



**SustainableLand** PLC

# SOLID GROUND



Land, a solid investment for the future

The official newsletter from **SUSTAINABLE LAND PLC**  
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## **Latest news on Government Strategy and Future Housing Requirements (RSS)**

The Government's East of England Plan has recently been successfully challenged by councils in the High Court on the grounds that it has failed to meet the requirements of EU environmental law. On the back of this further challenges have been lodged against the South East plan.

On a separate front it is now eight months since the Government's consultation process closed in connection with the proposed changes to the regional spatial strategy (RSS). They have now confirmed that the delay in publishing is as a result of the large number of responses received which they have had to assess.

The implications of the successful legal challenge are that local authorities do not have a definitive housing requirement to plan for but it would seem that the numbers set out in the RSS should not change as a result of the challenge. Most local authorities are currently consulting on previous conservative estimates until the RSS numbers are confirmed.

The legal challenge is centred on the prescriptive nature of the RSS, centred on the naming of specific sites for development which have not been endorsed by the local authorities.

Although sweeping changes are not expected as a result of the review of the RSS's and focused some references to specific sites for development will be removed.

Adopted zones of development will not be affected by the RSS changes and housing numbers are not expected to change, but some proposed sites will be reviewed with further thought being given by the relevant local authority as to their suitability for development. **We believe that all this will positively influence our site at Tangley Lane Guildford for adoption.**



## Update from Chris Evans

In the six months since my last letter we have seen the economy improve somewhat, although it has just been announced that we are not yet out of recession. However, we can look forward to emerging from the recession with an improving housing market. The demand has not gone away, it has only been suppressed for a while and of course every recession has been led out by housing.

Our land will help achieve that!

There is good news for homeowners, with figures from one high street bank showing house prices rising for the fourth month in a row! Halifax says property prices increased by 1.2% in October, taking the average cost of a property in the UK to £165,528 - 2.9% more than at the end of last year.

We believe that any impact on development land values which have seen falls will quickly be reversed once the economy has stabilised.

Our short term focus is fixed upon our sites in Guildford and Wokingham, which are being heavily promoted for release in the period between 2011 and 2016. By this time the economy should have positively swung, giving us the benefit of seeking an opportunity to sell the land to developers at an advantageous price. The Wokingham site is already under close consideration by the Council and we expect good news on this site within the next few months

As far as our Bracknell site is concerned the land has already been adopted for development during the period from 2017 to 2026. Our ongoing work here is to assist that development date coming forward.

The Radstock site continues to develop and we will be hearing more on this next year.

You will see our Fareham site is progressing well. This is our current offering through Limited Partnership, which is our preferred method going forward. Your financial adviser has full details of this investment.

It's timely to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year and I look forward to briefing all of you again in the spring.

**Chris Evans**

Chief Executive Officer

## **Bracknell [Adopted]**

The Council's latest Local Development Scheme came into effect on 16 September 2009. This is a three-year work programme that sets out the documents the Council will produce as part of the Local Development Framework

This latest local development scheme focuses on the expeditious preparation of a Site Allocations Development Plan Document and formalisation of a Proposals Map which will be updated alongside each development plan document. A review of the adopted Core Strategy and preparation of a Development Management Development Plan Document will be formally commenced after the adoption of the Site Allocations Development Plan Document and publication of a draft regional strategy.

The North Whitegrove and Quelm Park Area Action Plan which includes Sustainable Land's site, is now underway. Publication of draft submission document, which will take into account representations from the public participation stage in January, is due to be published in March 2010.

## **Wokingham [News Flash]**

Sustainable Land's site is within the North Wokingham Strategic Development Area (SDA) and following the recent publication of draft options for delivering 1500 homes at North Wokingham, JPC have met with the council and submitted written representations identifying issues and concerns with the draft options. Following a positive meeting with the local authority it was expected the Inspector's report would insist that the whole North Wokingham SDA is utilised to deliver a comprehensive development. This confirmation has now been published by the Inspector which is excellent news for Sustainable Land and their plot owners.

The Inspector has called for the Northern Relief Road to be incorporated in the design, which makes Sustainable Land's site key to the delivery of the SDA. JPC are forming a consortium with three major developers who are the other principal landowners to create a master plan for the East SDA area. The proposed master plan being developed by JPC and adjacent land owners would alleviate concerns of deliverability and identify a clear mechanism for delivering the requirements of the SDA. Housing densities and open space, the park and ride scheme, commercial land and local community facilities can all be incorporated in the plan together with a relief road serving the additional level of traffic.

JPC intend to submit the master plan early in the new year as the Inspector's report has now been received by Wokingham Borough Council to ensure that the whole of the North Wokingham Strategic Development Area is Adopted.



The document will present finalised policies, a proposals map and an infrastructure plan.

The infrastructure plan will identify the phases of development and the scheduled release of land within the adopted development area. Formal representations will be sought on the soundness of the document in June 2010, with submission of the area action plan to the Secretary of State planned for the end of 2010.

JPC are monitoring and feeding into the Area Action Plan process and will be submitting written representations in both the January and June 2010 consultation periods, ensuring key stages of development are linked to an early release of Sustainable Land's land holding.



