

# Casino's making Progress

Developers have provided a glimpse of what to expect at Swansea's new casino and revealed plans to open its doors in September. Bosses are emphasising there will be more than just slot machines and roulette tables on offer and that the venue will be an entertainment hotspot – not just a place for gambling.

They promise three bars, a restaurant, live sports TV and a cabaret stage, creating around 200 jobs.

You can even have your nails done at a beauty parlour to make sure you look sharp at the poker table. Of course, you will have to light up outside if you are a smoker.

The meat and drink of the casino will be 20 gaming tables, 40 electronic roulette wheels, and 20 slot machines.

In addition there will be poker rooms, and the chance to enter big money events such as the World Series of Poker and the Aussie Millions.

The casino is the culmination of a GBP 30 million regeneration project to transform Salubrious Place into one of Swansea's leisure hotspots.

It already hosts restaurants, the Vue cinema and Play nightclub

In January the stakes rose for the city's casinos when the Government announced Swansea was one of eight UK cities to be recommended a potentially lucrative licence as part of a shake-up of the current gaming system. It would mean higher cash prizes on offer, more gaming tables, and more jobs.

But that has all been cast into doubt after the recommendation failed to get past the House of Lords 10 days ago.

Aspers is one of three gaming firms in Swansea interested in applying for the licence.

Concerns have been raised in some quarters about potentially damaging impacts associated with gambling.

Damian Aspinall, who owns the Aspers chain, has vowed to examine the effects of gambling, based in similar schemes in Australia and New Zealand, as well as monitor problem gamblers.

He said: „It is my vision to make Aspers a leisure destination for people of all age groups, not solely for gambling. We want it to be the night out in Swansea, with the emphasis on enjoyment.“

He added: „We considered many cities in our search for our next venue but Swansea was, for us, the leading contender. There is a fantastic political will in the city to encourage and support new business and leisure ventures and the city clearly has ambitious regeneration plans.“

John Ives, director of Richard Hayward Properties, the developers behind Salubrious Place, said: „The news of the opening of Aspers really is the icing on the cake in creating a dedicated leisure and lifestyle area in the heart of the city.“