CASINO ADVISORY PANEL
Formal Proposal Cover Sheet

Please fill in *all* categories below:

Name of Local Authority:

CHESTERFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL

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Name and title of Submitting Officer:

Name: John Wrightson

Title: Corporate Director of Regeneration

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**

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

Large x 1

SUMMARY OF PROPOSAL

Chesterfield's application for a regional casino will be the catalyst to the development of a far larger 'regional destination resort' which has the potential to deliver transformational change in an area of significant regeneration need. There is an extremely high probability of successful project delivery if we are awarded the right to license a regional casino.

We offer a casino location that combines strong strategic market appeal with the tactical opportunity to minimise the risk of social harm by good siting, design and management, combined with the monitoring and enforcement of tough licensing conditions. Twenty million people live within two hours travel of Chesterfield. Our proposal seeks to incorporate a regional casino into an 'edge of town', new-build 300 acre gated resort destination with extensive leisure and business facilities, including overnight accommodation for 2,000 visitors. The mix and quality of resort features will ensure that it attracts visitors from many parts of England, with a wide range of motives to visit. The market mix will vary between weekdays, weekends and seasonally, ensuring a high level of visitation throughout the year. Major and sustainable economic benefits will be captured in the town and surrounding areas.

TYPE OF AREA

Chesterfield is the sub-regional service centre for North Eastern Derbyshire (population catchment 270,000). Geographically it is in the East Midlands region but its proximity, social, cultural and economic linkages place it firmly in the Sheffield City Region. It is easily accessible by road and rail from most parts of the country. The town lies on the eastern flank of the Peak District National Park, and is an important point of entry to this second-most visited national park in the world. An estimated 20 million people and five of the six biggest cities in England are located within a 75 mile radius of the town.

Summary of socio–economic characteristics

The Borough of Chesterfield has a population of 99,700 (2004 mid year estimate). Ethnic minorities comprise 1.9% of the total population. Overall economic performance (as measured by Gross value Added per head) is only 70% of the national average and 80% of the regional average (2002 figures). This under-performance reflects a range of factors including the historic loss of output as a result of coalfield closures and decline of traditional manufacturing sectors.

48,600 people work in the Borough (2004 figure). The majority work in service based sectors including local government, education and health services reflecting Chesterfield's role as the sub-regional service centre for north eastern Derbyshire. The Royal Mail has a major 'back office' presence and is one of the town's largest employers. Although manufacturing employment has fallen by a third since 1991, Chesterfield retains above average levels of manufacturing employment with a particular focus on metal products and mechanical engineering sectors.

The impact of industrial restructuring and associated job losses is evident in the low level of economic activity amongst residents of the Borough. In 2004-05 the economic activity rate was only 74.6%, compared to 78.3% nationally and 79.0% in the East Midlands. Chesterfield also has a high degree of benefits dependency with 6,440 people claiming either Incapacity Benefit or Severe Disablement Allowance in 2004. This represented 10% of the working age population compared to 7% nationally.

Unemployment in Chesterfield currently stands at 3.4% or 2,072 claimants (1,540 male and 532 female). This compares to 2.5% nationally and is the highest rate in Derbyshire. Although unemployment has fallen significantly since peaking at just over 13% in 1994, most recent figures show a year on year rise of 11.5% (reflecting the rise seen nationally). Four out of the 19 wards in Chesterfield have an unemployment rate more than double the national average. The rate of youth unemployment (below 25 years of age) in Chesterfield is 7.0%, some way above the national rate of 4.7%.

Relatively few people are employed in the higher skilled management and professional occupations whereas relatively more people are employed in lower skill 'elementary' occupations. The average weekly wage in Chesterfield is £367 (2005 figures) compared to £393 in the East Midlands and £427 nationally.

The qualifications profile reflects the occupational profile with fewer people qualified at NVQ 4 or above (Chesterfield 17%, national 25%) and a larger percentage of the workforce having no qualifications (Chesterfield 21%, national 15%).

The number of pupils in Chesterfield schools gaining 5 or more GCSEs at grades A*-C is slightly below the national average but comparable with the regional average (Chesterfield 52.6%, regional 52.3%, national 54.7%).

The Indices of Deprivation 2004 identify Chesterfield as the 66th most deprived district (out of 354 nationally) on the 'rank of average rank' and 'rank of extent' measures.

The socio-economic characteristics set out above underline the challenges facing Chesterfield, but also illustrate a real opportunity to bring about change as a result of the level of investment a regional casino can deliver.

Current level of tourism

Chesterfield is an historic market town located of the edge of the Peak District National Park. Its main attractions are its open air markets and the 'Crooked Spire' of the Parish Church. Other attractions in the vicinity include Chatsworth, Hardwick Hall, Bolsover Castle and Renishaw Hall Gardens. A new Tourist Information Centre (TIC) was opened adjacent to the Church in 2002. The Centre acts as a focal point for visitor enquiries (just over 174,000 people used the Centre in 2005) and also a contact point for information and advice for local tourism businesses. The quality of the tourist information service was recognised nationally when Chesterfield's TIC won the Tourist Information Centre of the Year 'England for Excellence' Award for 2005.

A recent audit of the tourism product in Chesterfield identified 28 establishments offering a total of over a 1000 bed spaces in serviced accommodation. There are also a small number of self-catering units (10) offering a limited number of bed spaces (50). Occupancy of serviced accommodation has been steadily rising in recent years. The local hotels sector has responded by investing in additional capacity and facilities improvement.

Tourism is a 'sunrise' industry in Chesterfield and the neighbouring districts of North East Derbyshire and Bolsover. The latest available (2004) Derbyshire-wide tourism economic impact assessment estimates that the town itself received 3.2 million visitors during the year, of which 92% were day visitors. Visitors generated total tourism revenues of £101.13m which supported 1,847 jobs in the local economy, 4% of the local jobs base.

Derbyshire has the largest county share of the East Midland's regional tourism market. Chesterfield's current share of the Derbyshire visitor economy is 9% by volume and 8% by value, ranking 7th in performance out of the nine Derbyshire local authority areas (including Derby city). Chesterfield's ability to realise its full economic potential from tourism, and especially by increasing the value to volume ratio, is curtailed by a current lack of higher specification business and leisure hotel accommodation – a type of provision that is often associated with casino development.

Local plans and strategies for tourism, leisure and culture

The local framework for the development of tourism is provided by the Economic Development Strategy for Chesterfield and North East Derbyshire (2005-2015). This includes the following tourism related objectives:

- Positively develop the area's image and undertake a range of marketing activities to attract visitors and investment to North Eastern Derbyshire.

- Co-ordinate the delivery of an effective Tourist information Service across North Eastern Derbyshire.
- Organise and enable a range of events to raise the tourism profile of the area.
- Support the development of, and encourage investment in, the area's tourism product and infrastructure.

Our development strategy for tourism looks to position the area as a popular and distinctive visitor destination, capitalising on the town's location as an important gateway to the Peak District National Park. In order to achieve this the Council is working in partnership with North East Derbyshire District Council and the District of Bolsover to promote the area using the branding of *"Peak District's Historic Border Country – Chesterfield and Bolsover"*. Our local area consortium in turn works with the other Derbyshire destination areas through the newly established Peak District and Derbyshire Destination Management Partnership.

