



Wednesday, 15 April 2009

Club Treasurer, Keith Brown gave a detailed update at the AGM on the Ground Development Project following the decision by the Secretary of State to call a Public Inquiry. The main points he made were;

The Public Inquiry has been called for 21st July and is expected to last eight days. This puts us in an unsatisfactory state of limbo but we have no alternative but to make out our case all over again – this time to the Secretary of State via the Public Inquiry.

The principal issue appears to be the Environment Agency's objection because of their contention that we are in the floodplain. Our Consultants have challenged this but in any case the development has been designed to put all the residential accommodation and most of the Club facilities on a stilted platform. This means that in the unlikely event of a major flood the flow of water would not be interrupted. Moreover, the scheme will contribute to the overall flood prevention measures for the centre of Chelmsford.

A proper evacuation procedure has been signed off by the Council's emergency planners.

The issue of flooding came to the fore as we prepared our design and planning preparation. Previously the EA had the power to comment but now they effectively have the power to veto the planning application, consequently leading to a referral to the Government. It is important to understand that this application has been to Chelmsford Planning Committee twice and has received approval twice. CBC has carried out their own Flood Risk Assessment as part of this process. Therefore every proper step has been taken.

There have been objections from a few local residents but the design has been amended to accommodate these. We are anxious to have good relations with our neighbours who appear to have been stirred up for political purposes.

It is immensely important that members refrain from any discussions or comments as this may be prejudicial to our case. Any questions, information or intelligence should be directed to myself or David East at the Club and we will deal with it as appropriate. Misinformed comment is not helpful to our case.

Under the terms of the contract with our development partner MCD it is required to use all reasonable steps to obtain planning permission. It has confirmed that this will continue to be the case and has injected further funds with its banking partner into financing the Public Inquiry.

The Club has made a significant investment in the project some of which has been rolled into the project and some which is for our own account due to the need to seek independent legal, accounting and other advice. The Club will probably have future costs of this nature but will not directly finance the cost of the Public Inquiry.

We are focussed on making a robust case at the Public Inquiry to ensure that this exciting and innovative project is acceptable to the Government and is delivered to the benefit of our Club, cricket in Essex, the Town of Chelmsford and the community in general.

**Please direct all enquiries to:**

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