

Sam Harrison

Subject: FW: Vastern Road - Energy strategy conference call (200188)
Attachments: Vastern Road energy strategy - Element Energy recommendations (24.02.2021)

From: Markwell, Jonathan <Jonathan.Markwell@reading.gov.uk>
Sent: 24 February 2021 18:38
To: Caroline McHardy <Caroline.McHardy@berkeleygroup.co.uk>
Cc: Williams, Julie (Planning) <Julie.Williams@reading.gov.uk>; Kim Cohen <Kim.Cohen@bartonwillmore.co.uk>;
Craig Pettit <Craig.Pettit@bartonwillmore.co.uk>
Subject: Re: Vastern Road - Energy strategy conference call (200188)

This message was sent from Jonathan.Markwell@reading.gov.uk <jonathan.markwell@reading.gov.uk>. Please be careful opening attachments or clicking links and report any suspicious emails to securitythreats@berkeleygroup.co.uk

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Dear Ms McHardy,

Thank you for your email. Please see attached a summary breakdown of the reasons why Element Energy (and I concur) that a virtual meeting on this matter would be helpful, prior to Element Energy then finalising their subsequent final report (potentially after the submission of further information by Hodkinson). I had asked Element Energy to set this out and have an initial chat with Hodkinson, prior to then setting up a meeting, but they unfortunately went a step ahead of themselves in seeking to arrange a meeting first - apologies for this confusion. Obviously, if you do not wish to undertake such a meeting/submit further information, I can simply advise Element Energy to progress with their final report? I would welcome your thoughts please?

Yours sincerely,

Jonathan Markwell
Principal Planning Officer
Planning Section | Directorate for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services

Reading Borough Council
Civic Offices,
Bridge Street,
Reading,
RG1 2LU

07971 015 688

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From: Caroline McHardy <Caroline.McHardy@berkeleygroup.co.uk>
Sent: 23 February 2021 18:12
To: Markwell, Jonathan <Jonathan.Markwell@reading.gov.uk>
Cc: Williams, Julie (Planning) <Julie.Williams@reading.gov.uk>; Kim Cohen <Kim.Cohen@bartonwillmore.co.uk>; Craig Pettit <Craig.Pettit@bartonwillmore.co.uk>
Subject: FW: Vastern Road - Energy strategy conference call

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Hi Jonathan,

Further to the below, I just wanted to clarify that we were a bit confused by Elements request this afternoon to Hodkinson for a meeting after we responded last week stating we didn't think one was required and just asked they finalised their report?

By all means if this meeting is further to our written response and will help you finalise your committee report for the 31st we would be happy to do so but Hodkinson didn't get that impression when they spoke to Sam at Elements and so we assumed more likely just crossed wires?

If you want to liaise with them and if there are specific matters they want to go through please set them out as Hodkinson suggested and we can review?

I hope that makes sense and is helpful.

Kind regards

Caroline McHardy
Land and Development Director

Berkeley
Designed for life



Berkeley Homes (Oxford and Chiltern) Ltd
Berkeley House, Farnham Lane, Farnham Royal, SL2 3RQ
Telephone| 01753 784400 |Direct Dial 01753 784436| Mobile 07917520742
www.berkeleygroup.co.uk

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From: Jonathan Peck <jonathan@hodkinsonconsultancy.com>
Sent: 23 February 2021 17:13
To: Sam Benjamin <Sam.Benjamin@element-energy.co.uk>; Markwell, Jonathan <Jonathan.Markwell@reading.gov.uk>
Cc: Ian Walker <ian.walker@element-energy.co.uk>; Caroline McHardy <Caroline.McHardy@berkeleygroup.co.uk>; Matthew Bailey <matthew@hodkinsonconsultancy.com>
Subject: RE: Vastern Road - Energy strategy conference call

This message was sent from Jonathan Peck <jonathan@hodkinsonconsultancy.com>. Please be careful opening attachments or clicking links and report any suspicious emails to securitythreats@berkeleygroup.co.uk

Afternoon Sam, Jonathan,

Having discussed with Berkeley, we feel that a meeting next week would be premature. In line with the response sent to Jonathan on the 12th and then forwarded to Element on the 17th (see attached) we are awaiting the final report to be issued to us. Our position has been set out within and in previous reports.

It was also noted that at an update on proceedings with Berkeley and Julie Williams only yesterday the wish for a meeting on this was not raised.

Please could we therefore have the final report sent to us so we can proceed accordingly.

Kind regards,

Jon Peck
BA (Hons), MSc, MEI



Trinity Court, Batchworth Island, Church Street, Rickmansworth, WD3 1RT
Direct: 020 3603 1622 | Office: 020 3603 1600 | Mobile: 07833 458745
Company Registration Number: 03823513/England

hodkinsonconsultancy.com

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From: Sam Benjamin <Sam.Benjamin@element-energy.co.uk>
Sent: 23 February 2021 11:17
To: Markwell, Jonathan <Jonathan.Markwell@reading.gov.uk>; Jonathan Peck <jonathan@hodkinsonconsultancy.com>
Cc: Ian Walker <ian.walker@element-energy.co.uk>
Subject: Vastern Road - Energy strategy conference call

Hi Jonathan,

Jon has agreed a conference call between Element, RBC, Hodkinson and Berkeley Homes would be helpful in discussing the energy strategy for Vastern Road, and agreeing a way forward re the planning application.

Could you please provide your availability from the following:

- Wednesday 3rd March, PM
- Thursday 4th March, PM
- Friday 5th March, AM

Jon will be doing the same within Hodkinson and with Berkeley, and hopefully we can find a suitable time for all. [@Jonathan Peck](#) once a time is agreed I am happy to set up the conference call.

