



Executive
23rd August 2006

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

For Action

Wards Affected:
ALL

Wembley Regeneration and the Casino Advisory Panel

Forward Plan Ref: PRU-06/07-001

1.0 Summary

1.1 This report updates members of the Executive on progress relating to the potential for Brent to host a regional casino. It sets out developments since the last executive report, in March 2006, restates the findings of the independent economic and social impact assessments of a potential regional style casino at Wembley that were commissioned prior to this date, and summarises the results of the recent public consultation process. It asks members of the Executive to consider whether to continue to support a regional casino in the Borough.

1.2 If members continue to support a regional casino at this stage, it in no way commits the authority to hosting a casino. Rather it provides Brent with the opportunity to license such a facility. Throughout the Casino Advisory Panel process the Council will be able to articulate the terms on which it would be prepared to pursue the concept further, and subsequently if Brent is recommended by the Casino Advisory Panel as a preferred location then the Council would retain regulatory powers through both planning and licensing controls. No specific site has been identified and no preferred operators or developers have been chosen.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 That in the light of the findings of the Economic and Social Impact assessments and the recent public consultation exercise, the Executive

indicates its ongoing support for a regional casino in Brent, provided that it can be demonstrated that any such casino would deliver an appropriate level of community and regeneration benefits within the Borough.

3.0 Introduction

- 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 m², 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 m², 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 750m², 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. Large and small casinos will more likely be gambling facilities, with less potential to support a wider range of leisure uses.
- 3.4 In order to determine the best locations for these facilities the Government has established an independent Casino Advisory Panel (CAP). The CAP's role is to consider submissions from local authorities that are interested in hosting a casino within their boundaries and to then recommend the most appropriate location for the new facilities.
- 3.5 At its meeting on the 16th January 2006, the Executive endorsed a response to the Casino Advisory Panel setting out Brent's initial interest in Wembley being considered as a location for a regional style casino. This expression of interest was made on a strictly non-commitment basis, and contained a number of strong caveats around the facility only being acceptable if it provides tangible benefits to local people by delivering key elements of Brent's Vision for Wembley, including new jobs, international style conferencing, hotels, new community facilities and improved transport arrangements. These issues and the Council's approach were fully discussed with Partners at the Wembley Partnership Board on 8th March 2006 and the Local Strategic Partnership on 15th March 2006.
- 3.6 At its meeting on the 13th March 2006, the Executive approved the submission of a full statement of case to the Casino Advisory Panel making the case for a regional casino in Brent, with a preference expressed for a location somewhere within the Wembley regeneration area, which extends from the North Circular Road all the way through to the Ealing Road. This decision was made in the light of the findings of both an Economic Impact Assessment and

a Social Impact Assessment of a possible regional casino, both of which were procured by the Council. The findings from these documents are re-presented to members of the Executive later in this report.

- 3.7 The Casino Advisory Panel received full statements from 27 local authorities from across the country who were interested in securing right to license the 1 regional casino. Following detailed consideration of the statements, the Casino Advisory Panel short-listed 8 local authority areas to go forward to the next stage of the process, including Brent. The other short-listed local authorities are Blackpool, Cardiff, Glasgow, Greenwich, Manchester, Newcastle and Sheffield.
- 3.8 The Casino Advisory Panel has now arranged an Examination in Public for each of the short-listed locations. This will be an opportunity for each of the short-listed locations to further develop their cases to host a regional casino, for other interested parties to present any further evidence either for or against the proposal, and for the Council to respond to these. Each Examination in Public will be chaired by a member of the Casino Advisory Panel. The Examination in Public for Brent is scheduled for Tuesday 29th August 2006.
- 3.9 In order to prepare for the Examination in Public, the Casino Advisory Panel has requested a summary statement from the Council, together with responses to a number of supplementary questions. Officers have provided this information to the Panel, on the basis that the deadline for receipt of this information was in advance of the meeting of the Executive.
- 3.10 Following the Examination's in Public the Casino Advisory Panel will consider further all of the evidence presented to them, and make a recommendation to ministers before the end of the year as to which of the 8 short-listed locations would be best placed to host a regional casino.
- 3.11 Members of the Executive are now being asked to indicate ongoing support for a regional casino in Brent and to express that support at the forthcoming Examination in Public . In order to inform this judgement the Executive needs to consider, amongst other things, three key issues:
- (i) The findings of the independent Economic and Social Impact Assessments, undertaken on behalf of the Council by consultants earlier in the year;
 - (ii) The findings of recent public consultation exercises on the issue of the regional casino;
 - (iii) The implications for the authority of withdrawing support at this stage
- 3.12 Each of these issues is examined in detail in the following sections of the report.
- 3.13 In the latter part of 2005 and early 2006, two detailed independent studies were undertaken by consultants into the potential economic and social

