

**CASINO ADVISORY PANEL  
Formal Proposal Cover Sheet**

**Name of Local Authority:**

**MANSFIELD DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**Main Contact:**

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**Name and title of Submitting Officer:**

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Title: Regeneration Project Officer

**Statement of basis of application:**

What exactly are you proposing? Please make clear which type of casino you **primarily** wish to be considered for.

Regional No

Large (state number) 1

Small (state number)

If this proposal is unsuccessful what if any is your fall back/ second proposal?

Large (state number)

Small (state number). 1

## **A Casino for Mansfield – Summary**

Mansfield is a sub-regional centre in a former coalfield area that is striving to attract new regeneration initiatives. This bid presents a unique opportunity to assess the benefits of a new casino in terms of the attraction of associated leisure opportunities and the impact on regeneration in one of the most socially deprived areas of the country. More importantly, it enables the impact of casinos on household spend on gambling and associated social issues to be monitored.

Mansfield needs a Casino. This bid can be implemented, both in terms of community and Council support but also in the physical ability to accommodate a casino in land use planning and land availability terms.

Mansfield would positively embrace a large casino and would welcome the opportunity to work with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport in developing robust monitoring regimes to demonstrate the benefits these can bring to regeneration aspirations and the management of any possible social impacts.

## **Introduction**

Mansfield is located in North Nottinghamshire about 20 miles north of Nottingham. The town of Mansfield is an historic market town with a large number of buildings dating back to the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Mansfield and its surrounding settlement grew with the industrial revolution with industries such as coal mining, textiles and brewing replacing the traditional agricultural economy.

The District of Mansfield now has a population of around 96,300 but the wider travel to work area of Mansfield has a population of around 370,000. Of Mansfield population around 60,000 are in the 16-65 working age brackets. The population are mostly white with 1.7% of the population being counted as non white in the 2001 census.

In the last 20 years the area has seen massive economic change with the decline of the primary industries which has contributed to large scale economic and social deprivation in the area. Whilst large scale public and private investment has led to inward investment and a reduction in unemployment, high levels of benefit dependency persist in some communities and overall there is a low economic activity rate. This has made Mansfield District the 33<sup>rd</sup> most deprived district in the country. (IMD 2004)

The initial response to the decline of the traditional industries was to invest heavily in the development of the town's economic and transport infrastructure. This led to the development of a number of key development sites. More recently the focus has shifted to knowledge based industries and there is a growing recognition of the role that the development of the service industries and town centre can play in the regeneration of Mansfield.

Mansfield has also developed an NRF programme that focuses on empowering local people to play a role in planning service delivery in nine focus neighbourhoods. This has led to the development of a network of active and skilled Neighbourhood Management Teams.

Tourism is a regeneration priority of Mansfield District Council with programmes ongoing to promote Mansfield's location as being a town next to Sherwood Forest with a range of shops and heritage attractions. A main aspect of the tourism strategy is to encourage a high quality hotel to be built in the town of Mansfield. The objective is to create the facilities within the town to allow people to stay more than one day. At the current time the majority of visits to Mansfield are by people doing a day trip and then going out of the district to find over night accommodation.

A casino would increase the visitor offering of Mansfield substantially and an associated hotel would give visitors the ability to stay within the district and use it as a base to go to other attractions around the area. Mansfield District Council would wish to promote a part of a wider regeneration strategy aimed at increasing visitor spending in the district.

It has been made clear by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport that they see these new casinos as a way to help areas that are in need of regeneration. It is for this reason that Mansfield is bidding for a casino to add value to the regeneration initiatives that are currently ongoing within the district.

Through the neighbourhood partnerships and other regeneration initiatives Mansfield District Council would ensure that all benefits are felt by the most deprived neighbourhoods and all effects of a casino are closely monitored.

Mansfield being a smaller district and town would also mean that any regeneration benefits such as job creation and value added through supply chains would have a more visible impact on the overall figures recording deprivation than they would if a Casino development is located within a town or city with a bigger population.

The high levels of deprivation in Mansfield have meant that a large amount of resources have gone into regenerating the district from a number of different agencies. This has led to effective partnership working through schemes such as the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund which have involved the communities in identify their needs and giving money to projects that will help address these needs.

