



Proposal for Casino Consideration from Dover District Council



March 2006

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Dover District Council**

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Basis of the Application: Proposal for a **large** or **small** casino within the district

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1. Type of Area:

- 1.1 The population base of the local authority area is approximately 105,000 (2003 figures), covering 315.0 km². The population can be further broken down as follows (figures are as a percentage of the total population)¹

Males:

Aged 0-9 = 5.7%
Aged 10-19 = 6.9%
Aged 20-29 = 4.8%
Aged 30-49 = 13.1%
Aged 50-69 = 12%
Aged 70+ = 5.5%

Females:

Aged 0-9 = 5.5%
Aged 10-19 = 6.5%
Aged 20-29 = 4.7%
Aged 30-49 = 14.1%
Aged 50-69 = 12.6%
Aged 70+ = 8.4%

- 1.2 The District has a relatively small ethnic grouping with 98.5% of the population classed as white and only 1.59% BME classified. On 1 April 2004 Dover had 1,052 retail premises (including shops, financial and professional services and food and drink outlets, but excluding public houses and hotels.) There were also 559 office premises, 407 factories and 341 warehouses. [Note that these totals exclude leisure and sports premises, as well as public facilities such as schools, hospitals and libraries.]²
- 1.3 Of the people in Dover who were of working age (i.e. those aged 16 to 64 for men or 16 to 59 for women) the employment rate was 77 per cent during the Summer of 2004 (June to August), compared with an average for Great Britain of 75 per cent. Over the same three months in 1999, the number of people in employment in Dover as a proportion of those of working age was 74 per cent and the rate for Great Britain was 75 per cent.³
- 1.4 In Dover, 5 per cent of the resident population aged 16-74 years were school pupils or full-time students, according to the Census of April 2001. This compared with 7 per cent of the population in England and Wales.

Dover is located in the Local Education Authority of Kent, part of the South East region. In the academic year 2003/04, 56 per cent of pupils in Kent achieved 5 or more GCSEs graded A* to C, compared to an average for England of 54 per cent.

Between 1999 and 2004, standards in education, as shown by the Standard Assessment Tests (SATs), also improved in respect of younger students in the area. In Kent the proportion of pupils achieving at least level 4 at Key Stage 2 (KS2) (the anticipated level of attainment for pupils aged 11 in their final year at primary school) changed from 68 per cent in 1999 to 70 per cent in 2004 for Mathematics and from 70 per cent to 74 per cent in respect of English.

[Note: the information on 2004 GCSE and SATs results is based on amended data produced after schools had verified their figures as part of the 'School and College Achievement and Attainment Tables' checking exercise. Final data, including all post

¹ Figures are taken from 2003 census data as supplied in the Audit Commission's Area Profiles

² Figures supplied by Neighbourhood Statistics

³ Figures supplied by Neighbourhood Statistics

publication amendments, will be published on Neighbourhood Statistics in due course.]⁴

1.5 and 1.6 Dover District is covered by the White Cliffs Country Tourism Association (WCCTA), created as an independent trade organisation in response to the local authority policy for tourism in the Dover, Deal and Sandwich area. The WCCTA's aim, with the support of official bodies and member organisations, is to encourage the development of local tourism by:

- creating marketing initiatives to increase numbers of UK and Continental visitors
- promoting the virtues of off-peak tourism
- raising local awareness of good practice within the tourism industry

The current levels of tourism are 423,000 staying trips with £64,250,000 spent by visitors on their trip. 3,400,000 tourism day trips with £91,000,000 spent by tourist day visitors on their trip, of this expenditure, £123,316,000 directly benefits local business in terms of business turnover.

A further £53,796,000 of business turnover is generated through indirect and induced spending. Expenditure by friends and relatives on visitors and visitors spend on second homes (ie maintenance) generates a further £9,482,000.

In total tourist activity generated £186,594,000 worth of income for local businesses.

