

ANNEX 3

MINUTES OF THE CASINO STEERING GROUP HELD ON 21 OCTOBER 2005

MINUTES
Of the
CASINO STEERING GROUP
HELD ON
21st October 2005

<u>Present:</u>	Steve Weaver (BCouncil, Chair), Gail Porter (GONW), Ian Whitaker (NWDA), Bob Harbin (PCT), Reg Haslam (ReBlackpool), Nick Gerrard (NWDA), Sharon Davies (BC Licensing), Dave Lund (BS, Children's Services), James Berresford (NWDA), Alan Cavill (BC Corporate Policy), Jim Twomey (PION), Jill Collinson (BCouncil), Russ Weaver (Blackpool Police), Dennis Taylor (LEP) Craig Leviton and Michelle Di Leo (LLM) contributed to the first few agenda items via conference phone.
<u>Apologies:</u>	Graham Pinfield (BC, Policy and Research), Doug Garrett (ReBlackpool)

		ACTION
1.	<p><u>Welcome and Introductions</u></p> <p>Group members introduced themselves.</p>	
2.	<p><u>Notes of the last meeting</u></p> <p>Agreed as a correct record</p>	
3.	<p><u>First Working Draft of Blackpool's case</u></p> <p>Nick Gerrard gave his thoughts on the draft:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is a good start but needs to be improved in some places • The Executive Summary should start with Blackpool's position not what casinos can do for Blackpool • Third party recommendations from people who have no interest in the case are needed (S Weaver informed the group that the final format will have a margin at the end of the pages which will include quotes of positive things people have said about Blackpool and that Blackpools warmth would come out through them) • Policy context e.g. RES is good • We need to make more of the work that the three regional organisations have commissioned and include something like 'This was looked at to see where the North West would benefit most....' • We need to capture and include why people are saying that it is likely that Blackpool will be successful <p>Reg Haslam reported that Montague Evans were helping produce a picture from an operators/ property developers aspect. Regarding the draft, Reg reported that he had come to the conclusion that although we need a general structure, the case should stay as a draft until nearer the time when we have more knowledge. He also stated that he felt we should not be overly critical and should always be willing to change it.</p>	

		ACTION
	<p>Craig Leviton listed his thoughts reiterating that the draft was a useful contribution but that it needed to include third party comments and the economic and social benefits to Blackpool and the Region. He also felt that the draft should include a sense of what life would be like once we've had regional casinos and what we are hoping they will do.</p> <p>David Lund stated that there was nothing yet in the submission, which reflected the needs of young people.</p> <p>Steve thanked everyone for their comments and expressed his desire for us to be as critical as possible and stated that any criticism would be taken as positive. Graham would update the case for the next meeting.</p>	GP
4.	<u>Position on Competitor cases and make up of independent Casino Advisory Panel</u>	
	<p>Craig reported that the panel would be asking for submissions early in the new year. They haven't yet agreed the criteria and there is a sense that they are way behind schedule.</p> <p>DCMS were not aware of the moves by Havering Council to bring together councils to lobby government and were not happy once they had heard this was taking place.</p> <p>Regarding the starred question, there is a debate opportunity for government speakers to answer and for other parties to contribute. Ask government what the criteria which the panel will judge expressions of interest by Local Authorities is.</p> <p>SW asked the group to forward any additions to the list to Graham Pinfield.</p>	ALL
5.	<u>Economic Regeneration Aspects</u>	
	<p>Jim Twomey (PION Economics) provided an update on the current position on economic regeneration aspects. He reported that they were at an early stage in the process where they were assessing the market context which was a complicated task but they are making reasonable progress. Hopefully they will be in a position to report back at the next meeting.</p> <p>They are talking to operators to gain access to information about assumptions, which they have to make.</p> <p>The document is morphing into other elements e.g. transport elements.</p> <p>Discussions are taking place around the way in which this work will fit into CRDP proceedings and impact on other schemes in the CRDP area. The CRDP requires schemes to be contrasted in terms of net and gross jobs created, with regards to Blackpools figures, our casino proposals fall down re net impact. S Weaver challenged this stating that the relative impact of our proposals was unreasonable and that Blackpools position is being understated. S Weaver thinks we can overcome this.</p> <p>S Weaver and R Haslam stated that we have to say that Blackpool is the place the casinos will have the biggest transformational impact on.</p>	JT

