

insight

MOTION CONSULTANTS

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Size matters

Local people in three Sussex villages could soon move into new environmentally sustainable houses. Hastoe Homes, a rural affordable housing specialist, is building three developments which will enable villagers to remain within their communities. Each scheme required specialist access advice due to their small size.

Hastoe Homes is part of Hastoe Group which owns and manages over 6,000 homes across the south of England in predominantly rural areas. Hastoe provides high quality housing, mainly on rural exception sites. The homes are built for the benefit of local people in perpetuity.

Motion provided transport advice to Hastoe for developments in Crawley Down, Burwash and Hurst Green. Jane Gallifent, Regional Head of Development, Hastoe Group says, *"Motion knew who to speak to at the planning and highways authorities and came up with a solution acceptable to all parties. All of our sites have huge issues when it comes to transport, drainage and ecology.*

Good transport advice is critical. Motion understands the challenges we face when it comes to obtaining consent for our bespoke, small-scale, rural, edge-of-village developments."

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Motion is Ten
anniversary special edition

Loosening the green belt



Many planning authorities are reviewing their green belt boundaries in order to overcome land shortages and meet strategic development targets. Motion is helping house builders get small, medium and large parcels of undeveloped land released.

The government recently reiterated its commitment to protecting the green belt, which is estimated to comprise more than 1.6 million hectares of land in England. Review may only take place through preparation of, or changes to, the Local Plan.

Demonstrating that land in the green belt is suitable to be brought forward for development is one of the challenges addressed by Motion's team of transport assessment, travel planning and infrastructure design experts.

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BEATING green belt blight

Managing Director Phil Bell argues, “Land with development potential can be ‘blighted’ by the green belt label. We work with the relevant authorities to turn this situation around.” Principally, the site needs to be considered a sustainable location in economic, social and environmental terms. Nearby employment, educational, health and retail facilities which can be accessed by non-car transport modes contribute to the justification.

Government policy on protection of the green belt is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). One of its aims is to ‘prevent urban sprawl by keeping land open’. Limited affordable housing and infill are exceptions to the rule.

Detailed preparation

Phil Bell reflects, “A house builder can greatly improve the chances of approval with detailed preparation. Access to the site is key and early work to identify a successful strategy is crucial. Access is invariably provided by a T-junction, although provision of appropriate visibility splays can be a constraining factor. We look for ways to reduce these requirements, for instance by slowing traffic speeds or by negotiating flexibility in the calculation of stopping distances.”

Phil adds, “Local communities can benefit from land being released from the green belt. Further development within a defined catchment area can help to make local amenities and services more viable.” By 2012 the government was already incentivising local authorities to use existing laws to review the extent of their green belt land.

Previous calls by the Institute of Directors for land to be released from the green belt to promote house building, have been welcomed by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

Size matters for access strategy

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James Bancroft, Associate Director at Motion explains, “Agreeing suitable access with the planning authority is vital to gaining consent. It can be more difficult to design access to a small development due to space constraints. It is important that an access strategy is identified at an early stage in the design process. This was especially true in locations like Hurst Green where development proposals are located adjacent to the strategic road network.”

All Hastoe’s properties achieve a Code for Sustainable Homes rating of level 4 or higher. Some, including the Burwash development, have been built to full Passivhaus accreditation, where each property is extremely well insulated, and heating costs may be reduced by 90 percent compared to a traditionally-built unit.



James Bancroft

Going places

Why did you join Motion?

JB A combination of working with a good range of clients, the chance to experience areas I hadn’t tried before and the opportunity of becoming a key player in a growing business.

What do you like about your job?

JB I handle a lot of traffic impact assessments to support a variety of developments, so every project is different. I love the challenge of putting together a strong argument that can both stand up to scrutiny and help to unlock a piece of land for development.

What’s next for you at Motion?

JB This is an exciting time to be working in the industry, as economic improvement means that there is scope for a range of larger developments. I’m looking forward to being involved with these projects, expanding Motion’s profile and influence.

If you couldn’t work at Motion, what you would do?

JB I’d be an international jetsetter! I just love new experiences and different cultures, so to be able to pop onto my private jet and head off to wherever takes my fancy would be brilliant.



