

# Business Post

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SWANSEA will become home to Wales's biggest gambling den when Aspinnall's opens its doors later this year.

Bosses behind the new facility in Salubrious Place say it will be one of the biggest in the UK.

Work is already underway on the scheme, which will cost £10 million.

It is expected to be ready this summer, and to create 225 new jobs.

The massive 57,000sq ft development will stretch from York Street through to Wind Street, with an entrance on either side.

Andrew Herd, Aspinnall's executive director, said it would be a huge boost for Swansea.

He said: "It is a very large property, it is one of the largest casinos in England and Wales, certainly the biggest in Wales.

"We have tried to put in as much as we can, given what the legislation will allow."

The new casino will have two bars, a cafe, a restaurant, a poker room with tournaments, live games, such as roulette and blackjack, and slot machines.

Mr Herd said it was based on the company's new casino in Newcastle and hoped it would have just as wide an appeal.

He said: "The objective is to appeal to a broad audience.

"There will be lots of plasma screens where people can watch football and internationals, which always prove popular."

Mr Herd said contractors were now on site and were hoping to complete late this summer.

He added: "We would expect to recruit the overwhelming majority of staff from Swansea and areas around the city."

Bosses at the casino chain see it as an important project for the company and the city.

"It is our most exciting project at the moment, we couldn't be more positive about it," Mr Herd added.

"We see it as being complimentary to what Salubrious Place and Swansea have to offer."

**BIG INVESTMENT** High-flying entrepreneur Richard Hayward has high hopes — and high praise — for Swansea.

# Gamble paid off for Richard

**H**E gambled on success — and won. High-flying entrepreneur Richard Hayward is the man behind Swansea's Wind Street development.

The self-confessed workaholic has seen the new complex, which includes a casino, cinema and restaurants, soar in value from its original £30 million to today's £45 million.

Hayward, voted the 38th most powerful businessmen in Wales by Business Insider magazine, says he is so impressed with what is on offer at Salubrious Place he rates it higher than Cardiff's attractions.

He reckons the 380,000sq ft scheme, with a Damien Aspinall Casino, Vue Cinema, Premier Lodge Hotel, NCP car park and an array of restaurants, has created a jobs bonanza in the city centre.

And he is confident the casino will employ more staff if it is successful in obtaining the licence to offer jackpots of up to £4,000, as part of the big

by **Shaun Greaney**

Government shake-up in its gambling laws.

"The casino will probably have 250 to 300 staff members if it gets the licence," he said.

"The number of jobs in the whole of the scheme is probably around 600.

"What it has done for Swansea is to establish the Wind Street area as the definitive leisure area of Swansea.

"It has moved away from the old Kingsway.

"What is important about our scheme is that, whereas initially Wind Street was previously just drink units, we have softened it up and made it a multi-leisure centre.

"It is important for Swansea that it has got that."

He adds: "The scheme is now worth about £45 million.

"The level-one investment in the town cost about £30 million.

"It is recognised as one of the best schemes in the

country. It's certainly in the top 10."

Mr Hayward has already rejected an offer to sell the Wind Street project.

On the subject of the licence to offer jackpots of £4,000, Mr Hayward said: "We stand a good chance of getting it.

"It's in the gift of the council who gets it, but I would like to think that we will get it.

"We probably deserve to get it."

His investment in Swansea followed behind big deals in Cardiff.

But it is Swansea — and its rapid rate of growth — which is now impressing him.

He said Swansea was an up-and-coming city.

"I think Swansea at the moment is probably one of the most vibrant cities in the UK," he added.

"There is an enormous amount happening.

"We are telling people about Swansea all the time.

"We have millions of pounds committed to Swansea and whenever we see investors we are always telling them about it."



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[info@xenos.co.uk](mailto:info@xenos.co.uk)

01792 224516

[www.xenos.co.uk](http://www.xenos.co.uk)



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