



ASSESSMENT OF DELIVERY OF HOUSING SITES AS AT NOVEMBER 2015

For:

Patrick Conroy
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South Gloucestershire Council.

Prepared by:

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19th November 2015



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1	Trajectory
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Residential Development Consulting

Private and Confidential

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Our Ref: TJC/lg

19th November 2015

Dear Sir

RE-ASSESSMENT OF DELIVERY OF HOUSING SITES AS AT SEPTEMBER 2015

1.0 EXPERIENCE AND QUALIFICATIONS

- 1.1 I am John Timothy Robert Cann, a Senior Director with BNP Paribas Real Estate ('BNPPRE'), one of the UK's leading real estate consultancies with seven regional offices in addition to its London offices.
- 1.2 I have responsibility Regionally for BNP Paribas Real Estate's Development Consultancy Business that specialises in residential development agency, appraisal, valuation and consultancy. I am based in Bristol.
- 1.3 I qualified as an associate with the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors in 1987 and became a fellow of the Institution in 2000 practising in the South West Region of the UK while based in Bristol where I still live close by. I have been qualified as a surveyor and involved in the appraisal of residential development land for 25 years. I was until February 2005 the National Director responsible for Chesterton's residential development and consultancy team covering the UK. I am a registered valuer with the RICS.
- 1.4 I have extensive experience in the residential sector undertaking valuation, advisory and agency roles, and in terms of valuation both in connection with dispute resolution and development funding or decision making.



- 1.5 I have accepted appointments as Joint Receiver under the Law of Property Act 1925 on portfolios of residential properties and sites. I have given expert opinion in the County, High Court and at the Land Tribunal on residential valuation and development land dispute resolution matters, providing independent determinations, and appeared at Public Local Inquiries as a witness
- 1.6 I am currently involved in exercising development land options within the UK and have recently sold and am acquiring large residential development sites via exercising development land option agreements within the South West and specifically the Greater Bristol Region.
- 1.7 BNPPRE's residential land and new homes business is a national enterprise and I am responsible for its regional business including the team based in Bristol covering the South West. I spend the majority of my working time in our Bristol office and live a short distance south of Bristol.
- 1.8 I currently act for both land owners and national house builders in addition to public sector bodies and believe my experience provides a balanced insight into the residential development market. I believe I am well placed to provide an assessment of the deliverability over the next five years from April 2014 to March 2019 of the sites relied upon by the Council.

2.0 INSTRUCTIONS

- 2.1 I am instructed by Patrick Conroy of South Gloucestershire Council, to review the new assumptions made by the Council's Planning Officers of the Housing Delivery Estimates for the period April 2015 to March 2020 and by way of an update to my earlier assessment of The Core Strategy in June 2013 and June 2014.
- 2.2 I am specifically asked drawing upon my experience in this sector to review the existing major sites and the Core Strategy strategic allocations in the South Gloucestershire area to determine the supply aspect in order to assist in a determination by the Council as to whether or not the housing supply policies of the Council's Core Strategy remain up-to-date and should accordingly form the starting point for the determination of planning applications.
- 2.3 I have also been asked to give an overview on changes to the new homes development market and key influences since 2014 as an understanding of the current housing market is material to the consideration of the Council's supply forecasts.
- 2.4 In undertaking my assessment and as a starting point I have considered information relating to housing supply provided by the Council in their July 2015 Residential Land Availability Survey RLS recently updated to the 30th September 2015 incorporating my suggested changes (included at **Appendix 1**). This document is useful in that it sets out individual site capacity, unit mix, planning status and take up. That RLS identifies in different categories sites currently active and delivering units to the market, those allocated or resolved to grant consent and in the pipeline and other categories dependent upon size or new opportunities.
- 2.5 I requested and have interviewed the relevant Case Officers and Council Housing Officers to discuss the current planning status and expected delivery timetable, and made general enquiries of the landowners, promoters or house builders where I have deemed it necessary. I have as well drawn upon my own knowledge and experience, including information held by BNP Paribas Real Estate, in forming my opinions on likely housing supply. In all respects I have sought to be consistent in approach to previous assessments and reviews.



2.6 At **Appendix 2** to this report I include my summary schedule on housing delivery of the main sites where I have made adjustments along with a short statement on delivery.

3.0 SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE NEW HOMES MARKET/RESIDENTIAL LAND MARKET

3.1 The new homes market has generally seen an increase in confidence with the recent re-election of the Conservative party. Demand for new homes continues to rise and the Chancellor's announcement that 'Help To Buy' will continue past 2016 to 2020 has served to strengthen the market. This is important given the greater majority of the volume new homes sites rely upon these products making up on average 30% of the private market new homes sales.

