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**Westbury Barn and Adjoining Land,  
Priorsfield Road, Compton, Godalming, Surrey  
GU3 1DW**

**Report to**

**Deloitte**

Stonecutter Court  
1 Stonecutter Street  
London  
EC4A 4TR  
United Kingdom

08015751

DTZ, 48 Warwick Street, London W1B 5NL

September 2008

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## Contents

1	Background	1
	Address	1
	Property Description & Current Lawful Use	1
	Planning History	1
	Planning Opportunity (policy review)	2
	Review of Previous Commentary	5
	Development Potential	5

## Appendices

1	Site Location Plan
2	Review of Housing Land Requirements
3	Minutes of Meeting with Planning Officers

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## 1. Background

- 1.1 The site consists of agricultural land close to the village of Compton, Surrey.

### Address

- 1.2 Westbury Barn, Priorsfield Road, Compton, Godalming, Surrey GU3 1DW.

### Property Description & Current Lawful Use

- 1.3 The site extends to 24 acres, immediately south of the A3 Guildford and Godalming Bypass Road to the west of the village of Compton, Surrey. The site lies to the north of Hurtmore Golf Course and the village of Hurtmore.
- 1.4 The site does not include any agricultural buildings, dwellings or other buildings. The site is currently in unoccupied agricultural use. There is evidence of the demolished remnants of an agricultural building. There is a concrete pad with disconnected water pipes and severed electrical supply cables protruding from these remnants of foundations.
- 1.5 The site is steeply banked to the north where it borders the slip road from the A3. There are extensive views to the east over the neighbouring valley and further rolling countryside.
- 1.6 Access is via a narrow and overgrown gated track rising up from Priorsfield Road. There are two disused gates into adjoining land to the east.
- 1.7 An avenue of native species of trees (saplings) has recently been planted in a straight line starting at the entrance from Priorsfield Road and ending at the site where the (now demolished) agricultural buildings used to be.
- 1.8 The lawful use of the site is therefore agricultural within the Green Belt, and the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

### Planning History

- 1.9 Three previous planning applications have been made on the site, related to the remnants of the agricultural barn existing on site:

Application Ref.	Date of Approval	Description of Development
98/P/01121	October 1998	Application made for the restoration of Bargate stone and brick barn containing open storage bays, mess room, toilet and shower for agricultural workers
98/P/00707	June 1998	New agricultural barn
98/P/00278	Refused in March 1998	New barn and repair/re-roof existing Bargate stone and brick structure

- 1.10 There were a number of conditions attached to the 98/P/01121 permission that should be considered in light of any development potential of the site. These relate to the requirement to use the barn for agricultural purposes only, with the building removed and land restored to its former condition on cessation of such use. This permission also raises the existence of a claimed right of way on the tracks to the north and east of the existing barn, which if pursued and successful could lead to enforcement action and the removal of the barn in order to reinstate the route.

## **Planning Opportunity (policy review)**

### **Regional/Strategic**

- 1.11 The area of Guildford falls within the remit of the draft South East Plan (2006), and Surrey County Council. The statutory Development Plan for the area is the Surrey Structure Plan (adopted 2004).
- 1.12 The South East Plan has previously been the subject of Public Examination in 2007 and a Panel Report in late 2007. Proposed changes to the South East Plan have been published for consultation running to 24<sup>th</sup> October 2008.

### **Local**

- 1.13 The site falls within Guildford Borough Council and is therefore subject of the policies set out in the Guildford Borough Local Plan (adopted 2002).
- 1.14 Guildford Borough Council is in the process of working towards its Core Strategy, currently at pre-submission stage, which forms a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.
- 1.15 Key objectives of the Core Strategy vision include meeting housing need as identified in the Surrey Structure Plan and South East Plan, and protecting the countryside from inappropriate development to maintain the open rural character of the existing environment.

### **Land Use Designation**

- 1.16 The site is greenfield land, currently in agricultural use as pasture land/set aside meadow. There is a single agricultural building located centrally on the site with road access onto Priorsfield Road.
- 1.17 The site is designated as both Green Belt and as an 'Area of Great Landscape Value'. Further to this, the northern part of the site (north of the agricultural building and access road) is designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
- 1.18 The site has been subject to an Article 4 Notice served by Guildford Borough Council. It is understood that an Article 4 notice has been served on the site to restrict permitted development rights. It is unusual for councils to serve Article 4 directions and this is considered to be a clear signal of the Council's desire to prevent detrimental forms of development on this site.



