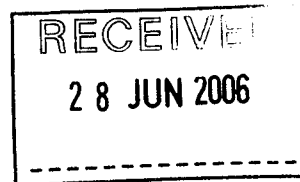


YORKSHIRE BAPTIST ASSOCIATION SOUTH YORKSHIRE DISTRICT

Chairman: Revd William Shaw. Treasurer: Mr David Grime. Minute Secretary: Miss Lesley Fuller
e-mail: <lesley-edna@amservice.com>
tel: 01433 630310
63, Smithy Knoll Rd,
Calver, Hope Valley,
S32 3XW

24th June 2006

Ms Jane Bransby (or her replacement)
Secretary to the Casino Advisory Panel,
Department for Culture, Media and Sport,
2-4 Cockspur St. LONDON SW1Y 5DH



Dear Members of the Panel

re: **Regional Casino proposal for Sheffield**

We represent the Baptist Churches of South Yorkshire and in conjunction with Churches Together in South Yorkshire, wish to register our concerns about the siting of the one so far proposed Regional Casino in Sheffield.

Our concerns are these:

- (1) We are not convinced that the Casino will bring regeneration to South Yorkshire, an area suffering deprivation due to loss of heavy industry, steel and coalmining. Apart from short-term construction work, increased job opportunities appear minimal. Help to re-establish light industry would be of far greater benefit. All the research we have heard shows that as money is sucked into the giant complex with in-house restaurants and other leisure facilities, local businesses suffer, wither and die. Profits from the casino will go to the overseas promoting company, taxes to the Treasury, and little if any financial advantage to the City Council.
- (2) There will be an increase in problem gambling, with its personal miseries of overwhelming debts, family instability and tendency to crime. Local Social Services and voluntary organisations will be left to pick up the pieces; Hall Aitken's research shows that the costs of this are likely to outweigh economic benefits. In their desire for maximum profits, promoting companies prey on vulnerable people, with no concern for their welfare. With a vast hall full of slot machines, there is not even a friendly croupier to warn the headlong gambler to think again. To quote Rt Revd Jack Nicholls, Bishop of Sheffield, 'Sheffield is a city with a conscience and has done a lot to narrow the gap between rich and poor, but a supercasino would undo all this and spoil the city.'
- (3) The casino would offend the substantial Muslim population of Sheffield, for whom gambling is forbidden by the Qu'ran. As Christians we also consider gambling unethical. Its social and psychological effects run counter to every expression of loving concern and compassion which Christianity teaches.

We hope you will carefully consider all these representations in deciding on your recommendation to the Secretary of State for Media, Culture and Sport.

Yours sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Revd William Shaw in cursive.

Revd William Shaw, Chairman.

Handwritten signature of Miss Lesley Fuller in cursive.

Miss Lesley Fuller, Secretary