		ACTION
	<p>N Gerrard suggested that we need to have a debate are how negative we are to be towards our competitors.</p> <p>S Weaver said that when our case is presented, it needs to be clear that there is no level of private sector investment if there are no casinos. Blackpools future is bleak without the casinos and it needs to be presented that there is no alternative for us.</p> <p>J Twomey questioned if the airport had been taken into account in the proposal with regards to the ambition to increase the number of passengers as the airport will help the casinos and vice versa. It was agreed that we could not underplay the level of the airports significance.</p> <p>S Weaver stated that the casinos will present a significant number of jobs for Blackpool and that we have to be rigorous and not underplay our own case. With regards to the number of jobs/ private sector investment we need to creep up on our competitors when they put their cases in and set the bar for jobs higher in a way that we can stand up against rigorous investigation.</p> <p>R Haslam reported that it was not in the interest of Local Authorities to challenge the figures presented by the operators, what we need to do is ensure the figures are defensible.</p> <p>R Haslam stated how it was hard to explain the scale of change and that we need to find a way to get the judges to understand how Blackpool will be and how casinos will get us there.</p> <p>S Weaver suggested producing a DVD of Blackpool's visionary future that could explain the level of transformational change to engage people.</p>	<p>GP</p> <p>JT</p> <p>JT</p> <p>LLM</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p><u>Position on Competitor Cases and Makeup of Independent Casino Advisory Panel</u></p> <p>S Weaver stated the need for us to strengthen our case around social issues, families etc. We don't want the criteria to be raised.</p> <p>N Gerrard – panel are no experts in gambling, debate around academic expertise</p> <p>S Weaver – Panel of select committee will be asking for problem gambling issues (papers etc), more emphasis on wider regeneration issues. R Haslam believes our strength is generally from Blackpool and not an operator.</p> <p>R Haslam is sending the questions to Harvard University to check their credibility and seek their view on them.</p> <p>The group will continue to receive papers from Peter Collins.</p>	<p>RH</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p><u>MORI Residents Survey</u></p> <p>R Haslam reported that he had met with MORI and discussed two survey methods, a 1,000 interview survey and a quota sampling survey. It was discussed that the resident population in inner Blackpool is not typical of Blackpool which may present issues around random sampling.</p>	

		ACTION
	<p>R Haslam discussed how if we built casinos in Blackpool, they wouldn't just impact on Blackpool therefore should our survey go outside the Borough boundaries ie St Annes, Fleetwood and Cleveleys.</p> <p>It was agreed that this needs to be looked at but the general feeling was that the survey should go beyond Blackpool's boundaries.</p> <p>R Haslam reminded the group that we were not looking for a prevalence figure; the survey is to identify problem gambling on the Fylde Coast.</p> <p>A Howe suggested using a citizen's panel to give us another indication.</p>	<p>RH</p> <p>GP</p>
8.	<p><u>L.B Havering Meeting: 'Making Our Voice Heard'</u></p> <p>S Weaver reported on this item as G Pinfield was absent. Havering Council invited all the Local Authorities with casino interest to a meeting re going to government and lobbying for more than one casino license. G Pinfield attended this as a lower level person just to go and listen and reported that a number of different councils were there e.g. Manchester, Glasgow represented by people of different levels but it was mainly Member and Chief Exec level. Although there are a collection of councils who have signed up to pushing for it to move up to eight, S Weaver does not think we will be one of them but we will keep an eye on it. S Weaver thinks there is potential for a move up to four and the strongest case for this is that social impact cannot just be tested in one place.</p> <p>N Gerrard noted that it is valuable to be mindful of the points that Blackpool wants to make – if there is more than one, what will it contribute to Blackpool and what will Blackpool's position be?</p>	<p>GP</p>
9.	<p><u>Any Other Business</u></p> <p>R Haslam reported that in November architectural designers will be asked to bid for producing a piece of design work. Commissioning a re-working of the fly-through was discussed but S Weaver felt this was not sufficient to visually represent the ambition of the transformation of Blackpool.</p> <p>J Berresford asked if the MPs names who would go against the two-hour slots at the parliamentary reception should be outside this locality and it was agreed that they should.</p> <p>S Weaver noted his concern over the negative impact of gambling but that it was good we had the rock-solid support of the community.</p>	<p>RH</p>