- 1.19 The site lies outside the nearby settlement boundaries, and is not within an area of floodplain as identified by the Local Plan 2002.
- 1.20 There are no listed buildings on site, and the plot does not fall within a designated Conservation Area.
- 1.21 We are not aware of any Tree Preservation Orders on the site.

### **Green Belt**

- 1.22 Maintaining the Green Belt and protecting it from inappropriate development is a key aspect of the Chiltern's future development strategy. Continued designation of land as Green Belt is considered to contribute to the strategic objective of restraining development and its fragmented loss will be restricted.
- 1.23 National planning policy attaches great importance to protection of the Green Belt. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy, as set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 2, is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open.
- 1.24 Green Belt designation is taken seriously as part of planning policy, and there is a clear presumption against inappropriate development in the Green Belt. National Planning Policy contained in PPG2 sets out forms of appropriate development and states that very special circumstances will be required to justify 'inappropriate' development.
- 1.25 Within the Green Belt, development will generally be deemed inappropriate, unless reasonably required for agricultural/forestry, new buildings to provide essential facilities for outdoor sport recreation, cemeteries, or limited extension of existing dwellings (Policy RE2). New buildings for essential facilities will only be permitted where they are genuinely required for uses of land preserving the openness of the Green Belt.
- 1.26 The demonstration of exceptional circumstances in order to override the Green Belt designation and achieve development for anything other than the 'appropriate' uses requires support at a national, regional, and local level to prove a strong case that the site provides an appropriate location for the development and that no alternative site exists that would not require the development to be phased in the Green Belt.
- 1.27 The adjacent village of Compton is an identified settlement in the Green Belt (Policy RE3), within which new development will be permitted through infilling on land substantially surrounded by existing development. The site of Westbury Barn falls outside the settlement boundary of Compton, therefore it is unlikely that any proposal on the site would be considered appropriate. The Council have confirmed that the site was very isolated and that although Compton, Godalming and Shackleford were the nearest Green Belt settlements, these were too far away to have any relationship with the Westbury Barn site (see appendix 3).
- 1.28 Policy states that development within the Area of Great Landscape Value should protect the distinctive landscape character of the area (Policy RE6), therefore there will be limited development potential in areas within this designation, such as Westbury Barn.

- 1.29 The site falls within the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty within which, development inconsistent with the primary aim of conserving the existing landscape character will not be permitted (Policy RE5). Small scale development for agriculture, forestry or outdoor recreation, as well as support services for the local community will normally be acceptable provided they conserve the natural landscape.
- 1.30 Policy states that planning permission will be granted for the re-use and adaptation of rural buildings to employment, community or recreational use provided the existing building is a substantial construction and constitutes permanent development which would not require substantial reconstruction (Policy RE9). Permission will not be granted to re-use a rural building for residential use without first attempting to secure a suitable community, recreational or business re-use (Policy RE10), and only where the proposal would not have a materially greater impact than the present use and purposes of Green Belt designation.
- 1.31 Permission for new agricultural dwellings in the countryside outside defined settlement boundaries will be strictly controlled under Policy RE11 to ensure proposed accommodation is appropriate and necessary to the agricultural use. New agricultural buildings will also only be considered for approval if reasonably necessary and appropriately sited (Policy RE13).
- 1.32 The Council officers have confirmed that there were some Green Belt sites being proposed for release, but as this process was in the 3<sup>rd</sup> phase of consultation and 18 months from adoption, it is very unlikely that sites not already included in earlier rounds of consultation would be considered a candidate in the future. Westbury Barn site is not one of the sites being considered for release (see appendix 3).

### **Housing Requirement**

- 1.33 The Council will seek to provide new residential development primarily within the existing urban areas and in the village settlements to minimise the development of green field sites and other open land (see appendix 3).
- 1.34 It is considered that there are sufficient sites in urban areas of the Borough to meet the housing requirement of 316 dwellings per annum as set out in the South East Plan and emerging Core Strategy. This will be reviewed should the requirement increase to 422 dwellings per annum as recommended by the Secretary of State. In which case, it is likely the shortfall will be met through on single new community to the North East of Guildford (see appendix 2).
- 1.35 The preferred spatial approach of Guildford Borough Council is to direct development towards previously developed land in urban areas of the Borough. Indications from consultation for the Core Strategy in Summer 2002 gave no public support for Green Belt release to provide new homes. It is likely that the Green Belt will continue to be seen as an unsustainable location for housing development.
- 1.36 Monitoring undertaken by the Council suggests there would be a shortfall to the regional requirement of 85 dwellings by 2017/18. Including small windfall sites however there would be an oversupply of housing over the same time period (see appendix 2). It is very unlikely that this site would be considered necessary for housing release in the South East Plan period.

