

**CASINO ADVISORY PANEL
Formal Proposal Cover Sheet**

Please fill in all categories below:

Name of Local Authority:

City of Wakefield MDC

Main Contact:

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Name and title of Submitting Officer:

Name: **Tony Reeves**

Title: **Deputy Chief Executive**

Statement of basis of application:

What exactly are you proposing? Please make clear which type of casino you **primarily** wish to be considered for.

Regional Yes/~~No~~

Large (state number) **No**

Small (state number) **No**

If this proposal is unsuccessful what if any is your fall back/ second proposal?

Large (state number) **None**

Small (state number). **None**

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A submission by the City of Wakefield Metropolitan District Council in support of proposals to license a Regional Casino in the Five Towns Regeneration Area of the District

1.1

This application has been made in the belief that there are compelling reasons for the Casino Advisory Panel to consider awarding a regional casino licence in the Five Towns Area of the Wakefield District.

1.2

We have selected the Five Towns area of the District to pilot the development of a regional casino, being a major regeneration area at the geographic heart of Yorkshire and Humberside, within the Leeds City Region and located astride the M62 close to its junctions with the M1 and A1(M) motorways.

In recognition of the merits of this location, the Councils that make up the Leeds City Region have endorsed the proposals accepting that the maximum economic benefit would flow to the region with a casino located within an established regional destination leisure zone at the centre of the main growth corridors of the City Region and at the heart of Yorkshire and Humberside.

1.3

The Five Towns Area (comprising Castleford, Pontefract, Normanton, Featherstone and Knottingley) suffered devastating job losses during the 80's and 90's due to the decline in coal mining activity which was compounded by subsequent closures in textiles, heavy engineering and chemicals. Whilst many of the 30% of jobs lost have today been replaced, several wards within the Five Towns remain amongst those most deprived when considered nationally. The award of a licence for a regional casino would provide a substantial boost to the present regeneration initiatives.

1.4

A regional casino would bring capital investment and revenue that would benefit the wider Leeds City Region, providing new jobs, diversifying the employment offer, helping to raise skill levels and assisting in strengthening the structurally weak Wakefield economy.

1.5

WMDC recognises that deliverability is a key consideration for the Panel. Accordingly, we have identified three major regeneration sites and have elected to test deliverability by examining the Glasshoughton Site option. By virtue of the existing Xscape leisure complex and the Junction 32 Factory Outlet Centre, this site already enjoys regional destination leisure status. The site also has appropriate planning zoning, is already attracting casino investors and with a new rail station enjoys unrivalled access to regional infrastructure. Land is available to accommodate a regional casino alongside other significant community benefits.

1.6

For WMDC and the Leeds City Region, a regional casino would be a flagship project encouraging tourism and providing a focus for the many partnerships and community groups. At the very least a regional casino package would provide a new community rugby league stadium, we anticipate however that the excellent network of well established local and district wide partnerships will form a close working relationship with the casino operator to maximise the potential benefits of a regional casino whilst minimising any negative impacts.

1.7

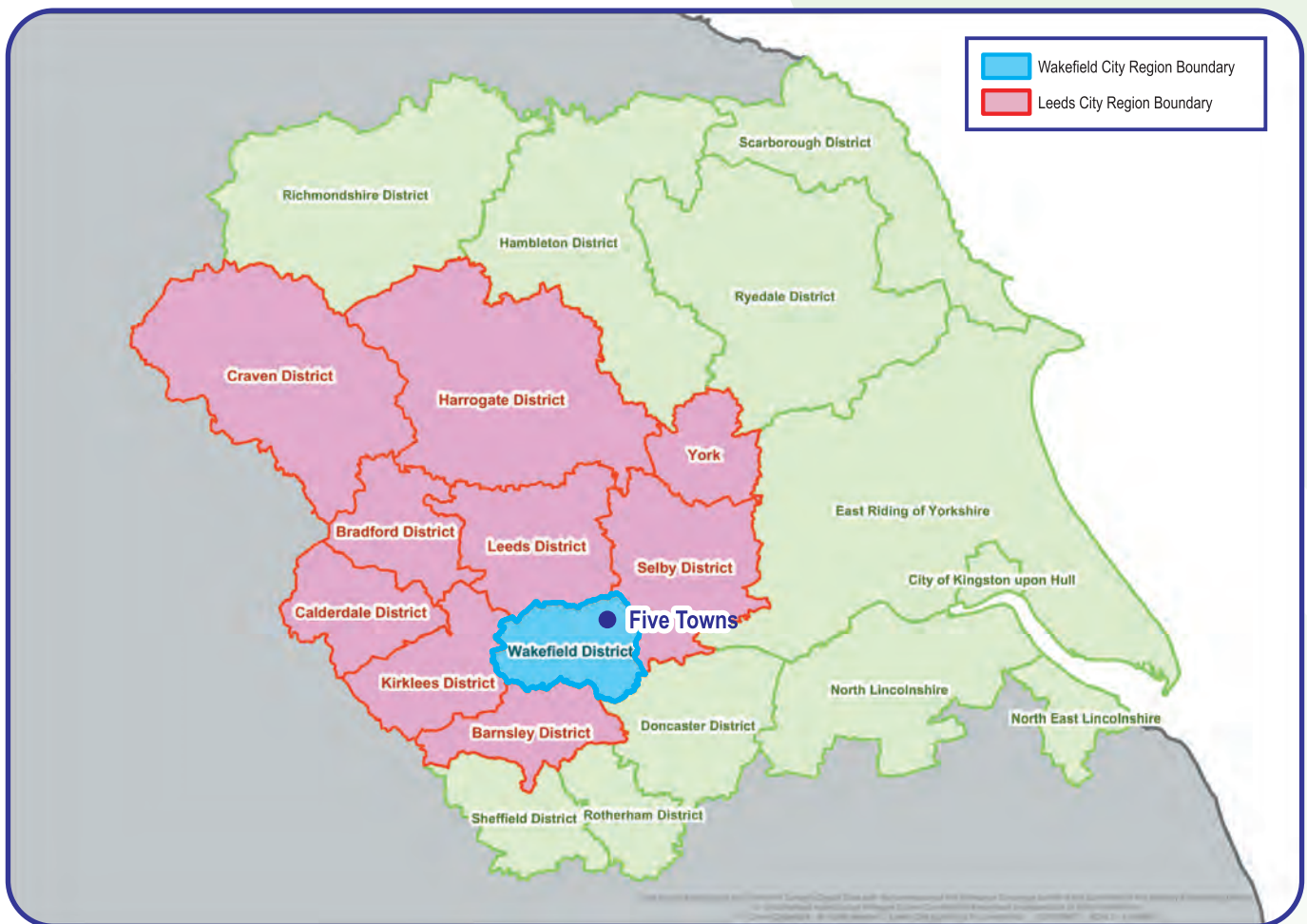
The area satisfies all of the criteria to test social and economic impact and there can be few competing locations with the 'Five Towns' which would be rail served and accessible to a regional population from a national motorway hub whilst retaining a destination status of its own. WMDC are confident that a site is deliverable and capable of injecting new life and prosperity into an economically disadvantaged area.