3.2 The RICS Residential Market Review as at September 2015 indicates that rising prices are matched by new buyer enquiries increasing for the fifth month in succession. The South West in particular is demonstrating a solid growth in transactions. While this is a survey of the wider residential market, the regional and national house builders generally report increasing levels of new build transactions.

3.3 There is clear evidence of a pick-up in house purchase activity. The Council of Mortgage Lenders recently reported the highest lending month in August 2015 since 2007. While there are encouraging signs of growth in demand there is still evidence that supply is not meeting demand and prices as a result are set to increase further. It is widely expected that increasing the delivery of units through greater numbers of outlets should be the response.

3.4 The National House Builders within the South Gloucestershire Region are evidencing improving sales rates since the election on their volume sites. At GHQ Emersons Green and the Emersons Gateway site sales are likely to exceed 280 units in 2015/16, up from 229 in 2014/15. Projected delivery for 2016/17 is likely to be 375 units. Notwithstanding this increase in delivery in the same location it is invariably the case that when the larger volume sites are established they deliver ever quicker their allocations.

3.5 I do not see any signs that the current market trend of improving activity falter. The demand for residential development land is strong in the areas close to the major conurbations but land values are not rising (in the Deep South West and areas some distance to the conurbations land values are stagnating or falling). This is more than likely due to good levels of supply of ready to go sites (in some areas over supply) and the nature of the market now changing from a seller's market to a buyer's one.

3.6 There is considerable frustration being shown by the house builders in the market relating to delays in delivery of major housing schemes where a combination of factors is in play. There has been increasing pressure on resource within the house builders, and greater complexity and time spent in achieving a suitable and implementable consent. However, in my opinion, the evolving and predominant reason for the delays are challenging land acquisition processes where unsuitable historic or incomplete arrangements create commercial pressures as increasingly values are not matching landowner expectations, with resulting disputes causing delay. As a result I have adopted a robust view that where there are signs of these commercial pressures that caution be taken when forecasting.



- 3.7 In the Budget the Chancellor announced changes limiting during the term of the government the rental growth in Social Rented and Affordable Rented stock. The Immediate effect was felt in the market with RP's bids falling by between 10 and 15%. It has had a significant effect on land values with a number of scheme's values I am selling or acquiring having to be altered. In some cases RP's are refusing to make bids while they re-plan their budgets. The effect of a freeze on affordable rents on delivery of housing completions in 2015/16 is difficult to predict, but there will certainly be added downward pressure on land values which will not be helpful to the earlier points made on landowner expectations.
- 3.8 The situation and location of the strategic housing site allocations (in the adopted Core Strategy) across the South Gloucestershire area as extensions to the Bristol suburbs and in market town locations, in my opinion offer a good mix of volume housing sites to accommodate future demand. It has been straightforward for home owners to target areas within easy commuter reach of the employment areas surrounding and within Bristol via the motorway network and this has given rise to large residential allocations in places such as Weston-Super-Mare. The introduction of good value choice sites within the Greater Bristol area will no doubt readily capture those commuters that have been buying in North Somerset and other areas of Bristol.

4.0 MY ASSESSMENT OF THE COUNCIL'S HOUSING SUPPLY

- 4.1 I have utilised the Council's RLS as a basis of my review, included at **Appendix 2**. I have concentrated on the key or large sites when arriving at my conclusions. I have prepared my own assessment of the likely delivery timetable and take up rates of the large site allocations in South Gloucestershire based upon today's market strength and my opinion of the likely planning timetables/site specific constraints reflected in an individual sites market appeal/stage of delivery concerning both planning and acquisition to a start on site. I have reflected the natural progression of the larger sites as they establish themselves to accommodate more outlets or higher sales rates from existing outlets.
- 4.2 In 2014 I assessed the likely level of delivery for 2014/15 at 1,261 units and it in fact came in at 1,224. This remains significantly above the height of the market in 2007 when the level was 1,003 units. There was a noticeable slowing in the market before the election in May 2015 and while activity has picked up since that reaction to the election is unlikely to have been significant enough to distort the past or projected delivery of housing this year in South Gloucestershire. This short fall is more likely explained by delays in delivery due to other circumstance.
- 4.3 General lead in times for the delivery of housing units has been extending. Below is an assessment of South Gloucestershire Council's experience for the period 1st January 2010 to the 30th September 2015:

Application type	Number	Average time to determine (days)	Average time to determine (weeks)	Average time to determine (months approx)
Full major applications	249	172	25	6
Reserved matters major apps	62	153	22	6
Outline majors	49	384	55	14



- 4.4 When considering the larger allocations the following timetable has been evidenced and is likely for those yet to start on site:

	From date of Submission	
Outline Application to resolution to grant	- 8 months	
Complete Section 106	- 6 months	(14 months)
Design Stage	- 3 months	(17 months)
Reserved matters (Infrastructure/housing first phase)	- 6 months	(23 months)
Pre-start period to prepare works contracts	- 3 months	(26 months)
Major site enabling infrastructure works	- 4 months	(30 months)
Period to first house completion	- 3 months	(33 months)

And in summary an estimated total of 33 months to first housing completion.