This income supported 2,960 FTE jobs and 4,031 actual jobs.⁵

Trends nationally are an increasing number of active over 50's with more money and time for leisure spend, increasing number of short breaks, visitor demands for relaxation and well being, active experiences, and socially unacceptable activities ie foxhunting, quad-biking use of open land etc.

Most notably, the cruise industry is the most buoyant sector of the tourism industry at the moment, cruise business into Dover is steadily increasing, the Cruise connections partnership directly promotes the destination as well as the Port to key decision makers in the USA and Europe.

The Port of Dover is Europe's busiest and most successful ferry port and is expected to maintain it's position as the primary route of choice into and out of the UK for the international road freight transport industry. The Port of Dover proposals plan to create a new marina in a more prominent position in the outer harbour, linked to the new sea sports centre due to open in 2007 on the beach. The marina will be an important asset to Kent's tourism and the attractiveness of the harbour front.

1.7 Regeneration needs

It is currently an exciting time for the District's regeneration and development.

⁴ Figures supplied by Neighbourhood Statistics

⁵ Based on 2003 figures

Through the delivery of a series of integrated projects we are focused on the delivery of a prosperous District with improved opportunities for employment, housing and regeneration.

This is already been demonstrated through our ongoing major projects, details of major projects can be found on the Council's website www.dover.gov.uk and also in the newly published Corporate Plan (to be published April 2006):

- White Cliffs Business Park, Phase 2,
- Dover Pride initiative
- North Deal; and
- Aylesham, Creating Quality Places.

This will continue to be our focus as we prepare through the improvement of Dover Priory Station for the high speed rail link, the potential new challenge of the use of Connaught Barracks and improvements in housing and urban regeneration. We will also work in partnership to focus urban regeneration resources to Dover town where social and economic need is greatest at this time.

The Dover Pride Regeneration Partnership seeks to improve the town through strong civic, community and business leadership essential for long-term economic growth and regeneration. The priorities of the partnership include:

- New firm formation rates
- Economic diversification of the economy
- Business survival rates
- Availability of workspace
- Developing an entrepreneurial culture.

Through the East Kent Partnership, devolved funding is beginning to make a difference to the coastal towns of East Kent. EKP recognises the priority towns of Dover and Margate and are striving to improve these areas.

- 1.8** Our current regeneration programmes already include extensive and detailed levels of consultation with the community. We use a variety of consultation tools from surveys to focus groups and we would build on these techniques to test social impact.

2. Social Impact:

The social impact of this proposal would be overall very positive for the district. It would offer job opportunities and contribute to the overall regeneration and improved self-esteem of Dover. However, we recognise that initiative would need to be carefully managed and monitored, requiring expert advice and input from recognised advice bureaus regarding the implications of gambling, balanced against the exciting regeneration and economic possibilities for the town.

2.1 We have gauged that initial public perception would undoubtedly be suspicious,
and however if the public are given the full picture and understand the benefits in
2.2 regeneration and economic terms, especially in terms of improved job opportunities
in the service sector and the development of non-gambling leisure facilities, we
strongly believe there will be overall public support.

2.3 We currently have a very highly regarded anti-social behaviour unit operating from
within the Council, this would be the cornerstone for negating any negative social
impacts arising from gambling activities. We have received an Award of Action Area
Status (one of only 50 in the country) by the Home Office, which has resulted in
£72,000 additional funding awards for the anti-social behaviour unit. We are also
currently in negotiation with local businesses to develop an evening/night-time
economy for the town. This initiative offers a strong foundation for increased social
activity and reinvigoration for the town.

2.4 We would carefully measure and report on the social impacts of a casino
development. We would achieve this through the development of meaningful and
measurable indicators combined with regular, satisfaction surveys and ongoing
consultation

2.5 Our regeneration programmes project a long-term vision for the District that includes
and a wide range of social, leisure and cultural activities. We are delivering the Dover
2.6 Town Investment Zone project that will result in a radical improvement to a large site
to the east of the town centre. The regeneration programmes also seek to address
job creation and skills levels.

