



**Executive**  
16<sup>th</sup> January 2006

**Report from the Director of  
Policy & Regeneration**

For Action/

Wards Affected:  
ALL

**Wembley Regeneration and the Casino Advisory Panel**

**1.0 Summary**

- 1.1 This report gives an overview of the government's recently established independent Casino Advisory Panel and explores the potential for a casino as a vehicle for delivering key regeneration components of Brent's Vision for Wembley. It sets out the timetable for the work of the Casino Advisory Panel and outlines a proposed approach for responding to this.

**2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1 That the Executive notes the timetable for the work of the Casino Advisory Panel.
- 2.2 That the Executive endorses the response already made to the Casino Advisory Panel expressing Brent's interest in being considered as a location for a regional casino only. (Attached as Appendix 1)
- 2.3 That a further report is brought to the Executive in March setting out the findings of the Economic and Social Impact Assessments.

**3.0 The Casino Advisory Panel**

- 3.1 The Gambling Act recently passed by Parliament will allow three new types of casinos to operate in Britain. One "regional casino" will be permitted, along with eight large and eight small casinos.

- 3.2 The regional casino will have a minimum total customer area of 5,000 m<sup>2</sup>, and be permitted up to 1,250 Category A unlimited jackpot gaming machines. Large casinos will have a minimum total customer area of 1,500 m<sup>2</sup>, and be permitted up to 150 Category B gaming machines, with a maximum jackpot of £4,000. Small casinos will have a minimum total customer area of 750m<sup>2</sup>, and be permitted up to 80 Category B gaming machines, with a maximum jackpot of £4,000. The one regional and eight large casinos will be permitted to offer bingo, and all three categories will be permitted to offer betting.
- 3.3 The Government expects that a regional casino will be a major development, offering clear potential for regeneration. It will provide not just a range of gambling activities, but may include hotel accommodation, conference facilities, restaurants, bars, areas for live entertainment and other leisure attractions.
- 3.4 In order to determine the best locations for these facilities the Government has established an independent Casino Advisory Panel (CAP). The CAP will consider submissions from local authorities that are interested in hosting a casino within their boundaries and will then recommend the most appropriate location for the new facilities, based largely on a regeneration case.
- 3.5 The CAP has written to all local authorities asking them to submit an 'expression of interest', on a non-commitment basis, to hosting a casino. The CAP had to receive a response by 31<sup>st</sup> December 2005. Failure to respond would be deemed as not wanting to even be considered to host a casino. Brent has responded expressing an interest in hosting only a 'regional' style casino on the basis that it is only a facility of this scale that could deliver the regeneration benefits for local people that match our aspirations as set out in the Wembley Vision.

#### **4.0 The Wembley Vision**

- 4.1 'Our Vision for Wembley' sets out the Council's aspirations for the regeneration of Wembley. The Vision requires developers to respond to the need to provide a number of critical components, including:
- A community focus for Brent
  - A national, regional and local leisure destination
  - The London Convention Centre
  - A centre for work
  - A cultural and educational centre
  - High quality commercial and retail facilities
  - A mixture of housing types and tenures
- 4.2 Significant progress has been made towards achieving this vision. The new National Stadium and the refurbished Wembley Arena are both nearing completion. Quintain Estates, the major landowner and

developer, have been granted planning consent for a striking mixed use development incorporating new shops, a cinema and residential uses on 42 acres surrounding the Stadium.

