

Jane Bransby  
Secretary to the Casino Advisory Panel  
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Dear Ms Bransby

### **Shortlist of Successful Casino Proposals**

Thank you for your correspondence of 24 May 2006 concerning the above.

I can confirm the East Midlands Regional Assembly as Regional Planning Body is continuing to hold discussions on this issue with the East Midlands Development Agency and strategic planning authorities, principally through the Regional Spatial Strategy Spatial Economy Advisory Group, which advises the Assembly on policy development with respect to spatial economy issues within the East Midlands Regional Plan (the Regional Spatial Strategy).

As I described in my letter of 21<sup>st</sup> December 2005, there is no policy in the current Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS8, March 2005) referring specifically to casino development. However, there are a number of policies which are relevant to development of this type:

**Policy 1:** Regional Core Objectives, which set out RSS8's underpinning core objectives including:

- to address social exclusion through the regeneration of disadvantaged areas and reducing regional inequalities in the distribution of employment, housing, health and other community facilities
- to promote and improve economic prosperity, employment opportunities and regional competitiveness

**Policy 2:** Locational Priorities for Development, which focuses on adopting a sequential approach to the selection of land, with the priority emphasis given to previously developed sites within urban areas, well served by public transport, followed by other suitable locations within urban areas.

**Policy 3:** contains a number of wider sustainability criteria to assess site suitability.

**Policy 7a:** Development in the Eastern Sub-Area, including the regeneration of the towns of Gainsthorpe, Mablethorpe and Skegness.

**Policy 21:** Regional Priorities for Regeneration, which identifies the parts of the region which demonstrate the greatest identified needs including the Principal Urban Areas and Sub Regional Centres; the Northern Sub Area; peripheral and isolated rural and coastal areas and other areas demonstrating high levels of deprivation.

**Policy 23:** focuses on Regional Priorities for Town Centres and Retail Development and promotes the vitality and viability of existing town centres through bringing forward leisure development opportunities within centres and preventing the development of regional scale out-of-town leisure floorspace. In this respect the Plan also refers to PPS6 on Town Centres.

**Policy 25:** deals with provision for additional tourist facilities, which may support the principle of a new casino, particularly where it includes provision for associated conference, accommodation and leisure facilities.

If dealing with a resort type facility we would also refer to **Policy 35** which deals with management of the Lincolnshire Coast and is aimed at ensuring that any development along the Coast requires a coastal location and if so this should be primarily in existing urban areas.

The Assembly's Spatial Economy Group are currently considering possible wording of a specific policy on Casinos as part of the current review of the East Midlands Regional Plan, which is due to be launched for public consultation on 28 September 2006. Whilst discussions are ongoing it is likely that a new policy will reflect the contribution that a large or small casino could make to the economic and regeneration aims of the Region. Following the announcement of the shortlist of successful proposals, such a policy is likely to name Leicester, Mansfield and East Lindsey as the preferred centres for such development in the first instance.

Having taken time to consider the three preferred bids within the Region in the large/small casino category, I would like to make the following specific comments from the perspective of conformity with the current RSS8:

#### **1. Leicester**

Policies 15 and 16 of RSS8 support the development and regeneration of the Three Cities Sub-Area. Leicester (along with Derby and Nottingham) all have relatively high concentrations of economic, social and physical deprivation and addressing this deprivation through strengthening the economic, commercial and cultural role of the city is a key regeneration policy. For a large or small casino with a regional catchment, the emphasis on a city centre location close to transport infrastructure, hotels restaurants and other services would be particularly encouraged.

Paragraph 4.2.15 of the Regional Plan states that Nottingham, Leicester and Derby are the largest centres and should be encouraged to develop their pre-eminent roles for the Region. Policy 5 states that Development Plans should consider locating significant levels of new development in the region's Principal Urban Areas (PUA), including Leicester, as they have the greatest potential to provide for a variety of choice of community facilities and services including a range of homes, job opportunities, modern transport and shopping facilities.

A sub-regional spatial strategy (SRS) is currently being prepared for the Three Cities Sub-Area as part of the current Regional Plan review. The strategy will promote more

sustainable patterns of development and movement within and between the three Principal Urban Areas of Derby, Leicester and Nottingham.

## **2. Mansfield**

The regeneration of the Northern Sub-Area is outlined in Policy 9 of the Regional Plan which aims to significantly strengthen the Sub-Regional Centres of the Northern Sub-Area (including Mansfield) by providing new jobs, services and facilities in and around their urban areas. The Northern Sub-Area will also be the focus of a Sub-Regional Spatial Strategy (SRS). The SRS is likely to consider the positive potential of the bid to strengthen the economy of the sub-region. Through discussions and correspondence with Mansfield District Council, it is understood that two or three possible sites might be considered as a possible location for a casino but that a non-town centre site is favoured in order to maximise the regeneration benefits outside of the existing town centre. This approach can be justified in context of the sequential approach to development outlined in Policies 2 and 3 of RSS8.

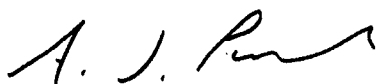
## **3. East Lindsey**

Both Skegness and Mablethorpe are strong regional attractions yet experience problems of significant deprivation, particularly during the winter months. The lack of all year round employment represents a particular problem. It is understood that all six proposed locations are situated within the Coastal Action Zone which exhibits some of the highest pockets of deprivation in the Region.

Development centred around either town would conform with the regeneration aims of Policy 21 of RSS8 within an area where there may be few opportunities to achieve investment other than through tourism led regeneration. The bid also meets the criteria set out in the Lincolnshire Coastal Policy (Policy 35) as it is focused on extending the existing coastal facilities and extending the tourist season. A small casino within the existing visitor area may be particularly suitable for this role, and it is also noted that the local authority is committed to working with potential developers on such a project. Whilst the Assembly would not wish to favour one site over another RSS8 does state that new development should take place primarily within the existing urban areas. Policies 2 and 3 would also apply.

I hope you find these comments useful. If you require any further information at this stage, I can be contacted on 01664 502554.

Yours sincerely



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