



## Latest Press Release: The Winsper Group Obligations Or Aspirations?

With developers aspirations at odds with planning obligations, fuelled by the resurgent construction & property sectors, are the days of 'Affordable Housing' contained within marketable developments numbered? Akin to Ebbsfleet, a proposed 'Garden City'.

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### Obligations Or Aspirations ?

Never has developers aspirations been so far at odds with government obligations than in the current, resurgent construction market. The Latham Report 1994, through to the present Growth & Infrastructure Act 2013, championed a more collaborative approach to construction and development as advocated by government and industry bodies alike (CIL). However, the majority of initiatives fail to address the disjointed methodology and disparity of Planning Departments and their individualistic Local Planning Frameworks (LPF). In reality, this pitches the developers aspirations and practices against its obligations, which impinges on the hot topic at the moment, that of 'Affordable Housing'.

Local authorities, overarched by central government rely on Section 106 of the 2013 Act to produce these affordable homes, but forget that developers can either implement these OR financially offset this requirement through remuneration, thus punting the 'hot potato' straight back at the planners, as can be seen by the 10 large scale appeals currently lodged with the Planning Inspectorate, ensuring that affordable housing is located elsewhere, as to not disrupt the profitability of the land and the organisations bottom line. Does this go against Corporate Social Responsibility? – Yes. Will it impinge on profitability? – No.

As such, the scorn is now with developers, but as so ably demonstrated by Nick Boles MP, PUSoS Planning, proposals for 4 'Garden Cities', containing some c60,000 homes and allocated £2.4Bn with completion c2020, such as Ebbsfleet in Kent, also lack any affordable housing solutions, confirming the disjointed approach on the national stage, at odds with Nick Clegg DPM and highlighting the extent of the issue, within government. Put simply, Section 106 has the potential to stifle development and any prospective regeneration. Thus Ebbsfleet becomes just another development, at the mercy of market conditions.



Therefore a complete step change is required, in how towns and cities are planned and developed – 'Garden' or otherwise, leaning towards a combination of sustainability and affordable housing policies, which may be reignited, given the current economic recovery. The exemplar in this field – Beddington Zero Energy Development (BedZED), which caters for social housing, shared ownership, key-worker units and private houses, was developed for and funded by the Peabody Trust Housing Association (95%), additional

funding sources included World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and the EU in conjunction with the Bio Regional Development Group, in Sutton (UK). The architect Bill Dunster, also incorporated office space and 'live-work' units overarched by a commitment to provide 'green' lifestyle services, through energy efficiency, renewable energy, water conservation, car club and local organic food deliveries. The build strives to achieve environmental, social and economic sustainability and is the UK's largest Eco Village. In addition, it promotes sustainable 'Social Housing' through its three main bastions of; Sustainable communities, sustainable tenancies and sustainable buildings. This ethos, projected at a macro level, could be the 'Blueprint' for all new towns and cities, addressing a much needed 'Work – Life' balance, as alluded too by the then Housing Minister John Healey in 2010, when the Communities & Local Government earmarked £60M for eco communities.

But alas with London a stone's throw away, will any true 'Garden City / Utopia' fall foul of Richard Whittington's Theory c 1380?

The rub is of course, that a growing percentage of all new large scale developments planned today, overarched by legislation and George Osborne's budgetary aspirations, will be purchased by B2L investors and the over 55's with their new found pension freedom (SIPPs) and rented back to the very people they were originally intended for.