

Casino firm's Bid to switch its Site

Britain's largest casino firm wants to build a huge new gambling centre at Derry's Cross.

Stanley Casinos plans to close its Union Street operation and move into new premises below the Travelodge hotel and above the row of bars.

The firm has just submitted a full planning application to Plymouth City Council, which reveals it would create a split-level casino with a ground-floor street entrance to the right of the hotel's foyer.

A mezzanine would be created and a huge second floor expanded by about a third, from 1,078sq m to 1,464sq m. The first floor would cover 538sq m.

The space is empty but had been granted planning permission to be used as a health club.

It has not yet been decided how many people will work at the casino, but the company employs about 50 people in Union Street.

Stanley Casinos said it had been looking for a new site for its Plymouth operation for some time.

It sees Derry's Cross as a better location because of the number of bars and restaurants nearby.

The site is also just across the road from the rival Grosvenor casino.

Stanley Casinos is part of the publicly quoted Stanley Leisure group, the UK's largest casino operator with a turnover last year of GBP 195 million and pre-tax profits of GBP 33.7

million.

It owns 44 casinos around the country, including in Torquay, Bristol and Bournemouth.

Three of its four London casinos are in upmarket Mayfair, with the Crockfords operation being ranked among the capital's most exclusive, catering particularly for wealthy international gamblers.

Its existing Plymouth unit, above the Kularoos bar, offers electronic roulette and jackpot slot machines, and a card room for games including poker.

Steve Myers, Stanley Casinos director of development, said: „This application is reflective of our commitment to investment in Plymouth and we look forward to working towards developing a first-class casino and entertainment venue at Derry Cross.“

The application is due to go before the planning committee by the end of next month.