

Frequently Asked Questions Helpsheet

Casino Advisory Panel

1. What is the timetable for the Panel's work

The Panel's broad outline for working is as follows:

- Scoping and research; consideration of selection criteria; consultation with stakeholders; programming; invitation to submit formal proposals (by end January 2006)
- Closing date for submission of formal proposals (by end March 2006)
- Complete examination and evaluation of proposals (by end of summer 2006)
- Consideration and Report to the Secretary of State (by mid December 2006)

2. How can we make contact with the Panel?

Anyone who wishes to make contact with us, submit evidence to us or correspond with us in any way may do so through the Secretariat:

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London
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020 7211 6453
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3. How were the Panel members selected?

All the appointments to the Casino Advisory Panel were made following an open and fair competition according to Nolan principles, to ensure a fair, open and transparent process. The appointments were advertised in the national press and online and candidates had to apply in the normal way. A number of candidates were shortlisted and interviewed by an independent selection board. This included two outside people from the list of Independent Assessors who have received training from the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments (OCPA) specifically to assess candidates for public appointments and ensure adherence to the OCPA Code at all stages of the process.

4. How will the Panel ensure there are no conflicts of interest?

All members of the Panel were required to declare any actual or perceived conflicts of interest as part of the application process. Additionally, members of the Panel will continue to maintain a register of possible conflicts of interest which will be available to the public on request.

5. Do the Panel members represent different parts of the country?

The home location of individual Panel Members has no particular significance. Their role is as part of a national panel and as such will act independently and impartially

6. Why will it take until the end of 2006 for the Panel to prepare its advice?

The Panel has a large amount of work to do before it can make its recommendations to Government. It will need to take into account the views of many interested bodies as well as the revised Regional Spatial Strategies which are the responsibility of regional planning bodies. The Panel aims to make sure it has considered all relevant information in formulating its recommendations.

7. Will the Panel be recommending an early increase in the number of Regional casinos?

The Gambling Act as it stands makes provision for one regional casino, and eight large and eight small casinos. The Panel's remit is purely to identify and recommend suitable areas for these seventeen casinos to be located and we do not intend to go beyond this.

8. Is the Panel choosing specific sites or Local Authority areas

The Panel's role is to recommend Local Authority areas for the locations of the new casinos, not the specific sites within those areas. If the Minister adopts the Panel's recommendations, then it is expected that the selected Local Authorities will then be able to determine the most appropriate site(s) within their area.

9. Are there any preferred areas for selection for the Regional Casino?

No such decisions have been made, nor will they before a full evaluation process has been carried out. It will be for all interested local authorities to make their case to the Panel.

10. What happens if one of the designated locations receives more applications for casino premises licences than it can grant?

In this case, the licensing authority will have to determine a process to select the most appropriate, which may be a competitive process. We understand that the Government intends to issue a code of practice on how local authorities should conduct competitions. However, in view of the fact that the Panel will not be making its recommendations until the end of 2006, we think it is unlikely that any competition will need to be held before mid-2007, at the earliest.

11. When will the new regional casino open for business?

The Advisory Panel is due to complete its work by the end of 2006 and we expect the local authority processes for awarding licences to take place thereafter, assuming Ministerial adoption of the panel's recommendations. It is not for us to speculate on the precise timetable beyond that.

12. Where can we keep informed of what the Panel is doing?

The Panel will make relevant information available and publish all papers on this website. Please keep checking the 'What's New' section.

13. How many of what type of casinos will there be?

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. 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.

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, gambling activities and non-gambling leisure facilities. The Government believes that it will have the potential to bring in major investment and economic regeneration to the area where it is located.

14. What is the difference between category A and B machines?

Category A machines will only be available in the regional casino. There will be no limit on the stakes and prizes on category A machines. No other gambling premises (including the other types of casinos) will be able to offer category A machines. The regional casino will be able to offer a maximum of 1250 category A machines (or a mix of category A with category B to D machines, within its overall limit of 1250 machines).

All casinos will be able to offer any mix of category B (and C and D) machines, within their overall limits on machine numbers. The regional casino can offer a maximum of 1250 machines; the large 150 machines, the small 80 machines and casinos licensed under the 1968 Gaming Act, 20 machines. Category B1 machines will have a maximum stake and prize of £2 and £4,000; category B2 machines will have a maximum stake and prize of £100 and £500; category B3 will have a maximum stake and prize of £1 and £500 and category B4 will have a maximum stake and prize of £1 and £250.

The new machine regime will come into effect once the Gambling Act comes fully into force in September 2007.

15. Will the Panel be considering the merits of rival operators?

No – the Panel will consider only broad locations, not specific sites or projects. Consideration of operators will be for the licensing authorities.

16. Can I meet with the Panel to put forward my thoughts?

The Panel will be organising a programme of appropriate meetings as part of the examination and evaluation process. They prefer not to take part in informal social meetings. Anyone may write to the Panel at any time through the Secretariat contact details given.

17. Where can I get further information?

Further information on the changes to gambling can be obtained from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport's website at www.culture.gov.uk

Further information on the role of the Casino Advisory Panel can be obtained from their website at www.culture.gov.uk/cap