

## Executive Summary

### Background

- 1 The DTZ Planning Team has been instructed to undertake a 'root and branch' review of the planning potential of the 13 sites within UKLI's South East England portfolio in order to inform their valuation. This exercise has therefore encompassed the following work, undertaken for each site:
  - A strategic review of housing need and potential for Greenfield and/or Green Belt land releases for the relevant area. This included a review of housing need (and therefore the potential for land release) at the regional and local levels
  - A site visit was carried out
  - The planning history was checked
  - An assessment of all relevant planning policy was completed
  - A meeting was held with senior planning officers at all the relevant local authorities, with the exception of Chiltern District Council (for the Pednor Road site) and The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (for the Little Westcott site). Despite repeated attempts, it was not possible to secure a meeting with the relevant individuals at these local authorities within the required period. Where meetings have been held, a note has been completed and this has been appended to the relevant report.
- 2 In each case, a full assessment has been completed and copies are enclosed. These set out our views of development potential of the land in question. In addition to its potential for residential development, consideration has been given to opportunities for a wide range of other uses including affordable housing, commercial, community, sporting and agricultural and related activities.
- 3 The sites are all green field, being located either on the edge of settlements or in isolated, open countryside positions. In many cases, the sites are subject to Green Belt or significant landscape designations. Some of the sites contain a small number of buildings in the form of either farmhouses or as agricultural buildings. However, all the sites can be considered as highly contentious locations for even small amounts of development.
- 4 We are aware that within the 13 sites, many individual plots have already been sold by UKLI to its investors. This fragmentation of ownership will undoubtedly affect the future potential of the sites. However, in order to provide clear advice, we have treated each site as though it was still in a single ownership. This will need to be considered in taking account of the value of the relevant site.

## Strategic Review of Housing Land Requirements and Potential for Land Release

- 5 A strategic review of housing need and the potential for further land release was undertaken for each of the sites. This work examined the national, regional and local housing requirements and compared these with housing delivery rates in each of the relevant areas. This work was undertaken to identify whether an exceptional case could be made for promoting any of the sites in order to meet over-riding housing need.
- 6 According to national planning policy for housing, as set out in Planning Policy Statement 3 'Housing' (PPS3), Regional Spatial Strategies (RSSs) should set out the level of overall housing provision for the region for a sufficient period to enable local planning authorities (LPAs) within the area to plan for housing over a period of at least 15 years. The 13 sites that DTZ have appraised fall within three different planning regions. Each of these regions, together with their respective housing targets, are set out below:
  - **East of England.** The RSS was published in May 2008 and sets out a minimum housing target of 508,000 net additional dwellings for the region over the period 2001 to 2021. The overall strategy is to concentrate growth in the region's cities, market towns and identified key centres for development. Strategic greenbelt reviews are proposed in a number of areas. However, it should be noted that none of these encompass the sites assessed by DTZ;
  - **South East.** The draft South East Plan has undergone Examination in Public (EIP) and is now the subject of proposed changes by the Secretary of State. Housing targets for the region as a whole have been increased following both the EIP and Secretary of State's review. The overall target is now proposed by the Secretary of State as 662,500 new homes for the period 2006 to 2026. Selective review of the Green Belt boundaries are proposed at North-East Guildford and South of Oxford. Otherwise, the spatial strategy directs growth towards urban settlements whilst continuing to protect the region's Green Belts. This means that none of the sites which have been considered by DTZ and which fall within the South East region are located in areas close those proposed for Greenfield land release;
  - **London.** The latest version of the London Plan was published in 2008. The housing targets set out in the Plan are based on the Mayor's 2004 Housing Capacity Study. The targets for the period 2006 to 2016 are for a net addition of 305,000 dwellings across London. There is a general presumption against Green Belt development for housing within the London Plan.
- 7 Housing figures within each of the RSS's are broken down by sub-region and individual local authority area. In order to review the housing land requirements in relation to each of the 13 sites appraised, we have considered each local authority's progress towards meeting its targets to-date, their future housing trajectory and their likely ability to meet RSS housing targets. In doing so, we have considered adopted and emerging policy and related evidence base documents including Urban Capacity studies, Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments (SHLAAs), Annual Monitoring Reports (AMRs) and any other relevant information.

