

# Outlook

CURRENT NEWS AND VIEWS ON ISSUES AFFECTING LAND & PROPERTY

AUTUMN 2024

## Planning shake-up



**The new Labour government has unveiled its plans to introduce wide-ranging reforms to the planning system and the delivery of infrastructure with the intention of unlocking development sites for housing, social and physical infrastructure and energy.**

**Key proposals include:**

### **Planning & Infrastructure Bill**

The Bill seeks to address the constraints of the current planning system to unlock more housing and infrastructure across the country by:

- Streamlining the delivery process for critical infrastructure including simplification of the consenting process for major infrastructure projects;
- Reforming compulsory purchase compensation. Ensuring compensation paid to landowners is “fair but not excessive” where important physical and social infrastructure and affordable housing are being delivered;
- Modernising planning committees to improve local planning decision-making;
- Using development to fund nature recovery where currently both are stalled.

### **Green Belt & Grey Belt Land**

Labour states that it will seek to unlock poorer-quality green belt land such as wastelands or disused car parks, labelled “Grey Belt” land, for the development of new homes.

While Brownfield Sites are to be prioritised ahead of Green Belt sites, Grey Belt is to be next in line. Housing development within Grey Belt land is to include at least 50% affordable homes.

### **Onshore Wind Farms**

The government has overturned the de facto ban on onshore wind farms with the aim of achieving its 2030 clean energy goal. Two revisions to the National Planning Policy Framework were issued, allowing for onshore wind applications to now be considered on the same basis as other energy development projects.

With the announced reforms, the new government has made clear its intentions to make significant changes to the way that development and infrastructure is delivered.

However, the proposed reforms are in the early stages and we await how they play out in practice.

### **In this edition**



#### **Labour lays foundations for planning shake-up.**

The new Labour government has unveiled its plans to introduce wide-ranging reforms to the planning system.



#### **Was Ashford always destined to be a new town?**

On 31st July 2024 Labour announced a new wave of new towns.



#### **Sustainable Farming Incentive – 2024 Expanded Offer.**

Defra are in the process of a “controlled” roll-out of their Expanded SFI Offer for 2024.

# AMC

The Agricultural Mortgage Corporation

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# Was Ashford always destined to be a new town?



**On 31st July 2024 Labour announced a new wave of new towns.**

For those local to Ashford, growth has always been on the agenda. We can look back as far as 1847 when the South Eastern Railway Company developed Alfred Town to house its workforce. Later this became known as Newtown and contained some of the supporting infrastructure that even today forms part of strategic development proposals for new communities. Ashford was then identified in 1959 as an area to house London's overspill with around 5,000 new homes. In 1967, the Buchanan Report proposed a staggering 200,000 population increase for Ashford by 1991. John Prescott's 2001 Sustainable Communities Programme prompted the creation of the Greater

Ashford Development Framework (GADF) to facilitate 31,000 new homes to 2031, which ultimately led to the expansion of what was a small railway (and market) town into what it has become today. Various schemes were promoted along the way, including the failed Ward Homes Bishops Forstal Garden Village in the late 1980s, and Ashford Great Park in 1993 which has now been built out to a certain degree under a different name: Finberry.

The term Garden City (first posited by the English town planner Ebenezer Howard in 1898) - and other related terms such as Garden Villages and Garden Communities - have more recently been attached to proposals for new settlements which comprise more than simply housing.

Along the way, each successive government has been keen to promote growth by building on Howard's founding ideas, each time re-badging the concept so that it has become diluted over time. New towns such as Hemel Hempstead were first enshrined in the New Towns Act of 1946.

With Labour announcing a new generation of new towns, will we see radical strategic planning, looking at opportunities across the country to embrace opportunities not only in the South but also further North, or are we going to see more of the same? Or will this be watered down with a greater reliance on urban extensions that can be justified with less infrastructure?

As part of the Labour Government's announcement, the concept of large-scale new communities built on greenfield land would be complemented with a larger number of urban extensions and urban regeneration schemes under a 'New Towns Code' and a 'New Towns Taskforce'. Does this sound familiar?

Returning to Ashford, I have always felt that Ashford has grown to such a degree that it is all but missing the 'new town' badge that other planned towns have the benefitted from. As Labour suggests that urban extensions will form part of this 'new' new towns programme is it

conceivable that, through the imminent review of the Ashford Local Plan, that a further urban extension could be on the cards for Ashford or for other towns across the South East? Elements such as nutrient neutrality will still need to be addressed as part of any large-scale development proposal and in the absence of a local solution, many will be keeping a close eye to see whether the government will soon announce a national solution to enable some of the new homes, which are still held up in planning locally, to be released.

Should you have planning queries or land to promote, or have been approached by a developer then please get in touch with one of our team.