2.0 THE TYPE OF AREA

2.1

The communities of Castleford, Pontefract, Normanton, Featherstone and Knottingley; known locally as The Five Towns occupy the north eastern quarter of the Wakefield District within the south east of the Leeds City Region as shown on Plan Map 1 below. The Five Towns have a population of 112,162 and the Leeds City Region 2,759,762. The Five Towns lie astride the M62, the east-west motorway which links Merseyside to the Humber and from there to North Europe. Two major north-south motorways, the M1 and the A1M also run through the area. The Towns form the base of the Northern Growth Corridor. This pre-eminent location gives the Five Towns great economic and lifestyle advantage at the heart of the Yorkshire and Humber Region.

2.2 **Map 1:** The Five Towns Within The Yorkshire & Humber Region



2.3

The Five Towns possess a range of strong qualities yet a proportion of these have been overwhelmed by economic stagnation, lack of investment, poor design and physical and environmental deterioration. They have recognised that to address this they need to work together and as part of the Urban Renaissance process the idea of a Polycentric Community has emerged. The Five Towns combine individual distinct characteristics whilst sharing valuable resources. Through collaboration they can gain strength in the political and trading areas around them, this theme is central to the 25 year vision for the towns as presented in the Five Towns Strategic Development Framework.

2.4

Over the last two decades there have been significant changes in the industrial infrastructure in the area with major job losses, not only from the coal closures but also in engineering, chemicals and textile manufacturing. Whilst in recent years we have seen some limited improvement the Five Towns area is still one of the most deprived parts of the District with deprivation levels of national significance.

2.5

There is still considerable work to do re-building the local economy and it is increasingly necessary to tackle hard to reach groups and neighbourhoods where a general rise in prosperity does not secure the change needed. The Airedale neighbourhood in Castleford is one such case where the Council is committed to invest and work intensively at a neighbourhood level to reduce economic and social exclusion. The close presence of the development of a regional casino would be a valuable additional opportunity to diversify the local economy and broaden the employment offer.

2.6 Table 1: Population Base

	Five Towns		Wakefield MDC		Leeds City Region		Y & H		GB/Eng	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
DEMOGRAPHICS										
*Population 2001	112,162		315,166		2,759,762		4,964,833		49,138,831 (Eng)	
*BME Population 2001	1239	1.1	4062	1.3	304,603	11.0		6.5		9.1

2.7

The Five Towns Regeneration Area has over 18% of its population in the 10% most deprived Super Output Areas (SOA) in England and over 46% in the 20% most deprived. The SOA surrounding Castleford New Fryston area of Fryston Road is the most deprived SOA in the regeneration area and the Wakefield District. It is ranked in the top 1% most deprived in England.

2.8 Table 2: Overall Index of Multiple Deprivation

England % Ranking	Five Towns Regeneration Area				Wakefield District			
	SOAs	Households	People	%	SOAs	Households	People	%
0-10	13	8,788	20,607	18.4	29	19,242	44,800	14.2
10-20	21	14,188	31,672	28.3	44	28,721	66,757	21.2
20-30	19	11,945	28,887	25.8	33	21,054	49,845	15.8

2.9

At the time of the 2001 Census, the District's population stood at 315,166 with the Five Towns at 112,110, representing 36% of the Wakefield District. However between 1991 and 2001, the resident population of the Five Towns had fallen by 1.1%, against an increase of 1.4% for the District as a whole. The area has a relatively low Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) population, representing just 1.1% of the area's population, compared with 6.5% in the Region and 9.1% national average.

3.0 THE REGIONAL AND LOCAL CONTEXT

3.1

The development of the Northern Growth Corridor (NGC), which is part of the Northern Way proposals, is a response by central government to work with local authorities to end the great output gap disparity of £29 billion which separates the north from the south. The NGC aims to narrow the gap and to maximise economic growth by releasing the economic potential of every region and locality. At the heart of the NGC, The Five Towns can benefit from this by linking into sub regional initiatives such as tourism, education and business.

3.2

Marketing the North is a key theme in the Northern Way. “Collectively promoting the assets across the North including great cities, coastal towns, five national parks and superb visitor attractions and museums to attract more tourism and investment.” The co-ordinated development of the existing leisure facilities at Glasshoughton, Pontefract Racecourse and a new regional casino and community stadium to service the Five Towns will help to transform the area in to a “superb regional visitor attraction”.

3.3

In response to the Northern Way Wakefield Council has worked with its business partners to produce a response called the Wakefield Way. At the heart of the Wakefield Way is the objective to take advantage of the excellent location and to forge links with the Regional and City Region economies to diversify and expand aspirations and opportunities for its citizens. In particular we want to use these opportunities to tackle skills deficiencies, develop a local economic culture more firmly based in enterprise at all levels and to broaden the range of weapons to deal with worklessness and low pay which characterise the local economy. Locating a regional casino in the Five Towns will increase their regional significance, it will provide the context to develop links with Leeds and the wider City Region and will deliver significant direct local benefits.

3.4

The Regional Economic Strategy (RES) seeks to promote Competitive Businesses (Objective 2) and Stronger Cities, Towns and Rural Communities (Objective 6). The development of a regional casino in the Five Towns will contribute to both objectives.

3.5

To promote “Competitive Businesses” the RES specifically identifies the need to actively boost the development of Key Sectors of Regional Significance and identifies tourism as one of the Key Sectors. “Tourism is already a significant contributor to the regional economy but has the potential to be much more so.” The RES commits the regional and local partners to “Deliver the Strategic Framework for Tourism and its focus on visitor spend, quality, sustainability and innovation” and “will address both organic growth and new product development” recognising that “Action on skills, enterprise and transport will benefit tourism”.

The indicative proposals for a regional casino in the Five Towns area will further develop an asset that will attract tourists and increase visitor spend.

3.6

The importance of culture in its widest sense is stressed within the RES. “It includes sports, leisure, heritage and social traditions as well as the arts”. “Culture often supports tourism, which contributed £4.2 billion to the region's economy in 2003.” The indicative proposals for the development of a regional casino at Glasshoughton in conjunction with a Community Stadium demonstrate how sports and leisure development can be enhanced to mutual benefit of all.

3.7

The five West Yorkshire Local Authorities, Yorkshire Forward and the Yorkshire Tourist Board are committed to ensuring the growth of tourism and the visitor economy as a dynamic sector in an expanding West Yorkshire economy. To help achieve this, the West Yorkshire Tourism Partnership has been set up made up of the five West Yorkshire authorities, Wakefield, Leeds, Bradford, Kirklees and Calderdale. The aim of this Partnership will be to develop joint initiatives and projects and to secure funding to deliver these, thus increasing and developing the visitor economy in West Yorkshire

3.8

To achieve their objective, over recent months these agencies have been working in close collaboration to develop a strategic approach which can achieve Yorkshire Forward's objective (as set out in the revised Regional Economic Strategy) to grow the value of the tourism sector by 5% p.a. by 2010.

3.9

The estimated value of tourism to the Wakefield District is £247.6 million and supports an estimated 5,036 full time job equivalents (FTEs) in the catering, accommodation, retailing, entertainment and transport sectors. When part time and seasonal work are considered, the number of jobs supported by tourism expenditure in Wakefield rises to 6,877. Leisure tourism is the largest segment of the market, accounting for 41% of all tourism nights in Wakefield and representing 45% of spending. Business tourism accounts for 12% of tourism nights and represents 27% of spending in the area. In terms of the staying trips, the domestic market produces 94% of the total and the overseas market makes up 6% of the total. In respect of spending the domestic market is estimated to produce 89% of the total, with the overseas market generating the remaining 11% (Cambridge Economic Impact Model for Wakefield 2002).

