

BLP moves to limit negative fallout from mistakes made by ex-real estate partner

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Berwin Leighton Paisner (BLP) is seeking counsel on whether it needs to inform the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) about mistakes that were hidden by a real estate partner who left last week.

The firm, which agreed to go on the record regarding the issue for the first time this week, has said property

partner Vinay Veneik, who resigned from the firm last week (15 January), made errors on a number of transactions.

These involved the failure to pay stamp duties and register transfers of property. BLP is now seeking advice on its regulatory obligations.

In addition, BLP announced it has moved to establish more stringent procedures in a bid to avoid a repeat of the errors

that led to Veneik's resignation. Clients of the firm have been made aware of the mistakes and will not suffer any financial loss as a result of Veneik's actions. Veneik was unavailable for comment.

Veneik is understood to have acted for clients including Morgan Stanley Real Estate Fund and Great Portland Estates, for which he advised on development projects.

Partnership specialist Ronnie Fox said: "The solicitors' code of conduct stipulates that a solicitor must provide a good standard of service. If a lawyer makes a mistake, it is always best to admit it. Depending on the circumstances, that means notifying colleagues, insurers, the client and possibly the SRA. Trying to conceal a mistake will always make things worse."