

Donna Williams

From: Kim Cohen <Kim.Cohen@bartonwillmore.co.uk>
Sent: 24 August 2020 16:33
To: Markwell, Jonathan
Cc: Eatough, Richard; Caroline McHardy; Craig Pettit
Subject: [EXTERNAL] SSE Site, 55 Vastern Road. (ref: 200188)

Importance: High

Good afternoon Jonathan

Further to Richard Eatough's email dated 4th August (below), we understand that the application to which Richard had referred was considered at the Planning Applications Committee on 12th August. As such we trust that you are now in a position to meet with Berkeley Homes, so that we can explore any outstanding issues. As previously indicated, we consider that a meeting is necessary in order to understand your view on the scheme; the consultation responses received; and the information that has been submitted by Berkeley Homes in response. This will inform decisions regarding any scheme revisions that may be considered necessary.

In addition we understand that you have now received an opinion on the Viability Report and would therefore now be in a position to discuss this matter with Berkeley's. Whilst on that point, we have received a summary of the BPS report, however we have not yet received a copy of the whole document. Please could you provide us with that so that my Clients may consider it?

I look forward to hearing from you regarding a date for a meeting as soon as possible.

Kim Cohen

Partner



DDI: 0118 943 0119

M: 07789667482

W: www.bartonwillmore.co.uk

The Blade, Abbey Square, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 3BE

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From: Eatough, Richard <Richard.Eatough@reading.gov.uk>
Sent: 04 August 2020 18:35
To: Kim Cohen <Kim.Cohen@bartonwillmore.co.uk>
Cc: 'Caroline.McHardy@berkeleygroup.co.uk' <Caroline.McHardy@berkeleygroup.co.uk>
Subject: RE: SSE Site, 55 Vastern Road. (ref: 200188)

Dear Kim,

Thank you for your message. Jonathan Markwell is currently engaged preparing a controversial application involving a 46 unit affordable housing scheme for our next committee, plus his time is also drawn to a number of other major schemes. But he has briefed me on the current position with your application and given the issues still outstanding, he does not feel it is prudent to yet commit to an overarching meeting until he is fully aware of the viability position of the scheme, which I understand is still under discussion between officers and our retained viability consultants, which we hope to be in a position to share very soon. At that point, Jonathan will brief managers here before presenting the various matters for action (the material planning considerations) to you, weighing these whilst advising how to proceed. He is nearly at this point.

At the present time, I understand that the matters are still unresolved include the energy strategy, wind/microclimate, EA considerations, transport, ecology, natural environment/trees, and various overarching matters concerning the application that arise from this such as design and height of the buildings, the north-south cycle route, distances between blocks and the comprehensiveness of the proposal. I would agree with him that with such a complicated application, picking off issues is not particularly helpful when the overall picture could well be lost, wasting time for us all and producing a lesser scheme in the process. Jonathan made it clear at the outset that individual responses were being fed into you and it was for you to decide whether to respond on an individual basis or await the overarching feedback once all responses had been received. These issues need to have had a certain level of discussion and clarity before a meeting is worthwhile. I am aware that there was a long and detailed pre-application process for this site but it appears to be the situation that much of the case officer advice has not been heeded and therefore it is not surprising that these issues are again presenting themselves at application stage.

Given Jonathan's caseload and the attention that I know has been paid to this application thus far, I am content with the level of attention that your application is receiving and all matters are clearly progressing. You have mentioned the current Aviva site application, but this is not comparable and my understanding from that case officer is that that application is still at a fairly early stage. For your information, none of the three applications north of Reading Station are being lined up ready to report to committee, hence my email to all relevant developers last week asking them how they think the area's redevelopment should respond to recent events, which I have not had a response to.

We do, however, note your desire for a meeting and Jonathan will arrange this as soon as he is able to.

Kind regards,
Richard

From: Kim Cohen <Kim.Cohen@bartonwillmore.co.uk>
Sent: 30 July 2020 16:44
To: Eatough, Richard <Richard.Eatough@reading.gov.uk>
Cc: Framalitto, Giorgio <Giorgio.Framalitto@reading.gov.uk>; Caroline McHardy <Caroline.McHardy@berkeleygroup.co.uk>
Subject: SSE Site, 55 Vastern Road. (ref: 200188)
Importance: High

This is an EXTERNAL EMAIL. STOP. THINK before you CLICK links or OPEN attachments.

Dear Richard,

Thank you for your response in relation to my voice mail messages regarding the SSE site, Vastern Road.

By way of context, the application (ref: 200188) was submitted on 4th February 2020, and validated on 16th March 2020. My clients immediately agreed to Jonathan Markwell's request to pay for RBC to commission external consultants in respect of viability; daylight sunlight; wind; and energy. Having initially been told that RBC were considering the viability report in house, on 4th June, we received a further update informing us that quotes were being sought from external consultants. The consultants, BPS, were instructed on 23rd June some 15 weeks after my client had agreed to pay the requested fee. We understand that the report from BPS has now been received by the Council but the report or outcome has still not been shared with my client.

Throughout the process, we have received copies of consultations responses as they have been issued to the case officer, which we have responded to expediently. My client has also agreed a number of requests for further financial inputs to cover external consultant fees that the case officer considered necessary.

At the time of writing, the determination date of 15th June 2020, has passed, and one extension of time to the end of August (26th) agreed. Yet we still have no indication of the case officer's views on the application submission or the material submitted to address consultation responses. We have requested a virtual meeting or con call with Jonathan Markwell on a weekly basis (either via ourselves or our client), and as yet have had no acceptance of this request, with Jonathan citing that he will not engage until he has the outcome of the Viability. This is frustrating as in his own words he has highlighted there are a "plethora of other issues" to be resolved, so we do not understand why to date these couldn't be addressed separately. We are aware that our colleagues dealing with the 'Station Park' scheme have had regular contact and feedback from their case officer, and we would politely request the same level of service.

My clients urgently need feedback from our case officer so that we may understand which matters are considered to have been dealt with satisfactorily, and which matters (if any) need further amendment or information. My client is unable to make any amendments to the scheme without this level of input and guidance from our case officer. We are now in a situation where we have been informed that the application will not be going to the August committee, and we urgently require a meeting with Jonathan Markwell so that we can address any outstanding concerns in a timely way, so that the application can be taken to the September committee. We do not consider this to be an unreasonable request given that the application has now been before the Council for 20 weeks.

I request that you look into this further, and I look forward to your response, and to hearing from Jonathan Markwell in respect of a meeting or telephone call.

Kind Regards

Kim Cohen

Partner



DDI: 0118 943 0119

M: 07789667482

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From: Eatough, Richard <Richard.Eatough@reading.gov.uk>
Sent: 29 July 2020 22:44
To: Kim Cohen <Kim.Cohen@bartonwillmore.co.uk>
Subject: sse Site, 55 Vastern Road.

Dear Kim,

This morning, I found a vm from you on my work mobile received late last Friday afternoon.

Jonathan Markwell is not able to come back to you at the moment, due to preparing another priority application for our next committee, but I am regularly briefed on the progress with your application.

The email that I have sent to you and others this evening is pertinent to the consideration of the sse site application.

Also, I am aware of BW's involvement in the Reading 2050 Vision and I would be interested to know whether this is being reviewed in the context of COVID-19's influence on town planning, long term.

Regards,

Richard

Richard Eatough

Acting Development Management Team Leader
Planning, Directorate for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services (DEGNS)

Reading Borough Council
Civic Centre
Bridge Street
Reading RG1 2LU

T: (0118) 937 3338 [internal extension 73338]

M: 07855 126953

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