

Gambling Minister challenges Conservative Party to revisit limit on super casinos

Faced with the possibility of the Gambling Bill being talked out of parliament as the election loomed, the government eventually agreed to allow eight small and medium-sized casinos and the single larger operation. Caborn said „a considerable number“ of Conservative MPs had lobbied him directly to have the one large casino in their constituency.

„We will consider this if the opposition are prepared to come forward and say they want to reconsider moving from to a number between one and eight,“ he said. „That is the way we believe it is right to move forward and that we are still prepared to do.“

The controversial shake up of Britain's outdated gambling laws originally envisaged anywhere between 20 and 40 Las Vegas style complexes, transforming some of Britain's rundown coastal resorts.

However, anti-gambling groups, bolstered by a campaign in the Daily Mail newspaper, harried the government at every turn until a compromise was reached allowing eight casinos in each category for a total of 24.

Former Foreign Office Minister Tony Lloyd, who instigated the parliamentary debate, said he wanted to see the super casino licence awarded within the Manchester area. Lloyd, the MP for Manchester Central, also called for an increase in the super casino limit to the original eight.

„I ask whether it is possible to have a proper experiment with regional casinos if you have only one,“ he said. „There is a very good case for regional casinos in economic and

regeneration terms but it will only be a proper experiment if you we increase the number from one to around eight."