

**NEW CASINO LICENCE  
SWANSEA**

**SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTIONS  
CASINO ADVISORY PANEL**

**Please Note:**

Some of the Supplementary Questions relate to subject areas that were addressed previously in Swansea's "Further Submission" submitted to the Panel in August. In order to be helpful, this information is either referred to or reproduced in answer to the relevant questions below.

**TYPE OF AREA**

-

**SOCIAL IMPACT**

***Given the higher proportion of the population classified as "white" than in the population of Britain as a whole, how could Swansea act as a good test of social impact?***

The white population is higher across Wales as a whole when compared with England, although recent ONS Annual Population Surveys suggest that the numbers of some non-white ethnic groups are increasing relative to other groups in Swansea.

The challenge, however, is not necessarily to test social impact in absolute terms by achieving measurable improvements to the lives of the greatest number of people. Social impact can also be demonstrated by how well (proportionately) minority groups are successfully integrated into Swansea's economic and social life. After all, the smaller the ethnic minority population in an area, the greater potential there is to underestimate the social exclusion that may be suffered by these groups, as their needs are compared with those of the rest of the population. The proper test of social impact of a development would be to demonstrate the proportionate change in the welfare of a targeted group, no matter its size.

Swansea's Economic Regeneration Strategy declares Economic Equity as one of its strategic aims, and will guide the city's development to ensure equal opportunities for all its citizens so that everyone has the chance to share in Swansea's prosperity. The Council is also developing a Social Inclusion Strategy with the aim of mainstreaming the core principles of social inclusion within its key policies and activities. Five possible generic themes are emerging in developing a framework for action – tackling poverty, preventing exclusion, promoting rights,

equality of opportunity, and employment – and a number of indicators have been identified to measure Swansea’s success in addressing these themes.

The two strategic aims of Economic Equity and Social Inclusion represent Swansea’s commitment to raising the welfare of diverse groups. The new Casino Licence would provide Swansea with a valuable opportunity to test this commitment and deliver real and positive impact on ethnic minorities within the community.

In a submission to the Panel dated 11 August, we referred in a section on Community Benefits to the creation of a Community Trust to identify and deliver meaningful development projects for community benefit. We would challenge the Trust to achieve positive outcomes for our communities, with one focus being on diversity and ethnic group issues. Benefits accruing from the Trust’s efforts would be monitored and could contribute to a test of the social impact of the casino development.

***How would benefits arising from casino development be directed to help alleviate concentrations of deprivation?***

As stated above, we would seek the co-operation of the casino operator (through financial and in-kind support) in creating a Community Trust to translate the benefits from the casino development into investment in our communities. The Trust, with representation from the Authority, its partners, community representatives and the operator would work together to identify needs and develop action that could impact positively on deprivation and diversity. Such action could focus on: -

- Improvements to infrastructure and social cohesion
- Providing new cultural and sporting facilities that engage diverse groups
- Investment in skills and career development related to job opportunities
- Implementing a local procurement policy that sources employees, goods and other services from people and organisations within the most deprived communities

The Authority plans to use the planning and tendering processes to secure a commitment from the potential operators to such a scheme.

***\*As in parts of Swansea there is much poverty, is it a good idea to offer people in economic distress an attraction — a “quick fix” — which could make their position worse?***

***(This question marked \* is derived from a representation made on behalf of the Methodist Church).***

Our intention, in seeking powers to issue a new Casino Licence, is to use the new legislation and arrangements to ensure that such an important development

can deliver economic and social benefit in a sustainable and targeted way. This approach will be demonstrated in the way we select both the location of the new type of casino and the preferred operator, and in the long term arrangements we implement to manage the facility and ensure an effective share and distribution of the benefits