impacts of a regional casino being located within the Wembley regeneration area. Summaries of their findings are set out below. Both studies included a range of interviews with relevant stakeholders, including the Police, Primary Care Trust, Gamcare (the leading problem gambling charity) and potential casino operators and developers who have expressed an interest in Wembley.

3.14 All studies of the potential impact of new regional style casinos need to be treated with a degree of caution. Such facilities on this scale are a new product in the UK market, and therefore all assessments of impact are based on a combination of evidence from around the world and assumptions related to other major leisure attractors in the UK.

3.15 If members continue to support a regional casino at this stage, it in no way commits the authority to hosting a casino. Rather it provides Brent with the opportunity to license such a facility. Throughout the Casino Advisory Panel process the Council will be able to articulate the terms on which it would be prepared to pursue the concept further, and subsequently if Brent is recommended by the Casino Advisory Panel as a preferred location then the Council would retain regulatory powers through both planning and licensing controls. No planning application has been submitted for such a facility and any such application which might be submitted in the future would be subject to a full environmental impact assessment, public consultation exercise and section 106 negotiation. No specific site has been identified and no preferred operators or developers have been chosen.

4.0 Economic and Social Impact Assessments

4.1 In the latter part of 2005 and early 2006, two detailed independent studies were undertaken by consultants into the potential economic and social impacts of a regional casino being located within the Wembley regeneration area. Summaries of their findings are set out below. Both studies included a range of interviews with relevant stakeholders, including the Police, Primary Care Trust, Gamcare (the leading problem gambling charity) and potential casino operators and developers who have expressed an interest in Wembley.

4.2 All studies of the potential impact of new regional style casinos need to be treated with a degree of caution. Such facilities on this scale are a new product in the UK market, and therefore all assessments of impact are based on a combination of evidence from around the world and assumptions related to other major leisure attractors in the UK.

4.3 **The Economic Impact Assessment** has been undertaken by NERA Economic Consulting. The study considered the economic impact of a regional casino against two alternative scenarios – firstly more development of a style already proposed in Wembley (ie. leisure and retail uses on the ground floor with residential and offices above) and secondly against a predominantly residential development. Its key findings are as follows.