- 1.37 Rural exceptions policy, as set out in PPS3, enables Local Authorities to identify sites suitable solely for affordable housing. These are often small, Greenfield sites, which would otherwise not be released for housing under conventional planning guidance. Given the isolated nature of the site, it is unlikely that the Westbury Barn site would be considered for such development.

## **Review of Previous Commentary**

### **RD Planning and Land Report 2008**

- 1.38 The RD Planning and Land Report assumes little prospect of further development on the site given the Green Belt and AONB designations.
- 1.39 The report considers that there may be the potential to redevelop the site for a hotel or country club use to be promoted through the emerging LDF planning system but recognises that this form of development is very unlikely to be favourably considered by the Local Planning Authority. Given that the site is designated as Green Belt, is within an Area of Great Landscape Value, and partially within a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, we consider it unlikely that commercial development of this scale, despite the recreation element, would be considered appropriate.
- 1.40 We consider there is insufficient argument for the need for any such use to overcome the presumption against development within the Green Belt. Coupled with the access restriction, there is unlikely to be any short to medium term development potential of this site for use of this scale and nature.

### **Cluttons Report, May 2008**

- 1.41 The Cluttons report notes that there are no buildings on this site, and that the site has been subject to an Article 4 Notice served by Guilford Borough Council. It recommends that the land has been plotted and is therefore not available for sale and provides a clear indication of the Council's desire to restrict the development of this site.

### **Savills Report, March 2006**

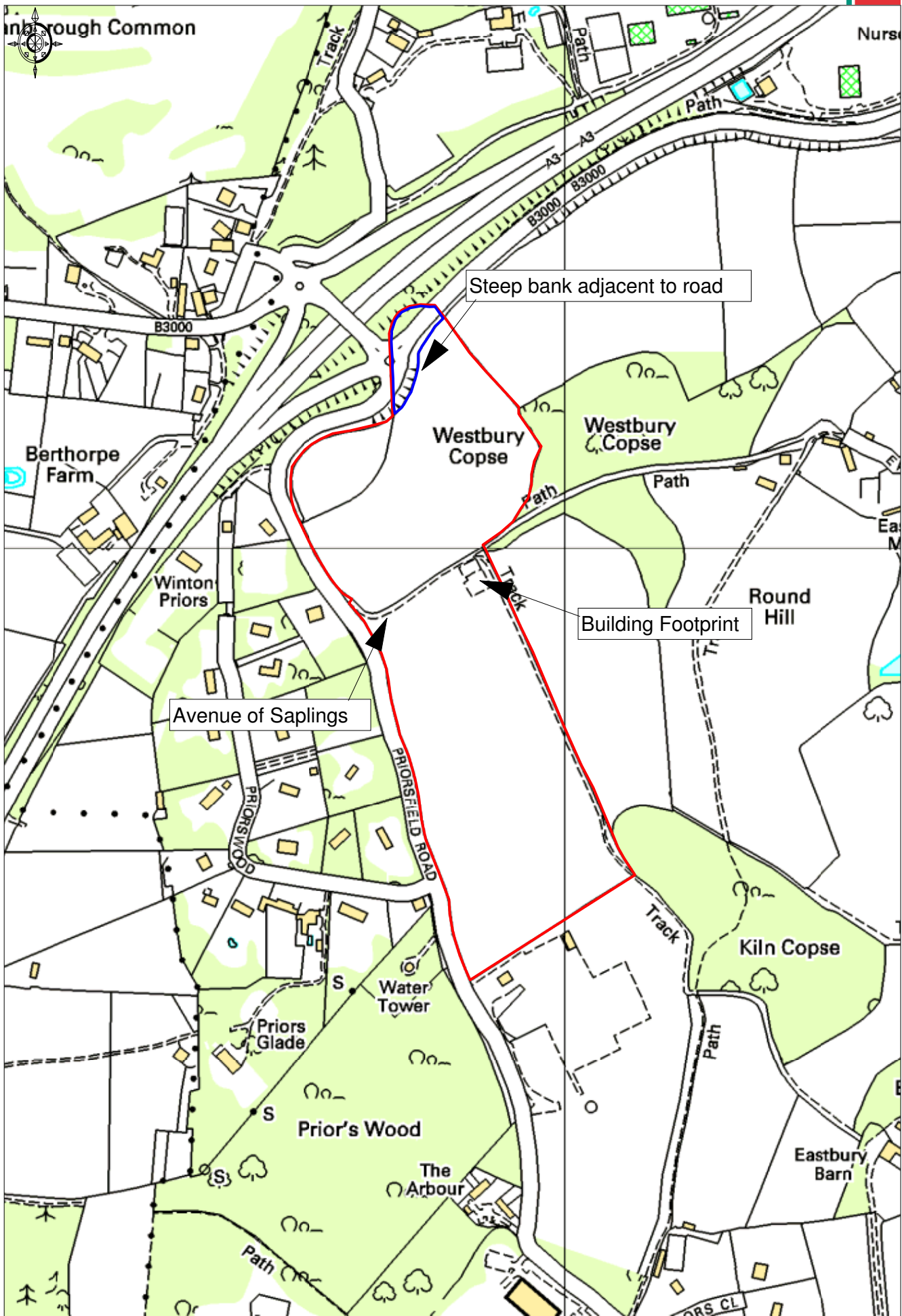
- 1.42 There are no existing dwellings on the site, and as such the plot was not included in the Savill's report.