Full steam ahead for station redevelopment

Work has begun on the redevelopment of Haywards Heath railway station and the land around it. The scheme will deliver a new Waitrose store, a restaurant and smaller retail units. Station facilities will be improved by the construction of a new multi-storey car park, a pedestrian bridge over the tracks that replaces an existing underpass, and new bus shelters and drop off lay-bys.

John Robinson, Senior Development Manager at Solum Regeneration is coordinating the redevelopment scheme. *"This is a very complicated project to deliver. There are effectively four contractor teams on site – for the Waitrose store, the pedestrian bridge, the car park and the track improvements. The logistics of managing so many teams around a fully operational rail station that handles 6,000 commuters every day is challenging, to say the least!"* John adds, *"We had to change the phasing of the Section 278 works to accommodate the separate teams. Motion has been very helpful in working closely with the West Sussex highways department to manage the whole process."*

Motion acted as transport consultant to Solum Regeneration, a joint venture between Network Rail and Kier Property. The company subsequently provided the detailed design for the scheme, which is due to be completed by summer 2016.

Straight answers to roundabout questions

The commercial viability of any development can be dramatically influenced by the amount of land required for enabling highways works. Where roundabouts need to be built or improved, it is essential to provide the optimum design, to avoid the use of third party land.

According to Motion's Managing Director Phil Bell, there is no right or wrong approach when it comes to roundabout design - it all comes down to experience. But a few guiding principles will assist developers and planners. TD 16/07 covers the geometric design of roundabouts. Departures from this guidance are usually at the discretion of the highway authority.

Key considerations

Phil Bell maintains, *"The roundabout design needs to consider minimising the delay for vehicles but also the safety of road users. Location may be the main constraint on designing improvements to a junction, especially in built up areas."*

The choice of roundabout type is determined by a number of factors:

- ▶ type of approach road (single or dual carriageway or grade separated)
- ▶ speed limit on the approach roads
- ▶ traffic flow levels
- ▶ levels of non-vehicular flows
- ▶ extent of land-take

For an impartial discussion about your access issues, why not give us a call on 01483 531300 or 020 7031 8140.



TRAVEL PLANNING early benefits

Developers should consider integrating a travel plan into any major application prior to submitting the scheme for approval, according to Motion's travel planning expert. A long-term strategy to encourage people to use alternatives to cars, has a positive influence on how an application is viewed by the planning authority.

Motion's dedicated Senior Travel Planner, Sarah van de Berg believes, "A travel plan should go hand in hand with a transport assessment. The traffic impact analysis can then take account of what conditions will be like once the travel plan is in place."

Sarah adds, "It can make life easier if developers consult a travel planning specialist early in the life of a planning application. Some developers are becoming more proactive, which avoids the requirement for the travel plan being imposed as a post planning consent condition."

Travel plans include a range of measures to promote walking, cycling, public transport and car sharing. If a travel plan is already in place for an existing residential or commercial development, the demonstrated benefits can be acknowledged in any future planning application.



Motion staff get on their bikes

Nick Peers, Motion's Senior Transport Planner, has been awarded first prize in Surrey County Council's Travel SMART Challenge. During September, he logged 150 journeys using a combination of sustainable transport modes. Nick won a £100 West End theatre voucher and a London travel card.

Motion came first amongst organisations with 6-50 employees. Sarah van de Berg explains,

"We had to log our sustainable journeys to work for a month. Staff at the Guildford office managed to complete 654 trips and were treated to a visit from an artisan ice cream bicycle."

Neighbours' objections overcome

5.5 hectares of farmland off the High Street in Cranfield, Bedfordshire is being developed by Bellway Homes to deliver 135 residential units. Land is also being provided for a new lower school under a section 106 agreement. Concerns about cars and school buses being routed through a neighbouring estate were overcome by Motion's team of traffic experts.

Ben Adams, Land Manager for Bellway Homes' Northern Home Counties division, recalls, "Access to the development was the main obstacle to gaining consent. Objections focused around the adjacent Flitt Leys Close which is only 5.5 metres wide. Residents often need to park on the road as off-street parking is limited."

Motion's transport assessment demonstrated that the road capacity was adequate to serve the new development. The site layout was designed to make provision for access, parking and servicing.