The Borough Council is investing significant sums in major town centre public realm improvements for the benefit of residents and visitors alike. A new coach station opened in 2005, the outdoor market is being renovated and a year round programme of town centre events is developing. These include an annual Markets Festival and a new cricket festival, celebrating the return of first class cricket to the recently restored Queen's Park.

The local development of leisure and cultural services is guided by the Community Strategy for Chesterfield and North East Derbyshire (2005-2015), which includes 'Leisure and Culture' as one of its key themes. Five aims are identified:

- Raise awareness and understanding of culture and to champion its benefits.
- Expand the enjoyment and community access to leisure and cultural facilities.
- Support and develop the cultural economy.
- Promote leisure and culture as a means to improve the health and well-being of the community.
- Promote the leisure and cultural benefits offered through the local natural and historic environment.

There are currently no local strategies which deal specifically with gambling. However, an existing proposal for a 'regional destination resort' has outline planning consent and has been safeguarded in the Replacement Chesterfield Local Plan (March 2005). We consider gambling to be an appropriate activity within such a resort. The Plan also includes criteria for the location of casinos. Further details are given in the Probability of Implementation Section.

Principal needs of regeneration in the area

The economy of Chesterfield and North East Derbyshire is going through a long and difficult period of structural change. 15,000 jobs were lost in the coalmining and manufacturing sectors between 1981 and 2002. This has had a significant and adverse effect on the area resulting in high levels of deprivation (66th most deprived area in the country); economic in-activity (Chesterfield's economic activity rate is almost four percentage points below the national average); and the highest rate of unemployment in Derbyshire.

Despite the restructuring that has already taken place, the local economy continues to be overly dependent on manufacturing sectors which are vulnerable to globalisation pressures. The recent announcement of 325 job losses at Chesterfield's largest manufacturing employer, GKN Sheepbridge Stokes, highlights the continuing need to diversify our economic base through a combination of inward investment and indigenous growth.

In response to the above, the Council's Economic Development Strategy sets out the principal needs of regeneration in the area. These include:

- Raising the overall performance of the local economy (as measured by Gross Value Added per head) relative to the regional and national averages.

- Increasing the overall number of employment opportunities in the area.

- Raising the level of employment in higher value / higher wage business sectors.

- Addressing the issue of under employment amongst the working age population, especially in areas of deprivation.

- Increasing the overall level of visitor spend in the local economy.

Testing of social impact

Chesterfield is not an existing casino location and it has relatively few places where gambling and gaming take place. Compared with many of the larger towns and cities that have expressed interest in hosting a regional casino we are relatively something of a blank canvas.

It is our firm intention to see the casino located on the edge of town outside the built-up area. This may well be a distinctly different proposition from the vast majority of other proposals for regional casinos.

A Chesterfield casino will be part of a new and purpose-built regional destination resort. Its scale, character and visitation will be distinctively different to other local regeneration projects and the current milieu.

These three attributes should make the social outcomes of casino development that much clearer to identify and track. Our Local Strategic Partnership brings together all the local voluntary, public and private sector organisations who can bring advice, guidance and expertise to the testing regime. We envisage the LSP performing a standing scrutiny role in the testing of social impact.

SOCIAL IMPACT

In assessing the social impact of locating a casino in the Chesterfield area it is important not to underestimate the potential positive impacts. The development of a regional casino in the Borough will provide significant direct and indirect economic benefits. The employment opportunities, household incomes and sense of purpose that result from being in work will make an important contribution to the social well-being of individuals, their families and the wider community.

The overall quality of life and image of the area will improve, helping to drive a virtuous spiral of positive economic, social and cultural multipliers into effect. Later sections of this bid identify proposals to ensure that local people benefit from the creation of these new jobs.

Research conducted in other areas of the UK and in the USA consistently highlights disturbance from customers, crime and problem gambling as the main social impact risks in the locality of a casino. Development, design, management and monitoring systems can be put in place to address these known risks, and give us early warning of any unanticipated emerging adverse conditions.

Clearly, as recognised in the Panel's guidance, not all the potential intricacies of a regional casino's social impact can be appreciated at this time. That is why the Borough Council will work with the developer, operator, Gambling Commission, Gamcare, its own LSP partners, academic research institutions and others to establish a baseline and long term impact tracking and review methodology that is fit for purpose and becomes a recognised model of good practice.

Resolving negative social impacts

There are potential negative social impacts in locating a Casino in any area. Our task is to plan effective prevention, minimisation, mitigation and remedial strategies.

Crime and the fear of crime

With regard to crime, casinos are often perceived as places that attract people on the margins of society. They are often associated with money laundering, drugs and prostitution. This perception is one that is perpetuated in films and on television. However, the *London on the Cards* report for the London Assembly quotes the Metropolitan Police Clubs and Vice Unit as saying that "organised crime in casino's is actually an image more appropriate to the 1960's". In addition, the report states that there is very little money laundering in London casinos. Under the new legislation the casino industry will, arguably, be one of the most highly and continuously regulated commercial activities in the country. Furthermore, casino operators go through strict probity checks, which has contributed to the eradication of organised crime within casinos.

At present gambling-related crime is not recognised in any crime statistics as a current issue in Chesterfield. Furthermore, Chesterfield has a well regarded and supported Community Safety Partnership which will be consulted closely in the development of the regional casino and their advice will be critical to ensuring that the risk of criminal activity is minimised.

Further, Section 17, of the Crime and Disorder Act places a duty on the local authority to consider the impact of all their functions and decisions upon crime and disorder, clearly the granting of a casino licence will fall into the remit of section 17. In granting the licence, the local authority will have to consider issues such as the safety of those travelling to and from the facility, potential neighbourhood nuisance and any potential criminal activity. In considering these types of issues the local authority, through the Community Safety Partnership, will want to ensure that the casino operator has robust policies in place to negate any potentially negative impacts on crime and disorder as a result of the granting of a licence. For example, ensuring the availability of free soft drinks rather than alcohol, security staff working alongside police to identify problems, the operator becoming part of the Pub Watch scheme which is a scheme designed to enable alcohol licence holders to share information about problem customers. The Community Safety Partnership will be an advisor and consultee in the casino operator tendering process to ensure that all issues of crime and disorder are considered when choosing a suitable operator. As a minimum the operator must have a clear Crime and Disorder Strategy & Management Plan to be agreed through the Community Safety Partnership.

The preferred location of the casino in Chesterfield will also help to ensure that criminal activity is minimised. The casino will form part of a larger gated development, away from urban areas. This type of location would not be conducive to activity such as prostitution or drug dealing as the site will be secured via CCTV and security patrols which would quickly identify and respond to any illegal, nuisance or anti-social activity.

Residential amenity and traffic impacts

Another potentially negative impact would be increased traffic as a result of visitors to and from the casino and the time of arrivals and departures. The obvious impact will be on road traffic levels, noise and safety. It is therefore important to consider the level of neighbourhood nuisance that might result from, for example, people waiting for taxis, those moving to and from the railway station and bus stops.

