

Planning Policy

From: George Hillier <
Sent: 14 September 2018 11:51
To: Planning Policy
Subject: Hillier Nurseries
Attachments: Brentry site plan.pdf; Test Valley Borough Council.pdf

Dear Sir or Madam,

Please find attached a letter and plan in relation to the Test Valley local plan consultation issues & options.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if there is any further information you require.

Kind regards

George Hillier

George Hillier | Head of Property | Hillier.co.uk

Tel: 01246 200000



Web site: www.hillier.co.uk Hillier Nurseries Ltd is registered in England at www.hillier.co.uk
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Planning Policy Team

Test Valley Borough Council

Beech Hut

Weyhill Road

Andover

SP10 3AJ

VIA EMAIL ONLY

Dear Sir or Madam

TEST VALLEY LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION ISSUES & OPTIONS – HILLIER NURSERIES

I write in response to the Local Plan Issues & Options Consultation, with particular reference made to our Brentry Nursery, Jermyns Lane. Having reviewed the literature published to inform the Issues & Options Consultation, we consider there to be opportunities via the emerging Local Plan to strengthen our business locally within the Borough and also aid the Local Planning Authority in delivering its social and economic objectives over the course of the Plan Period.

As a business, Hillier has multiple sites to the north of Romsey, centred to the north and south of Jermyns Lane and Sandy Lane, the largest of which is the existing Brentry Nursery as edged in red on the annexed drawing. The Nursery extends to circa 70 acres and, while well screened from major public thoroughfares, consists of extensive hardstanding and existing structures in the form of glasshouses, used for the growing of plants for commercial sale across the UK.

Over time and via the advancement in technology, the commercial operation no longer requires the land area used within the Nursery, with land and buildings now left vacant. Indeed, via inward investment and to improve the efficiency of the Nurseries, we are exploring the option of relocating the growing function that exists on this land, and relocating this to the north of Jermyns Lane, in turn consolidating our local Nurseries business onto one site. In addition, this would also facilitate future investment into the Sir Harold Hillier Gardens, in the form of development and donations, to ensure its prosperity under the stewardship of Hampshire County Council.



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There are inherent advantages to this strategy to Hillier going forward, which in turn would release a large area of Previously Developed Land (as per the NPPF definition) within the Borough for alternative land uses, and thus sequentially, could form an important component of meeting the Council's Local Plan objectives. As a land asset, the site's release for development would also enable us to reinvest into our retained Estate within the Borough, and grow the business while embracing modern practices in cultivation.

The area within which the land sits has of course seen significant change over recent years, via the delivery of Abbotswood and, more recently, the Ganger Farm development which abuts the western boundary of the Brentry Nursery. To the east, the land is bounded by open land and trees, beyond which is The Straight Mile. Far from being isolated, the land in question has in recent time been absorbed into the fringe of the urban area of Romsey.

Given the scale of the land area south of Jermyns Lane, we feel there are significant opportunities for alternative land uses including residential and, where appropriate, commercial use (compatible with residential use). The land has been engineered over time to create a number of flat, tiered areas of hard standing, which would be compatible with such uses and, with the land having been exclusively used for horticulture, unlike many other PDL sites the land is free from contaminants. Via a comprehensive master plan, there is the opportunity to re-use the areas of hard standing and buildings, while also returning large areas back to open space as part of a wider strategy for the site.

Within the Local Plan documentation, the question is raised of whether the Local Plan should continue to focus its growth on the larger towns, including Romsey, and the answer is yes, it should. With the vast majority of services and facilities, in addition to road and rail connections, Romsey represents the principal town in the Borough with which future growth should be directed. As a local business, we welcome both this social and economic growth focused on Romsey and, in turn, would welcome the opportunity to discuss with the Borough Council how via our landholdings we can aid delivery that supports the future growth of our business.

As a local business with a long history in the Borough, the re-use of the Brentry Nursery presents an exciting opportunity not only for reinvestment back into the business, but we recognise could also give the Local Planning Authority the platform from which to meet, in part, its social and economic targets. As part of the Local Plan process, we would welcome the opportunity to commence dialogue with the Borough Council as to how the land could form part of the emerging spatial strategy, and also escort relevant Officers and Members around the Nursery to gain a better understanding of its previously developed nature and the opportunities that exist.



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Please do contact me at any time, whereupon we would be delighted to expand on the points raised within this representation.

Yours faithfully,

George Hillier





