

„Let people vote on super casino“ plea

Coun Jon Bamborough said a referendum was needed as the resort would undergo its biggest change in more than 100 years if ministers backed Blackpool's regeneration dream.

The Blackpool, Cleveleys and Fleetwood Liberal Democrats branch feels the public has not had enough say on the plans and has called for a postal ballot to determine the council's policy.

Coun Bamborough said: „We are concerned that the people of Blackpool have not had the opportunity to vote on the heavily-hyped proposals for a large resort casino to be built in central Blackpool.

„We believe that the damage to Blackpool's already tarnished image and the social costs created by a large casino could be greater than the possible benefits.“

Coun Bamborough said the public should be given the chance to say yes or no to the proposed casino plan. He said: „Liberal Democrats believe that an issue of this magnitude, which will permanently and fundamentally change both the image and geography of Blackpool, should be voted upon by the residents of Blackpool.

„It must be their decision and not left to just 42 councillors.

After all it is the biggest change to central Blackpool since the building of the Tower.

„We therefore propose that a referendum be held of all electors within Blackpool's boundary to decide this issue.“

Local Lib Dems would like to see a series of public meetings

with both the for and against camps being given a chance to air their views before full postal voting.

But Coun Eddie Collett, deputy leader of Blackpool Council, said people had had ample opportunity to make their opposition to the casino bid known.

He said: „Beside the massive cost of a referendum, as suggested by the Liberal Democrats, we have conducted countless opinion surveys and have found people in Blackpool to be generally in favour of the bid with a ratio of three to one.

„The subject has been discussed extensively in the council and local media and we are aware of the views of people who don't want to see a casino in Blackpool.

„But I have no doubt any referendum the Liberal Democrats hold would be won by those in support of the casino and the huge regeneration benefits it will bring.“