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MOTION insight

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Unlocking sustainable logistics

A large specialist real estate investor and asset manager has secured a resolution to grant consent for four sustainable logistics units of between 32,000 and 64,000 square feet to serve the Heathrow and West London markets. The plans will help strengthen last-mile logistics capacity, supporting more efficient and sustainable delivery networks in one of the UK's busiest logistics hubs.

Motion has played a key role in supporting Tritax London Logistics Fund through a long-running planning process to develop part of the Central Park Estate in Hounslow. Dominic Moore, Tritax Senior Director, reports, *"Our ambitions for this site date back to before 2020 but were compounded by delays to Local Plan updates during the Covid pandemic. The transport context was further complicated by the adjacent Staines Road being a TfL red route, which required an additional layer of consultation."*

With around half of the industrial estate already developed, the proposals sought to bring the remaining grassland and car parking area into productive employment use. Dominic continues, *"Throughout this journey, Motion's support has been instrumental in helping us convert the underutilised land, as part of the long-term transformation of the site into a landmark, premier development."*

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£100m expansion for sustainable food manufacturing

Wiltshire employer, apetito | Wiltshire Farm Foods, has been granted planning permission to transform its previous 'Pie Site' on the Canal Road Industrial Estate in Trowbridge into a new food production facility to aid the business' continued growth. While retaining an existing kitchen nearby, the new 'Kitchen West' will enable the company to expand production capabilities to meet increasing demand. The proposals were supported with transport planning and travel advice from Motion.

According to apetito Project Director, Naseem Chughtai, *"This new facility represents an investment in the long-term future of apetito | Wiltshire Farm Foods and will help us safeguard and create highly skilled jobs for many years to come."*

Sustainable construction and travel

Naseem adds, *"Kitchen West also marks a bold step forward in our ambition to lead the market with one of the most sustainable food production facilities in the UK. This meant ensuring that the previous site was deconstructed to maximise the value of old materials, the use of sustainable materials during the construction phase and having a commitment to Biodiversity Net Gain."*

Within close proximity to Trowbridge railway station and town centre, future site users can access a number of sustainable transport options such as walking, cycling, rail and bus services. Traffic generated by the site's previous uses was taken into account and trip generation assessments determined that the development proposals will result in a net reduction in total vehicle movements.

Improved road safety

Motion Technical Director, David McMurtary, continues, *"Our pre-application support included a review of pedestrian and cycle upgrades, junction modelling and recommendations for enhanced crossing facilities to the south of the site to improve road safety for employees and the local community."*

apetito is a leading provider of high-quality meals to the education, healthcare and care home sectors, while its sister company, Wiltshire Farm Foods, delivers preprepared meals direct to consumers' homes across the UK. Construction on the Kitchen West site will commence in 2026, with the new facility expected to be operational by 2028.

Ellie Upton

Caring for community

Associate Director Ellie Upton shares highlights from nine years at Motion

What makes working here special for you?

EU: *We have fostered a strong, collaborative working environment where everyone is very supportive of junior team members. The clear structure for career development and progression means everyone can achieve their full potential.*

How does this add value to your support for clients?

EU: *We genuinely care about the client and their scheme. This doesn't just mean providing a good service and getting results; it also extends to delivering benefits for the wider community. We're very open and approachable and always happy to chat through the issues before a project gets underway.*

Tell us about your greatest achievements

EU: *There have been many schemes I've enjoyed working on, but what I really love is being involved from the pre-application stage to discharging of conditions. Seeing an application evolve from early conception through to build and eventual occupation is incredibly rewarding.*

What is the best thing about being a transport planner?

EU: *I love getting involved with the more challenging projects; the intricacies of constrained access for developments of, say, one or two houses. The planning process for very small schemes can be surprisingly complex.*

How do you unwind outside of work?

EU: *For me it's got to be a long walk in the countryside with a pub at the end! I'm also getting married next year so I swap transport planning for wedding planning most weekends.*

And what would you be doing if you weren't at Motion?

EU: *I've always loved anything to do with horses so it would probably be equine physiotherapy!*

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Appealing later living

A recent appeal outcome highlights how developers can deliver sustainable development, even in policy-sensitive locations. Early traffic and travel advice from Motion helped to unlock a high-quality integrated retirement community in Lingfield, Surrey, enabling Merrow Wood to obtain consent for 107 new homes, a new medical centre, public open space and associated infrastructure.

Proposals to convert Lingfield House and develop the site to provide a mix of apartments and cottages were refused permission by Tandridge District Council on green belt and ecological grounds, despite significant local support and an acute housing land supply shortage.