3.10

In 2005, the greatest volume of visitors to the Wakefield District came from the Yorkshire and Humberside region (23.31%), the second from the South East (16.8%) and the third from the North West (11.04%). In terms of the type of visitors Wakefield is attracting, the following groups are most prevalent: professional web-booking couples on European holidays, young singles on quick trips to family and friends and wealthy families on expensive overseas beach holidays.

3.11

There are currently 14 assessed hotels within the Wakefield District, with 1,935 bed spaces. There are another 14 non-assessed hotels with 1,213 bed spaces. There are also 14 assessed guesthouses within the Wakefield District, with 310 bed spaces with another 27 nonassessed guesthouses, with 361 bed spaces. The average room occupancy for 2004/2005 was 68%, this was up 4% on the previous year (2003/2004).

3.12

As a tourist destination the Wakefield District alone already has a number of key attractions including the Yorkshire Sculpture Park, (500 acres of historic gardens that forms the setting for exhibitions of sculptors and artists), the National Coal Mining Museum which gives visitors the chance to travel 140m underground down one of Britain's oldest working mines and the Xscape entertainment complex at Glasshoughton that houses one of only two indoor real snow ski slopes in the country. The Xscape complex incorporates recreational leisure activities including ski-ing, snowboarding, tobogganing, climbing, bowling, cinemas, skateboarding and a rope park as well as a wide range of complementary facilities such as restaurants and nightclub.

As the birthplace of two of the world's most famous modern day artists Henry Moore and Barbara Hepworth Wakefield has the opportunity to build on its cultural heritage. A major new art gallery 'The Hepworth' is due to be completed in 2008 as part of the Wakefield Waterfront Development. The new gallery will feature among other things a unique collection of Barbara Hepworth's original sculptures. The national recognition that this will achieve added to other proposed developments including a Castleford Museum/Library Exhibition space and improvements to the historic Pontefract Castle will help to increase the profile not only of the Wakefield District but of the Leeds City Region as a major leisure/tourist destination.

The wider tourist offer of the Leeds City Region is readily accessible from Wakefield and the development of a regional casino in the Five Towns would clearly be marketed in this context.

3.13

To promote "Stronger Cities, Towns and Rural Communities" the RES states that "The region needs cities and towns, places that have distinctive feel, a sense of buzz and that people love to live in." A Casino would add to the "sense of buzz" for this part of the Region. The RES also stresses the diverse yet complementary roles of different parts of the Region i.e. York as a science city and heritage centre and Bradford's role as a seedbed for enterprise. The Five Towns has the potential be a regional leisure hub that complements other centres across the Region.

3.14

The RES emphasises the need to give priority to development on brownfield land. All of the sites likely to be available for the development of a regional casino in the Five Towns have previously been developed and are classed as brownfield.

3.15

In order to implement their objective to promote “Stronger Cities, Towns and Rural Communities” Yorkshire Forward, the Regional Development Agency and author of the RES has been investing strongly in the development of renaissance proposals. The Five Towns has benefited from this work and an Urban Renaissance Strategic Development Framework (SDF) has been prepared for the Five Towns. This framework interprets the objectives of the RES in the context of the Five Towns.

3.16

The SDF identifies key projects for action with overall recommendations on the economy, transport and quality of environment. This has helped the Five Towns to redefine their purpose both collectively and individually, this purpose is now shaped by their relationship to two great northern cities and their position at the crossing points of major national and European transport and investment routes. They have many advantages not least good town centres, land to develop and a varied workforce. With the right investment in its people and its place the Five Towns are a success story waiting to happen.

The Five Towns already have a number of established leisure facilities including Pontefract Racecourse, Pontefract Castle and two great Rugby League clubs; Castleford Tigers and Featherstone Rovers both of which expressed an interest in new improved stadium facilities as part of the Urban Renaissance process. The other prime site and leisure facility identified within the SDF is Glasshoughton where the combined facilities of Xscape, Junction 32 Outlet Village (Freeport) and a new railway station have firmly established the site as a major visitor destination and regional entertainment complex. One of the key projects identified in the SDF which was fully endorsed through the community engagement process was to establish the feasibility of providing a new community stadium, including business plans that identify enabling developments to facilitate the stadium.

The SDF also identifies a number of generic economic recommendations, including the need to strengthen tourism by having an identifiable brand, focusing on the service sector to develop a high quality leisure offer and increasing co-ordination of existing leisure facilities such as Xscape and Pontefract Castle. The positioning of a regional casino in the Five Towns has the potential to serve as an enabling development for the new stadium and also to develop a leisure/visitor destination of such significance as to create an identifiable brand for the Leeds City Region.

3.17

The Draft Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) recommends that regional casino development would be 'most advantageously located in the urban areas of Leeds and Sheffield'. Whilst it is agreed that the Leeds and Sheffield City Regions are the best locations for such development Wakefield Council has formally objected to the wording in the RSS as it is considered that it could be wrongly interpreted as meaning that development in the two City Centres should be the priority. The Council feel very strongly that the Five Towns is the best site for a regional casino and the most effective site for a regional casino in the Leeds City Region. This position is reflected in the support given to the Five Towns proposal by the Leaders of the Authorities in the City Region.

3.18

Fast Forward the Community Strategy for the Wakefield District has five themes one of which is that we need to ensure that our citizens are part of a dynamic local economy. Three specific actions from the Community Strategy are particularly relevant to the proposals to develop a regional casino in the Five Towns, they are:

Encouraging investment and enterprise in the District and the development of clusters of economic development, we will focus efforts on both inward investment and assistance to small firms through enterprise development and creating better links to business support. We will aim to encourage the development of key groupings or clusters of businesses and social enterprises.

Promoting and marketing a new image of the District, we will develop an effective approach to marketing the District based on a modern and dynamic image to attract visitors and inward investment appropriate for a 21st century economy. The District will have a strong identity as a centre of excellence for culture and creativity.

The Five Towns Initiative, we will develop a strong urban renaissance vision linked to new developments at Castleford and use the motorway as a catalyst for development and investment to promote growth in cultural, environmental and manufacturing industries in the Five Towns.

3.19

The basis of the economic priorities in the Community Strategy was outlined in research commissioned by the Council from Leeds Metropolitan University which was presented in the report "Regeneration in Wakefield Strategy Report 2003-2006". It states "A coherent economic development strategy for the Five Towns needs to link the leisure, heritage and retail opportunities more firmly with community capacity building to create jobs and confidence. The opportunity should not be lost to develop a stronger urban renaissance vision linked to the new Castleford and Pontefract developments with stronger marketing of the inward investment opportunities and to capitalise on the arrival of Xscape in Castleford. Glasshoughton in Castleford, one of the largest brown field reclamation sites in Britain, beginning to regenerate the surrounding area and is ideally placed to bring new tourism and retail jobs into the District".

3.20

The ODPM in its 10 year vision has placed Community and Neighbourhood Governance at the heart of the modernisation agenda. In response to this the Council are currently looking at the potential for Neighbourhood Management Area Pilots within the Wakefield Local Area Agreement (LAA). These Area Management Pilots are citizen focus groups used to gauge and assess their quality of life.