The location of the casino will ensure that disturbance from customers will be negligible as the casino will not be near housing estates and traffic will not be routed through them. The preferred site in Chesterfield already has a comprehensive green travel plan that was developed in preparation for a regional destination resort and allows for the possibility of a regional casino being included on the site. Although many visitors will come by car, it is debatable whether the inclusion of a casino within a wider tourism/leisure development will impact greatly on the overall volume of traffic to the destination resort. As already stated a casino will only be approved as part of a larger tourism/leisure destination which in practice will mean that many visitors will use more than just the casino in any one visit and may stay overnight. Furthermore, if customers do intend to only use the casino it is likely to be in the evening and therefore outside of daytime peak traffic. It is also likely that many visitors will prefer to arrange access the site via private coach, mini-bus or taxi.

The resort operator, as part of its already approved travel plan, will be running shuttle bus services for staff and customers in the community to and from a range of local collection points including the rail station. Within the resort site careful design of parking and set down areas will minimise noise and maximise safety.

A comprehensive digital camera and information matrix network will be required on and off the resort site, to assist with effective management and incident response.

Problem gambling

One of the greatest social impacts might be considered to be problem gambling as this not only effects the individual gambler but can also have catastrophic implications for their families. There is no baseline position for the level of problem gambling in Chesterfield as gambling in the borough is limited to a small number of bookmakers and bingo halls.

At present information is not collected by any local organisations, however, during the development of the casino proposals baseline positions will be determined in conjunction with organisations such as the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) and the Community Safety Partnership. Gamcare will also be consulted closely to help determine the means by which information might be meaningfully collected and the ways in which problem gamblers and their families could be assisted.

Electronic management systems have been developed in the USA and Australia to assist in the identification of problem gamblers and policies are put in place to assist them. We would insist on the adoption of this best practice in the development of the casino

Locating the regional casino in an out of town, gated setting affords a fundamental advantage to problem gambling risk minimisation and management. What Professor Collins of Salford University calls ‘inconvenient location’, requiring planned travel, coupled with site layout and design which clearly segregates and distinguishes the casino from the other resort features will be a psychological deterrent to impulse and ambient gambling.

If a casino is not part of a mixed use development then the primary motivation to visit will be gambling. Our concept of the casino as an integral ingredient of a regional destination resort presents the casino as one of a number of attractions on offer. For many visitors to the destination, gambling will not be the primary motivation, nor necessarily a secondary purpose and many resort visitors will have no inclination to gamble. For those customers whose motivation is to gamble then it is more likely to be a planned excursion rather than an impulse visit. Careful attention to the interior design and layout of the casino area, its surveillance and customer care practices will all combine in helping customers to exercise self-restraint.

In addition, the potential developer and operator, as part of the planning and licensing processes, will be asked to provide a strategy for and facilities/funding to help deal with problem gambling through the s.106 agreement. This might include funding for an independent scrutiny, educational campaigns and resources support for local organisations dealing with the consequences of problem gambling.

We recognise that one of the groups possibly at greater risk of developing gambling problems could be casino staff, although our fact-finding also suggests that casino operators are especially aware of this and make every effort to minimise the risk. As a minimum Chesterfield Borough Council would expect the operator to put in place rigorous recruitment selection, training and personal development frameworks to ensure that those individuals are matched to suitable roles and environments. Well trained, motivated and aware staff are one of the critical factors in spotting those customers and staff who may be developing vulnerability and thereby help to prevent problem gambling develop. Some current UK operators have adopted a policy whereby casino staff are banned from gambling in the casino in which they work or any other casino operated by the group. As a licensing, planning and environmental health authority we will seek advice from trades unions on matters concerning the well-being of staff employed in the casino and the wider resort. The GMB and USDAW are amongst the organisations that we have briefed about this Proposal.

It is important to recognise that problem gamblers will form the minority of users of a new stand alone type casino and it would be unfair to penalise the majority who will enjoy the casino in a responsible manner because a very small minority face problems as a result. Information provided to the East Midlands Development Agency by Gamcare suggests that only 3% of the population take part in gambling and out of 11.2million visits to casinos during 2004, they only received 126 calls relating to problem gambling.

Gambling is a lawful activity but like any other realm where freedom of choice is involved there is a risk of harm to individuals and their families, and the wider community. As a licensing and planning authority, working in tandem with the Gambling Commission, we intend to implement the most comprehensive casino control, scrutiny and enforcement regime that the law allows.

Location is a key consideration and we have a good policy framework already in place for that aspect. The casino must be located outside the existing built-up area in a gated site and will only be approved as a part of a larger regional destination resort offering a variety of activities. We see this as an essential ingredient in our social harm risk minimisation and management strategy.

Existing level of gambling in the area

There have been no recent assessments of the impact of existing gambling in the area. There are no casinos operating in the Chesterfield area and advice organisations such as CAB do not collect information on problem gambling. A report prepared by Hall Aitken on the 'Social and Economic Impacts of Regional Casinos in the UK' provides estimates of the level of problem gambling amongst the populations of each of the major conurbations including Sheffield. As Chesterfield forms part of the Sheffield City Region these figures are the closest comparison we can make. The report suggests that of the 1,280,000 population within a 30 minute drive time of Sheffield, the estimated number of problem gamblers is 10,240. This figure is equal to the national average of 0.8%. This indicates that the issue of problem gambling in our area is no better or no worse than anywhere else in the country.

Social cohesion and sustainability of communities

As a local authority, Chesterfield Borough Council is experienced at working with its communities and would not embark on a venture that would pose an unacceptable risk of detrimental effect to social cohesion. If a casino is to be licensed in the Chesterfield area it won't be located within a specific community. As already stated the casino will only be approved as part of a larger leisure destination within a gated site. This in practice will mean that people have to make a conscious decision to go to the casino and participate in gambling activities. Many studies recognise that ambient gambling, the opportunity to gamble in an environment that you have not specifically visited with the intention of gambling, such as slot machines in a pub, is a greater contributor to the level of problem gambling than destination gambling. Online gambling poses a far greater risk to local social cohesion, in our opinion, than a regional casino located in Chesterfield.

With regard to sustainability of local communities, rather than being a negative impact, communities closest to the development may benefit through improved job opportunities leading to better quality of life and greater social cohesion. Employment is recognised as a key pre-condition of improved quality of life. The link between employment, lower crime and anti-social behaviour, better health and overall quality of life in neighbourhoods and throughout the community at large is well understood.

Measuring social impact

Key partners including the Primary Care Trust, Police, Voluntary and Community Sector, County Council etc will be involved in monitoring social impacts. The Primary Care Trust has suggested that a wider Health Impact Assessment could be undertaken as part of a baseline study to determine the current position on a range of social criteria. This will provide an excellent benchmark from which regular monitoring can take place. The indicators developed within the initial baseline study will be monitored and reported on annually to ascertain what the impacts of the casino have been. Where necessary partners will agree action that needs to be taken to deal with any negative impacts that may be highlighted by the study.

Comparable initiatives in place to manage social impact

Whilst there are no directly comparable initiatives in place, there are a number of mixed use regeneration schemes operating in the Chesterfield area which in terms of impact might be considered to be comparable. For example, developments at Markham Vale and Junction 29a, the development of the A61 corridor and the Bryan Donkin site. The Council aims to ensure that local opportunity is maximised through the development of regeneration activities. The Community Safety Partnership is involved in a number of initiatives within the Town Centre to reduce social impact to which the casino operator could become a part of or could replicate. The Pub Watch and Shop Watch schemes mentioned previously is an example of such an initiative.