A major Scrutiny review of training and skills in Dover District has recently been completed, concluding that 'developing and encouraging training and skills within our community is a key priority for the regeneration of our District'.

2.7 We have in place a Voluntary Compact to guide the way we work with voluntary and
community sectors. We have also recently signed a service level agreement with the
Citizens Advice Bureau, ensuring residents can continue to benefit from impartial
advice – this relationship will be of the utmost importance in addressing any adverse
effects of gambling. Alongside accommodation we provide for the CAB in Deal we
are also upgrading accommodation in Dover to provide a new modern building,
highlighting our commitment to future partnership working. We also operate within a
multi-agency partnership seeking to improve the economic, environmental and social
well-being of the District and this body is seen as the key sponsor for the project.

3. Need for Regeneration:

- 3.1** Dover District Council recognises the importance of its coastal towns, in particular the town of Dover and the issues facing the area in terms of high levels of deprivation, topography, and previous lack of investment opportunities. It has now made the regeneration of Dover a Council priority, delivered through major projects, investment and partnership working.
- 3.2** Dover suffers a relative disadvantage in the region and serious deprivation in several of its urban wards. Some wards have unemployment levels three times the national average and are ranked in the worst 20% nationally (IMD 2004).
- 3.3** Dover has suffered decline like many similar towns on the South Coast. Despite the successful port, the town is suffering from lack of investment that has led to the high levels of deprivation within its urban wards. Additionally, the reliance on the marine sector has, particularly in the recent past, shown the vulnerability of the local economy, which as a result suffers economic peaks and troughs. Troughs are demonstrated by the loss of Hoverspeed, P&O redundancies, problems in France, particularly with strikes and problems with the closure of berths.
- 3.4** A 30 year vision and action plan has been developed with key partners, to tackle the issues relating to Dover. Dover District Council will continue to prioritise the regeneration of urban Dover within the district and work with partners to deliver the Dover Pride Vision. The Dover Pride Strategy and Action Plan includes new ideas for Dover, strategic objectives and priority projects for the future. The Action Plan is grouped into five overall categories:
- Strategic actions to communicate a new vision for Dover
 - Education and community projects to rebuild local pride
 - Business environment to develop local enterprise and skills
 - Urban development projects to restructure and expand the town
 - Strategic and local access projects to enhance transport links

The Dover Pride Board is a strategic partnership including Dover District Council, Dover Harbour Board, Kent County Council, the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA), the Government Office for the South East (GOSE), Business Link Kent, Learning and Skills Council for Kent and Medway, Dover Chamber of Commerce, East Kent Partnership and the London Fancy Box Company. It is committed to initiate joint action to renew pride of place in the community and secure long term regeneration of the town.

Councillor Paul Watkins, Leader of Dover District Council, said: "This is a major step for Dover and we are delighted at the support of our partners in this key initiative. The Board's task is now to turn these ideas into reality. These are not short term measures and will require a consistent commitment from all concerned. These initiatives have to work. We are committed to moving forward and addressing the long term issues for Dover, and with the steps outlined here, we can take the action that will enable Dover to compete effectively and increase in prosperity."

KCC Cabinet Member for Regeneration Alex King said: "To put it simply, Dover's prosperity is vital for east Kent and the rest of the county. That's why it is so important for all Dover Pride partners to ensure we achieve what we have set out in these long-term plans."

Paul Hudson, the South East England Development Agency's Director of Development and Infrastructure, said: "We are delighted to be involved in such a significant partnership that will deliver the regeneration necessary to support this key coastal town, which is one of the busiest passenger ferry ports in the world."

"We believe this initiative will increase prosperity and provide greater opportunities for all in the town of Dover, which we recognise as being a unique regional asset. SEEDA values the partnership we have with both the Dover Harbour Board and the local authorities in this area."

