Joint Core Strategy for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk, Broadland Part of Norwich Policy Area Examination

The Councils' Further Statement on Evidence Submitted on 21st June 2013 Both Matters

Evidence Submitted by other participants

Four separate documents were submitted by other participants' on 21st June 2013. Two of these (document DV26 submitted by the Norwich Green Party and DV25 submitted by Barton Willmore for Landstock Estates) essentially relate to Matter 1 as they seek to question the adequacy of the Sustainability Appraisal and its assessment of reasonable alternatives. The other two documents (DV24 Barton Willmore and DV27 Norwich Green Party) relate to Matter 2.

This statement provides a response to the above submissions and also provides an update in relation to matters that will be relevant to the debate at the examination. The statement by Barton Willmore (for Landstock Estates) in DV24 that they reserve their position is noted and no response is needed at this stage.

There are also some further brief updates to the evidence since 21st June 2013 regarding viability testing, housing land supply, local economic forecasting, CIL and the Postwick Hub inquiry. These are set out at the end of this document.

Matter 1

Response to DV26 (Norwich Green Party)

The Councils' assessment is that this evidence provides an inadequate assessment of the carbon impact of the proposed Joint Core Strategy (JCS) growth strategy and seeks to compare this against an option that cannot be considered to be a reasonable alternative. The Councils see no reason to change either the JCS or the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) in response to this submission.

The paper DV26 presents a comparison with an option that does not include the Northern Distributor Road (NDR). The NDR is an adopted scheme of the County Council and is in the environmental baseline in the SA. This was tested through legal challenge and found to be an acceptable position to take[1]. Therefore the paper does not, in terms of this plan and its SA, form a reasonable alternative. The principle of more growth focussed in the South West was considered in detail in both the response to representations and the SA (summarised on page 19-21 of SDJCS7). Although the SA did not carry out a specific carbon assessment, it demonstrated that environmentally the option performed less well than the most appropriate option taken forward.

Furthermore the paper appears flawed in a number of ways. It ignores the fact that significant interventions to support walking, cycling and public transport in the North East Growth Triangle (NEGT) are being planned alongside the growth. It also suggests work is more advanced on schemes serving the South West sector than elsewhere. This is the case at present simply because of the more advanced nature of the growth locations,

[1] See Heard v Broadland DC and others

Hethersett and Wymondham having resolutions to grant, and Cringleford with informal discussions on-going.

Paragraph 20 refers to a £5m cycle route serving the South West. This refers to a bid (which has been submitted but is as yet undetermined) to the DfT for City Cycle Ambition Grant funding. It should be noted that (as is clearly illustrated on the plan included in Appendix B of the submission) the proposed improvements relate to a cross city route linking the Norwich Research Park (NRP) through the city centre and to the North East of the city. If successful the bid will result in substantial improvements to cycling infrastructure linking significant parts of the NEGT to the city centre.

The detailed work carried out by consultants MTRU to support the paper is an assessment based on assumptions of current mode share and those proposed for Postwick Hub. It does not factor in scale, or the impact of the ability to deliver supporting infrastructure facilities and services that will influence likely travel choices within and beyond a specific growth location. In addition it does not model any through traffic effect of the proposed stand alone link road.

Indeed the option sets up a scale of growth that is likely to not fit well with the delivery of secondary education (particularly in the North East) which would lead to an increased need to transport pupils to school. The report is high level and therefore its conclusions do not pick up on the work to define sustainable scales of development to minimise the need to travel together with the ability to deliver sustainable transport choices. In addition the commentary on the distribution of employment is skewed to the NRP. There are other employment locations of equivalent scale at the airport and Broadland Business Park (and substantial planned expansion at these locations in the adopted JCS) and further employment growth is proposed at Rackheath in the part JCS. The largest single employment location in the area is the city centre for which the North East is ideally placed to connect to with a choice of radial routes to deliver public transport and cycling routes.

