



Blackpool Council

BUILDING A BETTER COMMUNITY FOR ALL

Ms Valerie Curtis
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Date: 14 September 2006
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Dear Valerie,

Follow up to Blackpool EIP on 8th September 2006

I am writing to follow up on certain matters following the EIP here in Blackpool last Friday.

Can I firstly thank the Panel for visiting us, listening to our arguments and conducting the examination in a courteous and professional manner in front of such a large audience. I hope you felt that the day went well.

For our own part we were disappointed that the process of the EIP and what we hoped would be our opportunity to present to you the strengths of our case and to answer your detailed questions were somewhat distorted by the commercial interests of Leaguenotion on the other side of the table. This organisation also had not had the courtesy of providing either the Panel or ourselves with evidence that they used on the day, as requested in the guidelines that the Panel had given and which I am sure were respected in all other EIPs.

We are now in the process of looking at this late evidence and responding to it. We have agreed with you the date of 29th September to provide this.

Turning to the matter of Leaguenotion I would like to make it clear that Mr Biesterfield's statement on the day that his company had withdrawn its expression of interest to the Council in developing a regional casino on the proposed site was news to me and colleagues in ReBlackpool who up until very recently had been discussing co-promotion of the scheme with them. For your information on 22nd June the Chief Executive and Director of Development from ReBlackpool travelled to the Gateshead offices of Leaguenotion to share the contents of the emerging planning scheme for the Blackpool Conference and Leisure Quarter. At the meeting Mr Biesterfield commented on the similarities between the scheme and his own proposals for the area. The meeting was followed by the submission of a draft legal proposal relating to co-promotion of the site e-mailed on 28th June to Mr Biesterfield. A written response was received from Mr Biesterfield on 10th July in which he outlined a number of queries relating to the proposal. A full written response addressing the issues raised was forwarded to Mr Biesterfield on 27th July. The letter requested additional detail to be forwarded to Eversheds, ReBlackpool's legal advisors, and although several telephone requests were made by Mr Scot Morrison of

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Eversheds in the days following delivery of the letter Leaguenotion's offices reported to Eversheds that Mr Biesterfield was involved in other work and would arrange a meeting in due course. No such meeting was arranged and it was not until seeing the submission to the panel placed on your website on 22nd August that the URC realised Mr Biesterfield would not be further considering co-promotion – this position has never been directly communicated to ReBlackpool nor to the Council with whom they have still formally registered interest in themselves bidding for a Regional Casino venue.

With regards to the legal challenge that Leaguenotion have made against the part of the Blackpool Local Plan that concerns regional casinos, I said on Friday that I would send you the legal opinion that we have from Christopher Katkowski QC. This is attached. You will see he clearly states that the grounds of the challenge are 'flimsy to the point of being utterly without substance and in due course will be dismissed by the High Court'. I hope this is helpful to you. I would just like to assure the Panel once again that until such time as a High Court challenge is heard and unless the policies are quashed, the provisions of the adopted Local Plan have full status and cannot be accorded any less weight because of that challenge.

Thank you once again for your courtesy while in Blackpool. I will be in touch again towards the end of the month

Yours sincerely



Chief Executive

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