- 8 The housing need analysis has highlighted there to be significant pressure for housing growth across all three regions, in particular in the South East and East of England, which accommodate a number of the Government's identified growth areas. In order to accommodate additional housing growth, development is generally directed towards existing urban areas and to making the best use of previously developed land. It is a requirement for each local authority to demonstrate their ability to meet regional housing growth figures through a housing trajectory. Although each of the local planning authorities is at varying stages in the LDF process housing delivery is a key priority and as such the evidence bases usually well established. In summary, analysis of the local level evidence bases has highlighted very limited opportunities to promote further release of greenfield and/or Green Belt land in addition to that which is already identified in Regional Spatial Strategies. Those areas that have been identified within regional spatial strategies do not include areas in which any of the 13 sites we have appraised are situated.

### **Land at Little Westcott, Oakley Green, Berkshire**

- 9 This site comprises a bungalow, located alongside Oakley Green Road, and a large area of paddock. Although located quite close to a number of houses, it is well outside any defined settlement boundary and is therefore classed as being in open countryside. The land is wholly covered by Green Belt.
- 10 Within the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, there is little scope for the release of Green Belt land for housing development. Although the Royal Borough are conducting a site search for land suitable for Green Belt release as part of the review of their development plan, our analysis indicates that it is highly unlikely that any land in the vicinity of the site will be released for development. This is primarily because of its unsustainable location, which suffers from poor access, isolation from any significant local amenities and services.
- 11 There is potential to implement the planning permission for a three bedroom bungalow to replace the current dwelling. This consent will expire in November 2008.
- 12 There is some potential to provide an enhanced equestrian use as this would be an appropriate Green Belt activity.
- 13 Although the Council employ a housing 'exceptions' policy, which allows the use of Green Belt land for affordable housing in certain circumstances, this is unlikely to be of benefit to this site. This is because the site does not meet the requirements of this policy, which stipulates that to be eligible sites must be in a sustainable location with adequate local services. This does not apply in this instance.

### **Land at Pednor Road, Chesham, Buckinghamshire**

- 14 This site comprises agricultural land within an area of open countryside, located to the south-west of Chesham. It is well outside any identified settlement boundary and is wholly within land identified as Green Belt. There are no buildings on the site.
- 15 Chiltern District Council will not support proposals which lead to the fragmented loss of the Green Belt, in such an isolated location as the land at Pednor Road, and their policy for maintaining the Green Belt is very likely to be strictly enforced. As such there is very limited

potential for the land to be brought forward for development, for either a residential or a Green Belt identified use. To date, Chiltern has exceeded its housing targets and so is not likely to need to identify further land for development. This will remove the possibility of making a case on the grounds of housing need.

- 16 The site is not in a sustainable location for a recreation/leisure use although a very limited equestrian/horticultural use may be supported where it would conserve/enhance the site and surrounding area.
- 17 The Council do not have a rural affordable housing 'exceptions' policy. In any event, given the isolated location of the site and limited access to services it is very unlikely that the Pednor Road site would be considered suitable for this use.

### **Mason's Farm, George Green, Buckinghamshire**

- 18 The site comprises a large area of agricultural land, sited on the edge of the village of George Green. The northern part of the site includes a two storey farm house which is co-located with a number of agricultural buildings and stables. The buildings are all in poor repair. The whole of the site is located within the Green Belt.
- 19 Although there is limited potential for Green Belt release given the low annual housing requirement for the District and high rate of completions currently being achieved, there may be potential to promote the northern part (only) of the site for a future land release, on the grounds that it would be a sensible 'rounding off' of the Green Belt and Settlement Boundary of George Green. This possibility relates only to the northern-most portion of the land (i.e. that in the area of the existing buildings). However, this is likely to be a medium – long term option and is highly unlikely to offer an immediate prospect for development.
- 20 There is potential to refurbish and modestly extend the farmhouse to provide a larger single dwelling house or to knock down and rebuild a new larger dwelling house (two or three storey) in place of the existing farm buildings. However, this will be carefully controlled and will rely on a high quality of design, coupled with a net decrease in the overall amount of building footprint within the Green Belt. Linked to this, there is scope to upgrade the agricultural buildings on the site to provide for either enhanced agricultural or equestrian uses.
- 21 George Green is not a qualifying parish for an 'exceptions' rural affordable housing development and there is therefore little potential for a development of this kind on the site.
- 22 The site is designated as a Mineral Extractions Site and there is therefore potential to exploit the site for minerals extraction either on its own or as part of a wider minerals extraction programme.

