

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Director of Development and Environmental Services

Community Safety & Environmental Services Committee : 1 March 2006

Subject: Gambling Act 2005 – Casino Advisory Panel

1.0 Purpose:

- 1.1** To advise Members of the progress which has been made since the resolution by Council at its meeting on 21 December 2005, to submit expression of interest to the Casino Advisory Panel, supporting in principle the siting of a Regional Casino within West Dunbartonshire and to seek approval to progress to the next stage of responding to the “Call for Proposals” to the Casino Advisory Panel (CAP).

2.0 Background:

- 2.1** The Council agreed at its meeting on 21 December 2005, to submit an expression of interest to CAP, supporting in principle the siting of a Regional Casino within West Dunbartonshire. The Council furthermore agreed that it would consult with Community Councils, Scottish Enterprise Dunbartonshire (SED) and all other relevant parties to ascertain their views prior to entering into any formal discussions on the subject matter.
- 2.2** This expression of interest was submitted to CAP by the due date of 31 December 2005, being one of 47 submissions received by them for a Regional Casino.
- 2.3** On 2 February 2006, a “Call for Proposals” was received by the Council from CAP, inviting proposals to be submitted by 31 March 2006.
- 2.4** The proposals have to include information relating to demographics, social impact, regeneration, willingness to licence, probability of implementation and the opportunity for community benefits.
- 2.5** Due to the constrained time frames, Officers have been preparing to make a submission in anticipation that the Council will indeed respond to the “Call for Proposals”.

- 2.6 Early discussion with SED established their full support, given the potential economic benefit to not only West Dunbartonshire but to the wider area, to the extent that they have committed resources to assist Council Officers in making the necessary preparations, should a formal proposal be submitted.
- 2.7 In relation to the wider community consultation, Consultants have been engaged to carry this out. It was to comprise of two elements. Firstly, a programme of Focus Groups and secondly, 1,000 face-to-face interviews with the public and a meeting with the Community Councils. The Focus Groups have already met and the most common concerns related to traffic issues and the nature and quality of jobs on offer. Other factors, including concerns over problem gambling, were much less prevalent. Overall these Groups indicated a broad, if conditional support, for a casino led international entertainment resort. The Local Economic Forum have also generally supported the proposal and further meetings are scheduled with the Chamber of Commerce and the Regional Director of VisitScotland. A meeting has also been arranged with consultants specialising in responsible gambling.
- 2.8 The second element of the community consultation, namely the face-to-face interviews and meeting with the Community Councils, will be completed by the end of February.

3.0 Main Issues:

- 3.1 The "Call for Proposals" must be responded to before 31 March 2006.
- 3.2 The first element of the public consultation exercise has identified general support for the proposal. However, due to the tight timetable involved, as set down by the Casino Advisory Panel, it has not been possible to conclude the full public consultation programme at the time of this report being written.

4.0 Recommendations:

- 4.1 Members are asked to homologate the work undertaken by Officers of the Council in partnership with Scottish Enterprise Dunbartonshire to date, particularly in relation to the public consultation exercise.**

4.2 Members are asked to agree to respond formally to the “Call for Proposals” from the Casino Advisory Panel.



Dan Henderson
Director of Development and Environmental Services
Date: 16 February 2006

Background Papers: Letter, 31 January 2006 from Department for Culture, Media and Sports.
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