<u>Response to DV25 (Barton Willmore for Landstock Estates)</u>

The Councils' assessment is that this evidence does not provide a robustly based challenge to the limitations on delivering secondary education in Wymondham taken into account in the SA. Much of the evidence already submitted by the Councils in section 4 of DV19 is relevant.

It is accepted that higher demographic/pupil multipliers will mean more children may come forward from new housing than originally anticipated. However, the Wymondham Area Action Plan (WAAP) has yet to be submitted and the educational implications of development will be taken into account by South Norfolk Council in formulating the Publication WAAP and determining planning applications. It should also be noted that pupil place planning is not an exact science and that while there has been an increase in the demographic multiplier for the secondary cohort (11-16) the County Council expects to manage pupil numbers (i.e. provide sufficient places) within a broad range (e.g. plus/minus 10%), there may also be scope for some element of the 16-18 notional capacity assisting this.

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The County Council consider that the level of housing proposed in the existing JCS remains soundly based and is confident that educational solutions can be identified allowing children arising from new development to be educated locally without excessive cost or the provision of a new secondary school to serve Wymondham, even allowing for the impact of latest housing projections and the revised multipliers.

The alternative education solutions identified by consultants EFM statement are not favoured by Norfolk County Council as local education authority for the following reasons:

(a) a new/separate sixth form campus/site being required which would free up capacity at the existing High School site for more pupils (11-16);

The letter from the Academy (ref DV4 dated Feb 2012) makes clear that the Academy is strongly opposed to such an approach for educational reasons. The County Council does not have the powers and would not wish to impose this solution on the Academy, no funding has been identified to deliver such a solution and no site identified;

(b) a new "all-through" school (3 – 16/18).

The County Council is concerned that there would be significant issues surrounding funding/delivery of an "all through" school. Within Norfolk provision of such schools has tended to be in rural areas with much longer distances to alternative schools. In Wymondham there might be significant educational/logistical issues associated with an all through school in terms of "critical size" etc needed to deliver the national curriculum.

In addition the Councils make the following observations on specific paragraphs of the EFM report.

2.11 - The County Council not only has a duty to secure sufficient school places, it also has a statutory duty to ensure high standards of education in the county. It is therefore quite appropriate for the County Council to take a view on the impact of housing numbers and seek to input this view into the plan making process. Para 162 of the NPPF makes clear that local planning authorities should work with other authorities and providers to assess the quality and capacity of infrastructure for (among other things) education, and its ability to meet forecast demands. EFM's statement (repeated in paras 6.5 and 6.6) that it is 'inappropriate' for the County Council to seek to support or oppose any level of housing development based on education implications is clearly wrong.

3.2 et seq - EFM neglect to say that numbers in the secondary phase nationally are at a demographic low point and the number of larger schools will rise in the coming years. Statistical comparison with present secondary school sizes is not a pointer to the future. These demographic rises will place pressures on many sites nationally which are not yet under pressure.

3.4 - the issue is the current plan period not the future plan period. Proposals for the latter should be determined in the light of the final outcome of the present period, and should not start being planned in advance.

4.6 - the two all-through schools in Norfolk arose organically from local needs in rural areas and are based upon the desire to improve standards in those areas, not on demographic factors. It is weak to form a comparison between the Wymondham situation and these other Norfolk schools, or with the Oxfordshire school which arose as a solution to a specific problem - schooling on a remote former airbase.

4.9 a secondary phase of 420 pupils would be unsupportable educationally and financially, even within an all-through school framework.

Matter 2

Response to DV27 (Norwich Green Party)

In this paper the Green Party set out their views of the Local Infrastructure Plan and Programme (LIPP) describing infrastructure planning as being in a state of flux, citing various apparent delays in planned delivery dates for certain schemes and cost increases in relation to other schemes. They question whether sufficient funds will be available to deliver the schemes described.