### **Land on North Side of North Park, Iver, Buckinghamshire**

- 23 This site comprises agricultural land which abuts the western side of the settlement of Richings Park. The centre of the site contains a number of large greenhouses for horticultural use, with associated hard standing. Access to the site is provided from two locations. The site is wholly within the Green Belt.

- 24 The Article 4 direction provides a clear steer as to the Local Authority's likely restrictive view of any proposed development of the site. The short to medium term development potential of this Green Belt site is therefore considered to be limited to the enhancement and small scale extension of the existing structures to secure and enhance their agricultural and horticultural use. There may be the potential for some redevelopment of the existing greenhouse buildings.
- 25 South Buckinghamshire DC is currently exceeding the housing requirements set out for it in the Structure Plan and is likely to exceed the target for the period up to 2011 by a significant amount. There is therefore very limited potential for Green Belt release in the immediate future. However the eastern portion of the site forms a logical extension to Richings Parks' settlement boundary and may be considered a candidate for a future Green Belt land release by "rounding off" that portion. Through the emerging LDF system, it may be possible to argue a case for the realignment of the Green Belt and Settlement Boundary of Richings Park, to enable the promotion of limited residential development within this "rounded off" portion on the this site. However, this is on 'hope' basis only and will depend upon making a case on grounds of housing need. The ability to make this case is, at best, uncertain given the level of supply versus the low housing target identified above. Alternatively, it might be possible to promote the land on the same basis (i.e. as a sensible rounding off) as part of a future LDF review at such time when there may be a greater level of housing need. However, it is unlikely that any future LDF review, after the current one, will take place before 2015 at the earliest.
- 26 The Council do not have a rural affordable housing 'exceptions' policy and there is therefore no potential to promote the site on this basis.
- 27 It is considered that, with the exception of agricultural, forestry or associated uses, there are no other uses to which the site can be put.

## **Westfield Farm, Buckden, Cambridgeshire**

- 28 This site comprises agricultural land, with a farm house and associated out-buildings sited on its eastern edge, alongside the A1 road. Although close to the village of Buckden, it is outside the settlement boundary and is physically separated from it by the A1. A former windmill, which is located towards the centre of the site, is not within the UKLI land.
- 29 Given the green field nature of the site, which is also within an Area of Best Landscape, and the opinion of Council officers, it is considered very unlikely that the site could be successfully promoted for housing development. The site lies outside the Cambridge Growth Area, and outside the boundary of Buckden. As such the site will not be prioritised for the delivery of housing. To meet housing delivery targets, a number of green field sites have been identified by the Council for development. However these do not include land around Buckden or the Westfield Farm site. It is likely that the redevelopment of the existing 2-storey residential dwelling would be supported, with potential to relocate it further away from the road, in order to improve the quality of residential amenity. A proposal for a recreation/leisure use is unlikely to be supported due to the unsustainable location and the safety/access issues associated with the site's position close to the A1 and separate from the village. For similar reasons, the site is also unlikely be acceptable as a housing 'exceptions' site.

- 30 There may be potential to put the land forward for a gypsy/traveller site as the Council will shortly embark upon a search for suitable sites for this use. It is not considered that there are other uses which would be acceptable in this location.

## **Land at Pottery Lane and at Goatham Lane, Brede, East Sussex**

- 31 This site comprises two areas of land. One is a large area of mature woodland, which is designated as Ancient Woodland. The other is a smaller area of open agricultural land. Both areas are located in open countryside and outside any settlement boundaries. They are both located within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), a very restrictive landscape designation.
- 32 Rother District Council has a clear policy restricting development in the AONB. Furthermore the southern-most site (and the much larger of the two) has been confirmed by the Council as being classified Ancient Woodland which is a “highly sensitive material consideration” in planning terms. This highlights that this portion of the UKLI is afforded a further high level of protection from development.
- 33 The Article 4 direction imposed on the Northern site and Planning Department notices also provides a clear steer as to the Local Authority’s likely view of any proposed development. MP’s involvement in tabling Motion 1236 is an indication of the intense level of local opposition. There is clear opposition from local, District / Planning departments as well as from a high number of MP’s to development.
- 34 It is therefore considered that there is very little development potential for this land.
- 35 The Council confirm that a green or woodland burial site use would be a possibility on a small scale subject to transport and traffic issues. However they have stated that Hastings Cemetery already has a green burial area and it is therefore unclear whether there is any substantial need for this type of use.
- 36 Permission may be achievable for some minor development to allow the better use of the land for agricultural/forestry uses, recreation or cemeteries, subject to showing a clear benefit / improvement to the area and also subject to restricted transport access.
- 37 It is not considered that either parts of the site has potential for any other uses in the foreseeable future.

