

# Centre in the frame for casino plan

The ExCeL exhibition centre in Newham's Docklands could soon be home to a new large casino.

The exhibition centre in Custom House is already planning to expand its venue space to 100,000 sq m providing additional bars, restaurants and a new auditorium, writes Kay Atwal.

Venue bosses are engaged in talks with casino operators and Newham Council, which is one of eight local authorities granted a licence by the Government to run a large casino.

A spokesman for the council said: „Newham has been granted the only large casino licence in London by the Government. The council will be running an open and transparent competition later this year to select an operator who will deliver a world class leisure development.

„Newham has no preferred site but will ensure that any development generates the greatest benefit for local people, as part of our wider regeneration strategy to create jobs and other opportunities in the borough.“

A spokesperson for ExCeL confirmed the venue was in talks to consider the possibility of running a casino at the site but no decision had been made as yet.