

**In this  
issue**



**Winning in the grey belt -  
A new strategic shift**



**Restoring vital services -  
London leisure regeneration**



**Smoother planning -  
How early mitigation pays**

**MOTION**

# insight

X @MotionInsight

LinkedIn

ISSUE 28

## Springboard for sustainable growth and innovation

**The internationally recognised centre for automotive and aviation innovation, Bicester Motion, has been supported with highway and infrastructure advice to complete the first phase of The Ranges, a new HQ for YASA. The 90,000 square foot building on the former RAF Bicester airfield base captures the future technology ethos and pioneering spirit of the centre and will attract additional employment into the area.**

Owned by Mercedes-Benz AG, YASA is a spin-out from the University of Oxford and produces axial flux technology motors for electric vehicles. According to Project Manager, Norman White of IKS Consulting, *"Phase one of The Ranges is Bicester Motion's most ambitious development to date and will provide a strong springboard for the future."*

*Continued on page 2*

**motion**

## Overcoming access challenges

Working closely with the project team, Motion assisted with technical and highway matters to facilitate access for the high-specification regeneration of the site's historic rifle ranges. Motion Director, Robert Monie, recalls, "The difference in road levels could have presented a potential obstacle, with one access requiring augmentation. This led to the need for redesigned drainage to accommodate the change in levels."

Norman White adds, "Motion was very effective at deciphering and unravelling the complex challenges we faced. With deep understanding of local government guidance and a positive working rapport with officers at Oxfordshire County Council, the team effectively navigated the various changes to highway and design requirements throughout the process."

## On-time delivery

Robert Monie concludes, "Detailed redesigns needed to be produced to overcome issues encountered during delivery of the works. Each revision



had to be carried out without delay so the works could be completed by the deadline."

With the first phase now complete, the project team is shaping proposals for phase two, with the ambition to attract even more automotive and aviation innovators to its growing community of specialists.

## SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT:

- ▶ Connectivity with wider Bicester Motion and public green spaces
- ▶ Walking and cycling links to Bicester town centre and amenities
- ▶ Sustainable construction and buildings targeting BREEAM Excellent and EPC A

# IN BRIEF | The end of sequential testing?

**The government's Planning Practice Guidance for flood risk and coastal change has recently been updated. Notably, the sequential test may no longer be required where a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) can demonstrate that layout, design and mitigation measures will protect occupants and users from current and future surface-water flood risk for the lifetime of the development, without increasing flood risk elsewhere.**

According to Director Neil Jaques, "This update addresses only one aspect of flood risk and will place even greater emphasis on the need for robust justification and detailed FRAs to support applications. The sequential test will remain a central consideration for most development proposals, particularly where other sources of flood risk are present."

## Mark Fitzgerald

### Effective teamwork

**Insight caught up with Associate Mark Fitzgerald to discuss effective teamwork and projects with a lasting social legacy**

#### What makes Motion special for you?

**MF:** What sets Motion apart is the social side of the business. Employees can look forward to regular Sports and Social Club events, the Christmas party and the annual summer get together. Within each office everyone gets on really well. Between offices, the connections are very strong and also across the different disciplines. That very inclusive, trust-based culture makes the company really special.

#### How does this benefit clients?

**MF:** I would say they benefit from the symbiotic relationship within the teams here. We are one large family; we know and respect everyone's strengths and weaknesses and can help each other. This means our skills and experience are pooled across the business, leading to more effective teamwork, greater efficiency and better results for client projects.

#### What have been your greatest achievements?

**MF:** Many of the projects we work on take several years to come to fruition so it's rewarding to get one across the line with a planning approval. Being able to travel the country and visit sites you've worked on provides a sense of achievement, regardless of the scale of the scheme. From a personal perspective, schemes such as the Oak Cancer Centre at the Royal Marsden demonstrate that your work can help so many people.

#### What do you relish about being a transport planner?

**MF:** Training the team on adopting the vision-led approach to transport assessments has been an enjoyable part of the past year and ensures our clients can benefit from our shared knowledge.