## **Development Potential**

- 1.43 The planning at Guildford Borough Council have had no contact with UKLI regarding development potential since the enquiries of 2004 (see appendix 3).
- 1.44 The inclusion of land in the Green Belt is given paramount importance and as such its continued protection takes precedence over other land use objectives. This represents an 'in principle' obstacle to most forms of development. Permission may be given for development reasonably required for agricultural / forestry, new buildings to provide essential facilities for outdoor sport or recreation, cemeteries, or limited extension of existing dwellings.

- 1.45 The site lies outside the settlement boundary of nearby villages and surrounding development is dispersed and predominantly agricultural in character.
- 1.46 There are no buildings left on site with potential for sale and much of the land has been plotted and is therefore unavailable for individual resale.
- 1.47 An application was previously made and granted for the restoration of Bargate stone and brick barn containing open storage bays, mess room, toilet and shower for agricultural workers. It is therefore likely that a development of this type would be supported by the Council.
- 1.48 Given the site's inclusion within the Green Belt, we consider that the current development potential of the site is very limited. There is a general presumption against inappropriate development within the Green Belt, and we would suggest this would be strongly supported in such a location within a wider area of open space and green landscape. As identified, we do not consider there is any potential to pursue this site for Green Belt release (see appendix 3).
- 1.49 Given the current nature of the site as open land, without any agricultural buildings, it is unlikely that planning permission for development for business, general industrial or storage or distribution purposes, or for the hotel or country club would be achievable.
- 1.50 The isolated location of the site and boundary with the A1 would give limited potential for residential or other form of significant development. There would be potential access issues with any proposal brought forward.
- 1.51 Any new agricultural dwelling / building will only be acceptable where it is essential to the operation of an established agricultural holding, or where required for the functioning of the agricultural enterprise or enhancement of the agricultural use. Any new building should be of similar scale to the previous building on the site, possibly with some very moderate extension. The building should preferably be for agricultural uses. There may be the potential for a small residential unit, where it could be demonstrated that it was necessary for the ongoing agricultural use of the site.
- 1.52 The council confirmed that the fields could not be supported as they were, given the site has already been parcelled off it no longer achieves minimum grazing requirements, and there is not an ongoing need for the existing buildings (see appendix 3).
- 1.53 In terms of other uses, the council have indicated that given the planning history of the site, the Article 4 direction, and the fact that the site had already been parcelled off there was unlikely to be much possibility in such a highly unsustainable location (see appendix 3).
- 1.54 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.