- 4.5 My findings on the larger sites are summarised at **Appendix 2** and cover the 5-year period April 2015 to March 2020. In reviewing the Council's RLS I understand that the findings of my report are to be used by the Council to provide an independent audit of the Council's current housing land supply estimates to compare against their current minimum requirement as notified to me at 10,741 units.

4.6 **Summary of My Findings at Appendix 2**

April to March	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	5 years
Total Completions	1,001	1,476	2,052	2,115	2015	8,659

- 4.7 Forecasting is all about judgements and in terms of the delivery of strategic land you can only make that judgement based upon your experience in handling development sites, and the best evidence you have in front of you. The timing of delivery of housing from strategic sites is inherently difficult to predict accurately, and there are numerous variables, such as delays from negotiation of planning agreements, the landowner delaying the sale of the consented land, unresolved/unforeseen abnormal infrastructure/works, and even poor weather.

- 4.8 I have judged that the Councils updated forecast for 1,001 completions in 2015/16 ignoring small site windfalls be robust. This is some 500 units below my earlier forecast for this period. The main reasons for this shortfall in 2015/16 and in terms of the knock on for the 5 year likely trajectory for housing supply are not the suitability of the sites but delivery issues leading to delay. In a number of cases given further sites rely on infrastructure from the neighbouring site there is a knock on effect.

- 4.9 The main contributing reason for the likely 500 unit's shortfall in 2015/16 is significant delays to unresolved land owner positions relating to value. For example:

- East Harry Stoke – due to lack of co-operation between landowners - a 2 year delay likely,
- South of Harry Stoke (later phase) – dispute between landowners and developers - a likely 3 year delay,
- Cribbs Patchway West A4018 – Land owner agreement delays likely to be 2 years,
- Cribbs Patchway Fishpool Hill – land owner dispute – 1 years delay,
- Filton Airfield – change in ownership and speculator purchase – estimated 1 year delay.



Other factors relate to viability or technical issues to achieve a suitable planning consent:

- North Park Farm, Thornbury – resolution to a drainage solution – delay of 1 year.
- Land at North Yate - resubmission of planning in relation a major technical infrastructure change – delay of 1 year.
- Land East of Coldharbour – viability argument – 1 year delay.

- 4.10 While it is clear that delays do not mean the schemes are lost it does generate a short term shortfall in the target.
- 4.11 The Council is calling for sites to meet the shortfall likely in the 5 year period and necessarily have to be consented and built out within that period. There is little prospect of large complex site allocations performing in the period as there will be at least a 33 month lead in all being well. In my opinion self-contained sites will at best deliver 2.25 years of housing after the lead in period at circa 77 private and affordable housing units per annum (based upon 35% affordable). Within the remaining 2.25 years of the 5 year period this would suggest the equivalent of a maximum of circa 175 units for an outlet or small site. This is based on schemes delivering in the main urban area and market towns. Therefore a lower average maximum would be reasonable should schemes from across South Gloucestershire, including the rural areas be considered. This is because the annual rate of completions on sites within the rural areas is likely to be lower.
- 4.12 The risk that South Gloucestershire faces however is that the residential development sector is highly unlikely to be able to respond to the growth required and build at rates above the current forecast given it would require the medium to large house builders to virtually double their output. The current forecast is already suggesting significant growth beyond previously evidenced levels. The sector is not achieving significant new entrants (in fact at a regional level it is shrinking) and while materials are now readily available, skilled workers are already in short supply.
- 4.13 In my opinion the South Gloucestershire large sites allocations gives a good spread and mix of sites in both market towns, and Greater Bristol/urban edge locations to suit the likely range and value choice required for home purchase. It should also be noted that the combined totality of a significant number of these sites offer unit numbers well in excess of those that are targeted within the 5 year period. In terms of improved future demand these schemes are well placed to react to that demand by each outlet delivering higher numbers of homes for sale. Home production is capable of being increased to meet the demand and that increased demand can be accommodated in the allocations already made.
- 4.14 Affordable Housing delivery forms a significant portion of the take up in the area. In the period 2014/15 326 new affordable homes were completed (187 social rent, 49 affordable rent and 90 intermediate affordable housing), representing just under 27% of overall dwelling completions. In addition to the affordable housing to be provided through planning policy the HCA has allocated funding to RP's to deliver just over 600 new affordable homes in SGC in the period 2015/18.