Mark Bilsborough from the Government Office for the South East said: "The next few years will see great opportunity for the Kent economy and Dover has a vital part to play as the gateway to the county and beyond. The Dover Pride project will make a key contribution to keeping Dover successful and it has our full support."

Bob Goldfield, Chief Executive, Port of Dover, said: "We look forward to the Dover Pride initiative taking positive steps to solve traffic congestion problems in the town."

3.5 Dover District Council is also working with a number of partners, including, SEEDA, GOSE, English Partnerships, East Kent Partnership, Business Link Kent, Learning and Skills Council etc to realise a number of regeneration projects, including; the second phase of the White Cliffs Business Park (to realise sites for employment opportunities for new and existing businesses), St. James' area redevelopment of Dover town centre, Betteshanger, Aylesham Creating Quality Places Expansion Programme and North Deal regeneration.

3.6 We are absolutely confident that the additional economic activity created by a casino complex would outweigh any leakages from the local economy, especially as we predict that this development would draw in customers from the near continent, which in turn will provide wider economic benefits to the town and surrounding areas. This development would also be consistent with the White Cliffs Country Tourism Association's aim to draw in additional visitors from the rest of the United Kingdom and the continent.

4. Willingness to Licence:

- 4.1** The Council has constantly over the last few years demonstrated its commitment to a carefully planned regeneration programme. There is therefore an implied willingness to support the principles of this project. The Council's Cabinet resolved on 27.03.06 that a proposal for a large or small casino be submitted to the Casino advisory Panel for a casino within the District.
- 4.2** The Planning and Licensing Committees as Regulatory Committees will consider any planning and licence applications. However, we believe that if the applications consider all necessary factors and are sensibly and sensitively developed they have every chance of being supported. Aligned to this is the importance of choosing the correct location for this development. We envisage a seafront location in Dover, complementing other developments in the area.
- 4.3** At this stage, we have not publicised or consulted on this proposal, and no feasibility study has taken place. We believe that it would be premature to consult until the national picture becomes clearer and this would form the next stage of the process for the Council. We therefore do not have any letters supporting or objecting to the proposal. However, we have received an informal expression of interest in running a casino from one of our existing licensees who runs a night club in Deal. However, we believe that this proposal for a large or small casino is on a completely different scale, so no contact has been made at this stage.
- 4.4** Public interaction and consultation will need careful management, including the development of consultation and market research techniques specifically for this type of development, ensuring we explain fully the wider regeneration and economic benefits. However, as the district is at an exciting stage in its future development with a number of major projects underway, this development would clearly support this initiative.

5. Probability of Implementation:

Feasibility of the proposal

- 5.1** The geographical dispersion of the Dover District Council database shows that the customer distribution is concentrated mainly in the South East of England followed by the South West.

Absolute count analysis of the Dover District Council database indicates that Cameo UK group 6 'Less Affluent Family Neighbourhoods' and Cameo group 8 'Poorer White and Blue Collar workers' are the largest two groups of customers.

The categories 3C 'Well-Off Older Couples and Families in Large detached & Semis', 6B 'Older & Mature Households in Suburban Semis and Terraces' and 4D 'Mature Owner Occupiers in rural and Coastal Neighbourhoods' are the largest number of visitors in terms of absolute counts.

- 5.2** The imminent arrival of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link, France only 22 miles away, the international Cruise Liner Terminal all demonstrate that this proposal is more than a local facility, as we believe that our proximity to the Continent will attract foreign customers resulting in wider economic benefits for the whole South East. This proposal will build on existing transport links with Dover as the busiest passenger port in the UK and also our proximity to the Channel Tunnel. The international catchment is reinforced when you consider that the nearest casino on mainland Europe is at Le Touquet.

The domestic catchment area is likely to be drawn from Thanet, Canterbury, Shepway and Ashford. The nearest UK casino is at Ramsgate. It is anticipated that this proposal will impact somewhat on that operation, although this has not been fully assessed.