Job creation and training programmes

The organisation responsible for developing the regional resort destination, in consultation with the preferred operator, must be able to clearly demonstrate how it intends to utilise the local labour market through training provision and measures to recruit local people. This would help to ensure that local people benefit from the opportunities the casino (as part of a wider regional resort destination) might offer in the construction and operation phases of development.

Chesterfield College already provide courses to cover 80-90% of the required skills set for a casino of regional significance. It has an excellent reputation for the provision of courses in leisure and hospitality management and has links with higher education institutions such as Sheffield Hallam University and the University of Derby. Chesterfield College has indicated that it would wish to see a centre of excellence developed through the creation of an on site faculty at the new casino. New courses within this faculty will be developed through consultation with experienced casino operators, to ensure that there is a fully skilled workforce available locally to take advantage of the new development. In time we would expect the regional destination resort to achieve peer-recognised excellence in staff development and customer service, setting a benchmark quality standard and raising standards locally, regionally and nationally. The prospective developer shares this aspiration.

Relationships with relevant voluntary and public organisations

The community safety partnership will be a key partner in both determining the baseline position with regard to potential social impacts such as levels of gambling related crime and problem gambling and also in measuring any changes over time as a result of the proposed casino development. In addition the local CAB will be approached to help monitor any increases in the level of advice offered as a result of problem gambling.

Chesterfield Borough Council is a member of the CHART Local Strategic Partnership, which is made up of senior representatives of: the police, the Primary Care Trust, Derbyshire County Council, Learning and Skills Council, Chamber of Commerce, North East Derbyshire District Council, Chesterfield College, Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service and Chesterfield Borough Council. Chesterfield Borough Council has sought opinion from CHART on the council's intention to submit this application for a casino licence. It is our intention to request that CHART LSP acts as the monitoring intermediary for the proposed regional casino (and wider leisure destination) as it has the potential to significantly impact on the delivery of the Community Strategy. Partners will have a key role to play throughout the development of the proposals and in particular once a casino is operational, partners will be involved in base-lining and monitoring its impact.

NEED FOR REGENERATION

The principal regeneration needs of the area, together with information on employment status and activity rates, were summarised earlier. The Council, in partnership with the private sector and a range of other agencies, is seeking to bring forward a range of initiatives to address these regeneration 'challenges'. These include implementing a Town Centre Master Plan, completed in 2004, which seeks to strengthen retail, commercial, cultural and leisure facilities in the town. Projects within the Masterplan include a new coach station (opened in 2005) and major public realm improvements to the Markets area (in progress). The Council has successfully bid for Townscape Heritage Initiative funding from the Heritage Lottery and this will deliver £3 million of public and private sector investment in the town centre over the next five years.

The A61 Sheffield – Chesterfield – Alfreton corridor is another local focus for investment and regeneration. A major private sector office, retail and residential development is underway at the town centre's 'southern gateway' where the A617 Mansfield-Buxton route meets the A61. A masterplan has been published for the adjacent central Chesterfield segment of the A61 Corridor, which covers a number of brownfield sites in close proximity to Chesterfield town centre. This area has potential for a high quality, high density mixed use development, alongside the Chesterfield Canal and the River Hipper. Proposals include an 'urban village' centred around a new canal basin and up to 60,000 sqm of employment floorspace. The Council is currently in discussion with private sector developers to bring the scheme forward. The Council's preferred site for a regional casino lies two miles further north along the A61 corridor, in open countryside.

Derbyshire County Council is leading the redevelopment of the former Markham Colliery site on the eastern edge of the borough, and this scheme includes the creation of a new motorway junction on the M1 (junction 29A). This will improve connectivity between the M1 motorway and the Council's preferred site for a regional casino via the A619 and A61.

Additional economic value of the proposal

A regional casino will trigger the delivery of a range of economic benefits to the area. These include:

- Accelerating diversification of the economic base. New business activities will help to off-set the decline of traditional manufacturing sectors. Major capital investment will create supplier opportunities for local companies, and these will be maximised through the use of local supply networks.
- Acting as a catalyst for the physical redevelopment of a wider area. A regional casino will act as a catalyst to a range of associated developments (such as hotel accommodation, conference and leisure facilities), delivering a leisure based destination attraction of regional significance.
- Effecting a positive change in the image of the area. The creation of an entertainment 'destination' will have a positive impact on the external image and perception of Chesterfield and the coalfield area which is currently dominated by industrial decline.
- Creating a significant number of employment opportunities. Direct job creation in the casino complex and indirect job creation through local procurement of goods and services by the casino operator. An increase in visitor expenditure will also support employment creation in the wider area.
- Delivery of skills training opportunities for local people. It will be a requirement that a skills training 'academy' is created on site to ensure local people are properly equipped to secure employment within the development. Existing community economic development relationships will be harnessed and strengthened to help residents in the areas of greatest need to capture the new opportunities for training and work.

A number of studies have considered the likely GVA and employment generating potential of regional casinos. These include the Pion Econometrics assessment of market demand for casinos in the North West of England, which estimated that regional casinos may typically generate £50 million of GVA per annum. A report by the London Assembly on proposals for new casinos in London noted that an estimate of 1,500 – 2,000 FTE (full time equivalent) jobs seemed reasonable for a regional casino. This figure recognised that in addition to direct jobs at the casino, employment would also be created in associated hotel, catering and leisure related activities.

Within the Borough of Chesterfield, there is an existing proposal for a ‘regional destination resort’ incorporating a regional casino. Details of the proposal are set out under ‘Probability of Implementation’. An independent market appraisal and economic impact assessment of the proposal has been undertaken on behalf of East Midlands Tourism (EMT). This has identified that the proposal would generate between £53 million and £81 million per annum in GVA for the regional economy (see below for a more detailed consideration). The assessment also considered the employment generation potential of the scheme in both the construction phase and once the scheme is operational. The consultants estimate that construction would generate 1,800 FTE jobs and £174 million of local expenditure for one year of construction. When completed the development will provide 2,500 FTES on site, including 700 FTES directly related to the casino. The balance of 1,800 FTE new jobs, effectively enabled by the casino, is the key additional economic benefit secured by inserting a regional casino into the existing destination resort proposal.

Local regeneration impact

Chesterfield is a relatively small geographical area. We expect that a regional casino located anywhere within its boundaries will deliver significant regeneration benefits across the whole of the Borough and neighbouring districts.

The need for regeneration is clearly recognised with Chesterfield identified as being one of the most deprived 20% of districts nationally on the Indices of Deprivation. Within the Borough there is a particular issue around ‘employment deprivation’ with approximately 25% of Chesterfield residents living in areas identified as being amongst the most deprived 10% in the country. Securing a regional casino provides a means to directly address this issue through the creation of a large number of employment opportunities. These will be accessible and available to jobseekers in the greater Chesterfield area. Chesterfield is located in the former North Derbyshire and North Nottinghamshire coalfield, a priority area for regeneration following pit closures and manufacturing job losses over the last 20 years. There are currently just over 11,000 claimant count unemployed residents in the coalfield. The EMT study estimates that the proposed development in Chesterfield will have a total employment impact of between 4,060 and 5,340 FTEs (see below). A regional casino can therefore catalyze a significant reduction in local unemployment levels, perhaps moving us from a relatively worse position compared to the regional average, to a relatively better than average position.