5.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 I have concluded that the council should update their 2015 RLS by the revised delivery rates set out in my **Appendix 2**.
- 5.2 My previous conclusions stated that there was more than adequate allocated housing supply in the 5 year period and that there was more than adequate strategic capacity in the larger sites to accommodate increased demand akin to historical take up in previous stronger market cycles. Given delays in the delivery of the larger volume housing sites there is reason to change that earlier opinion.
- 5.3 As a result of my current review I am of the opinion that with regard to the key sites and despite the evidence of positive market movement over the last 12 months, that there is now less than adequate allocated housing supply in the 5 year period.
- 5.4 Given the indicators to date in 2015/16 of delays and from the conversations I have had I believe there is an opportunity to seek to mitigate that shortfall in 2015/16 but more particularly in the period 2016/2020 by engaging with the national house builders in exploring means of earlier delivery on the major sites, and increased production on active sites.

Yours Faithfully

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Tim Cann'.

Tim Cann MBA Dip (Est. Man) FRICS
RICS Registered Valuer
Regional Head of Residential Development Consulting
For and on behalf of BNP Paribas Real Estate



**BNP PARIBAS
REAL ESTATE**

APPENDIX 1

South Gloucestershire Residential Land Availability Survey (RLS)



**BNP PARIBAS
REAL ESTATE**

APPENDIX 2

Summary schedule on housing delivery of the main sites where adjustments made
and a short statement on delivery

Key Site Projections			April to March	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	Comment
0021a	Harry Stoke	Highbrook Park		44					Outlet on site and selling well - forecast by Crest that complete all new build by end March 2016 is robust
0021	Harry Stoke	Later phases						50	Delayed in delivery due to land ownership dispute effecting balance of 1034 unit allocation - scheme capable of a minimum of two outlets
0095	Kingswood Trading Estate				25	32			Strongvox Ltd - spring 2016 start on site after viability matters resolved housing delivery within one year
0132 & 0132a	North Park Farm, Thornbury				25	50	100	100	Delayed due to technical drainage issue (now resolved) - started on site and show home release estimated July 2016 and first Completions Sept 16. Likely second outlet next to land at Butt lane (0132a) delayed till 2018/19
0133	Land at North Yate					125	250	250	Delay given resubmission of planning concerning pylons. Section 106 signed and options being exercised, period for design and reserved matters likely complete Aug 16. First phase infrastructure start Oct 16 first sales begin Jul 17. source BNPPRE acting consultant
0133a	Peg Hill North Yate			60	60	60	49		Scheme successfully trading 78 units sold or reserved to date after Feb 15 release.
'0151	North of Morton Way, Thornbury				41	50	50	50	Bloor's expect to overlap schemes and trade as a single outlet
0151a	North of Morton Way, Thornbury			78					Under Construction - Bloor's expect to trade at average of 50/annum given single outlet -
0011a	Land East Coldharbour				75	120	175	175	Affordable viability concluded, Taylor Wimpey targeting first sales April 2016, includes additional outlet for an extra care scheme alongside market housing
0035	South of Douglas Road, Kingswood							50	Likely to proceed only as a small single block conversion in the period as landowner unlikely to progress remainder. There has been a fire in Douglas House. Viability was addressed at planning stage and so available.
0134ba	Cribbs/Patchway	Fishpool Hill				100	150	150	Delayed delivery due to land owner dispute. Persimmon have a signed Section 106 and are progressing their acquisition process which is not likely to conclude till early 2016, first infrastructure completion Oct 16 first sales April 17
0134bb	Cribbs/Patchway	Charlton Common						100	Redrow requires Persimmon at Fishpool Hill to complete first phase infrastructure which will create a delay in delivery
0134c	Cribbs/Patchway	Filton Airfield					100	150	Sale in progress to speculator/investor with residential development land delivery likely to fall behind neighbouring sites
0134a	Cribbs/Patchway West of A4018						100	100	Taylor Wimpey have land acquisition and planning challenges which are causing delays and envisage first sale no earlier than April 2018.
0135	East Harry Stoke - Area North and South or Railway							50	SGC/Crest/Private land owner - Master planning Stage pre-application but constrained by delays due to a lack of landowner cooperation
0138	Frenchay Hospital					50	50	50	Redrow to start demolition in the coming weeks and then a period for urban design but likely starting housing construction Q3 2016 sales latest end Q1 2017
0128	Former Intier Site, Bitton				10	60	43		St Congar - recent new owner resetting viability - with agreement to trade to Linden on consent. Sub structure work required. New scheme 113 units expected consent end 2015 and first sales end first quarter 2017