## **Guildford [Update]**

Following the publication of the Secretary of State's final version of the South East Plan (also known as the Regional Spatial Strategy for the South East) on 6th May 2009, six legal challenges to the Plan were received. One of these related to the policy for a selective review of the Green Belt to the north east of Guildford. The challenge from Guildford relates to the RSS having named Merrow & Burpham as a future area of development for around 2000 homes. Guildford Borough Council had made it clear in their draft core strategy that no more 500 homes would be suitable for development in the area, but the RSS endorsed the area for a further 1500 homes. The legal challenge has subsequently been upheld, and central government are now reviewing all their regional spatial strategies.

As outlined earlier, in the planning update it is not expected that the housing figures proposed by central government within the RSS's will change, but the naming of sites which have not been adopted or proposed by local authorities will be revoked.

It is clear Guildford Borough Council will not allow a large scale development to occur in North East Guildford and alternative sites will have to be found to accommodate the level of housing required in the Borough.

Guildford Site Allocation process is on hold until the RSS's housing targets are confirmed, and although the legal challenge has delayed the decision making process for allocating strategic development land, it will increase pressure to find and allocate future alternative sites. Guildford Borough Council's preferred approach to seek less intrusive green belt development will suit Sustainable Land's intended scheme.



## Radstock [Update]

Bath & North East Somerset [BANES] have produced their core strategy consultation document, which identifies Radstock as a future area of growth.

According to public feedback from the 2007 Core Strategy Launch document, the results of the various studies undertaken and continuing talks with local communities and other service providers, there were key spatial challenges facing the area. The following identified needs specifically relate to our site the development of which would help to deliver the solution.

- Protect and improve the high quality rural natural environment and improve access to open countryside.
- Implement the Town Park proposal in Midsomer Norton to tackle the lack of formal open space.
- Improve transport links needed within the Somer Valley as well as to Bath and Bristol, especially public transport, whilst reducing traffic congestion.
- Provide a mix of new housing, particularly affordable housing and housing for local people.
- Improve leisure opportunities, particularly social places for young people, toddlers /parents and older people.

JPC are currently submitting representations on the current options, which involve including Sustainable Land's site as a delivery mechanism.

JPC are developing a master plan that extends the strategic development areas to include Sustainable Land's site, incorporating the transport measures and a delivery mechanism for the Town Park.

Representations by the major house builders are calling for the focus of BANES core strategy to shift from the concentration of new development within Bath, to allocating additional numbers for satellite areas such as Radstock.

The major house builders have substantial land holdings around Radstock and are trying to push more development to the area. Sustainable Land's site is far better placed as a housing location than the green belt sites that are being promoted, but the increase in pressure will further benefit our site.

Consultation ends on 11th December, which will be followed with preferred options in the New Year. JPC will mirror the representations of the major house builders to increase pressure on the local authority, whilst also focusing on pushing the site to be included in the strategic development zones.



## **Fareham [Current Offering]**

Due to the delay of the South East Plan, Fareham Borough Council have yet to complete its core strategy. There are growing concerns the number of houses earmarked for North Fareham is too great and alternative sites within Fareham may be more suitable. The growing issue coupled with low delivery numbers within Fareham should further the case for our site to be brought forward. The Council is waiting on the results of the review of the South East Plan (RSS) before they can decide on their strategic allocation of additional land throughout Fareham.

The low completion rate and low forecast for uptake in high density brownfield sites (which the council is heavily relying on) will further add to the need for Fareham to release deliverable sites once the RSS figures are released.

Redrow Homes have purchased an option for our site as well as the surrounding land, and together with JPC are preparing representations for the site allocations process. The timetable has been put forward within the core strategy, and the publication of preferred options is now expected in February 2010.

The initial public consultation for suggested sites within the Site Allocations process identified Newgate Lane road improvements as a key priority for the council. The link road is viewed as necessary for movement in and out of Gosport and an essential arterial route. **This enhanced road route adjacent to our site will improve the infrastructure necessary for the development of the site.**

## **Consortium News**

The directors of each of the plot owners consortium companies met ahead of the release of this newsletter to receive the updates on each of the sites and on the admission of members.

All plot owners have now been admitted to the Wokingham consortium company and plot owners are admitted to the Bracknell consortium as they acquire their plot. Guildford, which is a much larger site, has admitted all but a dozen of a total membership of in excess of 450. We expect that all of these will have been admitted early in the New Year.

The Annual General Meetings for the three companies will be held at the St Anne's Manor Hilton Hotel, Wokingham from 10.00 am on Monday 21st December and you will find attached the formal notice and a set of dormant accounts.

The companies are treated as dormant because they have no financial activity and their purpose is solely to protect the plot owners and ensure the deliverability of the site as whole on maturity.

## **Change of Address**

Please advise Tania of any change of address, so we can keep you fully up to date with developments, and pay you when the site has sold. Changes need to be made in writing by post or e-mail. It is also vitally important that you notify the Land Registry of any change of address, quoting your land registry number.



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