Consideration will be given to specific initiatives which increase the prospects of those people living in the most deprived communities obtaining employment at the proposed development. The links established between a major inward investor (Sports World) and the community of Shirebrook in Bolsover provides a local example of good practice in this field. In addition, Chesterfield Borough Council works to ensure that local people are able to fully participate in the regeneration of their own communities. Links with Community Forums, Tenant Associations, Community Economic Development Workers and Staveley Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder Project will ensure people are consulted and engaged from early stages of development.

Chesterfield has a high level of youth unemployment, and it is anticipated that this age group will particularly benefit from the types of employment opportunity on offer in a regional destination resort enabled by a casino. Links will also be encouraged with local initiatives designed to assist those on Incapacity Benefit back into employment.

The balance of economic benefits

An independent assessment of the proposed ‘regional destination resort’ to be located within Chesterfield demonstrates how the additional economic activity generated by the proposal outweighs the potential leakage of money from the local area.

It is accepted that the operators of a regional casino and associated developments are likely to be national or international companies and therefore any ‘profits’ are unlikely to be retained in the local economy. However a regional destination resort will generate a multi-million pound turnover, and there are a number of ways in which part of this can be ‘captured’ for the benefit of the local area.

The positive local impacts can be summarised as:

Direct effect – jobs created at the casino and in associated leisure related activities, together with the expenditure generated locally through the spending of staff. Direct job creation for the proposed development has been identified as 2,500 FTES. It is anticipated that the majority of staff will be recruited locally (see section on ‘leakage’ below) and the area will benefit as a result of expenditure by these staff in the locality.

Indirect effect – the local purchase of goods and services. The study for EMT illustrates that the proposed development will generate net additional annual revenues of £65m - £115m dependent upon which of three scenarios is adopted (see ‘market demand’). Within the hotel and restaurant sector, research has shown that approximately 64% of annual turnover goes on capital expenditure and the purchase of goods and services. Taking this sector as a proxy for the whole development, this would equate to turnover of between £42m and £74m. Based on other studies the consultants’ estimate that 50% of this expenditure would ‘leak’ out of the study area through the purchase of goods and services from companies based outside the region. This would result in retained regional expenditure of between £21 million and £37 million annually. However, it is our intention to maximise local sourcing opportunities both through the Derbyshire Chamber of Commerce (headquartered in Chesterfield) and by making use of Derbyshire County Council’s *Source Derbyshire* initiative. Other indirect effects would include expenditure by visitors in the local economy, but away from the actual development. For example a regional destination resort would generate a large number of trips to the area and some of these visitors may choose to stay in accommodation not connected to the development and make excursions from the resort centre.

The induced or ‘multiplier’ effect – this represents the process by which the initial expenditure of the development, staff and visitors generates further rounds of expenditure in the local economy. The induced effect is typically 10-20% of the direct and indirect effects.

Taking account of all of the above factors (direct expenditure of wages, local purchase of goods and services, visitors staying outside of the development, and the induced impact), the total expenditure impact of the proposal would be in the range £53 million - £81 million. This represents the additional GVA that would be added to the regional economy as a result of the proposed development.

However, two factors will act to reduce the positive impacts outlined above – ‘leakage’ and ‘displacement’.

Leakage represents the benefits that accrue to other locations, for example jobs taken by people, and goods and services provided by businesses, from outside the target area. Displacement refers to any reduction in existing activity within the locality as a direct result of the new development. The majority of employment in casinos and leisure related activities tends to be lower skilled (exceptions being management related activities and croupiers on the gaming tables). It is not cost effective for lower paid workers to travel long distances so it is likely that staff will be mainly drawn from the local labour market of Chesterfield and the adjacent districts of North East Derbyshire, Bolsover, Sheffield, Bassetlaw, Mansfield and Rotherham. A number of these districts have low employment rates and therefore potentially have the capacity to absorb employment demand from any proposed development. If that is the case then employment ‘leakage’ from the coalfield area will be relatively low (the assessment undertaken on behalf of EMT estimates that 70% of employment will be retained in the East Midlands and 30% will be taken up by residents of Sheffield and Rotherham). Leakage through procurement of goods and services from outside the area has already been referenced under ’indirect effect’, where a 50% allowance has been made.

With no existing casinos in Chesterfield and North Eastern Derbyshire, displacement effects should be low. Some displacement effects may occur if there is any significant diversion of 'discretionary spend' from other local leisure activities such as visiting bars, restaurants, cinema and bingo. The independent assessment of the proposal estimates an employment displacement factor of 10%. The net effect of leakage and displacement is to reduce the regional employment gain to 1,575 FTE new jobs (although it should be noted that jobs 'lost' through leakage are actually going to residents in the wider Sheffield City Region).

The total employment impact of the scheme can be determined by calculating the additional employment created as a result of the net increase in expenditure (identified above) and adding it to the net local direct jobs created. This results in a total wide-area employment impact of between 4,060 FTE's and 5,340 FTE's.

In summary, the additional GVA impact of a regional casino-enabled resort development in Chesterfield will be in the range £53 million - £81 million per annum and the net employment gain will be in the order of 4,060 FTE's to 5,340 FTE's.

WILLINGNESS TO LICENCE

The Council's responses to the Casino Advisory Panel's current and previous invitations demonstrate that it is not minded to pass a s.166 'no casinos' resolution. Both this current proposal and the previous expression of interest were approved by the Council's Cabinet, which considered, and rejected, 'not to bid' options. Cabinet decisions have the delegated authority of full Council. Copies of the Minutes can be supplied on request.

Given these recent decisions plus the existing local strategic policy framework for social, economic and environmental well-being, and known developer interest in Chesterfield as a regional casino location, it is unlikely that the Council's intention will change. It is not likely to propose a s.166 resolution when it publishes its draft Licensing Policy Statement for consultation during the summer. However, like all other licensing authorities, we cannot give an absolute guarantee of our willingness to license until our Licensing Policy Statement is formally adopted. Our Licensing Policy Statement will be adopted in December 2006, before the Panel is required to report to the Secretary of State. Before then we will be able to report further on the extent and outcome of local consultations, if Chesterfield is short-listed for more detailed examination in the Panel's Stage 3 process.

Our draft Licensing Policy Statement consultation process will be fit for purpose. It is unlikely to include opinion poll research but it will provide the opportunity for a wide range of local bodies and individuals to express their points of view. CHART LSP, the Community Safety Partnership, Community Forums, Town Centre Partnership and Chamber of Commerce are identified as key consultation intermediaries as well as consultees in their own right. During March the Council is informing them of its decision to submit this Proposal to the Panel, and giving them advance notice of its intention to consult them on a draft Licensing Policy Statement later this year. The CHART LSP Forum was briefed on 17th March.

The current programme of briefings extends to other organisations including Chesterfield College (the main local FE college); the Parish and Town Councils (one of each) within the borough; neighbouring district councils (North East Derbyshire and Bolsover); Derbyshire County Council, local Members of Parliament; the East Midlands Regional Assembly (regional planning body); the Alliance Sub-Regional Strategic Partnership (covering the former coalfield areas of north-east Derbyshire and north Nottinghamshire) and the Peak District & Derbyshire Destination Management Partnership (DMP), our sub-regional tourism marketing and development organisation. The Council's decision to submit this Proposal has also been reported in the 'Derbyshire Times', the local and sub-regional weekly newspaper for north Derbyshire.