## **APPENDIX 1**



Steep bank adjacent to road

Building Footprint

Avenue of Saplings



## APPENDIX 2

## **2. Review of Housing Land Requirements – Westbury Barn, Compton, Godalming, Guildford**

### **Housing Numbers**

- 2.1 Guildford is the second largest borough in Surrey, and it has the highest population in the county, of approximately 129,700. The two principal urban areas are the town of Guildford and the urban area of Ash and Tongham. Outside the urban areas most of the borough is designated as Green Belt.
- 2.2 Until such time as the South East Plan is adopted, Surrey County Council Structure Plan sets out the housing provision figures for Guildford. This sets out a figure of 4,750 dwellings to be delivered between 2001 to 2016, equating to 317 dwellings per annum. According to the Structure Plan, most of these dwellings will be provided on previously developed land. In Guildford, the Structure Plan states that the provision for a new community to the north east of the town will be made in the local development framework, if sufficient capacity on previously developed land cannot be identified to meet the full housing allocation within the LDF period. The overall housing target is a reflection of the area as a centre of strategic importance.
- 2.3 The Council's latest Annual Monitoring Report (AMR 2007) sets out a housing trajectory, which demonstrates that average completions have been 322 per annum between 2001 and 2007 and are therefore marginally above the Structure Plan requirement. Beyond this period, the housing trajectory sets out forecast completions and compares this to an annualised required of 317 dwellings up to 2016/17. The trajectory suggests a shortfall of 85 units by 2017/18. The trajectory does not include small windfall sites. However, the AMR suggests that if they were included at the rate identified in the Council's Housing Capacity Study (2007), there would be an oversupply of housing over the same time period. The AMR notes that until housing targets are adopted in the South East Plan and Site Allocations process is progressed, it is difficult to fully know the impact of the exclusion of windfall estimates.
- 2.4 Once adopted, the South East Plan will set out the minimum housing provision figures for Guildford for the period 2006 to 2026. The draft South East Plan sets out a figure of 6,440 at a rate of 322 per year – this is consistent with the average previous rate of completions in the period 2001 to 2007. However, the Secretary of State's proposed changes to the Plan suggest increasing the housing provision in Guildford to a total of 8,440 dwellings at a rate of 422 per year.
- 2.5 Guildford is in the process of working towards its Core Strategy in which it will be expected to set out provision for housing numbers as per the South East Plan and in accordance with the requirements of National Planning Policy, as set out in Planning Policy Statement 3 (PPS3). As far as we can ascertain, the Council has not set out a housing trajectory on the basis of the requirements of PPS3 in terms of identifying a rolling five year deliverable supply of housing.
- 2.6 The Core Strategy is currently at pre-submission stage. It sets out that housing provision will be made for approximately 316 dwellings per annum between 2006 and 2018. This is based on the Structure Plan requirement which has been rolled forward two years until 2018. The Strategy refers to the emerging South East Plan and the draft proposed figure of 322

dwelling and suggests a revised annual housing figure will be prepared to reflect the new housing requirement once the Plan is adopted.

## Housing Locations

- 2.7 In terms of locations, the Site Allocations Development Plan Document within the LDF, will identify possible sites for residential or mixed-use development within the existing urban areas of Guildford, Ash, Ash Vale and Tongham and within identified village settlement boundaries. Priority will be given to providing housing on previously developed land within existing built-up areas, the redevelopment or conversion of some of the existing non-strategic employment sites and permitting mixed development on some employment land.
- 2.8 In order to inform the development of the Core Strategy the Council undertook a Housing Potential Study (June 2007) indicating that Guildford should be able to meet its housing targets through the development of existing brown field sites without requiring the release of Green Belt land. There are sufficient sites in the urban areas of the borough to meet the current housing requirement of 316 dwellings per annum. Within the housing study, rural areas within the Green Belt were treated as 'unsustainable' locations for housing due to the planning constraints on development. Indeed, the process for release from the Green Belt is now in its third phase of consultation and has been rejected at each stage – it is therefore highly unlikely that consideration will be given to release of sites such as Westbury Barn at this stage in the process (see Appendix 3).
- 2.9 Both the Structure Plan and draft South East Plan state that Guildford should give consideration to the need for a new community to the north-east of the town if sufficient capacity on previously developed land cannot be identified to meet the borough's full housing allocation. The Core Strategy draft submission version states that, based on the findings of the Housing Needs Survey and the latest Housing trajectory, the Council is confident that it can meet the current housing target within existing urban areas and village settlement boundaries. It goes on to suggest that should further land be required, existing previously developed land, such as land identified in the Slyfield Area Action Plan, would be considered before any greenfield or Green Belt release.
- 2.10 It should be noted that these assertions do not take account of the potential need to meet the proposed increase in dwellings provision of 422 per year. Guildford has joined with the neighbouring Council's of Waverley and Woking to undertake a Strategic Housing Market Assessment to inform their LDF, which is due for publication August 2008. Furthermore, a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment is in the early stages of preparation. Both documents will be used to further inform the Council's Core Strategy and Site Specific Allocations.