It is these partnerships which involve education providers, the primary care trust and others will mean that if there are any adverse impacts of a casino, the networks are already set up to help the most deprived communities deal with them. By ensuring that service providers are alerted early by people living in the neighbourhoods of negative impacts putting them in a position where they are better equipped to deal with them.

It is the intention of Mansfield District Council to establish monitoring systems to monitor how a casino effects the town. The system would also draw on other data from other agencies such as Mansfield Area Strategic Partnership who have a monitoring system in place which brings together data from all the agencies involved in Mansfield Area Strategic Partnership and would be effective at showing any adverse trends from a Casino being located in Mansfield. This would provide valuable information on the impact both positive and negative of a casino generally but would also allow prompt action by the agencies to be taken to take advantage or stop any effects.

### **Social Impact**

Mansfield District Council held a consultation event to gain views of the public on what they thought of the idea of the casino being located within Mansfield. The majority of the concerns about the casino were social with the majority of the positive comments being about the economic benefits.

The concerns of some of the residents ranged from the increase in crime and antisocial behaviour to worries about the increase in family break down and personal debt due to gambling addiction.

To assess the impact of these concerns and how they could be dealt with Mansfield District Council has consulted with service providers to get their views on a new casino and possible impacts that may occur. Their views are summarised below:

Mansfield and District Citizens Advice Bureau responded that in principle they are not opposed to a casino in Mansfield. However they did point out that 70% of their enquiries are debt or benefit related which are both linked with poverty. They would like to see funding in place before the Casino was opened to provide independent money advice to all in the district that may need it and also funding for education in financial management to be delivered to the communities through schools and community resource centres.

Job Centre Plus are supportive of a casino in Mansfield because of the extra jobs it would bring to the area. They would like to see as many of the jobs as possible be taken up by people within Mansfield and the surrounding area and would like to see mechanisms in place to achieve this.

Mansfield and Ashfield Primary Care Trust responded that they had no figures at the moment that would allow them to predict any affect of a Casino in Mansfield. They requested that before a Casino be allowed a full impact study be done to allow service providers to effectively plan for any effects.

If Mansfield was successful in obtaining a casino it would use schemes such as Job Centre Plus making the connection service which works with employers coming to the area to find them employees from the deprived neighbourhoods. Mansfield District Council along with its 2 neighbouring local authorities have been successful in obtaining Local Enterprise Growth Initiative funding which has given £3.8 Million over the next 3 years to fund a range of programmes focused on outreach work in disadvantaged neighbourhoods such as the making the connection programme within the 3 districts of Mansfield Ashfield and Bolsover. As well as putting funding in place to ensure that already existing businesses within the areas can take advantage on new supply contracts that may come about as a result of large scale inward investment such as a casino.

These resources would be used to ensure that local people would take advantage of the job opportunities that would be created by a new casino. Mansfield District Council would work with other providers to ensure that long term systems will be put in place to deal with any adverse effects of the Casino.

Mansfield District Council is currently going through the consultation process for the new Local Development Framework. It is the intention of Mansfield District Council to use this consultation process which will include representatives from the community, business sectors and service providers. To ensure that any site that is selected for a casino will be the most sustainable in terms of local needs.

### **Need for Regeneration**

Mansfield District is ranked the 33<sup>rd</sup> most deprived district in the country with high levels of worklessness, poor health and below average education attainment.

Many of Mansfield's problems stem from its poor economy. Mansfield like most of the North Nottinghamshire and North Derbyshire area relied on primary industries such as textiles, brewing and mining. During the last 20 years these industries have either declined or disappeared entirely. This has led to very high rates of unemployment and the deprivation and poverty that accompanies having a large amount of people out of work for a sustained period of time.

Mansfield unemployment rate at the current time is around 2.6% which is comparable to the national average. However this does not show the true story of economic deprivation in Mansfield. Mansfield has a worklessness rate of 26% compared to the average for Great Britain which is 21.7%. The low unemployment rate for the entire district also hides areas such as the Ravensdale ward which has an unemployment rate of 6.2% nearly triple the national average. In a figure on unemployment rates for Nottinghamshire released in February 2006 showed that 4 of Mansfield wards were in the top 10 for worst unemployment rates in Nottinghamshire.

