the associated employment generation. However, other associated land uses within the development will be available for wider use.

As previously presented to Newcastle City Council the Isle's proposals incorporate the following elements:

- Regional Casino
- Regional Conference Centre for 1,500 delegates
- A Flexible Exhibition Hall for up to 700 delegates
- Four Star Hotel of 400 plus bed spaces
- Associated Leisure Facilities including a Spa and Health Club
- Restaurants and Dining Facilities
- A Choice of Bars
- Ancillary Retail
- Highway Improvements and Public Transport penetration together with a direct link to Central Station
- Landscape to re-enforce the Tyne Gorge Topography

All aspects of the development proposal would be developed as a single scheme with significant potential for shared usage of space. For example, the exhibition hall and conference centre which could provide for business events throughout the week and entertainment at the weekend. This will maximise use of the space and, in turn, enhance the viability of this exciting space which has already attracted interest from a number of national operators.

The development of a regional casino entertainment centre will deliver contribute to achieving a number of strategies within the region, notably the Regional Economic Strategy and the Regional Tourism Strategy both of which seek to increase visitor numbers within the region. Regional Spatial Strategy also makes provision for a major regional conference facility building on the success of Bridging Newcastle Gateshead. The proposed development will provide this through the creation of an important landmark development within the Discovery Quarter. These elements will assist in the continued regeneration of Newcastle.



Turning to the Isle's track record it is a leading developer, owner and operator of regional casinos with 18 gaming facilities in the United States and abroad. At seven existing casinos, Biloxi, Lula, Vicksburg and Natchez (Mississippi), Lake Charles and Bossier City (Louisiana) and Bettendorf (Iowa) conference centres are provided as an integral component of the development offer.

By way of an example, within Scott County, Iowa, the Isle operates the only two regional casinos, one of which is located at Bettendorf, the other at Davenport and Marquette. Estimates from the Isle indicate that the development has resulted in a \$750 million (US) direct economic impact with a further \$318 million (US) being paid in state/county and city taxes. In addition to the above a further \$52 million (US) has been provided to non-profit partners. Importantly, however, in partnership with the City of Bettendorf Council the Isle has entered into a joint project to facilitate construction of a hotel and convention centre with a value of around \$70 million (US). Through positive joint working the Mayor of Bettendorf, Mike Freemire, commented that:

*"From the community view it [the Isle] really helps out tremendously. They have sponsorships for various racing teams around town, the St Patrick's Day parades and the American Diabetes Association, Bettendorf. Just about every community event or sponsorship opportunity which they can get involved in, they do. This goes above and beyond what we agreed for them to do. They've really been a good corporate citizen. Frankly, they are our largest corporate citizen. They have just been a pleasure to work with. If we had to do it over again as a community, would we do this? Would we do gaming with the Isle? The answer every single time we ask that question is yes, we'd do it again."*

This quote reflects those from other stakeholders where the Isle is operational as evidenced in the DVD previously submitted to the Council.

## Conclusions

I trust that the above and attached provide you with sufficient information at the current time and wish the City Council every success in the examination in public. Should you require anything further please do not hesitate to contact myself.

Yours sincerely

**CHRISTOPHER HARRISON**  
**ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR**

c.c.	Richard Meister	IoC
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