3.21

Airedale and Ferry Fryston, two of the wards in closest proximity to the proposed casino development will pilot a Community Leadership Neighbourhood Management scheme which will be based on strengthening the roles and responsibilities of elected representatives. Local members will work with communities and their representatives through neighbourhood forums to identify local needs and desires and influence services to achieve desired outcomes. This will be adapted to help facilitate a testing ground for the social impact of the proposed casino development in this area.

3.22

Neighbourhood Management is seen as process not a project. It involves communities working with local agencies to improve services at neighbourhood level. Neighbourhood management aims to tackle quality of life ("liveability") issues in communities through:

Better management of the local environment; Increasing community safety; Improving housing stock; Working with young people; and, critically, Encouraging employment opportunities.

3.23

The key to neighbourhood management is that residents concerns should be more important in defining what is done than agencies' assumptions. Local authorities, the police, health services, development trusts, housing associations and regeneration companies all have an important part to play. Whilst Neighbourhood Management Area Pilots major role will initially concentrate on how the Council and its partners identify good practice on the ground, and test out new approaches the opportunity will exist to extend the role of these pilots to assessing impact of major regeneration developments including a regional casino.

4.0 THE NEED FOR REGENERATION

4.1

Some of the most deprived areas in England can be found within the Five Towns. The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) statistics 2004 provides measures of deprivation at the small area level. It is based on Super Output Areas (SOAs) which are new geographical areas of approximately equal population size. In the Five Towns 18% of the SOAs are in the 10% most deprived in England and over 46% are in the 20% most deprived. The SOA surrounding Castleford New Fryston area of Fryston Road is the most deprived SOA in the regeneration area of the Wakefield District and is ranked in the top 1% most deprived in England.

4.2

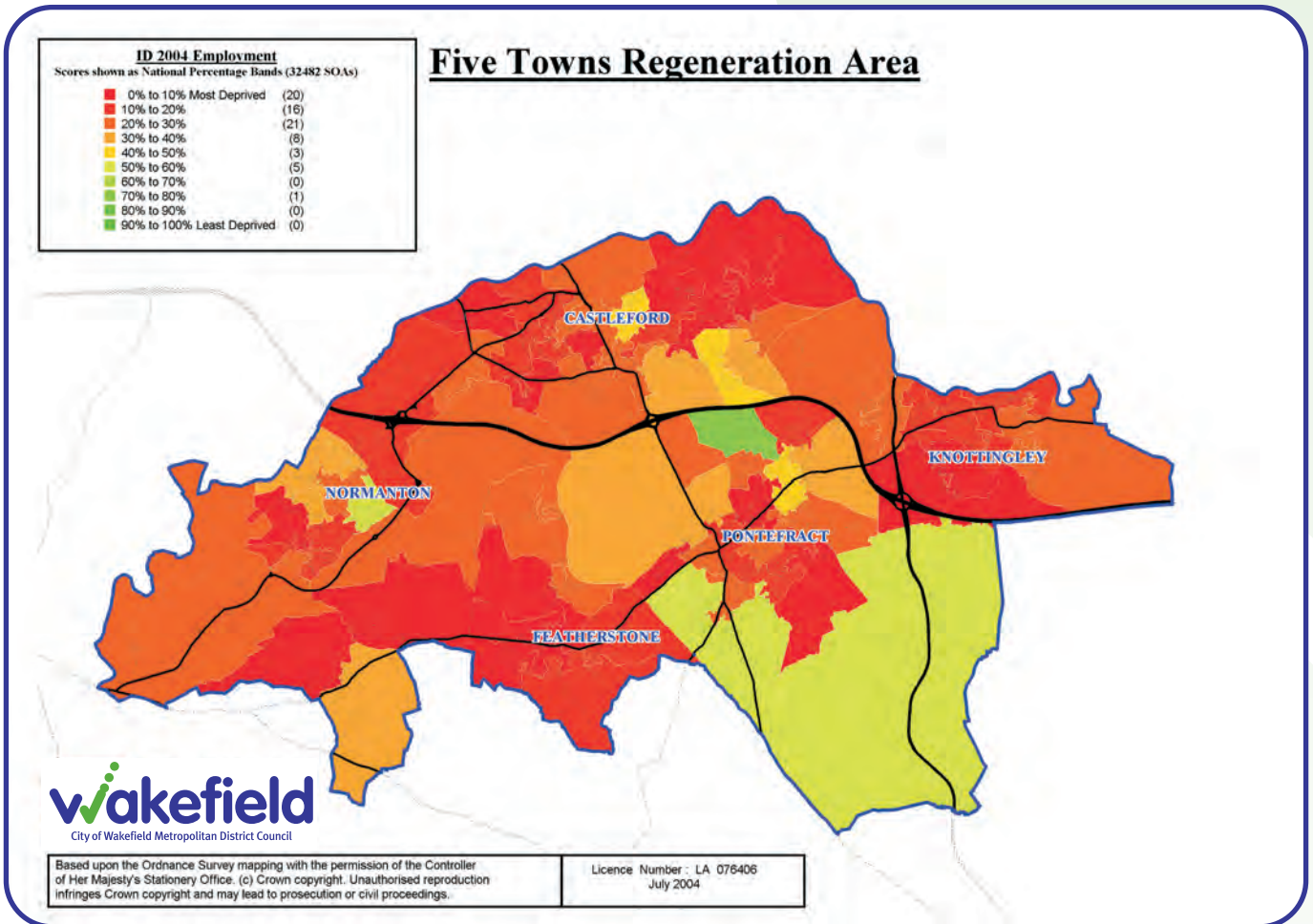
The following analysis identifies the issues currently being faced by communities within the Five Towns in relation to employment deprivation, income deprivation and education and skills deprivation. The Five Towns Regeneration Area consists of 74 SOAs, an estimated 47,503 households and 112,110 people.

4.3

Over 27% of residents live in SOAs ranked within the top 10% most employment deprived in England.

Over 32% of the working age population living in the SOA surrounding Fryston Road and Airedale (Holy Well and The Square) are involuntarily excluded from work. These areas are ranked in the 2% most employment deprived in England.

4.4 **Map 2: Employment Deprivation Rankings**



4.5

Over recent years, claimant count unemployment has fallen however, unemployment rates within the area remain higher than district, regional and national averages. Unemployment is particularly high around Castleford Whitwood, Ferry Fryston and Knottingley wards, all wards that are either directly adjacent to or within very short journey time to the Glasshoughton complex. According to the Indices of Deprivation 2004, 28% of the population live within the 10% most employment deprived in England.

4.6 Table 3: Actual Employment Rates

	Five Towns Regeneration Area	%	Wakefield District %	England %
<i>All people aged 16-74</i>	<i>80,297</i>			
Economically active	50,127	62.4	64.3	66.9
Full-time employees	31,499	39.2	40.1	40.8
Part-time employees	10,351	12.9	12.9	11.8
Self-employed	3,967	4.9	5.8	8.3
Unemployed	3,095	3.9	3.5	3.3
Full-time student	1,215	1.5	1.9	2.6
Economically inactive	30,170	37.6	35.7	33.1
Retired	11,982	14.9	14.4	13.5
Permanently sick or disabled	7,668	9.5	8.3	5.3
Looking after home/family	5,634	7.0	6.5	6.5
Student	1,931	2.4	3.1	4.7
Other	2,955	3.7	3.4	3.1

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4.7

Of the 30,170 economically inactive indicated in table 4 above it is a reasonable assumption that up to 20% of those would be more likely to look to rejoin the job market given the opportunity provided by the type and level of jobs that will be offered by the casino development.