- 4.4 In terms of visitor numbers a new regional casino could increase the number of visitors to Wembley by 55%, bringing an additional 6,145,000 people per year into the Borough. Three quarters of these people would be 'day visitors' (ie. they would not stay overnight in a hotel), and a majority of these would be 'diverted' from existing day visits to London, which as a whole receives 340,000,000 day visitors a year. This would leave some 1.6 million new overnight visitors, most of whom will be foreign tourists. This would generate substantial additional expenditure in the local area, and would provide an opportunity to maximise linked visits to other local facilities.
- 4.5 In relation to employment, NERA estimate that a new regional casino would directly create over 2000 jobs from day 1. When the impacts of indirect job creation, job transfers from existing employers into the casino, jobs displaced by existing local employers closing and the leakage of jobs to people outside of the Borough is all taken into account, the net number of jobs likely to be filled by Brent residents is estimated as 1,250 in year 1, out of a total of 1,501 across London.
- 4.6 A majority of the new jobs are likely to be in casino, food / catering and security operations. Interviews with potential operators indicated that the average salaries for each of these occupations within a proposed facility are likely to be as follows:
- Casino (Gaming) – 760 jobs – average salary: £21,450
 - Food / Catering – 557 jobs – average salary: £16,080
 - Security – 484 jobs – average salary: £23,107
- This would generate an additional £8million in income tax revenue, rising to £15million when National Insurance contributions are included. There may also be an opportunity for Brent to secure direct financial benefits from the Local Authority Business Growth Incentive.
- 4.7 In relation to disbenefits, it is estimated that there are currently 1,690 problem gamblers in the Borough (0.8% of the 16+ population). NERA predict that a new regional casino could increase this number by 163, to 1,853, putting some additional pressure on local support services. The social impact study (see section 5 below) considers this issue in more detail, and predicts a larger increase, indicating the difficulty of making precise predictions.
- 4.8 The issues of policing and transport are considered in the report, but the consultants have difficulty in assigning a specific economic cost for these. The social impact assessment provides more detail in relation to these issues.
- 4.9 The report concludes by stating that the economic impact of a casino exceeds the economic impact of either of the other alternative scenarios considered, both in the short and long terms. It provides more visitors (and hence more spend), more jobs, and more earnings.
- 4.10 **The Social Impact Assessment** has been undertaken by EDAW – a firm of regeneration consultants. The brief was to understand the critical social impacts of a regional casino and to explore best practice from around the

world in terms of mitigating against these. In assessing the social impact there has been a heavy dependency on studies based around existing resort casino facilities from around the world, coupled with in-depth interviews with local and national stakeholders. By its very nature this evidence is therefore far more difficult to quantify and far more difficult to put into a Brent context. The reports key findings are as follows.

- 4.11 It is probable that a new regional casino will directly increase levels of problem gambling. Typically negative impacts are felt disproportionately amongst those with low incomes, poorer than average qualifications and amongst non-white groups. Proximity to the casino in general will be likely to increase the likelihood of negative impacts. The analysis shows a likely increase of up to 600 casino related problem gamblers in the area, which when adjusted to reflect Brent's 'vulnerability' profile could increase to between 800 and 1200.
- 4.12 There is clearly conflicting evidence here with the economic assessment undertaken by NERA, illustrating how difficult it is to understand how many of the new cases of problem gambling would be directly attributable to a new casino. The context based on current trends is for a significant increase in problem gambling across the Borough (and the country) by 2010. Casinos are only one small element of this overall trend and are arguably the easiest to regulate and influence, when compared to online gambling or illegal / unlicensed gambling.
- 4.13 There is a body of research around the potential health impacts of problem gambling, which include stress, depression, anxiety, family and child neglect, and suicide. There are also strong links between problem gambling and mental health problems, anti-social behaviour and relationship breakdowns. Locally the Primary Care Trust has expressed concerns over these issues. It is clear that the range of direct and indirect health impacts is complex. Gambling is often just one of a number of causes, and indeed in many cases is a symptom. Significant numbers of problem gamblers also have other addictions and psychological disorders.
- 4.14 There is no real evidence to show that a casino will result in any significant increases in crime. There is limited evidence that some elements of criminal activity rises in areas close to casinos, but evidence from existing casinos in London and the UK indicates that any rise in crime is negligible and generally contained to internal activity such as money laundering and fraud. Some consultees felt that there may be an increase in prostitution but no empirical evidence was found to support this.
- 4.15 In relation to traffic congestion, research suggests that the majority of customers visiting casinos would travel by car and will therefore require parking. Peak usage hours from around the world are between 10:00pm and 2:00am, when traffic flows are generally low, therefore congestion is unlikely. Clearly if adequate transport routes are not provided there may be an issue with late night noise pollution, and any site specific proposals will need to be the subject of a full traffic impact assessment.

