

### **How will the bill aid regeneration?**

In some areas relaxation of gambling restrictions may bring regeneration benefits in terms of increased tourism and a number of councils are keen to explore this. However, other councils have expressed concern that in deprived areas regeneration through the relaxation of gambling laws is unlikely to address local poverty in the short-term.

### **What is the LGA's view?**

It is the view of LGA that while a number of local authorities will want to take advantage of the opportunities for regeneration presented by the development of large new casinos, we also recognise that an increase in the availability of gambling could increase the potential for harm to children, young adults and vulnerable people. Local gambling licensing policies will have to balance these potential benefits and risks to the local community.

In terms of employment, there is a concern that many of the job opportunities in gambling premises for members of disadvantaged communities are likely to be low skilled. We would be keen to see opportunities for 'upskilling' provided by gambling operators, to allow access to wider opportunities.

With regard to the nighttime economy, the LGA is concerned that town and city centres, which are already under pressure from the increase in late night venues and the forthcoming deregulation of alcohol and entertainment licensing following the Licensing Act 2003, will be further affected by public nuisance associated with gambling premises. For this reason the LGA is seeking an amendment to insert an additional licensing

objective on 'the prevention of public nuisance' to the bill.

### **How will the bill impact on social inclusion?**

While gambling can be a legitimate form of entertainment for people who can afford to lose money, for disadvantaged communities the promise of a way out of poverty presented by gambling is a powerful draw; the impact of problem gambling on personal and family debt could put vulnerable people at an even greater risk.

### **What is the LGA's view?**

The LGA would wish to sound a note of caution with regard to the problems that could arise, that would be contradictory to the work local authorities are doing to alleviate child poverty and financial exclusion. The LGA believes that the bill should be amended to allow councils discretion to impose an area wide ban on particular types of gambling premises where such restrictions are reasonable to secure the social well-being of the area.

### **How will the bill allow councils to control proliferation of gambling premises?**

When making decisions councils will have to regard to their local gambling licensing policy, Gambling Commission Codes of Practice and the licensing objectives. These are: the prevention of crime or disorder; fair and open gambling, and, the protection of children and other vulnerable persons. In response to the LGA's recommendations to the Joint Committee on the Bill, the government introduced powers for local

authorities to resolve not to allow new casinos in their area.

### **What is the LGA's view?**

The LGA believes that this bill should give councils genuine freedom to determine whether they wish to take advantage of increased gambling opportunities in their area or not. While we welcome the power to refuse new casino licences, we believe that this should be extended to all kinds of new gambling premises, as recommended in the report of the Gambling Review Body. The development of this industry as a result of the deregulatory aspects of the bill is an unknown quantity, and we believe that local decision making, rather than national limits or regional direction, is the only way to ensure maximum benefits for local communities.

### **What else does the bill cover?**

The bill establishes the Gambling Commission and local licensing authorities; sets out offences, including limiting the participation of children and young people in gambling; establishes a new lotteries regime and provides for prize gaming in certain locations, and private and non-commercial gambling; creates new rules for advertising, including new offences relating to advertising foreign or unlawful gambling; and provides for enforceable contracts relating to gambling, repealing 18 and 19 century law in relation to gambling debts.