4.8 Table 4: Income Deprivation

England % Ranking	Five Towns Regeneration Area			
	SOAs	Households	People	%
0-10	8	5,274	12,891	11.5
10-20	11	7,718	16,725	14.9
20-40	32	20,526	48,328	43.1
40-100	23	13,985	34,166	30.4
Total	74	47,503	112,110	100.0

Source: ID2004 (NB: Number of households and people are WMDC estimates)

4.9

The SOA surrounding Castleford and Airedale (between Holy Well & The Square within ½ mile Glasshoughton complex) is the most income deprived in the Wakefield District. The data shows that 46% of the population living in this area are experiencing income deprivation and it is ranked within the 2% most income deprived areas in England.

4.10 Table 5: Actual Income Levels

Household Income	FIVE TOWNS		WAKEFIELD		GB
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Percent
£ 0 - £5,000 (£96 per week)	5,974	11.70%	14,738	10.50%	8.80%
£ 5,000 - £9,999 (£96 to £192 per week)	9,802	19.10%	24,847	17.70%	15.00%
£10,000 - £14,999	7,356	14.40%	19,864	14.10%	12.70%
£15,000 - £39,999	22,378	45.70%	64,346	45.8%	44.00%
£40,000 +	4722	9.20%	16,756	11.90%	19.50%

4.11

In comparison the average household income for the Five Towns and Wakefield District is significantly below the national figure with over 45% of households in the Five Towns receiving income of less than £15,000 compared with less than 37% nationally.

4.12 **Table 6: Education and Skills Deprivation**

England % Ranking	Five Towns Regeneration Area			
	SOAs	Households	People	%
0-10	30	19,859	46,335	41.3
10-20	21	13,767	31,834	28.4
20-30	8	4,842	11,716	10.5
30-40	7	4,119	10,379	9.3

4.13

Nineteen SOAs from the Five Towns area are ranked in the top 5% most education and skills deprived areas in England. Five SOAs are ranked in the 1% most educationally deprived.

4.14

Low skills and educational attainment is a major issue for people living in the Five Towns Regeneration Area with over 41% of the population ranked in the top 10% most education and skills deprived in England. Despite recent improvements, GCSE attainments in the Five Towns area is below the national average.

4.15

Educational attainment within the District has improved dramatically over recent years and latest available figures for 2005 show that the District is now in line with the national average with 56.4% of pupils achieving five or more A* to C GCSE grades. The improvements in the District have been the best in the sub region (from 45.6% to 56.4%) since 2002.

4.16

Although educational attainment is improving and there are increasing numbers of young people staying on learning after Year 11, the District has the lowest staying in learning rate in West Yorkshire. It also has the second highest proportion of 16 to 18 year olds classified as not in employment, education or training (NEET).

4.17 **Table 7: Qualifications**

	Five Towns Regeneration Area	%	Wakefield District %	England %
All people aged 16-74	80,297			
Degree level or higher	7,283	9.1	12.5	19.9
No qualifications	35,791	44.6	39.1	28.9

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4.18

Evidence of low adult educational attainment in the Five Towns Area is highlighted by the results from the 2001 Census which show that 44.6% of 16-74 year olds have no qualifications, rising to 75% in some parts, compared with the 28.9% national average.

4.19 **Table 8: Unemployment and Worklessness**

	Five Towns		Wakefield MDC		GB / Eng	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
UNEMPLOYMENT / WORKLESSNESS						
+Claimant Count Unemployed, Jan 06	2,150	3.2	5,242	2.6	926,599	2.6
+Youth Unemp (% age under 24) Jan 06	770	36.1	1,835	35.3	280,945	30.5
^Income Support Claimants, Aug 04	5,200	8.0	12,675	6.8	1,816,220 (Eng)	6.3

*Sources: Census 2001, ONS (NOMIS) +NOMIS ^DWP Information Directorate

4.20

A new study (January 2005) into worklessness in the Wakefield District shows the Five Towns to have some of the highest concentrations of worklessness in the country, with benefit claim rates exceeding 22% of the working age population. Despite unemployment being at a record low the number of people claiming Incapacity Benefit (IB) remains high.

4.21

Worklessness in the Five Towns is higher than the district average. Map 1 above shows the Employment Domain rankings by 10% England bandings for SOAs in the Five Towns.

4.22 **Table 9: Gross Annual Pay for Full-Time Workers 2005 (£)**

	All	Male	Female
Wakefield	20,481	22,399	17,437
Y&H	21,514	23,644	17,703
England	23,313	25,531	19,667

Source: Annual Survey of Hours & Earnings, via Nomis, Office for National Statistics

4.23

Economic inactivity is also a serious issue for many young people living in the area. Skills and educational attainment amongst the young are significantly below district and national averages with over 26% of 16-24 years having no qualifications compared with 15.8% England average. Statistics also show that at the time of the 2001 Census, 8.5% of unemployed people had never worked and 53% of these were aged below 24. Over recent months there has been an increase in the number of young people out of work and claiming benefit and the proportion of claimants aged under 24 is higher than the national average. Figures for February 2005 shows that 700 claimants, 38.4% of total claimants in the area are aged under 24.

4.24

There is clear quantitative evidence that points to a major entrepreneurial gap in the Wakefield District: business start-up rates and self-employment rates in the District are in the lowest decile for the UK. In areas of multiple deprivation the rates are even lower. For example, in the District the business start-up rate is only 3.9 per 1000 economically active persons, compared to a UK average of 5.0. The stock of businesses in Wakefield is equivalent to 31.99 per 1000 people of working age population compared to the national average of 47.63. If Wakefield District had the same level of companies as the UK then there would be 3,239 more companies in the District. Self employment figures are also poor with only 90 per 1000 economically active people being self employed in the Wakefield District compared to a sub-regional rate of 111.

4.25

Low entrepreneurial activity within the District has become a spiral of decline and barrier to further enterprise activity. Potential entrepreneurs have fewer role models, mentors or local support bases to either identify with, or gain support from. This broken bridge does not allow possible entrepreneurs the opportunity to see the benefits of entrepreneurship and self employment as a sustainable career or life option to aspire to. The resources and stimuli for potential entrepreneurs within the District is also a barrier to entrepreneurship.

5.0 THE COMMUNITY BENEFITS

5.1

The positive economic and social impact of destination-style casinos has been well-documented in America. We would envisage direct economic benefits at a number of levels from the development of a regional casino in the UK. These benefits would mainly be felt in the Leeds City Region and the Five Towns.

5.2

The main direct economic benefits will be captured within the Leeds City Region, this assumption is reflected in the formal support that was given to the proposals at the recent meeting of the Leeds City Region Council Leaders who have formally identified the Five Towns as their preferred location for a regional casino. The employment levels and supply chain requirements of a regional casino can only be satisfied within a sub regional context. We also anticipate significant visitor spend to derive from the casino with both local impact and sub regional impact from linked trips to complementary offers within the region.

