Government back pedals over super casinos

Contributed by Administrator
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Culture Secretary Tessa Jowell today conceded that there will only be one regional "super casino", instead of the eight previously planned by ministers.

Ms Jowell accepted the cut in a deal with shadow culture secretary John Whittingdale to save the Government's Gambling Bill before Parliament dissolves for the General Election.

The location of the new casino will be decided by an independent panel.

The agreement was welcomed by Mr Whittingdale.

Fears

"Regional casinos are an entirely new concept for the UK and there are real fears about the impact they may have on crime and gambling addiction," he said.

"We have therefore told the Government that we will accept the establishment of just one regional casino as a prototype, in order to assess its impact.

"Its location should be a leisure resort where the regeneration potential is greatest. The case for locating such a casino in Blackpool is very strong.

"The Government has accepted our proposal and on this basis we are willing to allow the Bill to complete its passage."

The Bill will contain a provision allowing a future government to raise the number of regional casinos back up to eight, if there is an affirmative vote in both Houses of Parliament.

The Bill is intended to strengthen the regulatory regime with the creation of a powerful new Gambling Commission, which will for the first time control new forms of gambling such as internet betting.