

Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)

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

Jane.bransby@culture.gsi.gov.uk

Dear Jane Bransby,

Representation re Proposal to Licence a Casino at Sportscity, East Manchester

I am writing on behalf of the Social Justice Group of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Manchester, to express concerns about the proposal to licence a casino in Manchester. Quakers would wish to discourage gambling, both because it is an attempt to make a profit out of the inevitable loss and possible suffering of others, and because of the damaging consequences to those who become addicted, and to their families.

However, we recognise that this consultation is about the location of casinos, and these should be located where the inevitable negative effects can be minimised. We note that the City Council has addressed the issue of how to reduce negative effects (see page 3 of the Proposal on Social Impact). However, we fear that the budget for education on the risks of gambling, and dealing with the needs of those suffering from problem gambling and their families, is likely to be small compared with the budget of those promoting gambling.

East Manchester is a relatively low income area, with more than its share of social problems, to which we would not wish to add an increase in problem gambling. We note that increase in problem gambling tends to be lower when a casino is "out of town" and on a dedicated site. Manchester's proposal is to have the casino in an area with a range of entertainment and leisure facilities, and near residential housing, so is likely to attract casual visitors who would not otherwise have participated in gambling.

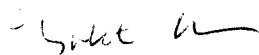
The increased traffic resulting from the casino would increase our problems of pollution, noise and environmental damage. The development of good public transport is likely to be several years off, with the delays in development of the tram system.

The regeneration of East Manchester could be damaged by the casino, especially if it remains open late, making the area unpleasant to live in because of late night noise.

A high proportion of jobs resulting from the casino would be likely to be low-paid and part-time with unsocial hours.

We oppose the proposal to have a casino in Manchester as we consider that casinos should not be situated in areas where they are likely to encourage gambling and the associated problems. Wherever the casinos are situated, we would ask that the budget for dealing with the negative effects is comparable to the budget for promoting the casino, so that the damage may be reduced.

Yours sincerely



Elizabeth Coleman
Co-ordinating Group
Hardshaw East Monthly Meeting Social Justice Group
Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)