

# St Helens bids for large casino

St Helens Council is to bid for one of the new large casinos.

The move is seen as a major step forward in supporting the proposed new Saint's stadium.

The new stadium proposals have been designed to easily incorporate such a scheme.

The council and its private sector partners recognise the considerable investment and employment opportunities that a large new leisure-based facility could bring to the borough.

Bob Hepworth, Director of Urban Regeneration and Housing, described the decision to bid for one of the casinos as a 'keeping options' open move.

„The bid will leave open all cross funding options. Clearly a large format casino would potentially provide a major cash injection to support stadium plans,“ he said.

Mindful that there could be opposition from some quarters to a casino the executive pledged that in the event that a casino is allocated to St Helens that there would be full public consultation of any detailed scheme coming forward.

Betting, bingo and slot machines are currently available in the borough.

It is only the gaming tables that are not available, although many are on the borough's doorstep and on the Internet.

The bid will be sent to the Government's Casino Advisory Panel who will then report their recommendations to Tessa Jowell, Secretary of State for Media, Culture and Sport.