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PLANNING &
SUSTAINABILITY
26 NOV 2010

22nd November 2010

Our Ref: PC/CC

Dear Mr Harrison

Land known as 'Former Civil Service Sports Ground' Malmesbury Place, Southampton

I have received a letter dated 11th November from your colleague Ali Mew regarding a S.17 Land Compensation Act 1961 application on this site, the purpose of which is to ascertain a fair market value for the land in question. Having considered your submission the Company believes that the value of the land should relate to its potential to provide residential development for the following reasons.

1. It is understood that the City Council did attempt to acquire the site following its cessation as a sports ground. However, it was instead sold to Stonechat, who then sold the freehold to Bovis Homes Ltd. My Company's attempts to promote this site for residential development – which, given the fact that the land is largely surrounded by existing residential uses is entirely logical – has thus been deliberately frustrated by the City Council.
2. The land is privately owned, and the public have no right to use it for recreational purposes. It is thus unavailable for these purposes.

3. The coalition government has made clear its concerns about the lack of housing provision. It thus intends to increase the supply of new housing from the unacceptably low levels that are currently being achieved by local authorities. Indeed, it is widely acknowledged that current planned provision will not meet forecast needs.
4. It is the Company's intention to promote the use of this land for residential purposes. Indeed, it has attempted this via a submission to the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment. The Council, however, rejected this proposal on the grounds that the land was allocated as open space – despite the fact that it was not actually available for that purpose – and because they saw it as a potential school site. Nevertheless, the Company will maintain its contention that this land could – and should be developed for housing, given its location, together with the Councils' housing requirements.

Conclusion

The site could reasonably be developed for residential purposes – in whole or in part. If it was to be partly allocated for housing, then the remainder of the site could be made available to the council for open space or educational purposes. At the moment, however, the site is unavailable to the public as open space, despite being allocated for that purpose. Such a situation is simply non-sensical. It also reflects badly on the City Council to reasonably assess its own housing and other requirements and to negotiate fairly with landowners. In these circumstances, the Council should accept a more responsible and responsive stance, by accepting that at least part of

the land could be developed for residential purposes. It should not, therefore, simply argue that the land should only be valued as open space / leisure / education when it could easily become all or in part residential.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Peter Court", with a horizontal line underneath it.

Peter Court

Associate Director Strategic Land