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BEESTON COMMUNITY FORUM

Richard Brook Esq
Leeds City Council
by e mail

17th October 2015

Dear Mr Brook

I refer to your recent e mail responding to our Freedom of Information request relating to the planning application, by Aspiring Communities , for the former Ice Pak premises at Barkly Road, Beeston, Leeds. Members of the Beeston Forum Committee had a lengthy discussion about the documents which you enclosed . Additionally, a number of members of the Committee had yet to read the documents. Accordingly, we may be writing to you again if further queries should arise. As a number of our comments are better dealt with by the Development Department than by your own Department, I shall be copying this letter to Ian Cyhanko, the Planning Officer in charge of the planning application.

We are surprised to see that your answer to the question 'Who took the decision to defer the application and on what basis?' refers to council officers by the title of their office, rather than by names. We see no reason why the officers are referred to as such and would therefore be grateful if you could identify the officers involved by names. We are also very surprised to see that in your answer to the question seeking the minutes of the meeting, you acknowledge that no minutes were kept. We are frankly most surprised to learn that no minutes are kept of a meeting at which such an important decision was taken. One member of the committee expressed the view that taking minutes of a meeting is, of the utmost importance, so that if, at some time in the future, questions are asked as to why a decision was taken, the minutes could be referred to . Another member of the Committee felt that no minutes were taken in order to disguise the reason for the decision. However, in the light of what you say, we shall pose our question in a slightly different fashion **'What was the basis for the decision to defer consideration of the planning application?'** We look forward to hearing your response.

Dealing with the redactions from the document setting out communications between the

Development Department and the developer and their agents ; whilst we accept that personal information must be redacted, we believe that a number of the redactions are difficult to defend on these grounds. Most importantly, we note that the names of members of the Steering Committee set up by Aspiring Communities have been redacted (see page 13 of the document comprising communications between Leeds City Council and the Developer). We believe that in the same way as individuals who make representations for or against a planning application must be identified, and cannot remain anonymous, a committee of individuals formed to support a planning application should not be able to hide behind anonymity. This is a principle which has clearly been accepted by Aspiring Communities ; please see this link to their website, which clearly identifies the members of the Steering Committee.

<http://www.aspiringcommunities.org/who-is-involved/nggallery/image/ed-2/>

The same letter includes a phrase 'We have also worked with [name redacted] from Hunslet Hawks' . Again, we see no justification for the redaction of the name of the individual involved. Will you please justify the redaction , or name the individual concerned . The same letter also states 'We are currently in talks with (name or names redacted) . They are in the process of providing us a supporting letter which will state the work we intend to carry out collaboratively in the locality. Again, we can see no justification fore this redaction, particularly in view of the fact that it is stated that it was the intention of the individuals to provide the developer with a supportive letter. Again, we would be grateful for the individuals to be named, or a justification of the redaction.

Will you please explain a redaction in a letter from Amey (page 37 of the document) just under the heading in bold type 'Traffic Impact- concurrent users' . There is also a further redaction from the paragraph above the heading 'Phased Development' in bold type. We find it difficult to believe that the redaction is of personal information and would welcome your further explanation . A further sentence from the same letter (page 39 of the document) , states 'Either a 50% modal share (phrase apparently redacted) is not appropriate. Please explain this redaction . There is a further redaction under the second paragraph headed 'parking' for which we would be grateful for an explanation . A further apparent redaction is made under the heading 'Traffic Impact – Concurrent users' . Please explain.

We would also query the redaction from the document of Chris Weetman's telephone number and e mail address (page 102 of the document). This information is available on a document which was printed out from the Leeds City Council Public Access website and is information which is also available publicly (see the link below)

<http://www.cwplanningsolutions.co.uk/contactus.html>

We also note from the documents that the deadline for the determination of the planning application was extended by Leeds City Council from 12th January 2015 to 1st April 2015 , then again to 31st May 2015 , because Aspiring Communities had not provided information which various Council departments had requested. Obviously, even this latter deadline has now been missed, by a matter of several months. This lends considerable credibility to our view that Leeds City Council has been far too accommodating to the developer . We would be grateful for the comments of the Development Department .

We look forward to hearing from you with your response to the matters raised in this letter.

Yours sincerely

ROBERT J.W. WINFIELD