This problem is added to by significant outward migration of young people from the area. There is a need to provide sustainable jobs and wide range of leisure activities to convince young people, particularly more highly qualified people to stay.

It is hoped that a Casino will create employment in the area. A report commissioned by the North West Development Agency put the number of jobs created by a large casino would be around 400. This bid has already outlined what efforts will be undertaken to ensure that these job opportunities will be taken up by people in the deprived neighbourhoods. The report also concluded that the added value from wages and supply chains would be around £12 million.

The council is currently in the process of developing a Neighbourhood Business Incubation Project. These units give space for people in the deprived areas to set up their business as well as being able to access business support to help them through first years of growth. It is hoped that a casino would give an boost to the local economy encouraging more people to take the risk and start up their own business.

Other more indirect benefits that Mansfield is hoping to achieve is the prestige in getting investment of a Casino. It is the hope of Mansfield that the investment of the Casino, along with other current regeneration projects will support the sustainable development of Mansfield as a Sub-Regional Centre and would be a place for both developers and businesses to invest.

Over the past few years a lot of funding and investment has gone into Mansfield to increase the attractiveness of the town by improving the public realm through projects such as public art and the redevelopment of the main market place. This has had a knock on effect to the private sector with many of the main shops and leisure facilities such as existing hotels are undertaking up grades of their premises.(Mansfield Town Centre Partnership)

There has also been substantial investment in the transport infrastructure of Mansfield with £30 million been put into the Mansfield Ashfield Regeneration Route which has given Mansfield a ring road which has eased congestion but also opened up new development sites some of which could be suitable for a leisure development. There

has already been discussion with the possibility of relocating the Mansfield Town Football Club to one of the sites as part of a wider leisure development. There is also plans to build a new transport interchange combining with a brand new bus terminal incorporating modern facilities and tourist information points. The programme which is due to be fully complete by 2012 will make Mansfield a more accessible to people from the surrounding area and further away.

It is the hope that the Casino will draw attention to Mansfield as a whole and highlights how the regeneration schemes that are ongoing are increasing Mansfield attractiveness for investment and that Mansfield is no longer a declining former mining town the main commercial centre for North Nottinghamshire which has desire and opportunity to grow further into its role as one of the main urban centres in the area.

### **Willingness to Licence**

On 27<sup>th</sup> March 2006 a special meeting of Full Council was held with the main agenda item being the invitation to formally submit a bid to the Casino Advisory Panel. It was resolved at that meeting that a bid for a large casino be formally submitted with a small casino as the second option. There is no doubt in the Council's willingness to licence a Casino.

The meeting of Full Council followed a series of public consultation events. The first, held on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2006, involved approximately 60 members of the public attending an open forum meeting with Councillors and Officers. The outcome from this was support for a large casino on the basis that it could attract additional leisure opportunities and assist in regeneration. In addition, live radio discussions have been held with the Executive Mayor on Mansfield Radio on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2006 and BBC Radio Nottingham on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2006. These hour long debates were supportive of a bid for Mansfield. Considerable press coverage has also occurred.

Policy LT13 of the adopted Mansfield District Local Plan provides support and criteria based considerations for new "Built" Leisure Facilities which would include a Casino. Whilst, at this stage, the bid does not need to be site specific it can be stated with confidence that there are a number of suitable sites within the District where a large casino can accommodated.

It would be the Council's intention to work with the Casino operator in devising robust monitoring regimes, secured through planning conditions and Section 106 Agreements to monitor the social impact of the casino and devise employment recruitment and training programmes to raise the skill base of local people.

Through its links with the Local Strategic Partnership, PCT and voluntary sector groups there is already a well established network of support within Mansfield to monitor, respond and support any social impacts.

### **Probability of Implementation**

The town of Mansfield is in a good position for a casino to take advantage of both the local demand and tourist demand. Mansfield town is the main retail and service centre in North Nottinghamshire and has a catchment area of nearly 400,000 people. With many of those people coming into Mansfield for its retail and service offering, a casino as part of a bigger leisure initiative would be a further draw to these people who would be able to have their retail, service and leisure needs met.