In August's submission to the Panel we referred to Swansea's City Centre Strategic Framework, which will guide new investment in the city centre over the next 15-20 years. It identified significant growth in prospects for the tourist industry, and therefore gave priority to the improvement of cultural, leisure and tourist facilities so as to create a city centre "destination" for visitors, residents and businesses. The Framework has provided strategic thinking and a greater understanding of our spatial priorities, which will help us decide the most appropriate environment for a casino development: -

- Within a prioritised leisure area of the city having a low disruptive impact on residents
- In an area with a good mix of leisure facilities to attract the widest range of leisure customers, creating a critical mass of development and complementary uses
- Accessible and manageable in order to maintain public order and social cohesion

We also stated in our original submission in March that the Authority would "give due consideration to proposals from licence applicants that demonstrate a strong commitment to local employment, training, sourcing of goods and services and to community activity, so that Swansea may share in the benefits accruing from the new casino". Our selection of a preferred operator would therefore require a long term relationship in order to deliver these benefits.

***While the remit of the Panel is to look at broad locations rather than particular sites, your proposal, properly following Planning Policy Wales, appears to focus upon the town centre. What steps do you expect to take to minimise the problems of ambient gambling in such a location?***

It is important that we ensure gambling venues are located in an area offering a broad entertainment environment, so that any potential domination of gambling above other activities is prevented. As stated above, our City Centre Strategic Framework will provide valuable guidance on the appropriate location for the new type of casino.

We would also want the operators themselves to develop a range of entertainment within their casinos, so attracting the widest range of clientele. For example, more details of the casino currently being developed in Swansea by Aspers for operation under the 1968 Gaming Act have recently been obtained. The Floor Plan indicates almost as much area will be taken up by public and

leisure activities (27%) as by gaming (30%), the remainder comprising back of house facilities (offices, kitchen etc). The public areas of the casino will accommodate two reception areas, a café, restaurant, bar, open-air terrace, beauty salon and live entertainment. These diverse facilities will appeal to different customer types and age groups, not all of whom will gamble. Indeed, operators Aspers have estimated that up to 70% of visitors to their casinos do not gamble, but enjoy a much more varied entertainment experience.

In addition, the Authority will use its additional powers to ensure that gambling is more stringently controlled, both within a venue and across an area. We will continue our action to remove gaming machines from unlicensed premises, and work with the casino operators to prevent the vulnerable and problem gambler access to gambling venues.

***On p.12 of your proposal, you refer to a possible representation from the Salvation Army. Have they made a representation? What does it say? Have you received any other representations that might relate to locational matters/***

The Swansea Citadel of the Salvation Army wrote to the Leader of the City and County of Swansea on 27 March 2006 (received 30 March 2006). A copy of the letter can be forwarded to you if required, but the content is summarised here: -

Major Granville Myers was concerned that the downside of a large casino in Swansea needed to be considered alongside the perceived benefits. He observed that in the USA and Australia, the introduction of large casinos had been accompanied by a rise in the number of problem gamblers. Such people often get into debt, some turn to crime and there is usually a breakdown in family relationships as well as unemployment. The cost to vulnerable people and their dependants is high, and must not be overlooked.

He added that the time scale has been short, and that he hoped an opportunity would be given for the community to express its concerns.

He enclosed a petition, signed by 72 supporters, against the Council's decision to submit a proposal to build a large casino.

The Leader responded in a letter to Major Myers dated 4 April, informing him that the Council had submitted proposals to the Panel. In the letter, the Leader indicated that the Council's proposals recognised the positive and negative aspects of gambling, and explored how the new gambling arrangements could benefit Swansea and protect its citizens. He described the work the Council is continuing to undertake to remove Amusement With Prizes machines from take-away premises and taxi offices, and how the Council proposes to work with the police, faith groups, the university and the operator to address problem gambling.

The Leader stressed the better regulation of the industry the new Gambling Act has introduced. He said that, if successful, the Council would work with the Gambling Commission to ensure operator proposals met all licensing requirements, competition specifications, planning permissions and any concerns raised from consultation with local people. It would also want potential operators to demonstrate a strong commitment to community activity as well as to local employment, training and sourcing of goods and services. At the same time, it would work with partners to ensure gambling is properly conducted and vulnerable groups are protected and supported.