5.3

Using Yorkshire Futures Regional Econometric Impact Scenario Model a casino development in the Five Towns would increase output in the Yorkshire & Humber by £56.1M in its first year, rising to £65.6M within eight years. From an initial 1255 direct full time equivalents (FTE) up to 1670 FTE's are expected to be created in total. The Leeds City Region would benefit from £52.7M additional output in the first year, the vast majority (£46.1M) within the Wakefield District. Of the 1582 FTE's to be created in the Leeds City Region 1428 are envisaged to be filled by residents within the Wakefield District. The £46.1M additional output to the Wakefield District, which is expected to rise to £54M within eight years, is a 0.91% increase to the Wakefield Economy. The above figures are based on an operational start date of 2008 and do not include any of the benefits from the construction of the development, which will employ approx 2000 people over the two years.

5.4

Casino operators use a broader based model to capture benefits from the development of a regional casino. Their figures suggest that the direct operational impact of a regional casino would be in the order of £100m with indirect beneficial impact of a further £15m and induced benefits to the Five Towns area of a further £15m giving an overall benefit of £130m. These two sets of figures give us a range of potential benefits where even the most modest offers significant uplift to the Five Towns and City Region.

5.5

It is estimated that there will be 1255 direct Full Time Equivalent jobs created by the regional casino with an average pay of £28,000. The employment that the Casino will provide will be at a pay level that will improve employees' income level above that which is currently experienced in the Five Towns. The regeneration impact provided by a regional casino development is very significant. By providing over 1,250 direct jobs and as many as 4000 additional indirect jobs (including construction), the regional casino and related developments will not only help provide many unemployed individuals with opportunities to bring in a steady income, but also provide new long-term career opportunities.

5.6 **Table 10: Pay and number of employees in the proposed regional casino**

Department	Number	Average Pay
Gaming	640	£29,500
Food	325	£21,750
Beverage	60	£22,250
Hotel	75	£23,250
Administration	95	£49,000
Facilities	50	£25,000
Other	10	£23,500

5.7

A casino development in the Five Towns would build on the established leisure offer at Glasshoughton (Xscape and the Factory Outlet) and will contribute significantly to the development and diversification of the local economy in a part of the District and City Region that still suffers significant deprivation.

5.8

The development of a regional casino in the Five Towns to help develop the area as a leisure node of regional significance is endorsed in the Urban Renaissance Strategic Development Framework and is further supported in the Regional Economic Strategy under the cover of Competitive Businesses and Stronger Cities. The scale of the proposal also provides the opportunity to promote local enterprise and competition within the casino's service supply chain which will be beneficial locally and across the region.

5.9

The most immediate special additional benefit would be enabling a community stadium to be built which would allow local clubs to continue to participate in Super League lifting the area as a whole to one of true regional significance and further complementing the leisure offer at Glasshoughton.

5.10

The new Wakefield College Campus (14-19 Academy) which is about to be built on the Glasshoughton site offers clear opportunities to develop the training needs of the leisure and casino sector within a formal relationship in the Five Towns.

5.11

As one of the largest employers in the Region, the regional casino operator will work closely with the Council and the local education team to provide educational programs at secondary schools as well as training facilities and courses for new team members who will fill more than 100 job classifications. There will be valuable synergy for this locally, once the New Wakefield College Campus at Glasshoughton has been established. In addition, ongoing training programmes designed to help improve the skill base of all workers will be put into place to help maximize the potential of all employees. It is fully expected that the regional casino operator will be an "employer-of-choice" within the community due in part to the career opportunities it will provide.

5.12

The profile of the jobs and average salaries generated by the casino development will provide opportunities not only to address the issues raised previously in relation to employment and income deprivation but will specifically provide opportunities for many people living and working in the area to move from jobs on a basic wage into well paid jobs with good career prospects.

5.13

Local skills audits will be undertaken to support the development of the regional casino. These will examine the likely skills required for the new opportunities in leisure and tourism employment. The aim being to meet the Five Towns growing significance as a leisure and heritage centre for the region and to examine new local training initiatives in leisure and tourism. This will also give impetus to existing programmes to increase local and regional skill levels to better respond to future economic opportunities.

5.14

As well as the direct economic benefits a number of special benefits are envisaged, there will be multi-million investment locally and in the sub-region from planning gain and other local agreements with the developer and operator which will prevail over the short and long term and again these will be distributed locally and across the City Region.

6.0 THE SOCIAL IMPACT

6.1

It is the informed opinion of Wakefield MDC that the development of a regional casino, together with related hotel and community stadium facility will have minimal, adverse social impact on either the Five Towns Regeneration area, The City of Wakefield, The Leeds City Region or the Yorkshire Region.

6.2

Any potential adverse social effects of the proposal have to be viewed against a prevailing environment where gambling is an easily accessible part of modern living. We believe that the potential incremental increase in the societal risk is offset by the real investment that can be made by such a major development in support and avoidance of the negative personal effects of any increased opportunity to gamble.

6.3

While it is acknowledged that a small minority of the adult population is unable to gamble responsibly and that a safety net is needed to minimize the potential harms associated with the development of a regional casino, we believe the positives resulting from the type of development under consideration (as described throughout this submission) substantially outweigh the negatives.

6.4

There are three key factors that lead us to conclude that the adverse social impact resulting from the development of a regional casino will be minimal:

The Region is home to numerous convenience gambling outlets, such that the development of a regional casino will not meaningfully increase the availability of gambling opportunities to local residents.

The operator of the regional casino will be required to contribute significant amounts of money to fund programs for research, training, treatment and awareness of problem gambling issues and will establish a Community Action Group to help address the concerns of local residents.

The potential regeneration impact of, and numerous job opportunities created by, the regional casino and related mixed-use development will create immeasurable benefits to a local community who are still suffering from the effects of job losses over the last 15 years.

6.5

There are currently seven casinos within the Five Town's catchment. With the recent elimination of the '24-hour rule' for new members, casino gambling is readily accessible to anyone of legal age. There are also many betting shops and bingo halls throughout the region and an unlimited number of locations where lottery tickets may be purchased, further more, added to this is the intermittent gambling that occurs at racing facilities such as the nearby Pontefract Racecourse. Of greater concern however is the internet, where any type of gambling can be carried out with virtually no controls in the privacy of individuals' own home and is available to anyone with a phone line and a computer.

6.6

It is generally accepted that ease of access to "convenience" gambling facilities presents the highest risk of an increase in problem gambling. While the development of a regional casino will add an additional outlet for casino gambling, it will have virtually no impact on the overall accessibility of gambling opportunities for individuals who choose to gamble. Any site within the Five Towns would be a true destination location and therefore a customer would make a conscious decision in order to visit the casino and therefore the likelihood of problem gambling will be reduced. Wakefield MDC will ensure that this is continually monitored by the operator.

6.7

We believe that the Five Towns location which we anticipate will be an out of town centre location means that the gambling visit is conscious and premeditated and is not based on random opportunity such as a spontaneous pass-by visit that would be found in a similar facility set in a city centre location. Moreover, gambling at a regional casino takes place in a controlled environment that is subject to strict regulatory controls and severe penalties for lack of compliance with these controls, unlike other forms of legal gambling. Thus, it is not considered that the development of a regional casino will result in a meaningful increase in the prevalence of problem gaming in the region. This conclusion is supported by a variety of research, including multiple studies which conclude that the number of individuals who are unable to gamble responsibly remains relatively constant when casino gambling is introduced in a market area where only betting opportunities were previously available.