5.0 Public Consultation

5.1 Four specific areas of public consultation have been undertaken:

- a full questionnaire survey distributed to every household in the Borough;
- an identical questionnaire survey sent directly to members of the citizen's panel;
- the Great Casino Debate;
- polling undertaken and published by Quintain and Harrahs

The findings of each are summarised below.

5.2 A questionnaire survey was distributed inside the August edition of the Brent Magazine to every household in the Borough, with a response deadline of 10th August 2006. A very large number of responses have been received to the questionnaire and it has not been possible to summarise the results in advance of the publication date for Executive reports. A verbal update will therefore be provided to members at the Executive meeting.

5.3 The same questionnaire survey was distributed directly to 880 members of the new Brent Citizen's Panel. A total of 224 responses were received, representing a 22.5% response rate. A significant majority of the responses were from people over 35 (89%). The 'top line' responses have been collated, and can be summarised as follows:

- 26% of those responding consider casino gambling unacceptable for anyone, and a further 39% consider it acceptable for others but not for themselves;
- 55% of responses were strongly opposed or opposed to a casino development within the Wembley regeneration area;
- Issues of most concern related to increases in crime (68%), traffic congestion (65%), problem gambling (64%) and parking (50%).
- The key benefits identified are employment / new jobs (69%), tourism (43%), regeneration (30%) and increased investment (27%).

5.4 On Tuesday 25th July 2006 the Council hosted the 'Great Casino Debate' – an open forum held at the Town Hall for local residents to discuss the issues and concerns associated with a new regional casino. Over 250 people attended the event, and heard presentations from Anthony Jennett (Chairman of Gamcare), Patrick Gulliver (EDAW – who undertook the social impact assessment) and Edward Bramley-Harker (NERA – who undertook the economic impact assessment). There was also an opportunity for individuals to ask questions from the floor to an expert panel, which included senior representatives from Brent Teaching Primary Care Trust, Brent Police and Harrahs Entertainment. A majority of the questions raised concerns about a possible casino, particularly in relation to traffic, car parking, local disturbance and crime.

5.5 As part of the event local residents were invited to participate in more structured 'table discussions', which posed three questions:

- What do you see as the benefits of a new regional casino in Brent;
- What concerns do you have about a new regional casino being located in Brent; and
- Are there any measures that could be put in place to overcome any of these concerns?

- 5.6 In relation to the potential benefits, the most commonly recognised were job opportunities for local people, inward investment, more leisure and entertainment opportunities, increased revenue into the Borough, the opportunity to negotiate section 106 resources and tourism.
- 5.7 There were considerably more disbenefits identified, including traffic, parking, anti-social behaviour (drinking, gambling, sex industry, crime, drugs), disproportional impact on vulnerable people, hidden costs of policing, out of character with the surrounding residential area. The disbenefits largely fell into two categories – those relating to the impact a casino would have on people living in the immediate vicinity, and those relating to effects of problem gambling.
- 5.8 In terms of measures that could be put in place to overcome these concerns, a range of ideas were suggested, including no casino, direct access road and car parking for the casino, extra security and policing, a proportion of the casino profits to be directed into a 'regeneration fund', ensure Brent resident's access jobs and more resources for health services.
- 5.9 The final piece of consultation was not undertaken by the Council, but by Quintain and Harrahs Entertainment, who commissioned Communicate Research to undertake a random telephone survey of 1000 Brent residents between 10 and 14 May 2006. The survey's findings were:
- One in five respondents are entirely resistant to casino gambling of any sort;
 - Overall there is a 50-50 split between those residents who support a casino and those who don't. Amongst those who are aware of the specific casino proposals, the figure in support rises to 54%.
 - There are significant differences in support according to age. 71% of 18-24 years support the proposals, but generally the older the respondent the less likely they are to support the plans.
 - The most common reason for opposing a casino is that it would encourage gambling amongst vulnerable groups, followed by crime and increased traffic.
 - 29% of residents are more likely to support the proposals when presented with the wider social and economic implications, and 22% are more likely to support if strict safeguards are put in place to address problem gambling.
 - The most common benefits cited were employment, tourism, helping to establish Wembley as a leading entertainment destination, good for local businesses and improved leisure facilities.