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Chartered Town Planner  
01233 506201



**Steve Davies**  
Associate Director and  
Chartered Town Planner  
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**Isabelle Adaway**  
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## Sustainable Farming Incentive -2024 Expanded Offer

**Defra are in the process of a "controlled" roll-out of their Expanded SFI Offer for 2024 and are no longer accepting applications under the 2023 scheme.**

As we write this, they are inviting Expressions of Interest from interested applicants but in our experience so far, the submission of an EoI has generated a prompt invitation to apply.

The expanded scheme is now open to all those who have not previously claimed BPS, which widens its availability to new entrants.

The scheme now extends to over 100 actions and encompasses updated SFI 2023 actions, Countryside Stewardship actions (updated to reduce rigidity where possible and "merged" into SFI) and new actions such as no tillage farming, precision farming and spring-sown and summer-sown cover crops.

The 25% land cap that was applied to some SFI actions will remain and some further actions will be added to the list.

We have assisted hundreds of clients with environmental schemes over the years and will ensure that the scheme

works for your business as well as the environment.

If you are interested in applying for SFI or want to know more about what is on offer, please give one of our team a call.



**Matthew Sawdon**  
Director  
01233 506201



**Sophie Walker**  
Chartered Surveyor  
01233 506201



**Karen Ross**  
Chartered Surveyor  
01233 506201



## Meet the Team

**Vicky Hutton-Squire (née Phillips)**  
BSc (Hons) MSc MRICS FAAV

We're delighted to welcome Vicky back from maternity leave. Having studied Geography and then Rural Land and Business Management at Reading University, Vicky joined the Property Consultants team as a graduate in 2008.

Alongside her training to become a Chartered Surveyor, she experienced most aspects of the Hobbs Parker Group including the livestock market, collective and farm sales and the car auction.

Vicky left Hobbs Parker in 2014 to join a national firm in their Oxford office where she specialised in valuation, compulsory purchase and compensation work alongside general practice consultancy.

Vicky returned to Hobbs Parker as a director in 2019 and has a varied workload with specialisms in valuation (including expert witness work), compulsory purchase (to which she brings her experience dealing with the HS2 and East West Rail schemes on behalf of landowners), landlord and tenant matters and farm agency.

While the arrival of baby Alex last October may have (temporarily) paused the wanderlust, Vicky loves to travel



to far-flung destinations – previous trips have included the Galapagos, Jordan and Uzbekistan.

These days, being married to a South African apple farmer, holidays to Cape Town are much more likely!

**Jon Rimmer**  
MRICS FAAV

Jon is Chairman of The Hobbs Parker Group. His particular expertise and experience includes compulsory purchase and compensation, land development, purchase of farms and land, agricultural tenancy matters and joint venture farming agreements. In the past, Jon assisted the Livestock Team as an auctioneer selling the finished cattle.

Jon studied Rural Estate Management at the Royal Agricultural College Cirencester and joined Hobbs Parker as a graduate in 1991 where he trained and qualified as a chartered surveyor. From 1994 further professional experience was gained in the

Midlands before rejoining Hobbs Parker in September 1999. Jon is also a Member of the National Farmers Union, Tenant Farmers Association, and Compulsory Purchase Association.



Jon is from a farming family in Lancashire and is married with three children. His interests include most sports, although this is now mainly restricted to being a spectator!

## Dates for your Diary



**Romney Marsh Ploughing Match**  
Sunday 1st September

**Weald of Kent Ploughing Match**  
Saturday 21st September

**East Kent Ploughing Match**  
Wednesday 25th September



# Farms & Land

#TheGardenOfEngland

Recent instructions from  
Hobbs Parker Estate Agents



**Teynham**  
£3,350,000

Lower Frognall Farm.  
Mixed farm. For sale as whole.  
**309.50 acres.**



**Sandhurst**  
£1,550,000

Frenchurst Farm.  
Residential livestock farm in the High Weald.  
**59.65 acres.**



**Biddenden**  
£1,575,000

Common Farm.  
Grade II Farmhouse.  
**30.20 acres.**



**Doddington**  
£1,450,000

Court Lodge Farm.  
Farmhouse. Kent Barn. Buildings  
**48.60 acres. As or whole or in 3 lots.**



**Denton**  
£250,000

Land at Agester Lane  
**19.05 acres pastureland.**



**Rolvenden**  
£2,250,000

Little Forsham & Little Thornden Farm.  
Livestock farm - as a whole or in 3 lots.  
**165 acres**



**Woodchurch**  
£1,950,000

King Farm  
Grade II listed farmhouse, buildings.  
**81.75 acres.**



**Little Chart**  
£1,350,000

Farmland at Surrenden  
153.20 acres of arable and fruit.  
As a whole or in 2 lots.



The articles in this edition should not be relied upon or regarded as a substitute for advice.  
Hobbs Parker Property Consultants LLP would be pleased to provide further information or advice on any particular issue.

**Hobbs Parker Property Consultants LLP**  
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Outlook is brought to you by Hobbs Parker Property Consultants - a team of experienced Rural Chartered Surveyors and Planning Consultants dedicated to providing professional advice and services to farmers and property owners.  
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