6.8

Critics of the development of regional casinos argue that regional casinos will have over 1000 “jackpot-style” slot machines that pay unlimited jackpots and therefore attract vulnerable individuals. In reality, only a small percentage (less than 5%) of the slot machines in the regional casino will have “unlimited” jackpots. Moreover, market forces and customer expectations dictate that all gaming machines in the regional casino will have better payback odds than other gambling opportunities. In summary, a regional casino will require a resident to make more of an effort to visit so that he or she can enjoy better payback odds compared to visiting the local casino, or other forms of betting outlets.

6.9

As with any development of this size and nature, there will always be a social impact on those living and working in surrounding areas. Some of this impact will be positive, for example with the creation of jobs, however it will also have some negative impact for example on health. It is our belief that working in partnership with the local community is the most effective way of creating a successful development and ensuring a positive outcome on the area.

6.10

In the Five Towns area there are many well established partnerships with which we could work to achieve a successful relationship between the Casino and the Community. Young peoples groups such as Wakies Watch and Wakies Shout are particularly strong and are experienced in both communicating the views of young people to others and vice versa. Through partnership working with such groups, it will be possible to develop sound educational programmes to ensure that the message of responsible gaming is conveyed to young people in the District. Alongside the issue of education, existing ILM schemes present in the Five Towns Area such as JOBNET, provide a good opportunity for WMDC to work in partnership ensuring that new jobs are provided for the District and that opportunities are provided for those most in need.

6.11

Furthermore any operator of a regional casino will have to provide substantial funding for programs to address problem gambling and assist individuals who are unable to gamble responsibly. Even with the abundance of gambling outlets conveniently available to residents of the City and Region, resources directed to problem gambling issues are extremely scarce. With the development of a regional casino, significant funds will be directed to research, treatment programmes and awareness campaigns to help the small minority of individuals who are unable to gamble responsibly.

6.12

The operator of the regional casino will be required to train team members to understand signs of problem gambling behaviour so as to be able to assist vulnerable individuals as much as possible. Various studies have shown that when increased availability of gambling supply is accompanied by new strategies and programs for addressing problem gambling, there may be no significant change in the prevalence of problem gambling. The Local Authority certainly plans to work closely with the regional casino operator to utilize its skills in implementing and managing programs to address problem gambling.

6.13

The regional casino operator will lead the establishment of a Community Action Group made up of a cross-section of the local community in the Five Towns and Wakefield, including representatives from churches, interfaith groups, problem gambling experts, police, and the Council to address the concerns of local people. We would also expect that the existing casino operators would join this group so that a unified effort to improve awareness about problem gambling and other social impact issues can be moved ahead.

6.14

Specifically, the Community Action Group will be tasked with assessing through surveys any local changes in social impacts and the prevalence of problem gambling. Whilst there will be a national prevalence study (as set out in the Gambling Act 2005), it will be important to closely monitor local trends. Finally, the Community Action Group will link with commercial and non-commercial organisations in the city, including the Local Tourism Office, Chamber of Commerce, and the main business interest and employers.

6.15

Wakefield is in line with its local authority peers with respect to important crime indicators and whilst some crime problems in the Five Towns remain more acute than elsewhere in the District, there are signs of significant downward trends for some types of offence. This is due in part to the excellent work undertaken by the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership, part of the Community Safety Partnership made up of Local Authority, Police Fire Service and the Primary Care Trusts. This body has a special Five Towns area group that will be ideally placed to identify and deal with any crime and disorder issue that may arise as part of a regional casino development.

7.0 THE PROBABILITY OF IMPLEMENTATION

7.1

This bid is for a licence for a regional casino within the Five Towns which has at least three potential sites including the former Glasshoughton Colliery. In all three cases the decline of industry has left a legacy of unemployment and social deprivation with large brownfield sites requiring significant regeneration. From a deliverability point of view, the former Glasshoughton Colliery has every chance to succeed. The site which is already home to the Xscape entertainment complex and Junction 32 Retail Outlet Village has many advantages including:

- Existing planning status as the site is zoned as a Special Policy Area
- It has support through the Council's Strategic Policy Framework including the Urban Renaissance Strategic Development Framework and Community Strategy
- The site has excellent infrastructure with direct access to the M62 motorway and a new railway station within the Glasshoughton complex which links with Leeds
- It has the support of existing businesses and commitment from land owner Waystone Ltd to accommodate a casino, hotel and stadium development
- Agreement with Yorkshire Forward (RDA), a key partner in the overall regeneration, to facilitate a casino proposal on the site

The Council's Highway and Transport Services have already been provided with a consulting engineers report establishing the refinements necessary to the infrastructure should this site become a selected casino location and the Highways Agency have also been provided with this same data.

7.2

If this proposal is supported the Council will embark on extensive detailed consultation. There has already been limited consultation to date on the casino proposal and significant discussion over the merits of expanding on the existing leisure offer at Glasshoughton. This consultation can be summarised as follows:

There has been specific discussion about the possibility of developing a casino as part of the leisure offer of the Glasshoughton site with the Glasshoughton Forum (a local group that monitors the development of the Glasshoughton site) and with the key leisure operators on the site. They have given the proposals full support.

The concept of developing the leisure potential of the site was extensively discussed during the preparation of the Urban Renaissance proposals for Castleford Pontefract and the Five Towns and the value of such development was supported in the final report. Central to the thinking was to secure enabling development to facilitate the development of a community stadium on the site which would provide a new home for the local rugby league clubs.

The proposal that this enabling development could be in the form of a regional casino was announced earlier in the year and was well received locally.

7.3

More discussion and engagement over the details of the proposal will take place once a planning application is prepared. An excellent network of local organisations and community representatives already exists in the region and work undertaken as part of the Urban Renaissance banner which will help facilitate this.

7.4 **Map 3: Sixty Minute Drive Time To The Five**



7.5

The regional fit is supported by information provided by market research undertaken on behalf of the existing major leisure operator in the Five Towns namely Xscape;

- 3.5 million visitors in 2005
- 83% of visitors are repeat visitors
- Average time spent at Xscape 2.5 Hours
- Average spend per visitor £60 with 10% of people spending over £100
- Average journey time 27 minutes

Analysis of data taken from the Snozone (ski slope) indicates that people regularly travel from Liverpool, Manchester, Sheffield, Hull, Leeds, York and Tyneside to use the facility.

7.6

In analysing the market demand, we have relied on information provided by a potential regional casino developer that has substantial experience developing and operating regional casinos in the United States. The developer believes, based on its experience, that the estimates provided below are extremely conservative.

7.7

The excellent location of the Five Towns enables it to be easily accessed by all of the Yorkshire Region and the primary catchment area can be broken down into four population bands:

(1) 120,000 residents living less than a 10-minute drive time; (2) 700,000 residents within a 10-20 minute drive time; and (3) 1.4 million residents within 20-30 minute drive-time; and (4) 1.4 million residents within a 30-40 minute drive-time. According to industry research, a regional casino's primary customers are those above 18 years of age within the A-C2 Social Groupings. Of the nearly 3.6 million residents within the 60-minute drive time catchment, of the Five Towns, 1.8 million of them fit this category, a percentage which is similar to national average. Individuals in these groups generally have higher disposable income and a greater tendency to spend more on recreational activities. Importantly, a majority of these individuals come from outside the immediate 20-minute catchment, where some wards have the highest level of deprivation in the Country. Thus, Five Towns is well-situated for a regional casino to generate substantial positive regeneration impacts and at the same time serve the regional population most likely to participate in this form of entertainment meaning that this represents an excellent location to test Social Impact.