The LIPP is a tool to coordinate and manage delivery of the infrastructure required to deliver growth in accordance with the JCS objectives and it also acts as the implementation plan for the Greater Norwich Housing and Economic Strategies. It was prepared to a format specified by the Homes and Communities Agency and the projects listed within it are grouped into various spatial and thematic packages. A number of versions of the document have been published.

The last comprehensive version of the LIPP (v4.1) was published in Feb 2012 (Document ref INF3.1). However, a schedule of factual updates to v4.1 to the LIPP was submitted to support the submission of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Draft Charging Schedules for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk (Document ref INF3.2).

A comprehensive (although unphased) update of all LIPP infrastructure projects required to support delivery of the JCS was included within a submitted document to support the submission of the Draft CIL Charging Schedules in Aug 2012 (this document is not in the library but remains available on the GNDP website at http://www.gndp.org.uk/content/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2012/08/BackgroundAndContextFinal.pdf - the schedule is page 27-30).

There has been no further published update since August 2012. The revised Appendix (7a) submitted as proposed main modification 7 represents the most up to date understanding of infrastructure requirements, funding and delivery related to growth in the Broadland part of the Norwich Policy Area (NPA). The information is drawn from the above information updated in the light of emerging delivery trajectories and discussions with infrastructure providers.

Cllr Boswell is correct to point out that some schemes have been rephased or had costs changed between the different iterations of the LIPP. This is entirely to be expected as proposals are developed in more detail. Nothing in this questions the need for the infrastructure or its ability to be delivered in a timely manner to support planned development. The main changes for the schemes mentioned in DV27 are explained below:

Airport BRT – Scheme ref T12. Phasing of this £10m scheme has varied as follows:

- Appendix 7 to the originally adopted Core Strategy phased the scheme as £2.5m 2011-16, £5 2016-21, and £2.5m 2021-26.
- The LIPP v4.1 retained the total costing but indicated a different spending profile of £1.5m in 2016-21 and £8.5m in 2021-26
- The updated appendix 7a (submitted as MM7) again retains the total costing but indicates a spending of £2.5m in the period 2016-21 and £7.5m in 2021-26.

Phasing was assumed to be delayed in LIPP v4.1 owing to the delays in NDR delivery, however phasing was subsequently re-examined and brought forward slightly in the light of development interest in along the route that may enable quicker delivery.

Salhouse Road BRT – Scheme ref T11. Phasing of this £5m scheme has varied as follows:

- Appendix 7 to the originally adopted Core Strategy phased the scheme as £1.8m 2011-16, £2.6m 2016-21, and £0.6m 2021-26.
- The LIPP v4.1 retained the total costing but indicated a different spending profile of £2.8m in 2011-16 and £2.2m in 2016-21.
- The updated appendix 7a (submitted as MM7) again retains the total costing but indicates a spending of £1.8m in the period 2011-16, £2.6m in 2016-21 and £0.6m in 2021-26.

Phasing in LIPP v4.1 reflected the uncertainties over the start date for Rackheath. Phasing in appendix7a reflect the projected start date for Rackheath development set out in the proposed MM5. Some work on this scheme has already been conducted (placemaking strategy presented as evidence to previous JCS Examination, doc ref RF48) and approval of City Cycle ambition grant may see delivery of certain elements of the scheme.

Broadland Business Park – Salhouse Road development link – Scheme ref T15

- Appendix 7 to the originally adopted Core Strategy listed this developer funded scheme as an estimated total cost £5m phased £2.5m 2011-16 and £2.5 2016-21.
- The LIPP v4.1 retained the total costing but indicated a different spending profile of £5m in 11-16
- The updated appendix 7a (submitted as MM7) again retains the total costing but indicates a spending of £2.5m in the period 2011-16, £2.5m in 16-21.

This scheme is linked to delivery of the Postwick junction and now has planning permission. LIPP v4.1 has assumed a quicker rate of delivery but this has been revised in the light of the Postwick timetable.

