

# Seaside city debates new casino

A plan to apply for a new style of casino for Swansea will be discussed by councillors on Thursday.

If members agree, the application will go to the Casino Advisory Panel, which will recommend areas for one regional, eight large and eight small casinos.

Swansea Council deputy leader Gerald Clement said a casino could bring „huge“ economic benefits.

But the Salvation Army has concerns about the impact gambling has on family life.

Under the Gambling Act, only one super casino can be built in the UK, along with 16 smaller ones.

Local authorities throughout Britain are making applications which will be looked at by the panel before it makes recommendations to UK government.

„I think it would be a huge economic driver for the city, it's generally recognised Swansea is regenerating itself,“ said Cllr Clement.

„Traditional industry has served its day. You have to be more diverse and look for what works that will see Swansea prosper.

„I accept that there might be a moral issue for some people and that's perfectly acceptable. I think it would drive Swansea's tourist industry and that is what we are going to be more and more dependent on,“ he said.

**„Las Vegas“**

Mr Clement, member for Killay South, added: „I don't think it

promotes gambling, it puts the facility there for people who already wish to gamble.“

The panel's job will be to recommend areas for the new casinos but not the specific locations; that decision will rest with local authorities.

But Major Peter Moran, the Salvation Army's divisional commander for south and mid Wales, wanted to see other points of view brought to the debate, apart from job creation.

„We always seem to be getting the pros and not listing the cons, or nobody is listening to them, “ he said.

„In the Salvation Army we do have some concerns about this. It is often being portrayed (as if) everything is wonderful: the number of jobs and the regeneration.

„One of our concerns is picking up on the family consequences,“ he added.

The council said no decision had been made on the size of the casino in its bid.

Cardiff Council has already put an application in for one of the regional „supercasinos“ as part of Cardiff Bay's sports village development.