Resolutions of support are not being sought at this briefing stage, but the informal and initial reaction of briefed organisations appears to be positive. The Council believes that it is better to invite considered comments simultaneously on all matters relating to licensing policy rather than take the issue of casino licensing in advance and out of context. The Council will consider all representations on its proposed policy and the development of casinos, be they expressions of support or objections, with its customary rigour and transparency.

The Panel is already aware that Chesterfield has been identified as the preferred location for a regional casino in the East Midlands region by East Midlands Tourism and its parent body the East Midlands Development Agency (emda letter dated 22nd December to the Panel refers.) Emda has recently confirmed its position in a letter dated 24th March to the Borough Council.

Relevant tourism, economic development, community strategy and local plan policies, and a relevant planning permission which also demonstrate our intent to license a casino are referred to elsewhere in this proposal. The Council considers that being awarded the right to license a regional casino in Chesterfield is the key to unlocking this regionally significant investment project and capturing sustainable net benefits for our community, the wider coalfield sub-region and the Sheffield City Region.

PROBABILITY OF IMPLEMENTATION

Within the Borough, there is an existing proposal for a regional destination resort (incorporating a regional casino) which is already at an advanced stage of development. The proposed site, currently referred to as the Birchall Estate, is located on the northern edge of Chesterfield, five miles south of Sheffield. The site is a former open cast mining site and extends to approximately 120 hectares. The site has been reclaimed and is currently being used as an 18 hole private golf course prior to the implementation of this proposal.

Proposed development of the Birchall Estate has been a prospect for a number of years and outline planning consent has been granted for a leisure and business based scheme incorporating hotel and lodge based accommodation. The developer, Raven Leisure Limited, has changed its site development concept in the last two years as the opportunity to develop new casinos has emerged. The current proposal, for which a Masterplan has been prepared by the architect Will Alsop, envisages an all-weather, entertainment and business resort, designed to compete as a tourist destination 365 days per year. Its facilities will include:

- A regional casino gambling and gaming area of 6,000 sqm (gross)
- A 350 bedroom leisure resort hotel
- A dedicated conference and business hotel with 150 bedrooms
- 266 high specification woodland lodges each accommodating up to four people
- A wellness spa
- A 5,000 sqm exhibition, performance and convention centre
- A world standard indoor waterpark
- An 18 hole golf course and country club
- 3,000 car parking spaces
- A ‘green’ utilities infrastructure dealing with all the site’s energy, waste and water requirements. It is intended that the development will be an international showcase for sustainable development and environmental technologies.

Outline planning consent, and related section 106 Planning Agreement and green travel plan, exists for a mix of all these uses except for the proposed gambling element of the regional casino. The casino gambling area will account for not more than10% of the total floorspace already approved in the original consent, but will require planning consent following imminent reclassification of casinos as a *sui generis* type of development. The prospective developer is a well-founded property development company listed on the Alternative Investment Market. It has development rights on the entire site.

Market demand

A market appraisal of the Birchall Estate proposal has been completed by consultants Scott Wilson Kirkpatrick (on behalf of EMT). They assessed each component of the regional destination resort and made projections for both visitor numbers and revenue generation potential.

They considered three scenarios (conservative, envisaged, optimistic) for each of the components to reflect different levels of use/occupancy. For example, for the regional casino the scenarios are based on the following assumptions:

Conservative – current market conditions will prevail; the current propensity to gamble will remain unchanged.

Envisaged – an increase of 40% above current market visitation, allowing for an increased propensity for repeat visit and an increase in penetration levels.

Optimistic – an increase to 90% above current market visitation, allowing for a considerable increase in penetration levels.

The consultants estimate gross annual visitor numbers and revenue generation potential for the regional destination resort as follows:

Scenario	Gross Visitor Numbers	Gross Revenue
Conservative	1,687,433	£90,557,053
Envisaged	2,317,314	£124,075,574
Optimistic	3,020,106	£160,836,552

Within the above, specific figures for the Chesterfield regional casino are:

Scenario	Gross Visitor Numbers	Gross Revenue
Conservative	881,767	£55,551,364
Envisaged	1,250,000	£78,750,000
Optimistic	1,685,655	£106,196,276

The consultants apply two further sensitivity tests to adjust the visitor figures to eliminate double counting that would otherwise occur if a casino visitor also visited another resort facility (or vice versa):

Scenario	Annual number of visitor to resort if 30% of casino visitors also use other resort facilities	Annual number of visitors if 50% of casino visitors also use other resort facilities
Conservative	1,422,903	1,246,550
Envisaged	1,942,314	1,692,314
Optimistic	2,514,410	2,177,279

Even at its lowest forecast level, at 1.25 million visits annually, the regional destination resort would represent the largest single site attractor of day visits and largest single site provider of overnight stays in the East Midlands. At its highest level (2.5 million) this would represent a purpose built resort with similar visitor levels to Alton Towers.

Catchment area and customer base

Market demand will be generated by both day visitors and overnight stays. The location of the proposal is such that five of the six largest cities are within a 70 mile radius, providing a catchment population of over 20 million people. Recognising the fact that a regional casino is (potentially) a unique proposition in the country, it is anticipated that day visitors will be drawn from across this wider catchment area (greater than one hour drive time), rather than just from the immediate locality. However it is expected that the one hour travel-time catchment, and greater Sheffield in particular, will provide the primary core of day and repeat visitors to the casino.

Given the all-weather, all-year mix of uses on site, it is expected that the development will have national appeal to both leisure and business markets, attracting over-night stays from across the country.

As well as attracting many staying guests in its own right, a regional casino will enhance the attraction of the overall development to both the leisure and business markets. For example, the provision of a resort hotel and spa facility is likely to appeal to a more up-market visitor segment, either couples at the pre-family stage or empty nesters, who may also be attracted by the provision of a casino.

The casino will appeal to the business market, particularly to conference and exhibition organisers seeking to provide competitive and high quality settings for their events. The experience of Las Vegas, which has now developed into a major conference venue as well as gambling destination, demonstrates the business synergy between these two uses.

The development will gain additional benefit from its location on the edge of the Peak District National Park, the second most visited national park in the world. Visitors will be able to combine visits to the Park with the facilities of a regional destination resort, particularly the high standard of accommodation offered by the woodland lodges and leisure hotel. The resort will also help to retain a greater proportion of discretionary leisure spending by local residents, in the area. Public footpaths and good cycling routes directly link the resort site to the nearby national park and will provide an alternative to private car travel into the park.

Criteria for the location of a casino

The *Replacement Chesterfield Borough Local Plan* provides the land use and locational policy framework for casino development in the borough. Policy SC 10 (PROPOSALS FOR AMUSEMENT CENTRES AND CASINOS) states that planning permission will be granted for amusement centres and casinos provided they satisfy a number of specific criteria designed to:

- Prevent harm to visual amenity and the amenities of surrounding areas
- Exclude the possibility of locating in primary shopping frontages or in proximity to housing or schools
- Protect the viability and vitality of shopping centres
- Ensure locational suitability from a traffic and highway safety perspective.

Policy EP10 (ECODOME PROPOSAL) safeguards a specific site, the Birchall Estate, “for development of the Ecodome leisure project in accordance with the planning permission for the site”. The Council considers the Birchall site to be its preferred location for a regional casino. Indeed, the existing planning consent permits all the non-gambling components of a regional casino, or what we consider is better described as a regional destination resort.