7.8

Once the number of adults within the relevant drive-time catchment is identified, the total number of expected visits to the regional casino can be calculated based on comparisons to the developer's experiences in the United States, gambling prevalence studies conducted in the United Kingdom and the existence of other gambling outlets available to such residents.

7.9

The regional casino being proposed will be a new and unique offering that we expect will substantially grow the market for casino gambling and will have a positive impact on other casinos in the region. Because the expected demand for casino gambling will exceed the capacity of a single regional casino, existing casinos should benefit from being able to provide the necessary capacity for this excess demand. This has been the case in numerous gaming markets throughout the world gambling exceeds the supply as more casinos are opened, the overall market expands and revenues at all properties increase depending on their specific operational capabilities. Given the size restrictions imposed by the Gambling Act and the dynamics of the Leeds City Region the market can reasonably expect that demand will exceed supply for an indefinite period of time and the development of a regional casino would therefore have a positive impact on the existing casinos.

7.10

The draw of a regional casino is expected to increase visitation rates and dwell times overall for the existing Five Towns development and indeed to increase the number of visitors to the town centres of both Castleford and Pontefract. The development will be not just a casino, but a mixed-use leisure and entertainment destination complex of the highest quality. The continued regeneration of this area along with the investment to which the Castleford, Wakefield and Leeds City Region will be able to commit as a result of the financial contributions from the development will help improve the status of existing leisure node at Glasshoughton as a centre serving the whole of the Leeds/Yorkshire Region due to its excellent road communications. This again will increase recreational and leisure spend and we would expect local GDP to increase significantly, resulting in further demand for alternative leisure and retail activities.

7.11

The regional casino development is a major regeneration scheme that will build upon the success of the Glasshoughton site and provide a new multi-purpose Community Stadium. The Five Towns has a significant advantage in that it is a true test of a Destination Casino that serves all of the Yorkshire Region, it is a Regional casino for Yorkshire that will have regenerative benefits throughout the Region. The development will have an extremely positive impact on this part of Yorkshire and benefit from a clustering of activities in addition to the casino development itself, namely the Snow Dome and the factory outlet centre providing a truly world class destination.

This will also provide a further catalyst for investment and development in this area, which is a vital regeneration area identified in Yorkshire Forward's 'Five Towns Strategic Development Framework'. The combination of a further 3.5 /4 million visitors each year plus the additional dwell time of visitors due to the added attractions is seen as a huge advantage which could not otherwise be delivered by any other form of development.

7.12

With respect to the impact on other gambling outlets, it is well-established that the development of destination-style casinos has little, if any impact on other forms of gambling, such as lotteries. This is supported by extensive research, some of which has been undertaken by Professor Peter Collins of the University of Salford who has advised the Joint Scrutiny Committee in recent years.

7.13

The proposed Regional casino will be 100% funded by private sector funds and will deliver the following inward investment;

Approximately £250m of total capital investment, including the casino and hotel entertainment facility, the stadium and associated infrastructure costs

A new community stadium

Improved Railway service from Leeds through the Leeds City Region and in particular Glasshoughton and the Five Towns

Construction of the Casino and associated developments will be over 24-30 month period, it is anticipated that once a licence has been issued planning and other pre construction approvals will be considered within 6 months so a 2007 start on site would be possible.

The development will consist of an equivalent 180,000 sq ft 5 star hotel with 350-400 rooms and conferencing facilities and Spa, and 180,000 sq ft casino including restaurants (fine dining, buffet, sports bar and casual) office and circulation entrance, In total the total casino and hotel complex will be in excess of 360,000 sq ft.

7.14

In addition to the capital costs described above, the regional casino operator will make contributions to the Council and Leeds City Region equating to over £130 million in the first 10 years, providing much-needed resources for the Region to implement other key regeneration schemes that are planned.

8.0 OUR WILLINGNESS TO LICENCE

8.1

On the 29th of March 2006 the City of Wakefield Metropolitan District Council Cabinet approved a recommendation to support the development of a regional casino in the Five Towns. The full report, resolution and minutes of the meeting can be supplied if required.

8.2

The Council presented a report to the Wakefield District Partnership (LSP) on March 23rd 2006 at which the board noted the application to the DCMS, recognised the potential regeneration benefits to the Five Towns and requested future reports on the proposal as the application progresses.

8.3

The Council presented a report to the Leeds City Region Leaders meeting dated 20th February who formally identified the Five Towns Wakefield as their preferred location for a Regional Casino

9.0 THE UNIQUE CHARACTERISTICS OF OUR PROPOSAL

9.1

A true pilot needs to be located so as to be able to track its specific impact unaffected by the distorting effects of a major city centre or the complicating consequences trying to isolate impacts which spread across regional boundaries. This proposal not only promotes a location that exactly satisfies the locational specification for a regional casino but is in an area that already has a comprehensive database of economic and social statistics against which to assess both positive and any negative impacts that arise from the development. Adding to this the established local and district wide partnerships and proposed Neighbourhood Management Area pilot gives us an ideal testing ground for the social and economic impact that a regional casino development generates.

9.2

This proposal has the potential to create a leisure destination of regional or even national significance as part of a cluster of attractions both in the Five Towns and in the Leeds City Region.

The development will be not just a casino, but a mixed-use leisure and entertainment destination complex of the highest quality. The co-ordinated development of the existing leisure facilities at Glasshoughton and Pontefract Racecourse with a new regional casino and community stadium/concert venue will help to transform the area in to a “superb regional/national visitor attraction”. Furthermore it has the potential to create a visitor destination of such significance that will help to define the brand for the Leeds City Region, focusing on the service sector to develop a high quality leisure offer.

9.3

The Five Towns area is increasingly outward looking thanks to its location and position astride the east-west, north-south motorway crossroads of the North of England. It is at the centre of the main growth corridors of the City Region. It also has a significant advantage in that it could be a true test of a destination casino that serves all of Yorkshire and the Humber providing a regional casino that will have regenerative benefits throughout the whole region.

9.4

The deprivation in the Five Towns area is real and nationally significant. Strategies are in place to address the problems which will provide a context to maximise the range of direct and indirect benefits that will be associated with the development of a regional casino. In particular a regional casino development will provide an opportunity to tackle skills deficiencies, develop a local economic culture more firmly based in enterprise at all levels and to broaden the range of weapons to deal with worklessness and low pay which characterise the local economy.

The new Wakefield College Campus which is about to be built on the Glasshoughton site offers clear opportunities to develop the training needs of the leisure and casino sector in the Five Towns offering a unique and valuable local synergy.

9.5

Most importantly, within the Five Towns we have at least one site where the practicalities of delivery are resolved with the ability, if chosen, to move straight to development and realisation of the project giving this proposal an excellent chance if chosen as a pilot regional casino of actually being delivered on the ground.