We are not aware of any other representations made.

## **NEED FOR REGENERATION**

***What evidence have you to back up your suggestion (p.8) that a casino would lead to other new leisure facilities?***

If you refer to the first paragraph of our answer to the question “*How do you expect your proposal to assist regeneration of your area and the wider area?*”, we regret that you may have misinterpreted what we stated.

We meant to imply that, if Swansea was successful in obtaining new licensing powers, it might receive from tendering casino operators proposals that would create new leisure facilities in addition to those (theatres, museums, cinema etc.) already in existence. We did not mean to necessarily suggest that new leisure facilities might be attracted to locate nearby as a result of the new type of casino being opened in Swansea.

Evidence for this can be found in our mixed-use development in Salubrious Place, where we have been able to attract a new cinema, hotel, apartments, restaurants and bars in addition to the new casino which is to be fitted out shortly. The casino itself will offer new facilities such as live entertainment, a quality restaurant and a beauty salon, and help to create a significant leisure “destination” within the city centre.

## **WILLINGNESS TO LICENCE**

***Since the submission of your proposal, has it received the endorsement of Full Council?***

Swansea’s bid was authorised by the Cabinet, exercising its Executive function under the Council’s Constitution and the Local Government Act 2000, and full Council endorsement is not required.

***Since the submission of your proposal, have you conducted any test of local opinion upon it?***

No formal consultation has yet been undertaken, although Swansea's decision to submit proposals to the Panel has appeared in the media, and there is likely to be some awareness of the Council's position.

The Council has not yet committed itself to a particular site or operator, and has not had the advantage of considering operator proposals that might be received from a competitive tendering process. Therefore, the public and other stakeholders can only be consulted currently on the basic principle of having a casino.

Details of possible locations, outline design and other key elements an operator might bring forward will have a major influence on the outcome of any consultation. Without these details, consultation could potentially produce responses based on uninformed opinions.

Should Swansea be successful, the Council is planning to carry out a comprehensive consultation, which would include:

- General consultation carried out with members of the Councils Citizens' Panel, Swansea Voices (the panel has around 1,250 members, randomly selected to be representative of the population of Swansea).
- Specific consultations carried out with
  - Community Plan partners
  - Diverse groups and individuals, including ethnic minority residents, people with disabilities etc.
  - Local businesses
  - Charities, support/advice organisations and religious groups
  - Voluntary groups and other organisations
  - Residents directly affected by any potential development

***The proposal is for a large and a small casino. What are the perceived benefits of having two facilities?***

The prospect of two new types of casino in Swansea would introduce an element of competition among operators, which would drive up the quality of their tenders and business plans, and encourage them to be innovative and distinctive in their service offering. It would create a new "industry" with operators competing for the best staff, thus providing greater opportunities for people to establish new skills and careers. Competition would also test the operators' commitment to achieving a greater positive social impact on Swansea through the prevention of

illegal gambling, their support of problem gamblers and their participation with partners in efforts to improve social cohesion and community welfare.

## **PROBABILITY OF IMPLEMENTATION**

***In discussing tourism your proposal acknowledges that there is currently a weak attraction base. Why have attractions not been achieved?***

The economic downturn in the 1990s was a key contributor to a lack of investment at that time. In recent years, however, Swansea has been successful in securing public sector investment (Welsh Assembly, EC Programme Funding) to regenerate the city, and this has helped attract private sector interest more recently. A number of flagship developments have occurred (Wales National Pool, Liberty Sports Stadium, National Waterfront Museum) which evidence a new confidence in the city.