According to Merrow Wood's Managing Director and Founder, Dan Webber, *"Motion's deep understanding of the need to balance costs with technical solutions resulted in sound, pragmatic advice, right from the outset."*

The highway authority recommended approval, subject to conditions. Associate Director, Ellie Upton, continues, *"Working closely with the wider project team, Motion developed a clear accessibility narrative, proposed enhanced cycleways, traffic calming and highway improvements, and provided detailed technical evidence to support the appeal process."*

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Community benefit

Motion Managing Director, Phil Bell, explains, *"With a balanced view of the transport impacts, the Inspector's decision acknowledged the wider benefits of the scheme including its contribution to housing supply, healthcare provision and community wellbeing."*

Dan Webber concludes, *"The appeal outcome builds on the success of our relatively new business, and the sensitive, sustainable reuse of the previously developed land effectively removes it from the green belt, for the benefit of the entire community."*

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New employment opportunities

The scheme will deliver significant local benefits, creating new employment opportunities and enhancing sustainable travel infrastructure, with improved walking and cycling connections, safer crossings, e-bike facilities and support for local bus services.

Motion Associate Director, Calum McGoff, takes up the story. *"A significant challenge was to help steer negotiations about bus contributions. By presenting evidence from comparable schemes, we were able to achieve a more proportionate level of contribution."*

Motion helped shape proposals for the enhanced transport infrastructure including walking and cycling upgrades and improved crossings along the site's southern and western boundaries. Predicted traffic movements were assessed, including the offsetting impact of removing the existing car parking space. During the process, the site's designation changed from green belt to grey belt, reflecting its position within the existing estate boundary.

The Motion team continues to support the project with detailed design of off-site highway works and discharging transport-related conditions.

When is a location **sustainable?**

VIEWPOINT

Phil Bell examines the impact of recent planning appeals and explores the concept of locational sustainability

The planning appeal process in England exists to provide an independent check when a local planning authority (LPA) refuses permission. In my experience of transport planning, some of the most difficult appeals arise where development is rejected because its location is deemed 'unsustainable'.

Locational sustainability sounds objective but in reality it is a judgement. National policy guides decisions for significant developments, stipulating that these should be focused in locations that are, or can be made, sustainable. This means limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. Crucially, national policy also recognises that opportunities differ vastly between urban and rural areas and that local context is key.

And there is the paradox: one authority may regard a settlement with a shop, school and intermittent bus service as sustainable while another may regard the same amenities as inadequate. Walking distances, bus frequency, cycling infrastructure, access to services, car ownership and the potential for improvements can all be interpreted differently.

The government's own Connectivity Tool now attempts to provide a more consistent evidence base for assessing accessibility to jobs, schools and healthcare. However, schemes can sometimes be refused not because their impacts are demonstrably unacceptable but because of broader and growing perceptions of what sustainability is.

Often, the risk is that that mitigation measures, users' travel behaviour and, importantly, the impact on the viability of an existing community when a scheme is refused, may not always be considered in full.

Under the latest National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), greater weight is given to development within settlements, sites that can demonstrate they satisfy previously unmet housing needs and locations with strong transport connectivity. Settlement boundaries, walking accessibility and public transport connections are therefore increasingly important.

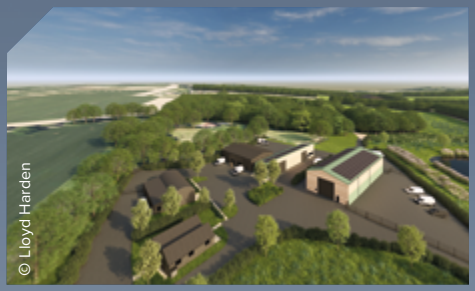
So, when is a location sustainable? Is it when people can live, work and access services with realistic choices about how they travel? As well as sustainability needing to be evidenced, it should also be relevant to the local context and capable of evolving to reflect future connectivity. In this regard, appeals can provide a critical safeguard where necessary.

PROACTIVE ENGAGEMENT AIDS PLANS FOR NEW HOMES

Welbeck Land has received a resolution to grant planning permission for 90 new homes in Rudgwick, West Sussex. The announcement follows several years of close collaboration with Horsham District Council to secure the site's draft allocation within the emerging Local Plan, enabling transport considerations to be addressed as the proposals evolved.

