

# Council denies plans to employ gambling counsellors

Claims Southend Council will shell out GBP 80,000 a year to employ gambling counsellors have been rubbished.

A Sunday newspaper said Southend was one of three councils to sign up to the scheme run by gambling charity GamCare which will advise those with gambling problems.

The seaside town is one of at least 50 council's bidding for a new casino licence from the Government which could see a regional super casino built in Southend.

However, a council spokeswoman vehemently denied the claims saying the scheme will not cost taxpayers a single penny because Southend's existing casinos were paying for it.

She said: „The council was approached by GamCare. We are allowing them to use facilities in the Civic Centre's contact centre for their counselling.

„The cost of providing this service is being met by the casinos in Southend so it is not being met by the council. Tax payers money is not being used.“

The two other authorities reported to have signed up to the GamCare scheme were Leicester and Middlesbrough.