

Consideration

287. The small towns of the Lincolnshire coast, because they are small, would make good sites for the testing of social impact among the local population, though impact among visitors would be hard to trace.
288. The council is currently working with Gamcare and others in order to develop best practice programmes to manage any social ills that the casino might create.³¹⁶
289. While over 6 million visitors are attracted to the area each year, there are nearly 60,000 bedspaces in the Coastal Action Zone, over half of which are in static caravans and less than 10% of the accommodation is in hotels.³¹⁷ Taking this situation together with the seasonality problem, we agree that the development of a casino with hotel would be beneficial, and likely to be implemented, given the interest of existing holiday operators in the area³¹⁸ as well as prospective operators.³¹⁹ A range of potential sites has been identified.³²⁰
290. The regional context is favourable and there is a strong local position regarding willingness to license, with a favourable council resolution made in March 2006 following local consultation.³²¹
291. Without doubt the coastal towns of East Lindsey have all the problems of small cold water resorts, but they would make good sites for the test of social impact. We are impressed with the council's careful plans for using a small casino to assist in – not create – regeneration. This is altogether a good proposal.

Great Yarmouth*About Great Yarmouth*

292. Great Yarmouth is a town of 92,500 residents³²² situated on the east coast of Norfolk. Originally a port and fishing village, it grew with rail connections in the mid nineteenth century into a seaside resort peaking in visitor numbers in the late 1970s. Since then, like most cold-water resorts, its tourist trade has fallen off. It is now at a steady but low level³²³. There is a sizeable stock of 2,500 bedspaces in 120 hotels rated up to three stars,³²⁴ but no higher.
293. The Borough of Great Yarmouth is the 71st most deprived local authority area in England,³²⁵ lying in the second lowest 10 percentile band of multiple indices of deprivation.³²⁶ The proportion of economically active in the population of working age in the period

³¹⁶ *Supplementary Information August 2006*, p.2

³¹⁷ *Proposal Document*, p.3

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp.15-17

³¹⁹ *Supplementary Information August 2006*, p.4

³²⁰ *Ibid.*, p.4

³²¹ *Proposal Document*, p.9

³²² *NOMIS data for 2005* (www.nomisweb.co.uk, accessed 22/11/2006)

³²³ Visitor numbers which peaked in the late 1970s and early 1980s amounted to almost 12 million visitor nights (mvn) annually but fell to 5mvn four years ago. Response to Supplementary Questions p.1

³²⁴ *Proposal Document*, paragraph 1.6

³²⁵ ODPM (2004) *Indices of Deprivation 2004*

³²⁶ *Ibid.* percentile bands of average score

April 2005 – March 2006 was 79.8%, of whom 70.0% were in employment. Unemployment stood at 4.3% in October 2006 against a national average of 2.5%.³²⁷ Much employment is seasonal and unemployment levels can be as high as anywhere in the UK.³²⁸ Average earnings are low³²⁹ and educational attainment is poor.³³⁰ Great Yarmouth has the highest rate of claimant unemployed amongst 43 principal seaside towns.³³¹

The proposal

294. As a fall back from an unsuccessful regional casino bid, either a large casino and/or one or two small one(s) is now proposed as congruous with the development of the overall tourism and hotel offer in accordance with a draft “Tourism Strategy for Great Yarmouth”.³³² The preferred location is in the town’s “Pleasure Beach Complex”.³³³ Given our remit to provide a good geographical spread, we are of the opinion that only one casino should be considered in Great Yarmouth.

Consultations and regional considerations

295. The East of England Regional Assembly endorsed the original bid for a regional casino, referring it to the EiP of RSS. However, the EiP Panel Report in June 2006 did not consider it to be the role of the EiP to establish priority at one particular location rather than another.³³⁴ The plan does however identify the borough as a priority area for regeneration.³³⁵
296. The East of England Development Agency made its preference clear for a regional casino, preferring the proposal from Southend.³³⁶ (However Southend did not wish to be considered for a large or a small casino).