The Plan is at the Public Inquiry stage at present. The hearings have finished and we expect the Inspector to formally close the Inquiry in early April. We are not anticipating any changes that would significantly alter policy framework for casino location. The policy on casino location criteria did not attract any objections during the formal public consultation stages of plan preparation.

Existing and proposed transport infrastructure

Chesterfield has excellent road links to and from the M1 motorway at junction 29 and 30, the addition of J29A will see significant improvements to those links providing three routes into the area. The public transport infrastructure is also good with the town being served by a railway station which forms part of the Midland Mainline providing excellent access to key towns and cities both in the north and to the south. The town is just a two hour train journey from London and is also served by major cross country services connecting North East England with the South West, and the North West with East Anglia. Nottingham East Midlands Airport and the new Robin Hood Airport near Doncaster are 45 minutes travel time from Chesterfield. There is an excellent local bus service network. Taxis are numerous and cheap. The site will be well served by public transport and by its own fleet of shuttle bus connections, provided as part of the Green Travel Plan.

The preferred location on which a regional casino might be located has planning approval for a large leisure based complex. The addition of a casino is not expected to generate a significant increase in road users as people will use the attraction for other reasons as well as the casino and the existing consent already permits a generous level of parking. In addition as highlighted in the social impact section, the peak time for day visits to the casino is likely to be between the hours of 8pm and midnight, outside of daytime peak travel. The existing dual carriageway approach roads to the site should be able to cope with the additional traffic. Although the approved site would be gated, it is not proposed that fees will be charged on entry to the facility but that people will 'pay for what they use'. This will avoid traffic queues whilst people pay on entry. Visitors will be able to book day visits in advance, a comprehensive network of roadside traffic management information will be installed and strict limits on maximum visitor 'in grounds' capacity will be set and enforced. We do not anticipate the need for off-site highways investment, beyond what is already provisioned by the s.106 and the Highways Authority's capital programme.

Current provision for gambling

There are no casinos in Chesterfield. The nearest are three small ones in Sheffield. There are 16 betting shops and 2 bingo halls in the area. There are no racecourses and the nearest dog racing track is located in Sheffield. As elsewhere, there is widespread access to scratch cards and the national lottery. Broadband access to online gambling and gaming is available, although the current percentage of local households with home access to a computer is believed to be below the national average.

The impact of competition

Scott Wilson's appraisal of the Birchall Estate proposal identifies a displacement effect of 10%. The proposed development is a major new attraction of regional significance and there are few 'competing' gambling and gaming outlets in the area. At the local scale, there is some possibility of gambling expenditure displacement amongst the 16 Betting Shops and two Bingo Halls (already factored into the 10% displacement figure above).

There are 3 casinos located in Sheffield and it is likely they will see some degree of displacement as a result of this proposal. However each of these casinos are very small scale and serve predominantly localised catchments. For example the casino closest to Chesterfield (located in the South West of Sheffield on Ecclesall Road) is used by local people as much for its restaurant and the opportunity for a late drink, as it is for gambling.

Critical mass effect

The regional casino will act as a catalyst to the development of a range of business and leisure tourism- based activities which includes a waterpark, conference centre, spa and hotel accommodation. Together these will create a critical mass of attractions which have the potential to be the largest resort destination in the East Midlands.

As an all-weather, all-year destination, the proposed development represents a significant opportunity for the East Midlands to strengthen its product offering and increase the volume and value of both overnight and leisure day visits. The Consultants note that each of the components provides growth opportunities for tourism in the region (in fact it is this mix of uses that is likely to ensure the sustainability of this proposal). They recognise that the proposal could be used as a potentially iconic development within the East Midlands, such as the Eden Project for Cornwall and the Sage in Gateshead. In their words, "the development would epitomise the aspirations of the East Midlands, and would demonstrate an enthusiasm for major investment within the region".

The assessment also considered the likely impact on employment if a large casino is approved instead of a regional casino. Revenue earnings potential is significantly reduced with a large casino. This is caused by the prescribed difference in format. Overall it was estimated that casino revenue would drop from over £51 million to approximately £11 million. The consequence of the reduction in revenue will be to reduce the impact of visitor spend in the wider economy through direct, indirect and induced effects. For example, a large casino would not have the same 'pull' factor in generating large numbers of visits to the area, particularly overnight stays. This would have a knock-on effect on visitor numbers to other attractions within the overall scheme. Based on the conservative scenario (which is more likely to be the most realistic scenario with a large casino), employment prospects are reduced to 2,518, a drop of 1,500. This includes a reduction in direct employment at the casino from 700 FTE's to 350 FTE's.

With significantly reduced revenues, there is also a question mark over the deliverability of the wider scheme given the cross subsidy effect of a regional casino. It is anticipated that if a licence for a large casino was granted, the scheme might still go ahead, but development would take place in two or three phases and over a much longer timescale, with a lower net regeneration dividend for Chesterfield.

Investment potential

The resort scheme is developer led and has a private sector capital funding requirement of £300 million. No public sector 'pump-priming' or 'knock-on' investment need has been identified to date.

Current level of investor interest

A potential site for a large scale regional destination resort has already been awarded outline planning consent. The site would be suitable for and capable of accommodating a regional casino. There is both developer and operator interest in developing this site and if a regional casino licence were awarded the whole development could go ahead in one phase. Several hotel and specialist leisure facility operators and management companies are in informal discussions with the site owner and lead developer. Approximately £5 million has already been spent on reclaiming the land in preparation for the development of a regional destination resort.

The prospective resort developer has had detailed discussions with at least two potential casino operators but we are advised that there are no arrangements or commitments in place that would prevent an open competition for licenses. The developer fully appreciates that there will be an open market competition for prospective casino operators in due course.

Gambling spend

The report prepared for East Midlands Tourism on the Birchall Estate proposal estimates that a regional casino will attract (under the 'conservative' scenario) 882,000 visitors a year and generate £55.5 million in revenue. Clearly this will represent a large increase in gambling expenditure in the locality but the majority of this revenue will be generated by visitors from outside the area, rather than local residents. Whilst it is anticipated that local gambling spend will also increase, the degree of increase is difficult to predict because there is no real evidence on how markets or 'propensity to gamble' will change following the introduction of regional casinos.

REGIONAL AND LOCAL CONTEXT

The Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) provides the broad development strategy for the East Midlands up to 2021. The RSS contains more detailed policies for the region's five sub areas, including the 'Northern Sub Area', covering the former North Derbyshire and North Nottinghamshire coalfield. The RSS notes that the area has been subject to major structural change with the loss of some 55,000 jobs since 1981. As a result 'it is crucial that the sub-area develops a viable new economic base that will support healthy and vibrant communities'. The RSS notes that the sub-regional centres (Chesterfield, Mansfield and Worksop) should remain the focus of economic activity and 'the greatest and most sustainable opportunities for regeneration will frequently be in or on the edges of the sub-regional centres'.

The current **Regional Spatial Strategy** does not contain any casino-specific policies. The Regional Planning Body has decided to develop policy in its current Regional Plan review. A consultative draft is expected to be available in September 2006.

