

## SUMMARY OF THE GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE

1. The Government welcomes the Committee's view that legislation is necessary and urgent.
2. The Government's approach to gambling combines an effective licensing regime, which will secure protection of the vulnerable, with clear planning guidance, which will ensure that new regionally significant casino developments deliver optimum tourism and regeneration benefits.
3. In respect of the largest casinos, the Government believes that "regional" is a better classification than the "leisure destination" which was suggested by the Committee. The obvious, and more alluring, classification of "resort" is not to be.
4. The Government welcomes the agreement by the Committee for the proposed size of the minimum gambling areas for small (500 m<sup>2</sup>), large (1,000 m<sup>2</sup>) and regional casinos (3,500 m<sup>2</sup>) and the cap of 1,250 gaming machines.
5. The Government has rejected the Committee's recommendation that the non gambling area for regional casinos be increased from 1,500 m<sup>2</sup> sq to 4,000 m<sup>2</sup>.
6. The Government comments that estimates of the number of regional casinos likely to be developed are necessarily speculative.
7. The Government welcomes the Committee's Recommendation that children be allowed into the non gambling area of regional casinos, provided that there are appropriate barriers and a suitable distance between the gambling and non gambling areas.
8. The Government accepts the Committee's Recommendation that children should not be permitted into the non gambling areas of small and large casinos.
9. The Government accepts the Committee's Recommendation that primary responsibility for enforcing the separation of gambling and non gambling area should rest with the Gambling Commission.
10. The Government accepts the Committee's Recommendation that additional research into Category A gaming machines should form part of the overall programme of research, as part of a gradual and cautious approach, and states that there will be effective and rigorous monitoring of their impact.

11. The Government reaffirmed that its policy is to limit the accessibility of Category A gaming machines to regional casinos in the first instance. The Government rejected the Committee's Recommendation to reconsider the appropriate entitlement of Category A gaming machines for existing casinos.
12. Entitlement to machines for all premises will be kept under review, but as part of its precautionary approach, the Government is minded to await the results of at least two prevalence studies (six years), after the implementation of the new regime, before considering significant alteration to the gaming machine entitlements of all types of casinos.
13. The Government will publish their Regulatory Impact and Competition Assessments soon.
14. The Government accepts that it is right that different stake and prize limits should apply in different gambling premises. A schedule of machine stakes and prizes for all categories of machines will be published with the Bill. These will continue to be under review. The Government has not yet been drawn on the Committee's suggestion that there is a strong case for substantially increasing the maximum stakes and limits for Category B gaming machines located in casinos.
15. The Government reiterated that it is for Regional Planning Bodies ("RPBs"), where they consider it appropriate, to identify suitable locations within the region that would optimise their contribution to tourism and regeneration. Where RPBs wish to set out policies, or indicate broad locations, for regionally significant leisure usages, these proposals will be taken forward as part of the Regional Spatial Strategy ("RSS").
16. Importantly for prospective regional casino operators, the Government stated its belief that restricting opportunities to gamble does not mean locating casinos in inaccessible or remote locations. Government policy is to locate major generators of travel demand, such as major leisure developments, in areas that are highly accessible and well served by public transport. The Government would expect all town centre options to be thoroughly assessed before less central sites were considered.
17. The Government accepts that national planning policy guidance should, where it is appropriate, deal with casinos, but does not consider that a separate national planning policy statement on casinos is required.
18. Casino planning applications may be referred to the Secretary of State for determination in accordance with the Government's existing "call in" policy, for example where it gives rise to substantial regional or national controversy.
19. The Committee raised "grave concerns", from a problem gambling perspective, about locating regional casinos (with their Category A gaming machines) in areas in close proximity to where people live and work. Also, the Committee did not believe it was

appropriate for regional casino developments to contain provision for housing. In response, the Government stated that those concerns are best addressed through the licensing system and that restricting opportunities to gamble does not mean locating casinos in inaccessible or remote locations. The Government stressed that it is concerned to ensure that efficient use is made of land within centres and elsewhere, although careful consideration will need to be given to the impact of the casino on any proposed residential development within the development as a whole and any existing residential areas nearby.

20. The Government has decided to initiate a review of the classification of casinos within the Use Classes Order. Casinos are currently classified as a D2 use. Interested parties are invited to submit evidence to ODPM by 29 October.
21. The Government agrees with the Committee that regionally significant casinos are likely to provide a major contribution to regeneration, tourism and economic development.
22. The Government is willing to set up a working group to help inform development of planning guidance for casinos. The Government hopes to arrange a meeting of the group within the next 4-6 weeks.