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**Report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Corporate and Governance)**

***Licensing Committee***

**Date: 16<sup>th</sup> November 2010**

**Subject: Large Casino Update**

**Electoral Wards Affected:**

**Specific Implications For:**

Ethnic minorities

Women

Disabled people

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**Executive Summary**

The Gambling Act 2005 provided Leeds City Council with the opportunity to grant a Large Casino Premises Licence under a two stage process which will determine a licence on the greatest benefit to the City.

Officers are now starting the preliminary stages for this competition and are reporting to Licensing Committee on the next steps in the process.

## **1.0 Purpose Of This Report**

- 1.1 This report is to inform the Licensing Committee of the progress of the Large Casino project and their delegated responsibilities during this process.

## **2.0 Background Information**

- 2.1 The Gambling Act 2005 (the Act) changed the legislation governing the licensing of casinos significantly. Under the Act seventeen new casino licences were to be granted, each of which are to be significantly larger than existing casinos. The licences are broken down as follows: one regional casino, eight large casinos, and eight small casinos. The DCMS formed a special Casino Advisory Panel (CAP) to recommend where the new casinos should be located.
- 2.2 In April 2008 Parliament dropped the regional casino and approved the eight small and eight large casinos in line with the CAPs original recommendations. Leeds was awarded a large casino licence.

## **3.0 Main Issues**

- 3.1 Work has begun on the formation of a policy and the application pack. As previously advised the policy will follow the Budgetary and Policy Framework rules, progressing through to full Council. The application pack, which will include the evaluation matrix, will be progressed through Licensing Committee.
- 3.2 As both the policy and the application pack will contain the same basic information, both pieces of work are being developed together. These documents provide the information required by applicants to enable them to provide a second stage application bid which will be able to be evaluated alongside the other bids received at that stage.
- 3.32 Project Board – The Development Department has formed a Project Board to approve each stage in the process and control spending in line with a budget already agreed with Executive Board.
- 3.4 Advisory Panel – The project board has determined that a level of expert advice will be required to evaluate the second stage bids, especially in regards to the financial aspect of the bids. Development have been tasked with procuring this advice in the form of a consortium of consultants who will provide input into the financial requirements of the policy and the evaluation matrix. This procurement is ongoing, with the aim to have specialist advice in place by December to progress the policy and application pack. The consultants may then form part of the Advisory Panel who will assist the Licensing Committee to evaluate the 2<sup>nd</sup> stage bids.
- 3.5 Policy and Application Pack – Entertainment Licensing has been working with the Economic Development Unit on a draft Policy. The latest draft will be refined further with the assistance of the procured expertise.
- 3.6 The final draft of the policy will be taken through the Budgetary and Policy Framework process, to be approved as the Public Consultation draft by full Council. The policy will also be taken to Scrutiny Board for their comments.
- 3.7 The current timetable allows for adoption by Council in July. As the approval phase of the policy development takes approximately 6 months, the policy will have to be ready for

consultation by the end of January. Should this not be feasible the timetable could slip two months, for adoption by council at their September meeting.

3.8 The application pack will be developed at the same time, with a four week consultation with the trade around May/June. The application pack will be presented to the Licensing Committee for their approval for consultation in April.

3.9 Public Consultation – Once the public consultation documents are ready, officers will arrange a 12 week consultation. This will be advertised in libraries, one stop shops and leisure centres by way of a poster. A webpage will be created and a web form will be available for people to make comments online.

3.10 Timescales – the current timescales being worked to are as follows:

Dec 10	Advisory Panel in place
Feb-Apr 11	Public Consultation
Aug 11	Advertise competition
Aug - Oct 11	Stage 1 process
Jan 12	Stage 2 process
May 12	Issue licence

3.11 Training – Full training for members will be given to provide Licensing Committee with background knowledge of the casino industry as well as specialist knowledge they will need to interpret the evaluation report provided by the Advisory Panel, and the Stage 2 bids received from the applicants.

#### **4.0 Implications For Council Policy And Governance**

4.1 The principles will need to be included in the Gambling Act 2005 Statement of Licensing Policy which will have to follow the normal approval process following the Budgetary and Policy Framework

#### **5.0 Legal And Resource Implications**

5.1 The contents of the application pack and the grant of the licence are Part 8 functions of the Act and are expressly a matter for the council's Licensing Committee, although the principles that the committee will use to inform its decision on greatest benefit will be contained within the council's statement of licensing policy subject to full Council approval.

#### **6.0 Conclusions**

6.1 The project is now proceeding, with the project board being formed and an Advisory Panel appointed in the near future.

#### **7.0 Recommendations**

7.1 That Licensing Committee note the contents of this report.