#### What would you be doing if you weren't at Motion?

**MF:** That's a difficult one to answer because I enjoy the variety here – no two days are the same and each scheme brings its own unique challenges. I love passing on my experience to the next generation of transport planners.



# When grey is the new green



**The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was comprehensively revised at the end of 2024, marking one of the most significant shifts in national planning policy for more than ten years. One of the key changes relates to land categorisation, characterised by the introduction of the grey belt concept. The latest NPPF consultation process that began in December 2025 signals further overhauls and a refined definition of grey belt. Managing Director, Phil Bell, assesses the impact.**

The NPPF now formally recognises the grey belt land category within existing green belt designations. Grey belt comprises previously developed land, or land that makes a limited contribution to the defined purposes of the green belt. Grey belt excludes land where other designations such as AONBs and national parks provide a strong reason to refuse or restrict development.

For developers, the shift in approach has opened up new strategic land opportunities. Motion has actively supported clients wishing to make use of the new grey belt designation. Previously constrained sites such as disused land or under-utilised green belt parcels can now be considered for development where unmet housing needs exist, or evidence shows a limited contribution to green belt purposes. Grey belt development is now also more likely where it can support sustainable schemes, incorporating a raft of infrastructure and service improvements.

## Transport and infrastructure planning in the grey belt

Against this backdrop, transport and infrastructure planning is increasingly a strategic exercise becoming even more central to development proposals. The new vision-led approach further urges developers to demonstrate how their plans can enhance sustainable travel and reduce reliance on motor vehicles.

With renewed focus on enabling improvements to transport and infrastructure, there is a growing need for proposals to enhance a site's connectivity, promote active travel through new cycle and pedestrian routes and optimise public transport. These measures are symbolic of the Golden Rules set out in the NPPF, helping to unlock land, achieve housebuilding targets and create healthy, sustainable and biodiverse communities for generations to come.

Since the introduction of the grey belt concept, developers, planners and consultants will have seen firsthand how the change presents a significant opportunity to unlock previously unattractive or undevelopable land. But in order to overcome any remaining hurdles, plans still need to be approached with careful early-stage assessment, supported with robust, evidence-based analysis and brought to fruition with sustainable transport principles and infrastructure strategies.

**For advice and support for your next project, call us on 01483 531300**

## WINNING IN THE GREY BELT

### Land South of Kenley Aerodrome, Caterham, Surrey

▶ Appeal allowed following grey belt designation for 80 dwellings, in part due to improved package of mitigation measures including speed limit reductions, raised tables and speed humps

### Grove End, Bagshot, Surrey

▶ Appeal allowed under NPPF Golden Rules for 126 new homes with a range of benefits to optimise site sustainability including on-demand bus services

### Castle Grove Nursery, Chobham, Surrey

▶ Transport planning advice, drainage strategy and flood risk assessment supported successful outline planning application for 30 residential units

### Land north of Raleigh Drive, Claygate, Surrey

▶ Following a history of refusals, outline permission was granted for 60 new homes within a sustainable site with good walking, cycling and public transport connections

## Vital public services restored in leisure centre regeneration

**The London Borough of Tower Hamlets has received a resolution to grant planning permission, subject to agreement of conditions and obligations, for the regeneration of St George's Leisure Centre in Shadwell. The plans for the mixed-use scheme will place the redeveloped leisure centre as a valued community facility.**

Motion formed part of the project team, led by Leadenhall Project Management, that shaped proposals for demolition of the existing building in a phased redevelopment of the site. The plans include a replacement leisure centre building with ancillary café use and external cycle parking, a new nine-storey residential building with 30 affordable homes, public realm improvements to St. George's Gardens, shared accessible car parking and a servicing yard.

According to Motion Technical Director, Chris Saunders, *"Given the constrained nature of the site, close coordination was needed with the highway authority, TfL and Tower Hamlets council departments to secure support for a suitable delivery and servicing arrangement."*

The leisure centre closed in March 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the building has remained vacant since.

