

Super Casino U-turn



The Faith Network for Manchester (FN4M) welcomes Prime Minister Gordon Brown's (pictured left) decision to call a halt to Manchester Super Casino.

Following their conference in March, the Faith Network for Manchester (FN4M) published press releases and other documents to register a resounding 'NO' to the Super Casino decision.

Those who attended the event, people who live and work in Manchester and who understand the needs and dynamic of the city, were vociferous in expressing their shock and horror at the prospect of their city becoming home to the UK's largest casino. Whilst we are wholly supportive of positive initiatives for regeneration, we believe the proposals for the super-casino will be counter-productive. East Manchester is already coping with serious issues of deprivation. There is a real concern that local people already struggling to cope financially would be drawn to the casino, leading to increased levels of indebtedness, broken relationships, addiction, job losses and even home repossessions.

The presence of the Super-Casino in East Manchester (pictured right) would also be likely to lead to increased levels of crime, traffic congestion and prostitution in an area that already faces more than its share of problems.



Manchester City Council's bid made reference to having consulted the Greater Manchester Faith leaders regarding the socially responsible gambling proposals – but failed to make any reference to the Faith Leaders' opposition to the bid itself. In so doing, we feel that the faith communities' views on the bid had been effectively misrepresented.

More broadly, only one local residents group wrote to the Casino Advisory Panel in support of the casino. Others claim not to have been consulted. Indeed, we have seen no evidence that Manchester City Council made any attempt to consult the wider community on the proposal, which their own bid document describes as an 'ideal test bed' for the Super Casino. We reject the idea of using Manchester residents as the 'test bed' in a huge social experiment, which all agree will have negative social impacts on significant numbers of people. We all want regeneration but surely there are better, more sustainable and more imaginative ways than this.

Following that conference, the FN4M resolved to appeal against the decision to locate the Super Casino in Manchester. We are very pleased that the Prime Minister appears to have listened to the views and, indeed, needs of the ordinary people of Manchester.

We applaud his announcement for a review and urge that the plans for the Super Casino to be based in Manchester are scrapped.

FN4M. 18/07/2007.