

East Lindsey District Council - Small Casino Premises Licence

The Gambling Act 2005 introduced three new categories of casino: one regional casino, eight large casinos and eight small casinos. In 2006 East Lindsey District Council submitted a proposal for a small casino to the Casino Advisory Panel.

On 15 May 2008 the Categories of Casino Regulation 2008 and the Gambling (Geographical Distribution of Large and Small Casino Premises Licences) Order 2008 was approved. This specified which Licensing Authorities could issue premises licences for large and small casinos. East Lindsey District Council was authorised to issue a small casino premises licence.

If there is more than one applicant for this Authority's small casino premises licence, then the Council will stage a 'competition' under Schedule 9 of the Gambling Act 2005 and will run such a competition in line with The Gambling (Inviting Competing Applications for Large and Small Casino Premises Licences) Regulations 2008 and Code of Practice and DCMS Code of Practice.

The Council's Gambling Licensing Policy sets out in detail how the small casino premises licence competition will be determined. However, the Council's small casino licensing process is currently on hold – this is in part due to a perceived lack of interest from the gambling industry in bidding for the East Lindsey licence.

It is currently this Authority's view that the lack of interest by the gambling industry regarding a small casino in East Lindsey is mainly around the perceived lack of viability for a casino on the coastal strip due to the current law governing the number of gaming machines which may be provided in a small casino.

The current law states that the gaming machine ratio for a small casino is that for every 2 gaming machines there must also be 1 gaming table available for use. The Government in their recent White Paper are proposing to change this to a ratio of 5:1. If this change in the law goes ahead in 2024, this Authority feels it may make the East Lindsey casino licence more attractive to the gambling industry.

The 2023 White Paper indicated a Government policy intention to reallocate unused 2005 Act casino licences. This would include the currently unused East Lindsey small casino licence.

In light of the above, this Authority has advised the DCMS that it would prefer to retain the current permission to issue a casino licence. This Authority has advised the DCMS of its view that the Government's proposed changes in the Gambling Act 2005 licensing regime may make the East Lindsey casino licence more attractive to the gambling industry. The DCMS has been advised that this stance has been endorsed by both the Portfolio Holder for Licensing and the Portfolio Holder for the Coastal Economy.