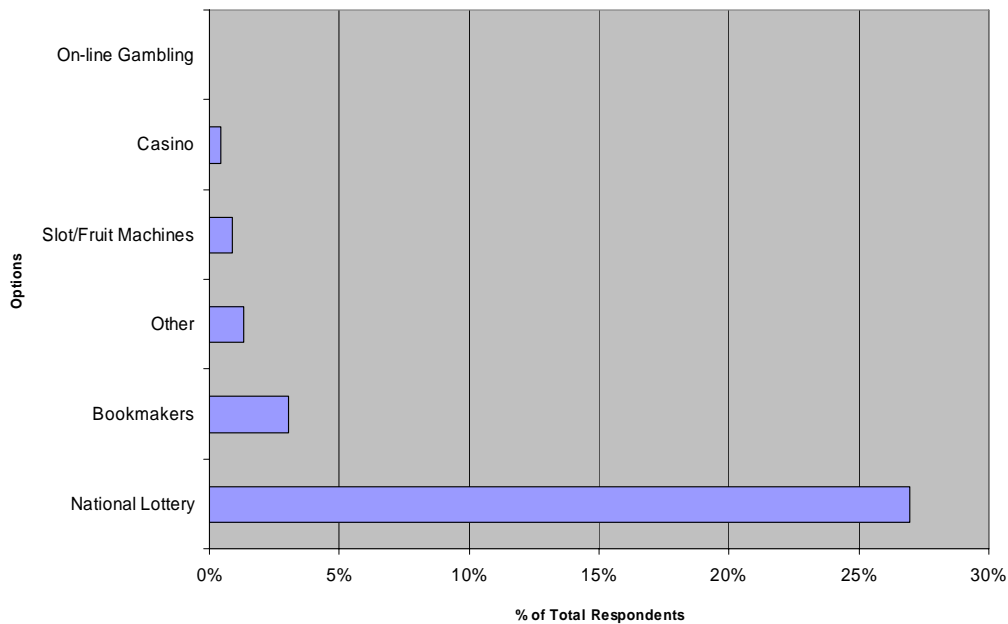
Mansfield is also next to Sherwood Forest which is one of the main tourist attractions in the area. This is set to increase with the planned extension of the Sherwood Forest Visitor Centre. Attractions like Sherwood Forest have meant that in 2005 the County of Nottinghamshire had over 12 million visitors. This is a market that a casino accompanied by other leisure activities would be able to tap into as part of their customer base especially if they are able to tap into the Sherwood Forest theme a brand that has international recognition. The town of Mansfield is also located close to international airports such as the established East Midlands Airport 30 miles to the South and the new airport at Doncaster 30 miles to the north both of which have international connections to a range of locations. Locating in Mansfield a smaller town with no other casinos currently located would give the casino a large amount of people that they could market their product to.

Mansfield is recognised as the main club centre for North Nottinghamshire with people coming from the surrounding area for a night out. A casino would enhance the night time economy of Mansfield attracting a wider spectrum of people into Mansfield.

As part of a consultation exercise into a new Casino the public were asked to submit their views through the Mansfield District Council web site. With the local paper and radio station also running consultation campaigns to get local people's views of having a casino and what gambling they currently undertook.

The table below shows that while a high percentage of the population undertake gambling such as the national lottery very few undertake casino gambling. It is thought that this is mainly because there is no casino currently located in Mansfield for the population to get to easily. This is an untapped market that the casino operator would be able to tap into as part of the casino development.

**Q3 - Do you currently use/play any of the following...?**



Results from this and further consultation exercise through the Local Development Framework would also be taken into account when looking for a site in Mansfield that would house the Casino. Mansfield has several sites both brownfield and Green field that would be suitable for a Casino development. However for a casino to be supported by Mansfield Council it would have to meet the following criteria:

- Its location would have to have good transport links so that as many people as possible will be able to access the services a leisure complex provides.
- Any proposal for a Casino in Mansfield will have to fit within Mansfield District Council and Mansfield Area Strategic Partnerships Regeneration Strategies.
- The casino will have to be part of a wider scale leisure development which includes other aspects to the development such as a hotel.
- A system for monitoring the impact of any casino to be set up before the casino opens.
- That the casino operators agree to engage fully with partnership which are working to treat the effects of compulsive gambling.