- 5.3** Dover Pride regeneration programme has identified the various locations within the town that would be suitable for this type of development, in particular a dockside location in close proximity to the cruise and passenger terminals. We also have studies undertaken by various partners on the East Kent Partnership considering the economic future of the area.

- 5.4** Dover has the following infrastructure:

- Trunk/major roads – A20, A2, A256
- Rail - CTRL Domestic, Dover Priory, Connection to the South East and back to the Port
- Dover Harbour – 30 year vision
- The major trunk roads emanating from the Port of Dover across Kent link to the national motorway network and major conurbations.

Dover is well served for road transport with the A2 and A20 meeting at the Town. The siting of the proposed development would be such to maximise the benefits of these links. Rail transportation is improving significantly with the anticipated opening of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link that will utilise the Eurostar rail tracks and bring in a journey time from St Pancras to Dover in less than 1 hour. The international transport links are well established with the Ferry Ports and Channel Tunnel. Air transport is developing with short hop flights to the continent and UK regions from Lydd and Kent International Airports being planned in the near future.

- 5.5** Gambling/casinos operate on the cruise ships that visit Dover, however currently
and there are no land sites that offer this facility. The current provision of gambling is fairly
5.6 low key with some 205 Clubs and Pubs being entitled to use gaming machines.
There are approximately 7 adult entertainment centres providing adult only machines.
- 5.7** Potential Critical Mass: We do not anticipate this being a significant problem given the different customer bases that potential clients will be drawn from. Casinos tend to be more business orientated customers who have a culture of gambling in their spare time. The existing provision in this area tends to be working class oriented casual users who use the facilities as an adjunct to consumption of alcohol. The proper placement of the casino will provide a physical as well as cultural distance between the two.
- 5.8** Investment is anticipated to be wholly privately financed.
and
5.9
- 5.10** Given the above the gambling spend would not change significantly in the pubs and clubs. The benefits for the Dover District would be derived from drawing in a perceived unmet demand in the district and surrounding areas. This additional spend would result in an increased employment opportunity without detrimental effect to existing operations in the DDC area.

6. Regional and Local Context:

- 6.1** The Regional Economic Strategy is currently under review, however, in the existing strategy Dover is a priority area for economic regeneration.
- 6.2** The South East Plan (East Kent and Ashford) notes 'the urban area of Dover was selected for concentrating growth because the District Council has identified areas of search for development that are outside the ANOB and set back from the immediate coast, and a particular need to regenerate the urban area and to revitalise the economy'.
- 6.3** The preferred spatial strategy 'supports examination of further growth at Dover to improve the choice and quality of new housing, support services in the town, and widen the local economy, but avoids excessive development that cannot be supported by jobs in the area...'
- 6.4** The strategy highlights that the sub-region should build on the distinct economic roles of each area. 'The coastal towns are of major strategic importance for international gateways, research and manufacturing. These functions should be developed and the economy of each town diversified and enlarged'. The strategy goes on to note that 'appropriate development of the Port of Dover will be supported to enable growth of freight and passenger traffic'.

7. Community Benefits:

These have been explored in the earlier chapters. This proposal is linked to the regeneration of the district. This will provide economic development, an increased and improved job market and a net inflow of funds to the District. We believe we have the capability and capacity to deliver this project. We are negotiating further growth in our housing to provide the critical mass required, we are well advanced with our Local Development Framework approach and have a highly skilled and regarded planning team with a higher than average Planning Delivery Grant. Our focus for the future is on job creation and providing high quality facilities.

8. Unique Characteristics:

- 8.1** We feel our close proximity and easy access to the continent offers a unique opportunity to develop a facility that will draw people into the town and to the country. At present, we suffer from a draw away from the town, through tax free shopping and the 'booze cruise' culture. This proposal could dramatically address this issue, resulting in an inflow of monies to the local economy and national exchequer.

- 8.2** The timing of this proposal is also extremely beneficial to the regeneration of the town as we undertake major developments to improve the social and economic infrastructure of the area.