5.10 Overall the results of the public consultation undertaken to date are inconclusive. It is clear that a significant number of residents who have participated in the consultation are opposed, or at the very least concerned, about the prospects of a new regional casino. It is equally clear that the consultation work to date has not reached all sections of Brent's community – in particular the age of most participants is over 35. This is significant given the age profile of the Borough as a whole, and the findings of Communicate Research's work which shows that the younger population are significantly more likely to support a regional casino facility.

6.0 Implications of Withdrawing Support For a Regional Casino

6.1 Brent is one of eight local authorities who have been shortlisted by the Casino Advisory Panel as a potential location for a regional casino. It has beaten off strong competition to reach this stage. It should be made clear that at this stage what we are competing for is the right to grant a license for a regional casino – not a casino itself. If we win this right, the Borough will be required to organize an open competition to select the preferred operator, developer and site. Even following this stage Brent will remain in control of planning and licensing arrangements, and will be able to set the terms and conditions which we would expect any potential new casino to adhere to.

6.2 The opportunity is significant. Notwithstanding the direct economic impacts that could accrue, as set out in section 4 above, there is the scope to negotiate a significant package of local benefits through the planning and licensing process. Our submission to the casino advisory panel suggests the following as a minimum package of benefits:

- Diversifying and increasing the visitor potential of Wembley through provision of an international conference and convention venue, providing high end, state of the art plenary and break out space for worldwide and large scale conferencing events for up to 5000 delegates.
- Provision of an additional five star hotel facility to further diversify the hotel offer in Wembley.
- Provision of a range of other cultural and community facilities consistent with 'Our Vision for a New Wembley', ensuring appropriate access for all sections of Brent's diverse community.
- Commitment to local training and recruitment programmes for both job entry and subsequent career development opportunities, as well as a commitment to on going positive employee relations protocols.
- A transport and traffic solution which mitigates against any potential adverse impact on nearby residential properties.
- A package of measures designed to prevent problem gambling, based on best practice from around the world, close monitoring of

the extent of problem gambling and associated social and health issues, and a commitment to an ongoing funding mechanism to support additional public and voluntary preventative and support services.

- An ongoing funding mechanism – linked to turnover – to be directed towards local benefit in perpetuity.

- 6.3 There is scope to review the detail of this package, and to expand it if desired. It is highly unlikely that any other development would be of the size and scale to offer such a comprehensive package of local measures. Withdrawing support for a regional casino at this stage would therefore result in a lost opportunity.
- 6.4 Furthermore, having pursued the opportunity to this stage there is the real prospect that if Brent chooses to withdraw support now there will be significant reputation damage on a number of fronts. The Council enjoys a strong reputation with government, the Mayor, the GLA and the London Development Agency, particularly in the field of regeneration. We are dependant upon these organizations for our regeneration resources. Withdrawal from the competition at this stage will begin to raise questions about our ambitions and commitment to regeneration across the Borough, and will require significant subsequent relationship management if we are not to jeopardize our currently strong reputation as an organization that delivers.
- 6.5 Similarly there will be reputation consequences within the private sector. Much effort has been made over recent years to position Brent as a Borough that is 'open for business' for new investors. A withdrawal from the process at this point in time could again jeopardize that position. Investment is highly competitive and potential investors into the Borough may well choose to look elsewhere, or to 'land bank' their sites until they perceive there to be a more favourable development climate.

7.0 Weighing the Case

- 7.1 The starting point is to place the casino proposals in the overall context of the regeneration of Wembley. 'Our Vision for Wembley' sets out the Council's aspirations for the regeneration of Wembley:
- 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
- 7.2 This vision is entirely consistent with the Council's existing formal policy framework. Both the Corporate Strategy 2002-06, the Community Plan and the Regeneration Strategy 2001-2021 include a priority to 'promote a

landmark development of regional and national significance at Wembley, creating an identity for the borough and ensuring substantial local benefit'. The Regeneration Action Plan 2004-06 goes on to set out a range of activities designed to ensure the delivery of 'Our Vision for Wembley'.