The draft **Regional Economic Strategy**, currently out to consultation, sets the framework for ensuring the long term sustainable economic growth of the region. The draft strategy includes policies to support the growth of the visitor economy with a priority action identified as: 'increase visitor spending in the region, particularly from staying and inbound visitors with support to encourage investment in new hotels and business tourism facilities'. The Strategy also provides a sub-regional breakdown, with a key challenge for the Northern Sub-Area identified as addressing the high level of unemployment and associated ill health. It also states that 'physical regeneration and economic renewal will remain major long term priorities for the sub area'.

The **East Midlands Tourism Strategy** 'Destination East Midlands' provides the framework for the development of tourism up to 2010. Priority is given to investment that supports iconic brands, creates destinations, encourages high value staying tourism; protects and improves the region's primary tourism assets of high quality natural and historic environment. The strategy recognises the need for key projects 'that are expected to have a major impact on the region as a tourism destination'. Whilst not specifically referencing the role of casinos (the strategy was prepared in 2003) it notes that major projects will be assessed against the objectives and principles in the strategy and 'other economic development, regeneration and environmental objectives'.

The Corporate Plan (2005-2008) of the **Alliance SSP (Sub-Regional Strategic Partnership)** sets out the following vision for the former coalfield of North Derbyshire and North Nottinghamshire: "We will be recognised as a dynamic and leading contributor to the wealth and future economic success of the East Midlands". Achieving this requires a 'catch-up phase' during which the per capita sub-regional GVA grows at a faster rate than other parts of the region. It notes that the largest sub-regional centres (Chesterfield and Mansfield) have not acted as growth drivers in the same way as other large settlements in the East Midlands. As such the SSP is 'looking to support projects which will address these strategic deficiencies'. A second key barrier to overcome is the challenge of those communities which formerly relied on coalmining and ancillary businesses. They often form pockets of deprivation where issues of low aspirations, low levels of entrepreneurial activity, poor education and skill levels are major areas of concern.

The redeposit version of the **Replacement Chesterfield Local Plan** (March 2005) includes a land use policy in support of the Ecodome proposal (the previous name given to the Birchall Estate proposal). The Plan notes that 'the development of the Ecodome as a major new visitor attraction would be a significant boost to revitalising the local economy and increasing the number of overnight stays'. The Council is awaiting the outcome of the Local Plan Public Inquiry following which the Plan will be adopted and saved under the transitional arrangements until replaced by the Local Development Framework documents.

Outline planning consent exists for a mix of all the proposed uses apart from the regional casino. The prospective developer proposes that regional casino gambling area will account for about 10% of the floorspace already approved in the original planning consent. Work on the permitted proposal has moved forward in the last year with the acceptance of a Green Travel Plan and the subsequent signing of a s.106 agreement. A Reserved Matters planning application for the original scheme is being prepared for submission to the Council (as local planning authority) later this year. A planning application for the casino element will also be submitted if Chesterfield is short-listed as a potential casino licensing authority.

Achievement of regional economic objectives

Regional casino development in Chesterfield will make a major contribution to the achievement of the Regional Development Agency's headline targets. These include:

Development = 1,816 FTE jobs created or supported during construction phase, and between 4,000 and 5,300 FTE jobs created or supported in the East Midlands during operation. This represents between 65% and 87% of the regional development agency's job creation target.

Development = represents £300 million of inward investment and the introduction or expansion of key branded companies within the region. No quantitative target is set at regional level.

Development = £300 million private sector investment, a sum 3.6 times greater than the regional total target

Development = 121 hectares of land developed for employment purposes on a former open-cast mining site, equivalent to 93% of the regional target for this indicator.

Development is expected to provide a sizeable contribution to the regional target of 855 adults within the workforce that are supported in achieving NVQ level 2 qualifications or better.

COMMUNITY BENEFITS

The planning process will identify a robust Section 106 agreement, taking into account factors including the requirement for policies and procedures to be in place to ensure that residents of Chesterfield and the surrounding area benefit from training and employment opportunities associated with the development of the complex. This will ensure that local people will have the opportunity to improve their quality of life through employment and training opportunities that might otherwise not have been available to them.

A green travel plan has been developed as part of the Section 106 agreement relating to the site of the regional destination resort. This will be reviewed through the planning process in light of the addition of a casino on to the site. The green travel plan will improve the transport infrastructure of the surrounding area for the benefit of resort workers, visitors and the local resident community.

In addition, the developer is committed to implementing road safety improvements, improvements to rights of way, leisure footpaths and cycle routes and the provision of a community multi-purpose building in the nearby village of Unstone.

UNIQUE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PROPOSAL

A regional casino in Chesterfield will act as the catalyst to the development of a far larger 'regional destination resort' which has the potential to deliver a transformational impact in an area of significant regeneration need.

Our proposal will transform the regeneration process of this coalfield area, giving it profile, a modern and iconic image, momentum and new jobs accessible to local people. It will demonstrate that satellite towns in city regions have a greater contribution to make to the prosperity of city regions than that of simply being dormitories.

Our proposal delivers two thirds of the Regional Development Agency's job creation target for the whole region. It delivers new job opportunities equivalent to over one third of the current total number of claimant count unemployed in the North Derbyshire and North Nottinghamshire Coalfield. Local recruitment, training and employment initiatives, and local supply networks, will help realise maximum local economic benefit. The investment will create the means to sustain such local economic dividend, sustainability and workforce development mechanisms long term and make them available to the tourism, hospitality and leisure sector further afield.

The regional destination resort will be an iconic development for the East Midlands. As an all-year, all-weather attraction, the development represents a major opportunity for the East Midlands to strengthen its product offering and generate increased volume and value of both overnight and leisure day visits. The combination of the various elements represents a regionally unique proposition that is likely to appeal to a variety of markets. For example, the proposal will add significantly to the region's profile as a business and conference destination. The independent market appraisal of the scheme estimates annual visitor numbers of between 1.25 million and 2.2 million. Even at the lower level, the development would be the largest single site attractor of day visits and the largest single site recipient of overnight stays in the East Midlands.

The proposal is also unique in that Chesterfield at present has very limited opportunities for 'walk-in' gambling activity. For this reason there will be very little local concentration of gambling displacement and trade diversion. The closest casinos, in Sheffield, Derby and Nottingham and are not currently large scale gambling destinations so this proposal is unlikely to have serious impact in terms of displacement. Leisure spend will be drawn in a shallow and broad way from a large geographical area.

The proposed location of the casino, within a larger gated 'regional destination resort' will help to minimise and manage the risk of negative social impacts on surrounding communities. This ' inconvenient accessibility' is regarded by informed commentators as one of the best ways of damping down the likelihood of impulse and ambient gambling opportunity which Gamcare regards as key environmental risk factors giving rise to problem or addictive gambling. It may be harder for proposals in the urban heartlands of major cities to provide this degree of separation. The potential for exemplary design and layout within the resort site, supported by comprehensive surveillance and management control on and off-site will further keep the risk of social harm, whether ambient, incident-based or internally-referenced within risk tolerances.

The proposal for a regional destination resort is already at an advanced stage of development. Outline planning consent has been granted for a major leisure and business mixed use development scheme (although this at present does not include the casino element) and the second deposit version of the Replacement Chesterfield Local Plan (March 2005) includes a land use policy in support of the development.

The prospective developer has made good progress in assembling an investment package for the proposal. He is also resolutely committed to making the development and operation of the resort a showcase for best practice in sustainable construction, environmental management, waste management and the application of renewable energy technologies.