

St James Development will soon back on track after disagreement



By **Jordan Bluer**

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THE new contractors for the St James Development will be decided within two to three weeks, say landowners Legal & General.

Construction firm Kier pledged to build the project for £24million – but walked away after a disagreement with developers Bond City.

The firm said it could not “reach consensus” on the next stage of the development. It added: “We will support Bond City Ltd as part of our handover.”

Bond City granted Kier a contract to build the St James Development in May. This included a six-screen cinema, hotel, restaurants and shops.

Work on the scheme, which will have a total cost of £53million, has not halted, with Kier continuing to work at the site in Townwall Street until a new contractor takes over. But the hitch may delay the delivery of the project. It was originally scheduled to open in autumn 2017.

Dover District Council (DDC), Legal & General and Bond City say they are in the process of “finalising plans” with a new contractor.

A joint statement from all three parties said: “It is in all of our interests for it to open as soon as possible. We are finalising plans with a contractor for the project and look forward to getting started on this exciting new retail and leisure development for Dover.”

Committed

“We are fully committed to the scheme and it’s in all of our interests for it to open as soon as possible. We have been working hard to finalise plans to ensure we maintain the target programme of autumn 2017 and we will be in a position to confirm more on this soon.”

Dover and Deal MP Charlie Elphicke said the St James scheme is “vital” for the future development of Dover.

The project joins the £120million revival of the Western Docks, bringing a new pier, a new marina and retail space alongside an expanded cargo terminal.

Mr Elphicke said: “We need a contractor who can stick to a contract, honour an agreement and to get on with building a better future for Dover.”

“We all want to see new shops and businesses in the town centre as quickly as possible. Everyone will support Legal & General in getting things back underway as soon as possible. I hope we hear an announcement on the new contractor very soon.”

Over the last two years, St James developers confirmed Cineworld, M&S, Next, Travelodge, Nandos, Bella Italia, Frankie & Benny’s and other food and retail outlets.



OPEN VIEW: How the development may look



BIG NAMES: Shoppers will see

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