Our major Leisure Centre, always a very popular leisure facility, is currently closed for redevelopment, and this has affected significantly our attractions base. When the Centre opens again in 2008, the £25 million investment will create one of the best facilities of its type in the country, offering: -

- Europe's first indoor surfing centre
- An indoor water park, including the world's first uphill water slide
- A multi-purpose sports and exhibition hall for sports, conferences and exhibitions, concerts and a synthetic ice rink
- Wales' biggest fitness arena

Additionally, there has been until recently a lack of a strategic approach in Swansea's regeneration, leading to haphazard and unfocused development. This has now been addressed, and this year has seen the development of an Economic Regeneration Strategy, a Tourism Strategy and a City Centre Strategic Framework that provide "joined up" thinking on Swansea's development priorities. We are now in a strong position to employ our resources more effectively and become "a distinctive European waterfront city".

## **REGIONAL AND LOCAL CONTEXT**

***Since the submission of your proposal, have you had any specific expression of support from the National Assembly or Welsh Assembly Government?***

We have received a copy of a letter sent by the First Minister for Wales to Professor Crow supporting both Cardiff's and Swansea's bids. His acknowledgement of our efforts to regenerate the economy and consideration of

our bid is appreciated and represents a vote of confidence in Swansea's ability to make a success of a new casino facility.

## **COMMUNITY BENEFITS**

***Has any further thought been given to the question of achieving community benefits as a result of casino development?***

***Can you tell us more about how your proposal would directly provide community benefits?***

We initially provided you in general terms with details of the community benefits we expected from this process. More specifically, we anticipate: -

- An initial investment of up to £10 million (for a new build) with a further £10 million per annum in on-going economic benefit
- A world-class venue within an integrated leisure environment offering diverse entertainment not necessarily dominated by gambling, of interest and value to the widest range of leisure customer
- Up to 400 new jobs created for a large casino and 180 for a small casino, with a proportion of these jobs going to people with little or no previous employment experience
- A local procurement policy from the operators, ensuring that a significant level of employment and services are sourced locally and from the region (we already have experience and similar procurement initiatives in place to help developers and operators source local skills and services)
- Heavy investment in training and development to ensure sustainable employment and good career opportunities
- The possibility of planning trade arrangements to fund additional projects of community value (e.g. sport, culture, equality and diversity, transport and public spaces)
- Co-operation from the operators towards responsible gambling, protecting the young and vulnerable and supporting problem gamblers
- Further co-operation from the operators in the setting up of a Community Trust to identify and deliver meaningful development projects for community benefit. We would expect the operators to contribute financial and in-kind support to the Trust to improve infrastructure, skills, employment prospects and social cohesion, particularly in our more deprived communities
- New and additional powers provided by the legislation for the Authority to intervene and protect our community

## **UNIQUE CHARACTERISTICS**

***What could you do that would make Swansea more uniquely positioned compared with other towns locations wanting a casino?***

Swansea has emerged as one of only two Authorities short-listed from Wales, and represents the sole bidder for a large and/or small casino from this region. We are obviously keen that Wales shares with other regions the economic and social benefits of this substantial opportunity. It is important, therefore, to emphasise Swansea's central location and accessibility, with excellent road and rail connections and within an hour's drive of the South-West, South-East and Mid-Wales areas, in bringing a world-class entertainment facility to the wider region.

In recent months, a new company, Swansea Futures, has been created with the aim of promoting Swansea as a distinctive place to live, learn, invest in and visit. Whilst Swansea has a wealth of attractions – beaches and parklands, a maritime quarter, a lively social scene, and great cultural and sporting opportunities – many people outside of Wales are not aware of what the area has to offer. This lack of awareness has contributed to Swansea underachieving on its potential. The new company has secured a number of major employers and stakeholders as partners in a co-ordinated effort to promote the Swansea brand “Swansea – it's a bay of life”. Commitment of the partners to unite behind the brand will strengthen Swansea's strategic marketing and send a valuable message of loyalty and pride in Swansea to the outside world. Further details of this unique initiative are available from [www.abayoflife.com](http://www.abayoflife.com) .