# Vision-led approach aids residential approval

**Years of Local Plan representations and extensive discussions have resulted in planning approval for the construction of 200 homes for Barratt David Wilson Homes. The site comprises two connected parcels of land southwest of Felbridge on the Surrey-Sussex border. Consent involved gaining the agreement of both Surrey County Council and West Sussex County Council.**

Seán Havis from Barratt Homes explains, *"From Local Plan promotion to site allocation and eventual approval, Motion has played an integral role in helping us deliver the vision. The team successfully demonstrated that our proposals would not worsen the traffic impact at the critical A22-Copthorne Road junction and on the wider highway network."*

### Traffic impact reduction

Key to the reduction of traffic impact was formulation of a range of site-specific measures to encourage walking, cycling and public transport journeys from the development. An extensive scheme of pedestrian route improvements included

Copenhagen-style crossings along Crawley Down Road and the A264 Copthorne Road.

Enhancements to a bridleway running through the site from north to south and routes to the South Downs Way will further improve connectivity. Real-time information display panels will also encourage public transport use and improve the experience for travellers to East Grinstead and other nearby destinations.

### Sustainable travel measures

Motion Director, Andrew Whittingham, concludes, *"A carefully selected range of sustainable travel measures and precise modelling of the A22-Copthorne Road junction underlined our vision-led approach to shaping the development proposals. The combined package helped to secure local agreement for the scheme and avoid the need for an appeal with the consequent cost and delay."*

Working with charity Make Space for Girls, the developer has incorporated a dedicated area into the design to prioritise access to safe, open spaces for girls.



### Boyer

This image was prepared by Boyer. Not to be copied or reproduced without the written consent of Barratt Redrow and Boyer.

# Ten-year partnership gives life to homes and Farmstead vision

Outline planning consent has been granted for 150 new homes on land north of Chipperfield Road in Kings Langley, Hertfordshire. The scheme will also deliver a new community education facility with café, farm shop, therapy gardens, and spaces for vegetable growing and farm animals.

Local plan representations were initially made by Silversaw Limited in 2015, with discussions spanning almost a decade. After completion of the Section 106 agreement,

*also helping to allay general public concerns during the extensive engagement process."*

## Road safety

Concerns were expressed about vehicle speeds on Chipperfield Road and the potential risk to children walking to and from the secondary school. Motion responded with a traffic calming scheme incorporating speed cushions and additional lighting.

Motion Associate, Ellie Upton, reports, *"Feasibility studies were conducted prior to planning submission and supported with pedestrian and cycle proposals. Following close consultation with residents and the local schools, we also advised on off-site improvements."*

## Improved public transport

Negotiation for upgrades to the local bus service was another key feature of Motion's support. Two new bus stops will be built adjacent to the development. The service will be upgraded from a low frequency to every 90 minutes. Phil Bell explains, *"This improvement still avoids the need for provision of more than one bus, keeping the costs at an affordable level for the developer."*

## The Farmstead – a community and education facility

The Farmstead will be a unique feature of the scheme with a clear social benefit. Accompanied by school staff, pupils from Kings Langley School will have access to the facility, which will provide an outdoor learning resource and can help children who may be struggling with anxiety and absenteeism. The Farmstead, including the café, will be managed and supervised by Sunnyside Rural Trust.

the scheme will be built by The Hill Group, a privately owned five-star house builder with a focus on quality and sustainability. According to David Cox of Silversaw, *"Throughout this long journey, Motion has been an invaluable partner, not only assisting with transport, travel and technical advice but*



© Mosaic Urban Design & Masterplanning

## Timely engagement smooths planning passage

**Two recent planning applications highlight the importance of early resolution of transport, traffic and access issues.**

Chartwell Property Group has secured permission for 85 new homes in Smallfield under delegated decision planning. Chartwell's proposals for 45 units in Warlingham have also been approved. Both sites fall within Tandridge district in Surrey.

