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Ms Valerie Curtis  
Secretary to the Casino Advisory Panel  
Department for Culture, Media and Sport  
2 - 4 Cockspur Street  
London SW1Y 5D

11 August 2006

Dear Ms Curtis

**Support for the Thames Gateway Regional Casino and Entertainment Centre in London Borough of Havering.**

The London Thames Gateway Development Corporation is a government (DCLG) Non-Departmental Public Body, established in 2004, responsible for leading the regeneration of a large part of east London. A primary function of the Corporation is to improve the economy and create new employment in its two areas of London Riverside and the Lower Lea Valley as a major contribution to the government's overall targets for the Thames Gateway.

This Corporation's area includes Rainham, a major housing and employment regeneration opportunity, the Rainham Conservation Park and the site of the proposed regional casino and entertainment centre.

At its board meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> March the Corporation confirmed its support in principle for the London Borough of Havering's bid to the national Casino Advisory Panel for a regional casino and entertainment complex to be located at Rainham on the grounds of regeneration but without prejudice to the future need to evaluate the planning case in its role as a strategic development control planning authority.

The £250 million project by South African developers and operators Sun International would create a mixed use leisure development, comprising hotel and conference facilities, restaurants, ice rink, night clubs, family entertainment and arena. In addition to the comprehensive redevelopment of a brownfield site at Ferry Lane North in Rainham, the project is expected to create 2 500 jobs, the majority for local people. In supporting the project, the Corporation has recognised the significant regeneration benefits that will arise.

Since joining Havering Council and other key stakeholders in recognising the merits of this major private sector investment and supporting the application to the Casino Advisory Panel there has been progress in a number of key areas.

The final draft of the London Riverside Regeneration Framework has been completed and approved by the Corporation's Board. The London Riverside Regeneration Framework forms the basis for the development of a sub-regional Opportunity Area Planning Framework, which the Corporation will soon be taking forward in partnership with the Boroughs and the Greater London Authority.

The framework identifies the Thames Gateway Regional Casino and Entertainment Centre at Rainham as a critical element in the regeneration of London Riverside. It will bring employment and investment, act as a catalyst to the development of adjacent vacant land and help generate the demand necessary to bring improved public transport to the area.

The proposal will give a new and much-needed impetus to plans for the adjacent Rainham Marshes and Conservation Park, one of the most important elements of the "Green Grid" project. Properly managed as a nature reserve and public open space beside the Thames, and with the right kind of investment, this natural area will become an environmental and tourism asset of national importance. The regional casino and entertainment centre will provide shared visitor infrastructure, and funding for development and ongoing management, to turn the vision for this area into a reality.

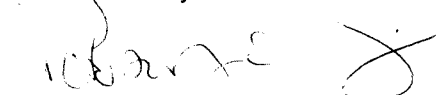
The Corporation will shortly be arranging a formal launch of the Conservation Park accompanied by the publication of the 'Wildspace for a World City' document. This sets out a vision for this flagship project of the east London Green Grid. In addition, provision for the development of the RSPB site and, longer term, the Conservation Park has been made in the Corporation's Corporate Plan, which would compliment the investment proposed as part of the regional casino.

The Corporation's recently published Corporate Plan 2006-2008 (copy enclosed) identifies £15 million in the next two years for enabling infrastructure and regeneration in Rainham. This that will support an improved transport interchange at Rainham station and better links to the site identified for the regional casino. The Corporation considers that the proposed development will be well located, close to Rainham Station and the A13 road junction, making it readily accessible by both rail and road. By increasing the demand for public transport in the area it will further strengthen the justification for new public transport such as increasing the service frequency and capacity on the C2C railway line, the eastwards extension of the DLR to Dagenham Dock, and the extension of East London Transit from there to Rainham, which are vital to the area's future.

London Riverside is an area of significant deprivation and in need of regeneration. Skills levels, wage levels and GVA per head are amongst the worst in London and the UK. The Thames Gateway Regional Casino and Entertainment Centre will compliment the role of the Corporation in bringing forward much needed investment in the economy of this national regeneration priority area.

In the light of these considerations, we would urge you to reconsider the scoring of the bid for the Thames Gateway Regional Casino and Entertainment Centre and to include it on the Casino Advisory Panel's shortlist and at the Examination in Public.

Yours sincerely



Peter Andrews  
Chief Executive