

Comments on the proposals from FTQP (Friends of Town Quay Park), CoSS (City of Southampton Society) and SCAPPS (Southampton Commons and Parks Protections Society)

"We understand the purpose of the meeting is for the Committee to decide, from a consideration of statutory provisions & the content of the respective stage 1 applications, if the Council may accept stage 2 submissions which relate to premises in a different location in the proposed Royal Pier Waterfront (RPW) development to that which was considered by the Committee at stage 1. The underlying implications arising from this change in the location of casino premises within the RPW development would, we consider, give rise to considerable public concern.

At the stage 1 hearing, we drew attention to the absence of a firm & committed planning context for the definition of the 'premises' in applications in the RPW development. The City Council recently adopted the City Centre Action Plan which provides for a development including the derelict Royal Pier, the Red Funnel car ferry terminal & Mayflower Park. Over recent years, various different broad sketch layouts & illustrative perspective drawings have been published but there has been no meaningful public consultation, as required by the wording of the City Centre Action Plan, on details of layout, location & scale of built structures, scale & mix of uses & phasing of development.

The stage 1 applications showed the casino premises as one of the uses within a major built structure with a mixture of uses on the site of the derelict Royal Pier, with a multi-storey car park above the casino premises. This concept conformed with illustrative perspective drawings published by the City Council & the developer in 2014. Construction of this major mixed use development could not therefore commence until after relocation of the Red Funnel car ferry terminal & completion of reclamation from the River Test. The phasing of construction of the replacement waterside park is similarly determined by completion of reclamation because it too is located on land to be created by reclamation from the River Test. There was therefore the opportunity to tie phasing of construction of the development containing the casino to construction, completion & opening to the public of the replacement waterside park.

The new proposal is to locate the casino on the landward half of the present Mayflower Park, probably as a single use building, not, as before, as one element in a multiple use structure. In the absence of a planning permission specifying phasing, there must be concern that the casino could therefore be constructed as soon as the developer secures control of the land --- in advance of relocation of the Red Funnel terminal & completion of the reclamation, both of which are necessary before building can commence on the major part of the RPW development itself, & certainly before work creating the replacement waterfront park. The loss of the present waterside Mayflower Park so long in advance of completion of its replacement would be a matter of considerable public concern. There may well be concern too about the very different nature of a stand-alone casino in the new location compared with the previous proposal where it would have been one use amongst others & contained within a complex where, very largely, uses other than the casino would face out onto the public realm, including the replacement park."