Consideration

297. Although the resident ethnic minority population is well below the national average,³³⁷ Great Yarmouth would be a useful place in which to test social impact among the resident population. Tracing visitors, however, would not be so easy.
298. As to social impact, the council appears to have studied carefully the present situation (the town already has two casinos) and is preparing itself for another, larger casino in collaboration with, but not determined by, potential operators. While the council has made estimates of jobs to be created, we would have liked to see more as to how hard to reach groups could be fitted into them.

³²⁷ NOMIS data (www.nomisweb.co.uk, accessed 22/11/2006) The national average given is for Great Britain and the unemployment data is the claimant unemployed as a % of the working age population

³²⁸ Proposal Document, paragraph 1.11

³²⁹ *ibid.*, paragraph 1.19

³³⁰ *ibid.*, paragraph 1.20

³³¹ Sheffield Hallam University (2003) The Seaside Economy quoted in Proposal Document, paragraph 13.8

³³² Proposal Document, paragraph 1.20

³³³ Response to Supplementary Questions p.6

³³⁴ Response to Supplementary Questions p.6

³³⁵ Proposal Document, paragraph 3.6

³³⁶ Letter of 23 December 2005 to the CAP

³³⁷ Resident BME population is 3% compared with a national average of 7.9% – Proposal Document, paragraph 1.5

299. Undoubtedly the town is in need of regeneration, and the approach of the borough council, that a casino would assist regeneration rather than reversing tourism fortunes,³³⁸ is encouraging. Casino development would be consistent with the local aspiration to stretch the very seasonal tourism offer to become all year round.³³⁹
300. There is some evidence of market interest³⁴⁰ and we have no doubts about willingness to license.³⁴¹
301. Noting that we are of the opinion that we should not consider more than one casino in Great Yarmouth, we conclude that despite the mixed regional support, and taking all the above together, this is a generally good bid for a large casino.

Hastings

About Hastings

302. Situated on the south coast of England, the Borough of Hastings includes both the town of Hastings and also St Leonards on Sea. The borough has a resident population in 2005 of 86,400. Like so many cold-water resorts, the borough has suffered severely from a downturn in domestic tourism. Hastings suffers through being over an hour and a half by rail from London³⁴² and through inadequate road links.
303. Today, the town exhibits considerable deprivation with high levels of economic inactivity and wage levels are low.³⁴³ The Borough of Hastings is the 39th most deprived local authority area in England,³⁴⁴ lying in the second lowest 10 percentile band of multiple indices of deprivation.³⁴⁵ The proportion of economically active in the population of working age in the period April 2005 – March 2006 was 74.4%, of whom 71.2% were in employment. Unemployment stood at 3.7% in October 2006 against a national average of 2.5%.³⁴⁶
304. Tourism remains important to Hastings and surrounding settlements with a stated 1.1 million staying visitors a year and 8.5 million day visitors.³⁴⁷ The pressing need for regeneration in the borough is illustrated by the closure of several of its premier tourist assets including Hastings Pier, White Rock Baths and St Leonards Lido.³⁴⁸

The proposal

305. The proposal is for a small casino which could be located in either a seafront, town centre or other location except for a residential area.³⁴⁹

³³⁸ Response to Supplementary Questions p.1

³³⁹ Proposal Document, paragraph 1.11

³⁴⁰ Response to Supplementary Questions p.5

³⁴¹ Proposal Document, paragraph 4.1, Additional Information paragraph 2(ii)

³⁴² Compare service London to Brighton at 50 minutes

³⁴³ Supplementary Submission paragraph 1.2

³⁴⁴ ODPM (2004) Indices of Deprivation 2004

³⁴⁵ *Ibid.* percentile bands of average score

³⁴⁶ NOMIS data (www.nomisweb.co.uk, accessed 22/11/2006) The national average given is for Great Britain and the unemployment data is the claimant unemployed as a % of the working age population

³⁴⁷ Proposal Document, paragraph 1.3

³⁴⁸ Supplementary Submission paragraphs 2.1 – 2.4

³⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, paragraph 5.2