A key feature of the plans was a new puffin crossing, providing a safer and more accessible connection for pedestrians and helping to improve links between the development and the wider village. The crossing proposal was developed through proactive engagement with the parish council and forms an important part of the scheme's wider sustainable transport benefits. According to Motion Director, Andrew Whittingham, *"The scheme presents an opportunity to provide not only much-needed housing, but also meaningful improvements to local connectivity and sustainable travel."* Andrew continues, *"The emerging Horsham Local Plan allocation identified the site for approximately 60 dwellings. We are pleased that detailed discussions helped shape a larger development, contributing to local housing needs with 40 per cent of the new homes being affordable housing."*

Fostering nature recovery to inspire future generations



Proposals for a renatured, rural, mixed-use redevelopment centred around a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) habitat plan have been granted planning approval, subject to a S106 agreement. Plans for the Stonehouse Farm and Lakes scheme will deliver benefits for the local community, ecology and environment. Drainage advice was provided by Motion for the planning application after the redundant farm in Plummers Plain near Horsham, West Sussex, was acquired by Lake Investments Ltd, part of The Hunter Group, a specialist redeveloper of country estates and farms.

Positive public engagement

The sensitive redevelopment of the 120-acre site will result in three sustainable, energy-efficient detached houses, and two separate sympathetically designed business parks providing valuable rural offices, storage distribution and light industry space. The planning proposals were received positively by the local community, with high levels of public engagement and letters of support during the consultation process.

Managing Director of The Hunter Group, Lee Goossens, explains, *"This was a complex, multifaceted scheme, requiring close collaboration of a wide range of expert consultants within our team of professional advisers, who were dealing with a very demanding rural situation. Motion skilfully presented proposals that were not only efficient and pragmatic but also acceptable to the local planning authority."*

Sustainable drainage strategies

Motion Technical Director, Phil Allen, recalls, *"The challenge was to develop a balanced sustainable drainage infrastructure strategy that not only satisfied policy and regulatory requirements, but also complemented and enhanced the renatured landscape and biodiversity habitat scheme."*

Drainage and SuDS designs will capture and store surface water, helping to reduce pollution, runoff rates and flood risk. A full assessment of future foul waste requirements was conducted to prepare specifications for high-standard effluent treatment, ensuring sustainable discharge and improved local watercourse quality.

The registration of a biodiversity habitat scheme will secure a progressively renatured landscape for thirty years by way of a conservation covenant, to include newly planted woodland and hedgerows, scrub land, wildflower meadows and wetland scrapes.

Dare to dream

In June, the Stonehouse Farm and Lakes site played host to a landmark 'Dare to Dream' one-day initiative jointly organised by the developer and the Love Local Jobs Foundation. According to Lee Goossens, *"Dare to Dream was aimed at future generations who will both spearhead and benefit from the recovery of nature. Students got to experience firsthand a live rural regeneration project where community, business and biodiversity will come together to create lasting local impact."*

Phil Allen represented Motion at the event. He explains, *"The day brought together 120 Year 10 students from across Sussex for tree planting, environmental awareness and valuable, real-world perspectives on career opportunities in the built environment."*

He continues, *"I was privileged to be able to share some key insights into the work of a drainage and flood risk engineer and bring to life some of the challenges and opportunities presented by AI and climate change, highlighting their impact both on the profession and the planning process."*

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ENDNOTE

Water neutrality, SuDS and the evolving planning landscape

Neil Jaques and Phil Allen report back on a year of intensifying requirements in water management

The introduction of the new National Standards for Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) marks another significant step in the evolution of water management in England. With the growing focus on water neutrality in water-stressed areas such as in Kent and parts of Hampshire, developers are increasingly being asked to demonstrate how new schemes will minimise water demand and make better use of alternative water sources.

According to Director, Neil Jaques, *"The revised SuDS Standards place greater emphasis on rainwater harvesting and the reuse of water for non-potable purposes. This means developers may need to look beyond traditional drainage solutions and incorporate a wider range of water-saving measures from the earliest stages of design."*

Overcoming water-reduction requirements

Technical Director, Phil Allen, continues, *"Successful strategies typically combine greywater recycling following appropriate treatment, rainwater harvesting, high-efficiency sanitaryware and fittings, water-efficient landscaping, and other demand-reduction measures. Together, these can significantly reduce potable water consumption while supporting wider sustainability objectives."*

Neil Jaques argues, *"By incorporating effective water-reduction measures, some applications may be able to avoid more complex water neutrality strategies or offsetting requirements, potentially easing the planning process and unlocking sites that might otherwise face delays."*

"Working with experienced water and drainage consultants can help developers navigate this changing landscape," advises Neil. *"Having been at the forefront of delivering water neutrality strategies for sites in Sussex, our team is well placed to apply those pragmatic, problem-solving approaches to similar projects across the country."*

For further advice call 01483 531300

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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?

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