A casino in Mansfield will diversify the leisure offering of Mansfield especially in its night time economy. At present Mansfield night time economy is aimed at young people with offering for older people being limited.

A casino development that leads to a increase in visitor numbers would encourage more related businesses such as restaurant and speciality bars. These bars would be

more appealing to an older clientele which at the present time do not spend their money in Mansfield preferring to go further away to places such as Nottingham for their leisure and entertainment.

We would envisage that this would change the type of people in Mansfield who regularly partake in gambling activities to change. Having a casino will make it more accessible and help lose the seedy image of gambling.

### **Regional and Local Context**

The East Midlands Development Agency is currently formulating their Regional Economic Strategy which outlines their vision for the East Midlands to become one of Europe's most economic vibrant regions.

One of the 10 main priorities of the strategy is "To reduce economic inequalities by enhancing economic opportunities." A casino in Mansfield would help to achieve this objective by bring economic opportunities directly through employment and supply chain of the casino but also in secondary investment created by the Casino.

The East Midlands draft Regional Economic Strategy identifies tourism and culture as a key regional priority. The East Midlands Tourism Strategy, 2003 identifies the importance of market towns to the delivery of the East Midlands Tourism Product and acknowledges the importance of image.

In response to the call for areas to put forward bids for the Casinos the East Midlands Development Agency have made their own representation to the Casino Advisory Panel outlining how a casino would fit into the Regional Economic Strategy. They have also indicated that EMDA will support any council in the East Midlands that wants to bid for a Casino.

A casino in Mansfield can also be linked to the Sub-regional Strategic Partnership for North Nottinghamshire and North Derbyshire objective of their Economic Infrastructure Group to "contribute to the creation of necessary infrastructure to enable the economy of the sub-region to thrive and grow."

Preparation of the East Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy is in an early stage but the casino is being consider by the Northern Sub Region Sub Group. Any recommendation that come out of this group on casinos will be incorporated into the policy of the Local Development Framework.

One of the main aims of Mansfield District Council Corporate Plan is to revitalise the District, town centres and neighbourhoods. A main part of this is to encourage and where necessary assist in the implementation of regeneration schemes that will bring more jobs and greater investment into the area. A casino within a wider leisure development would be consistent with this policy as long as the site chosen will not detract from what Mansfield District Council is trying to achieve through it various regeneration schemes.

## **Community Benefit**

Through the licensing and town planning process Mansfield District Council would use their powers to ensure that a Casino is located on a site which is most accessible to local people by public transport so that local people are able to take advantage in the job opportunities and leisure facilities offered by the casino development.

Licensing powers will be used to enforce controls on noise and antisocial behaviour to ensure that business and residential areas around the casino are not adversely affected by the casino.

As already mentioned in the bid it would be expected that any casino operator who developed a casino in Mansfield would be actively engaged with the existing partnerships that have been set up through schemes such as the neighbourhood renewal fund to tackle the issues of deprivation in Mansfield by making links to jobs and training opportunities.

## **Conclusion**

Mansfield District Council recognises that this is an unique opportunity for the local authority to bid for the ability to license one of these new kinds of Casino.

We believe that a properly run and regulated casino as part of a wider leisure development would be beneficial to Mansfield and its surrounding area.

Mansfield and its surrounding area are still suffering the effects of the dramatic shift in the UK economy. With the loss of the traditional manufacturing base leaving areas of Mansfield with high levels of worklessness and some areas with over double the national unemployment rate. In Mansfield there is a needed for developments that will give the local people access to employment opportunities and act as a catalyst for further development within the area.

It is the hope that is a Casino is located in Mansfield will create jobs which can be taken advantage of by the people in the most deprived areas of Mansfield and the surrounding area.

Mansfield District Council has undertake a range of consultation to allow local people to express their views of a perspective new casino. Through this consultation concerns have been raised about possible adverse social effects such as increase in dept and family breakdown due to compulsive gambling.

Mansfield already has partnership in place to tackle issues of deprivation such as anti social behaviour and family breakdown. One of the main conditions of any casino being set up in Mansfield would be that these partnership are used to ensure that any effects of a casino in Mansfield will be monitored and any negative effects tackled.