

Mr R Mellor
The Programme Officer
Louise St John Howe
PO Services
PO Box 10965
Sudbury
Suffolk CO10 2FY

Our ref: DP/sc

25th November 2016

By Post and Email: louise@poservices.co.uk

Dear Mr Mellor

**Re: Maidstone Borough Council Local Plan (2011 – 2031) Examination
Session 5A Housing Supply – 12th October 2016
Land at Farleigh Hill Tovil Maidstone Kent**

I sat in on the Supplementary Hearing on this subject on Wednesday 23rd November as an observer and wish to put the record straight on comments made by Participants that the above site for various reasons is undeliverable and should be deleted from the Borough Council's Objectively Assessed Need figures and its 5 Year Land Supply.

I have acted for Mr P J Burke, the freehold owner of this site, for more than 10 years and but for circumstances beyond his and our control the site by now would have been sold. Firstly, in 2007 an unconditional sale of the site to Taylor Wimpey was fully agreed and on the point of exchange of contracts only to become a victim of the 2008 recession.

The recovery of the market from the 2008 crash coincided with the lifting of the embargo on Greenfield sites which inevitably took precedence over Brownfield sites with house builders.

For your information this is a Brownfield site (an original ragstone quarry which has been partly historically used as an official Borough Council household waste tip, now no longer gassing having closed in 1975).

Our Client therefore commenced himself with a progressive remediation strategy of the site overseen by Knapp Hicks (Civil Engineering Consultants) which has involved screening and rescreening of the land to include removal from site of all non-biodegradable matter to official household waste tips to the point where the site is now 95% remediated.

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In parallel with the remediation work a Detailed Planning Application pursuant to the original Outline Planning Permissions the detailed scheme prepared by BHD Architects of Sevenoaks, is on the point of being approved. A further period of marketing by us in conjunction with RPC (Land and New Homes Specialists) will then commence.

More recently a sale of the site to Bellway Homes was agreed, only for Bellway to withdraw in the immediate after effects of Brexit which significantly impacted on housebuilder shares.

We and RPC are confident that a buyer will be identified in the short term.

Yours sincerely



David Pares MRICS
For and on behalf of Sibley Pares