

rec. 29/8/06.

PW/MTW

25 August 2006

Professor Stephen Crow CB  
Casino Advisory Panel  
Department of Culture Media and Sport  
2-4 Cockspur Street  
London SW1Y 5DH

Dear Professor Crow

### **Examination in Public: Blackpool**

I was disappointed to learn that Blackpool and The Fylde College has not been invited to participate in the Examination in Public in connection with Blackpool's bid for the casino licence.

The College had hoped to be involved in the Examination because of the unique developments in education and training that we have led and which are a particular feature of Blackpool's bid. This was put forward in my letter to the Casino Advisory Panel of 26<sup>th</sup> April. In summary, in conjunction with a range of partners, over the last four years the College has developed the country's first training facility for the Gaming industry. This has included the development of the first suite of nationally accredited qualifications (City and Guilds and Edexcel) for Casino Operations and Coin Slot Technology – qualifications ranging from level 2 up to and including degree level. This initiative, which has had the backing of the major employers in the Gaming industry, is specifically aimed at ensuring a properly trained workforce as one of the integral features of a well-regulated and responsible industry.

We are aware of the potential social problems associated with the relaxation of the Gaming laws and the wider scale development of casinos. However, we believe that in Blackpool we have gained the experience and conducted the research to help mitigate these problems. The recognition of the essential role played by education and training within a socially responsible industry is key critical to this.

To date, an investment of circa £2 million has been made in the infrastructure necessary to deliver high quality education and training in Gaming at the College. In order to ensure that the benefits of regeneration that a casino would bring to the town are felt by local people, we are aware that we need to work to develop and extend the skills base of the local population. The community of Blackpool comprises high numbers of people (above the England and north west average) with no formal qualifications at all. Skill levels at levels 1, 2 and 3, as well as graduate levels, are also significantly below regional and national averages. Consequently we are working hard with our partners to address this skills deficit within Blackpool, not only in terms of basic literacy and numeracy, but also within a range of vocational areas including Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure, in order to ensure that local people have the necessary skills and expertise to benefit from the employment opportunities that would arise if Blackpool's bid for the casino licence is successful.

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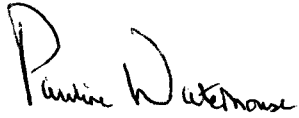
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Should the Panel wish to hear more about the contribution that the College is able to make to education and training and the skills agenda in underpinning Blackpool's regeneration, I would be pleased to attend the EIP.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pauline Waterhouse". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'P'.

**Pauline Waterhouse**  
**Principal and Chief Executive**