- 4.3 Notwithstanding this there are still large elements of the vision that remain to be delivered, of which a critical component is conferencing. Significantly, Wembley will lose its existing conference centre, and the resulting potential for jobs, business tourism and increased local expenditure, when the existing Wembley Conference Centre is demolished later this year.
- 4.4 The provision of a 'regional' casino complex at Wembley could go a long way to helping us deliver many of the outstanding aspirations within our vision. In itself it would provide another significant leisure destination, generating significant numbers of new visitors and jobs. It should also be possible to secure large scale conferencing and convention facilities, opening up Wembley to new markets in business tourism. Furthermore cultural facilities, luxury hotels, additional shops, restaurants and bars will all be forthcoming on the back of the value generated by a new casino. All of this would generate new jobs, new visitors and new facilities for Brent.
- 4.5 Already one proposal for a regional casino is in the public domain – a joint venture between Quintain and Hurrahs (formerly Caesars). The Council has also been approached by another casino operator exploring the potential for a facility at Wembley.
- 4.6 There are areas of concern that would need to be further researched so that their impact can be fully understood, including problem gambling, transport arrangements, crime and noise.

## **5.0 Next Steps**

- 5.1 The CAP has published a timetable for its work as set out below:

**December 31<sup>st</sup> 2005** – closing date for receipt of expressions of interest from local authorities who wish to be considered, on a no commitment basis, as possible locations for new casinos.

**March 31<sup>st</sup> 2006** – closing date for receipt of a full statement of case demonstrating the impact of locating a resort casino within any given local authority area.

**Summer 2006** – examination and evaluation of proposals completed.

**December 2006** – CAP produces final report and recommendations.

- 5.2 Brent has already responded to the initial invitation to express an interest in hosting a casino. Our response has made it clear that we are only interested in hosting a regional casino (for which at this point in time there is only provision for 1 in the country) and that we are only

interested if it provides tangible benefits to local people by delivering key elements of our vision for Wembley including new jobs, international scale conferencing, hotels, new community facilities and improved transport arrangements. A copy of the letter is attached at Appendix 1.

- 5.3 The next stage in pursuing this opportunity is to develop a full statement of case and formal proposals. There are two critical pieces of work that would need to feed into this. Firstly an economic impact assessment, which will consider the economic benefits and costs of a new regional casino in terms of jobs (new and displaced), investment, income, visitor numbers and expenditure. This piece of work has already been commissioned and is nearing completion. Secondly there will be a full social impact study which will consider the impact on problem gambling, crime, noise, traffic and transport. The assessment should also identify best practice from around the world in mitigating any potentially adverse impacts. This will be procured during January 2006.
- 5.4 These reports will be finalised by March 2006, and their findings will be reported back to the Executive together with the draft Statement of case for approval.

## **6.0 Financial Implications**

- 6.1 There are no direct financial implications of this report. All consultancy expenditure will be met from within the existing Wembley regeneration budgets.

## **7.0 Legal Implications**

- 7.1 The consultancy contracts are below £50k in value and so are only subject to the limited rules contained in the Council's Contract Standing Orders which require three quotes to be obtained.
- 7.2 The findings of the impact assessments will be reported to members of the Executive in March so it can then decide whether to submit the Statement of Case.

## **8.0 Diversity Implications**

- 8.1 There are no specific diversity implications as a consequence of this report. The proposed social impact study will examine this issue in more detail. A key theme of Our Vision for Wembley is that the new developments reflect the multi-cultural character of Brent. Preliminary work has suggested that there will be over 2000 direct new jobs created by a casino complex, and that typically the profile of employees in such facilities reflects the diversity of the areas in which the facility is located.

## **9.0 Staffing/Accommodation Implications (if appropriate)**

- 9.1 There are no staffing or accommodation implications as a consequence of this report.

### ***Background Papers***

Letter from the Casino Advisory Panel dated 11<sup>th</sup> November 2005 inviting local authorities to express an interest in being considered to host a new casino.

Letter from Chief Executive dated 21<sup>st</sup> December 2005 in response to Casino Advisory Panel. (Appendix 1)

### ***Contact Officers***

Andy Donald  
Assistant Director, Regeneration  
Tel: 020 8937 1049  
Email: [andrew.donald@brent.gov.uk](mailto:andrew.donald@brent.gov.uk)

PHILIP NEWBY  
Director of Policy and Regeneration