According to Phil Bell, "There were no technical or policy grounds on which to refuse the application. Central Bedfordshire Council had previously stated that the access road is satisfactory to serve the land allocated under local policy HA7. This allows development to take place in rural areas, if it accords with other existing policies."

Ben Adams concludes, "Despite the access concerns, the application was 'plain sailing'. We have an excellent working relationship with Motion and the team turns work around very quickly." Motion also developed a travel plan for the Cranfield scheme.



Room service

The Montcalm group is opening a luxury hotel, the 'M by Montcalm', at 151 City Road, London, in the heart of the area known as Silicon Roundabout. The new build 269 bedroom hotel is part of a landmark 23 storey building designed by architect Will Alsop. Incorporating appropriate access was critical to the scheme gaining consent.

As longstanding advisers to the holding company, Precis Management Services, Motion gave transport advice to support the planning application. Associate Director, Pete Sturgeon says, "As with many highly accessible central London properties, there is no provision for car parking on site. The building offers limited frontage on a busy A road. The local roads either side of the hotel provide on street parking and access to adjacent buildings. This restricts the space available for service and deliveries. The scheme includes a new access point leading to an off-site service area. This can accommodate the small delivery vehicles that will form the majority of deliveries. It will also minimise the use of local streets for servicing."

Successful inquiry tips the balance

A new 80 bed care home for the elderly will be built by Kitewood Investments in Sevenoaks, following a successful public inquiry. Planning permission was granted subject to conditions. Motion represented Kitewood on transport and drainage issues.

Paul Watkins, Kitewood Investments' Planning Manager comments, "We are delighted that planning permission was granted, subject to approval of the surface water drainage scheme." Motion's Associate Director Damian Tungatt showed that the expected traffic volumes and gradients were acceptable, given the cul-de-sac location. Principal Engineer Neil Jaques demonstrated that the proposed sustainable urban drainage system (SUDS) would be sufficient.

At the inquiry the planning inspector concluded that despite its size, the building would not dominate the area. The need for care accommodation, together with the improved alternative vehicular access to an adjacent church, meant that the scheme was considered to be a suitable development.

Damian concludes, "The site is in a residential area on undeveloped land to the west of the High Street. The alternative access route from the church car park, which can be delivered as part of this application, is expected to relieve significant congestion on the High Street after church services."



Motion is Ten

Poetry in Motion

Ten years ago I'm sad to say the network was a mess.
The traffic was in chaos and it did not impress.

So Phil and Steve they met up, they put their heads together;
They came up with a cunning plan to change the streets forever.

There was a need, we should succeed in helping transport flow,
And so on board took experts, some people in the know.
Instead of two our team it grew, to over twenty staff.
We are a close knit, friendly crew; we often have a laugh!

We've offices in Guildford and London's Duncannon Street.
Our work comes recommended, to use us it is a treat!
The plans we do are quality, we're not a waste of time.
Our expertise saves money, our strategy's sublime.

Developers are very wise, when us they do commission;
With us on board, we're not ignored, it helps them gain permission.
We always drive things forward, we are a balanced team.
Bringing order out of chaos, restore a planner's dream!

Our team of experts number crunch, to us it is a pleasure.
We love to give to charity, we're happy when together.
We've helped to ease the traffic squeeze, with love and our devotion
It won't surprise if I surmise there's 'Poetry in Motion'.

Phil Bell

10 years young win a ten year old port

Match the current photographs of Motion's management team to the pictures of their younger selves, using the numbers and letters. Email your answers to: info@motion-uk.co.uk

All correct responses will be entered into a prize draw to win a bottle of ten year old port.

RULES Entry is restricted to one per person. No Motion staff, family members or associates may enter the competition. This competition is open to UK residents only. The prize can only be sent to a valid UK address. The competition will run from 25th November to 24th December 2014. The winner will be chosen at random from all valid entries. He/she will be notified by email from info@motion-uk.co.uk after the closing date.



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Ask Motion



If you would value a preliminary discussion about the transport, traffic or

infrastructure issues associated with a potential development project, why not give us a call on 01483 531300?

www.motion-uk.co.uk