## Implications

- There are a number of documents coming forward which will further inform the availability of housing sites for development and the current position of the housing market.
- Guildford is confident of meeting its current housing target (set out in the Structure Plan) through the development of existing brown field sites without requiring the release of Green Belt land. However, there is a lack of information at this point in time to assess



whether the higher figure set out in the proposed changes to the South East Plan could be met.

- Nonetheless, it is likely the Green Belt will continue to be seen as an unsustainable location for housing in the short to medium term. In the longer term, in accordance with the Structure Plan and South East Plan a Greenbelt boundary review may be necessary to the North East of Guildford in order to accommodate a new sustainable community. The subject site is situated to the south east of Guildford and is therefore unlikely to be considered a suitable location for the release of Greenbelt land to meet housing provision figures.

## **APPENDIX 3**



## WESTBURY BARN, GODALMING, SURREY

### NOTE OF MEETING WITH HEAD OF WEST AREA DEVELOPMENT CONTROL TEAM HELD ON THURSDAY 7<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST 2008 AT GUILDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

**Attendees:** Jo Bell (JB) West Area Team Leader Guildford BC  
Iestyn John (IJ) DTZ (Planning)  
Karim Malhamé (KM) DTZ (Planning)

#### ACTION

#### 1.0 Introduction

1.1 IJ briefly explained the background to DTZ being instructed to value the UKLI portfolio.

#### 2.0 UKLI Westbury Barn Site

2.1 JB stated that there had been no contact with UKLI since the enquiries of 2004. JB was sure that UKLI did not have any contact with Guildford BC. In fact if there had been any contacts then the Committee Report of 24/02/2004 relating to the Article 4 direction on the land (copy provided by JB) would have made reference to it.

#### 3.0 Article 4 Notice

3.1 GB Land;  
IJ stated that almost all sites in the brief are Green Belt (GB). IJ asked if any GB land was being released by Guildford BC.

JB confirmed that all land on the site was in the GB and stated that there were 3 sites at the time that an Article 4 Notice was issued on concurrently in the Borough.

JB stated that the Westbury Barn site land is;  
GB – Green Belt  
AONB – Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty  
AGLV - Area of Great Landscape Value  
Subject to Article 4 Notice removing permitted development rights on the land.

#### 4.0 Housing Land Supply and Potential for GB Release

4.1 JB confirmed that there were some GB sites being proposed for release as part of the Council's LDF review for the 5 Year and 10 Year housing supply. This process was now in the 3<sup>rd</sup> phase of consultation and was 18 months away from adoption. JB stated that the Westbury Barn site is not one of the sites being considered for release. If it had not been included in these earlier rounds of consultation then it was very unlikely indeed to be considered a candidate in the future.

#### 4.2 GB Changes;

IJ asked what the nearest GB settlements were. JB noted that the site was very isolated and confirmed that Compton, Godalming and Shackleford were the nearest of these but too far away to have any relationship with the Westbury Barn site. There were a few groups of houses in the vicinity but these were not uncommon in the Borough and were not accorded any significance whatsoever as settlements by the Council. Their presence would not be considered to assist the case for allocation of the Westbury Barn sites as GB.

### 5.0 UKLI Site Potential

5.1 IJ asked about the potential of the site since there were some buildings and other structures on the land. It was noted that the barn which had formerly occupied a small part of the land had been demolished.

JB confirmed that there had been no planning activity on the site since 2005.

5.2 JB stated that the previously existing building on the site had been subject to an auction but this could not be lent any significance in terms of its planning potential.

5.3 JB confirmed that the fields could not be supported as they were and that there was not an ongoing need for the existing buildings.

JB stated that if this was to be taken further that the Council would have to go through a Humberts PPG 7 test on the site.

### 6.0 Other Uses for the UKLI Westbury Barn Site

6.1 IJ asked if the council would consider other GB compatible uses.

JB replied that given the planning history of the site and the Article 4 direction and the fact that the site had already been parcelled off, meaning that the site no longer achieved minimum grazing requirements, that this was unlikely to be a possibility. It was in a highly unsustainable location.