

The GBP 1bn casino ,loss‘

Scrapping Manchester’s supercasino in favour of other regeneration projects would cost 3,000 jobs and GBP 1bn, the city council has claimed.

The figures are revealed in documents sent by town hall officers to a government panel looking at alternative ways of bringing work and economic wealth to the proposed site of the casino at Sportcity.

The dossier was prepared after Gordon Brown called a halt to plans for the supercasino during the summer.

The Prime Minister said he wanted to see whether there were better ways of regenerating areas like east Manchester.

His decision was seen as spelling the end for the scheme, with sources close to Number 10 saying supercasinos were ,dead in the water‘.

The panel set up to investigate the matter is led by Salford MP Hazel Blears and is due to report in a matter of days.

According to official statistics, Beswick and East Manchester – the area where the supercasino would be built – is one of the most deprived in Britain.

The town hall dossier claims alternative leisure schemes would be ,uneconomic‘ and housing would not be appropriate to the ,role and function of the site‘.

Funding

Offices would not be ‘sustainable‘ without ,very significant public funding‘, and speculative development ‘not realistic‘, it adds.

A report on the dossier, in the name of chief executive Sir Howard Bernstein, concludes that the planned supercasino and

accompanying leisure, sports and housing facilities would bring 3,500 jobs, ,the majority of which would be accessible to local residents‘.

By contrast, all other uses were ‘shown to deliver comparatively small benefits‘, it says.

„The largest impact would be less than 500 jobs,“ adds the report.

„Overall the lost opportunity to build a mixed use scheme anchored by a regional casino would cost Manchester GBP 1bn over a ten-year period.“ Sir Richard Leese, leader of the city council, said: „We have looked in detail at a range of alternative options for the site.

‘But none of them would involve any more than 500 new jobs, compared with the 3,000-plus locally accessible jobs which a regional casino would generate.

„Our consistent message has been that the regeneration benefits from a leisure development anchored by a destination casino massively outweigh those which any other potential use of the site would deliver.“