

3. BILL FOR SECOND READING

3.1. Casino (Amendment) Bill 2017 – Second Reading approved

Mr Cannan to move:

That the Casino (Amendment) Bill 2017 be read a second time.

The Speaker: Item 3, Bill for Second Reading, Casino (Amendment) Bill 2017, and I call on the Hon. Member for Ayre and Michael, Mr Cannan.

Mr Cannan: Mr Speaker, the Isle of Man Gambling Supervision Commission has regulatory responsibility for all gambling activities on the Island. This includes both online and land-based licence holders, with the exception of the UK National Lottery.

Whilst online gambling has become a significant part of the Isle of Man's economy, the Island has always supported a small but well-regulated domestic gambling sector, which includes licensed casinos. Such entities are regulated under the Casino Act 1986.

Licensed casinos, of which there are currently one, with opportunity for up to two, are required to operate from specified premises on the Island and can offer wagering on a variety of games. The Casino (Amendment) Bill 2017 makes a number of amendments to the rules governing casinos, these being: a formal power that allows the Gambling Supervision Commission (GSC) to supervise a casino for the purposes of anti-money-laundering and countering financing of terrorism compliance; transfer provisions which allow a casino to transfer from one premise to another without the need to surrender its licence; the ability for the Council of Ministers to specify whether a deposit needs to be supplied by the concessionaire before a concession to grant a casino licence is offered.

The first amendment to the Casino Act 1986 looks to ensure that the Gambling Supervision Commission has explicit powers to supervise the anti-money-laundering and countering financing of terrorism compliance of a casino licence holder, permitting the revocation of a casino licence in the cases of non-compliance with money-laundering and financing of terrorism legislation.

The second amendment to the Casino Act 1986 facilitates the permanent transfer of a casino licence holder's facilities to alternative premises. It also permits the board to vary, with the consent of the holder of the licence and the Council of Ministers, the facilities and amenities to be provided at the proposed casino or any proposed associated premises.

The Casino Act 1986 does not allow for a casino licence to be transferred from one premises to another and does not allow for a licence to cover the operations on more than one physical site. If the licence holder wishes to relocate premises, the old licence must be surrendered and a new casino licence application submitted for consideration. This latter procedure requires the approval of Tynwald, and the process of surrendering and obtaining a new licence understandably creates business uncertainty.

The third amendment relates to the Council of Ministers' ability to undertake to grant a casino licence to a person, known as a concessionaire, who intends to provide premises specified in the concession which are to be used as a casino. Currently, the concessionaire must deposit with Treasury a sum equal to 20% of the estimated total cost of the provision of the premises. The amendment provides the Council of Ministers with flexibility to specify a percentage deposit to be supplied by the concessionaire in relation to a request for a concession for the development of new premises.

Mr Speaker, I have specified the provisions of the Bill and consider the amendments necessary to support both international standards and sector needs, and as such respectfully ask Hon. Members to give the Bill their support.

I beg to move that the Casino (Amendment) Bill be read for a second time.

The Speaker: Hon. Member for Douglas North, Mr Peake.

Mr Peake: Thank you, Mr Speaker.
I beg to second.

The Speaker: Hon. Members, the question is that the Casino (Amendment) Bill 2017 be read for the second time. Those in favour, please say aye; those against, no. The ayes have it. The ayes have it.