## **Lodge Farm, Ramsden Heath, Essex**

- 38 This site comprises a large area of farm land, located within the open countryside near, but isolated from, Billericay. The site is within an area designated as Green Belt. The western part of the site includes stables, which are made up of a number of single storey wooden buildings. There is also a single house on the western side of the site.
- 39 Chelmsford BC have a demonstrated supply of housing land above the regional target and are not therefore proposing the release of any additional Green Belt land to bring forward housing development. Lodge Farm is therefore very unlikely to be considered for significant residential

development or any other substantial land use. There is therefore little likelihood of a case being made for a residential allocation on the grounds of unmet need. The existing equestrian use could be continued, with some potential upgrading of the existing stabling facilities, although these appear to be extensive. Any additional building footprint in the Green Belt is unlikely to be supported.

- 40 It is considered that a case can be made for a redevelopment of the stable buildings for residential accommodation, although this would be subject to strict design criteria, with any increase in the amount of floor space unlikely to be considered acceptable by the Council. The stables on site appear to be 1/1.5 storeys and so any residential dwellings would likely be single storey with the potential for accommodation in the roof space. Overall, it is considered that there may be potential for the construction of 2 or 3 single storey dwellings in the area of the existing dwellings.
- 41 It is unlikely that further extension to the existing residential dwelling would be permitted given visual impact in the Green Belt and the neighbouring dwelling.
- 42 We do not consider that the site has any substantial potential for anything other than those uses described above.

### **Land at Kendall Hall Farm, Radlett, Hertfordshire**

- 43 The site comprises agricultural land and some hard standing but, it should be noted, excludes the farm house, cottages and sheds which were associated with the Farm's former use. There are also a number of other buildings which are close to the site, but not within it. These comprise a Jewish Primary School and Radlett Preparatory School. The site is located within Green Belt land and is isolated from any settlements, being within open countryside.
- 44 There is very limited scope for the release of Green Belt land for housing development. Although some release of Green Belt land is being considered within the District, this site is not within the area of search. Release of land in the area of the site would not only generate a 'hole' in the Green Belt but would also lead to a coalescing effect. Both these impacts would be contrary to clear policy objectives.
- 45 There is potential to upgrade the agricultural buildings to provide for enhanced agricultural or equestrian use.
- 46 There is potential to sell additional land to the Jewish Primary School (JPS) as officers have indicated that additional use of the area by the JPS will be acceptable on a modest basis. This could facilitate extension of the Jewish Primary School. However, the amount of land required is likely to be modest and encompass no more than the area required for a couple of classrooms and a small playing field. It would be necessary to undertake discussions with the JPS in order to confirm the precise amount of land sought.

### **Land at Theobald Street, Borehamwood, Hertfordshire**

- 47 The site comprises a large area of agricultural land which abuts the northern edge of Borehamwood. It is sited within the designated Green Belt and does not contain any buildings.

- 48 There is very limited scope for the release of Green Belt land for housing development. Although some release of Green Belt land is being considered within the District, this site is not within the area of search. Release of land in the area of the site would to a coalescence of Borehamwood and Radlett. This would be contrary to clear policy objectives.
- 49 There is potential to upgrade the agricultural buildings to provide for enhanced agricultural or equestrian use.
- 50 There is potential to develop part of the site for sports and recreation uses (football/rugby pitches) based on an established shortage of such facilities in the Borough. However, only essential buildings (for example changing rooms) would be acceptable. Anything more is likely to be vigorously resisted.