- 7.3 From a planning perspective this vision is supported by the formal policy framework, which identifies Wembley as a location for leisure, entertainment and destination uses in both the London Plan and Brent's Unitary Development Plan.
- 7.4 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 an ambitious mixed use development incorporating new shops, a cinema and residential uses on 42 acres surrounding the Stadium.
- 7.5 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 facility, and the resulting potential for jobs, business tourism and increased local expenditure, when the existing Wembley Conference Centre is demolished later this year.
- 7.6 The provision of a regional casino complex somewhere within the Wembley regeneration area 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. There is much development and regeneration already agreed within the Wembley Regeneration Area, and the casino will undoubtedly bring greater speed and clarity to the delivery of the Vision for Wembley.
- 7.7 The economic impact assessment outlined above highlights the scale of change that a resort casino could drive. Wembley is ideally placed to cope with the additional visitors, with new public transport facilities, road infrastructure and a public realm with the capacity to cater for both day and night visitors. The Wembley Regeneration Area extends all the way to the North Circular Road, providing enough scope for a suitable site to be identified well away from residential areas and allowing for late night traffic to be directed straight through to the North Circular Road.
- 7.8 Clearly a huge benefit is the number of jobs that will be generated, particular given that Brent remains a high worklessness and low income Borough. Brent has Beacon Council winning employment programs, which should give us confidence that we will be able to capture those benefits for local people. In the year 2005/06 the Brent in2work partnership will place over 1000 workless people into employment.

- 7.9 The social impact assessment identifies a number of critical areas that need to be considered. Of these, problem gambling is perhaps the most serious. A new casino will be likely to increase the number of local problem gamblers, although casino-related problem gambling only represents a small proportion of the overall problem gambling issue. A regional casino would provide a highly regulated and controlled environment that will allow us to monitor what is an already an upward trend in problem gambling (largely due to internet gambling), and will provide a mechanism for resourcing both preventative and support services.
- 7.10 The findings on crime are inconclusive. With the competition for casino licenses being extremely competitive, the onus for preventing and controlling crime has very much shifted on to the casino operators, who tend to install sophisticated security systems, as well as personnel to the police to reduce the likely impact of any activities.
- 7.11 On balance, the regeneration arguments for a regional casino are exceptionally strong. It is difficult to see how any other facility could provide the level of visitors, investment, employment and profile that a regional casino could. Specifically, a regional casino would contribute significantly to the delivery of the outstanding elements of the Vision for Wembley, most notably by providing an international conference venue with no public subsidy. Certainly in comparison with other alternative land-use scenarios considered within the NERA study, a regional casino delivers more economic benefits both in the short term and over time. There is a supportive policy framework in place and there is clear market demand.
- 7.12 There are clear social issues associated with such a facility. Problem gambling is already increasing, but undoubtedly a regional casino would add to the issue. There would be likely to be an adverse effect on other health related issues, although the extent of this is difficult to quantify. Late night noise and traffic movements will be generated.
- 7.13 Results from the consultation are inconclusive. There is clearly a section of the Brent community who object to gambling per se – 26% of the responses to the Citizens Panel questionnaire for example. About 55% of those responding to Brent’s consultation are opposed to a regional casino. However, the consultation failed to gain large responses from large sections of the community – most significantly young people with 89% of those who responded being over 35 years old. This is important, since the work undertaken by Communicate Research suggests that the older the participant, the less likely they are to support a regional casino within the Borough. The business community expressed support for the concept of a regional casino at the Wembley Business Forum.
- 7.14 There are significant negative consequences to withdrawing support at this stage in the process, both in relation to potential lost opportunity and equally significantly to loss of reputation.

