

# Tourist plan for axed casino site

A GBP 300m tourist attraction should be built on the site earmarked for the super-casino in east Manchester, regeneration experts have said.

A delegation has been looking at other ways of bringing jobs to the Sportcity site since the casino plan was axed.

Homes, offices, shops or an industrial estate were all ruled out as options because of „market conditions“.

A report before Manchester City Council says a tourist attraction would make the biggest economic contribution.

But it does not specify what the visitor attraction should be, only that it should be „nationally significant“.

Eddie Smith, chief executive of regeneration body New East Manchester, said the private sector would determine what was built.

„It is the typical Manchester way – we aim high and we usually succeed.

„No-one said we would get a casino and we got the regional casino – much to everyone’s surprise.

„I’m fairly confident there are ideas out there and there are companies out there who want to come and invest in Manchester.“

## **Government task force**

The report says a tourist attraction would contribute about GBP 500m to the local economy over 10 years.

Its potential scale would also make the Sportcity site, which

includes the football stadium and Velodrome, one of the largest visitor centres in Europe.

Senior council figures have been working with a government task force exploring ways of generating the same number of jobs a casino would have brought to east Manchester.

The project, which was intended to drive urban regeneration close to Manchester City Football Club's Eastlands stadium, was controversially scrapped in February.

Development options for part of the site have included an Olympic standard BMX centre, a national skills centre for hospitality management and a digital/animation business cluster.

The attraction recommendation has been made in a report being discussed by the council's executive on Wednesday.