### **Land and Buildings at Layham's Farm, Keston, Kent**

- 51 This site comprises a very large area of farmland and includes two farm houses as well as associated buildings and stables. Separate from the main group of buildings is another group of farm buildings (on the western side) and also a motor racing track (on the south eastern side). The site is detached from any settlement and is entirely located within the Green Belt.
- 52 Our research plus discussions with senior officers at the London Borough of Bromley, strongly suggest that there is very limited scope for the development of the land for housing. The Council have recently approved their development plan and can show a very robust level of housing land supply. It is therefore highly unlikely that they will need further land releases. We do not consider that a case for residential development can be made on the grounds of housing need, particularly given the site's isolated location.
- 53 There is potential to refurbish and extend the two dwelling houses or to knock down and rebuild two marginally larger dwelling houses within the same (or similar locations). This might include some modest extension of the properties.
- 54 Discussions with officers indicate that the Council may also accept the replacement of the surplus or dilapidated agricultural buildings with new buildings designed specifically for some form of rural business use. However, this would be strictly controlled and would require a high quality of design and probably also a reduction in the overall footprint of the buildings, in order that the net harm to the Green Belt is reduced.
- 55 Council officers also accepted the potential to upgrade the existing motor racing track with new buildings to improve on-site facilities. However, it should be noted that this would be strictly on the grounds that these were essential to the operation of the track and would have minimal impact on the Green Belt. In practice, these caveats are likely to reduce the amount of extra development achievable to a bare minimum particularly given the potential for disturbance which is associated with motor sports.
- 56 No other opportunities are considered to exist for development of the site.

## **Darman's Lane, Laddingford, Kent**

- 57 The site comprises two large areas of agricultural land, sited in open countryside to the south of the small village of Laddingford. The land is sited outside the settlement boundary of the village. Large areas of the site are prone to flooding. There are no buildings on the site.
- 58 There is very limited scope for the development of green field land for housing development. Maidstone DC are proposing some Green Belt release, but this would be in the form of a single, large extension of Maidstone (for 5,000 homes). Other major sources of supply would come from redevelopment of substantial numbers of brown field sites within Maidstone and other urban areas. As a result, there was little likelihood of other Green Belt sites coming forward.
- 59 There is potential to develop the site for agricultural, horticultural or equestrian uses.
- 60 Planning officers acknowledged that there may be potential to develop the site for a golf course. However, the impact of associated buildings, such as a club house, would be judged by its impact on the appearance of the countryside as well as how any golf course development would overcome flooding issues.
- 61 The development of any of the land, even that closest to Laddingford (i.e. that adjacent to Claygate Road) for 'exceptions' affordable housing development is unlikely to be supported by the Council, as Laddingford is not considered to be sustainable location nor has local demand for affordable housing been identified.

## **Land at Lagham Farm, Lingfield, Surrey**

- 62 This site is entirely comprised of agricultural land with some woodland. It lies in open countryside, close to but separate from the village of South Godstone. There are no buildings on the site.
- 63 Tandridge District Council is expected to meet and even exceed delivery of the target number of dwellings required by the emerging South East Plan. It is therefore considered that delivery of additional dwellings will not be possible on the back of a housing needs case. Furthermore, restricted road access through a shared drive precludes any large scale development.
- 64 Council officers confirmed that there is no need for additional sports facilities since these are provided by the nearby settlement of South Godstone. Furthermore, if a golf course facility were to be proposed that they would consider additional buildings (club houses etc.) related to the golf course to be inappropriate in this location. Therefore whilst a golf course would "in principle" be acceptable, it is the associated buildings that would not be.
- 65 The development potential of this Green Belt site is therefore considered to be limited to the enhancement and small scale extension of the existing structures to secure and enhance their agricultural use.
- 66 In summary therefore in the immediate and foreseeable future, development is limited and restricted to agricultural, horticultural and equestrian uses.

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## **Westbury Barn, Compton, Surrey**

- 67 The site is in the Green Belt and so there is limited development potential. There exist sufficient sites in urban areas of the Borough to meet the local housing requirement and so it is very unlikely the site would be considered for Green Belt release. Given the unsustainable location of the site it is unlikely that a proposal for any use would be supported, other than a potential small-scale agricultural building where it would be necessary for the operation of the land as an agricultural holding. Although there are currently no buildings on the site, a proposal of this type has previously been supported by the Council.