8.0 Financial Implications

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

9.0 Legal Implications

- 9.1 The Gambling Bill Act 2005 received Royal Assent on 7th April 2005. The Act consolidates a range of legislation covering many different types of gambling. Specifically it covers gaming (playing a game of chance for a prize), betting (including casinos) and lotteries. For the first time non-localised gambling such as internet or phone based gambling is legislated for. A Gambling Commission will replace the existing Gambling Board and local authorities will have a central role in the determining of gambling licence applications.
- 9.2 The Act provides that casinos will be licensed by local authorities subject to the oversight and framework set out by the Gambling Commission. Licensing sub-committees as created by the Licensing Act 2003 (which passed responsibilities for alcohol licensing to local authorities) are responsible for the hearing of licensing applications for premises where gambling takes place, issuing gaming and/or machine permits for clubs and institutes, and registering society lotteries.
- 9.3 The Gambling Act has its own licensing objectives which provide fundamental guidance for both applicants and authorities. It should be noted that although these objectives are similar to those contained in the Licensing Act 2003, there are essential differences. The three Gambling Act Licensing objectives are:
- Preventing gambling from being a source of crime or disorder, being associated with crime or disorder or being used to support crime.
 - Ensuring that gambling is conducted in a fair and open way.
 - Protecting children and other vulnerable persons from being harmed or exploited by gambling.
- 9.4 Each licensing authority will be required to publish a statement of licensing policy every three years that sets out these objectives and the authority's approach toward gambling issues. Authorities will be able to limit new facilities opening in an area, review, suspend and revoke licences and even resolve not to allow any casino premises license within their area. This must apply to casino licences in general and cannot be used to refuse specific casino licence applications. The authority must adopt its statement of licensing policy by the end of December. This will be adopted by Full Council.. Any application for a gambling license or planning permission will be considered carefully by the authority in accordance with statutory requirements and relevant guidance in force at the time and subject to appropriate consultation.

9.5 The published guidance states that the criteria against which the Casino Advisory Panel will assess proposals were set out in the national policy statement on casinos published by the government in December 2004. It goes on to say that the primary consideration for the panel will be to ensure that the locations satisfy the need for the best possible test of social impact. The Panel will also consider the regeneration case the willingness of the authority to license a casino.

10.0 Diversity Implications

10.1 The brief for the social impact assessment specifically required a consideration of the possible impacts of a regional casino on diverse communities. The findings include:

- males are more prone than women, but that women develop problems at a faster rate;
- single people are deemed to be more vulnerable;
- lower income and unemployed people are more vulnerable;
- correlations with ethnicity are inconclusive, although most research points towards higher vulnerability for immigrant and minority populations;
- problem gamblers often have mental health problems.

Should this proposal be taken forward, careful monitoring will need to be undertaken to understand the ongoing impact of the facility on all sections of the community.

10.2 In terms of the economic impacts, a critical factor will be to ensure that the employment opportunities are open to all sections of the community. Current performance through Brent in2work indicates that Brent is well placed to achieve this – for example, in 2005/06 we expect to place 1000 people into work across the Borough, of which 75% are from ethnic minority communities.

11.0 Staffing/Accommodation Implications (if appropriate)

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

Background Papers

Economic Impact of a Casino in the Wembley Regeneration Area – NERA Economic Consulting, December 2005

Social impact of a Casino in the Wembley Regeneration Area – EDAW, March 2006

Destination Wembley: The Case for a Regional Casino – A submission by the London Borough of Brent to the Independent Casino Advisory Panel, March 2006

Casino Advisory Panel – Guidance Notes for Participants in the Examination in Public of certain proposals for a Regional Casino (Revised, 2nd August 2006)

Casino Advisory Panel Examination in Public – Responses to Questions to the London Borough of Brent, August 2006

Local Strategic Partnership – Minutes 15th March 2006.

Contact Officers

Andrew Donald
Assistant Director, Regeneration
Tel: 020 8937 1049
Email: andrew.donald@brent.gov.uk

Philip Newby
Director of Policy and Regeneration