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*(Registered in England. Registered Number 09055769)*

10<sup>th</sup> April 2015

**URGENT – BY EMAIL**

Martin Grout Esq  
Licensing Officer  
Southampton City Council  
Civic Centre  
Civic Centre Road  
Southampton SO14 7LS.

Dear Mr Grout

**Casino Competition (the “Competition”): Licensing Committee Meeting 9<sup>th</sup> April 2015**

We refer to the decision of the Licensing Committee dated 9<sup>th</sup> April 2015 and which we received today. We have extremely serious concerns (which are set out below) and we wish to draw this to your attention immediately. We are still considering our position which is therefore entirely reserved.

The Licensing Committee has decided to extend the closure of Stage 2 of the Competition by three months. This results in precisely the same delay as was requested by certain Competition applicants last year and which was considered and rejected by the Licensing Committee at a hearing on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2015 at which we were represented.

Yesterday’s Licensing Committee meeting had a very specific Agenda. It was to consider whether (1) certain applicants were free to include the WQ2, WQ3 and WQ4 land in their Stage 2 applications, (2) whether the Council has a discretion to accept late applications for Stage 1 and (3) if it did have a discretion to accept such late applications whether it would exercise such discretion in favour of certain applicants.

The Agenda for yesterday’s meeting **did not** include considering a possible delay of three months to the closure of Stage 2.

We submit that the Licensing Committee was fully aware in December 2014 that a delay of this kind to Stage 2 was a matter requiring proper notice and one for which it was necessary to hear arguments from applicants and other interested parties. That is why the hearing on

16<sup>th</sup> December was convened. We respectfully submit that it is quite obvious that to reverse the December 16<sup>th</sup> decision must equally require a similar proper hearing.

The fact that various forms of delay were touched on in yesterday's discussions in general terms does not reduce or eliminate the need to listen to considered arguments from all interested parties (including those not present yesterday) about a specific proposal which is properly itemized in advance on the Agenda.

The Licensing Committee says in its decision that it needed to weigh "finely balanced arguments". But the Committee has not heard the arguments (finely balanced or otherwise) because no one knew that a delay of three months was proposed and therefore no one was able to consider the matter properly.

GGV would clearly be seriously prejudiced by a three month delay, not least as several applicants will now have three months to prepare the applications which they were unable or unwilling to prepare and submit next week in accordance with the published timetable. To quote from the Committee's decision, you are offering certain favoured applicants the "oxygen of an extension". We submit that the gift of oxygen to favoured applicants in this fashion should only have occurred (if it should have occurred at all) after a proper hearing with notice and after listening to proper arguments.

We would appreciate an urgent response, since, as you will be aware, time is of the essence since we believe the original Stage 2 timetable must be re-instated (as nearly as is now possible).

Yours sincerely

**Tony Wollenberg**  
Chairman