Kind regards,

Sam Benjamin
Senior Consultant
elementenergy

t: +44 (0)203 813 3905

w: www.element-energy.co.uk

London: 5-6 Argyll Street, London W1F 7TE tel +44(0)203 195 8119

Cambridge: Suite 1 Bishop Bateman Court, Thompson's Lane, Cambridge CB5 8AQ tel +44(0)1223 852 499

York: Innovation Centre, Innovation Way, Heslington, York YO10 5DG tel +44(0)1223 852 499

Lille: 14 rue du Vieux Faubourg, 59042 Lille Cedex, France tel +33(0)608 157 924

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From: [Sam Benjamin](#)
To: [Markwell, Jonathan](#)
Cc: [Jan Walker](#)
Subject: Vastern Road energy strategy - Element Energy recommendations (24.02.2021)
Date: 24 February 2021 17:10:15
Importance: High

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

Dear Jonathan,

Please find below our recommendations following Berkeley's response to the memo issued on the 9th Feb. We advise that the strategy as it stands is not fully compliant with the Council's planning policies, for the reasons set out below. As you can see there are a number of items that were not addressed in the response from Berkeley, including items regarding open-loop GSHP and gas boilers for top-up heat.

Ground source heat pumps

The following extract from RBC's Sustainable Design & Construction SPD states the following:

- Paragraph 8.5 (pp. 29)
 - "The preference for air-source and ground-source heat pumps over CHP is set out in the Local Plan, but in general GSHPs should be investigated as a priority over ASHPs. This is because they enable greater seasonal efficiencies."
- Paragraph 8.6 (pp. 29)
 - "Evidence should be provided at the detailed planning application stage where GSHP systems are discounted, and ASHP systems selected, with the following technical analyses:
 - Calculated system seasonal efficiency comparison;
 - Evidence of any constraints on boreholes related to existing utilities or other sub-surface infrastructure;
 - Borehole spatial constraints; and
 - Any other technical reasons why GSHP cannot be progressed and ASHP must be taken forward as the primary heat technology."

Whilst it is acknowledged that a closed-loop GSHP system is not applicable due to spatial constraints (i.e. a lack of space for the requisite number of boreholes to satisfy all heat demands), sufficient evidence to discount open-loop GSHP has not been provided. It would be expected that at the very least Hodkinson would have consulted with a hydrogeological expert to assess (via non-intrusive desktop survey) the potential access to aquifers, and expected abstraction flow rates, on the Vastern Road site. A screen grab from the British Geological Survey (BGS) website is provided by Hodkinson, with the suggestion that there are no boreholes deeper than 30m in the vicinity of the development. We advise that this does not provide sufficient evidence of a lack of access to aquifers, and further evidence is needed.

Additionally, we advise through liaison with hydrogeological experts that the BGS does not have a complete set of borehole data for the UK. **It is therefore recommended that Hodkinson commission a non-intrusive desktop survey by a hydrogeological expert to confirm the**

assertion that there is no access to groundwater aquifers on the Vastern Road site. Until such a survey is undertaken, open-loop GSHP cannot be discounted as a heat supply option for Vastern Road.

Furthermore, Hodkinson state that the development's land could be "potentially" contaminated as it is a brownfield site, which would preclude boreholes being deployed here, however no formal evidence is provided. Whilst an intrusive borehole test would not be expected, site ground investigations must have been conducted and a report produced as part of the development's planning application process, in accordance with Reading council planning policy. Therefore, **it is recommended that at the very least the ground investigations undertaken for the planning application be referred to as evidence of site contamination.** It is acknowledged that, under planning policy, ground investigations may not provide details of contamination up to the depths required for aquifer boreholes, however the likelihood of deeper ground contamination is low where there is no or negligible surface-level contamination identified during standard ground investigations for new developments on brownfield sites.

Use of gas boilers for top-up heat

The employment of gas boilers for Vastern Road is contrary to the direction of national policy relating to energy in new build developments. The Future Homes Standards will ban the use of gas boilers in new buildings by 2025, thus Vastern Road will likely be a non-compliant building in relation to national policy upon its completion should it retain gas boilers for top-up heat.

Additionally, the justification for use of gas boilers is to reduce heating costs for residents. However, as we noted in our memo, the difference in cost of heat between pure-ASHP and ASHP + gas boilers for the average resident will be as little as £3/month, therefore this is not sufficient justification for relying on gas boilers as part of the heat supply strategy.

Therefore, **should the assessment of open-loop GSHP (recommended above) demonstrate that this technology is unviable for the development, Hodkinson should revise the energy strategy such that all heat is supplied via ASHP, with no gas boilers included in the heating system.**

We hope the above is clear. We remain open and available for a teleconference, which may help Hodkinson progress the proposed energy strategy to a state in which it can be considered fully compliant with energy and carbon policy.

Kind regards,

Sam Benjamin

Senior Consultant

elementenergy

t: +44 (0)203 813 3905

w: www.element-energy.co.uk

London: 5-6 Argyll Street, London W1F 7TE tel +44(0)203 195 8119

Cambridge: Suite 1 Bishop Bateman Court, Thompson's Lane, Cambridge CB5 8AQ tel +44(0)1223 852 499

York: Innovation Centre, Innovation Way, Heslington, York YO10 5DG tel +44(0)1223 852 499

Lille: 14 rue du Vieux Faubourg, 59042 Lille Cedex, France tel +33(0)608 157 924
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