According to Martyn Avery, Land Director for Chartwell Property Group, *"The Smallfield plans move the company into a different league, enabling us to unlock land for a much larger number of units. Motion has assisted us on that journey, holding our hand at every step. The team is very skilled in presenting proposals and effectively engaging with key stakeholders."*

Motion Technical Director, David McMurtary, adds, *"In both cases, a suite of robust mitigation packages addressed concerns. At Warlingham, offsite footway upgrades and nearby junction changes put forward during the pre-application process helped to persuade highway officers. At Smallfield, an extension to the 20mph speed restrictions and other traffic calming measures were proposed during early discussions with Surrey County Council."*



# Compulsory rainwater harvesting

Director Neil Jaques examines the impact of recent updates to sustainable drainage standards

**New national standards for sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) now position rainwater harvesting as a key requirement for most developments in England.**

The new overarching guidance seeks to establish a more structured and consistent approach to sustainable drainage. Motion has already adapted drainage strategies for development proposals in water-stressed areas to reflect this shift. The former requirement to demonstrate water neutrality in planning applications (now withdrawn by Natural England) has provided our teams with valuable experience in developing practical and effective engineering solutions.

One such project involved support for redevelopment of the Rapkyns Estate near

Broadbridge Heath, enabling expanded residential accommodation for pupils at New Barn School. The lessons learned from this project, alongside numerous other applications requiring water neutrality strategies, can now be directly applied to the interpretation and implementation of the updated national SuDS standards.

Regardless of differing views on the widespread adoption of rainwater harvesting for new developments, it is clear that this measure has sat at the top of the sustainable drainage hierarchy for some time. The key challenge for engineers will be to engage proactively with local authority officers and other key stakeholders to ensure these requirements are applied pragmatically and efficiently.



**Ask Motion** – If you would value a preliminary discussion about the traffic, travel, infrastructure, drainage or flood-risk issues associated with your development project, why not give us a call on 01483 531300?

## Directors

**Phil Bell** E: [pbell@motion.co.uk](mailto:pbell@motion.co.uk)

**Laura Harris** E: [lharris@motion.co.uk](mailto:lharris@motion.co.uk)

**Neil Jaques** E: [njaques@motion.co.uk](mailto:njaques@motion.co.uk)

**Robert Monie** E: [rmonie@motion.co.uk](mailto:rmonie@motion.co.uk)

**Andrew Whittingham** E: [awhittingham@motion.co.uk](mailto:awhittingham@motion.co.uk)

## Technical Directors

**Phil Allen** E: [pallen@motion.co.uk](mailto:pallen@motion.co.uk)

**Phil de Jongh** E: [pdejongh@motion.co.uk](mailto:pdejongh@motion.co.uk)

**David McMurtary** E: [dmcsmurtary@motion.co.uk](mailto:dmcsmurtary@motion.co.uk)

**Jason Morgans** E: [jmorgans@motion.co.uk](mailto:jmorgans@motion.co.uk)

**Chris Saunders** E: [csaunders@motion.co.uk](mailto:csaunders@motion.co.uk)

## Associate Directors

**Richard Allman** E: [rallman@motion.co.uk](mailto:rallman@motion.co.uk)

**Shaun Cregeen** E: [scregeen@motion.co.uk](mailto:scregeen@motion.co.uk)

**Julian Smith** E: [jsmith@motion.co.uk](mailto:jsmith@motion.co.uk)

**Richard Storey** E: [rstorey@motion.co.uk](mailto:rstorey@motion.co.uk)

## Associates

**Mark Fitzgerald** E: [mfitzgerald@motion.co.uk](mailto:mfitzgerald@motion.co.uk)

**Calum McGoff** E: [cmcgoff@motion.co.uk](mailto:cmcgoff@motion.co.uk)

**Fiona Thorp** E: [ftthorp@motion.co.uk](mailto:ftthorp@motion.co.uk)

**Ellie Upton** E: [eupton@motion.co.uk](mailto:eupton@motion.co.uk)

## Offices

84 North Street, Guildford, Surrey GU1 4AU  
T: 01483 531300

Golden Cross House, 8 Duncannon Street  
London WC2N 4JF T: 020 8065 5208

Quadrant House, Broad Street Mall, Reading  
Berkshire RG1 7QE T: 0118 467 4498

[www.motion.co.uk](http://www.motion.co.uk)

Follow us on [LinkedIn](#) (Motion Consultants) and [X](#) (@MotionInsight)

If you no longer wish to receive a copy of Insight, please email [info@motion.co.uk](mailto:info@motion.co.uk) with the subject line "Unsubscribe Insight".



Recycle after reading

