

Jeremy Beeton

Department for Culture Media and Sport
2-4 Cockspur Street
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cc.
John Armitt, ODA
David Higgins, ODA
Paul Deighton, LOCOG

20th July 2009

Dear Jeremy,

The Commission for a Sustainable London 2012 has been asked to support the decision taken by the ODA to procure PVC roofing fabric for the Main Stadium.

In its 2007 Governance Review, published in November 2007, the commission recommended that the ODA develop a strategy for dealing with environmentally sensitive materials through the design and supply chain process.

In February 2009, the Olympic Board approved a policy statement setting out specific criteria to be applied for use of PVC tensile fabrics. This set out 10 specific requirements to be met. Of these, eight were mandatory and two required reasonable endeavours to be used as these requirements had never been tried before for this structural specification, specifically recycled content and use of non-phthalate plasticisers.

The fabric to be procured meets all eight mandatory criteria but does not meet the two requirements where reasonable endeavours should be made. The commission is therefore being asked to provide a view as to whether the ODA has used reasonable endeavours.

We understand that it is not currently possible to use recycled content in PVC tensile fabric that needs to be waterproof. The alternative phthalate-free fabrics that have been tested failed the fire retardancy test. Based on the evidence supplied by the ODA, the commission believes that the ODA has made reasonable endeavours to achieve the criteria. While not phthalate-free, the chemicals used conform with European legislation and REACH standards. The ODA is also specifying take back and closed loop recycling or reuse. The commission therefore concludes that the specification has been met and the ODA has used reasonable endeavours to achieve the two non-mandatory criteria.

We recognise that significant effort has been made by the ODA over the past 12 months to engage with the industry and endeavour to set new standards of sustainability. However, given that our recommendation was made in 2007, we believe that earlier specification may have given the industry more opportunity to respond.

The commission understands that the ODA is continuing to work with suppliers to develop alternatives that meet the criteria and hopes that these will be available for subsequent venues.

Yours sincerely



Shaun McCarthy
Chair

Commission for a Sustainable London 2012