NDR cost increases – Scheme ref T1

- Appendix 7 to the originally adopted Core Strategy listed the total cost for this scheme as £106.2m for delivery by 2016.
- The LIPP v4.1 reassessed the total cost as £110m but retained the estimated delivery date of 2016.
- The updated appendix 7a (submitted as MM7) has revised the cost to £120m and phased this expenditure £107 up to 2016 and £13m post 2016.

Costs have changed as further details of the scheme have emerged. The latest costs reflect those referred to in a County Cabinet report dated 2nd April 2012.

With regard to the points made about funding, there are many possible sources of funding for capital projects and central government is looking at a 'single pot' approach that will allow greater flexibility on spending allowing more efficient management of capital programmes. The Councils are working with partners to develop a shorter term investment programme [prepared within the context of a revised LIPP] to deliver particular schemes and identify funding sources. CIL is only one of the possible funding sources . This issue was discussed on day 3 of the examination. The governance arrangements for this have yet to be agreed but key decisions will be made in public and there will be considerable consultation in relation to the prioritisation of schemes. The response given to Cllr Boswell's question to the Leader of Norwich City Council is attached as Appendix 1.

It is expected that the next iteration of the LIPP will be published in the Autumn of this year once the outcomes of the Examination and the City Deal bid are known. The format of the LIPP is likely to be simplified to remove thematic and spatial packages when this occurs.

Updates in relation to the Councils' evidence

Since the submission of evidence on 21st June 2013 work has been continuing on a number of fronts.

<u>Viability Testing</u>

A letter has been received from the HCA in relation to the evidence submitted by the Councils on viability. This has been included as Appendix 2 to this document.

The model runs used for testing have now been formatted so they can be published. These can be submitted and will be added to the evidence library subject to the Inspector's agreement. Please note there was an error in the calculations for typology 3, this has now been corrected in the published information but has resulted in a discrepancy between this and the summary evidence submitted on 21st June (doc ref DV22). An errata sheet correcting the summary tables in the document is attached as Appendix 3.

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In their letter of 21st June (doc ref DV20) the Councils referred to clear signs the market is turning up in terms of prices and lending. Appendix 4 summarises this latest information.

Land Supply

As indicated in the Councils' letter of 21st June (doc ref DV20) the position regarding land supply is rapidly improving. The material submitted on 21st June contained information that was correct at the end of March 2013. However, as the situation is changing so rapidly the Councils are very keen to ensure that the latest information is available to inform the Examinationand will submit an update to evidence statement DV21 updating the information contained in it to mid July in the week beginning 15th July.

East of England Forecasting Model (EEFM)

As mentioned at the Examination it is expected that a further updated version of the East of England (Economic) Forecasting Model will be published by Cambridgeshire County Council shortly covering the area of the former East of England region and including the associated LEP areas. This is expected to be published at the end of the week beginning 8th July. When it is published it will be added to the document library along with a brief note examining its implications for the Housing Topic Paper (SDJCS14).

CIL

CIL came into force in Broadland Area on 1st July and will come into force in Norwich on 15th July. Relevant websites will be updated shortly with charging schedules.

Postwick

The Inquiry into the side and slip roads orders for the Postwick Interchange opened on 3rd July when the Highways Agency gave its opening statement. This can be added to the document library if necessary. The Councils will publish further updates if matters considered to be of particular relevance to the Examination come to light.

GNDP
July 2013

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Appendix 1

Cllr Brenda Arthur, Leader of Norwich City Council response to Cllr Boswell's question on 25 June 2013:

"It is possible to get very carried away about the income to be derived from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). However it has always been the case that CIL would only be part of the funding necessary to finance the infrastructure required to deliver the growth in homes and jobs planned in the Joint Core Strategy.

Yes, like many others, I was disappointed when the inspector determined that the level of CIL would be below our expectations but on the other hand I am pleased that we have established a more robust way of collecting and pooling funds to support investment programmes for many years to come. It is the start of a new era and is something we can build on in future.

The reality of our situation is that, now we know what contribution CIL will make, we can focus our efforts and attention on securing other sources of funding – whether this is for schools, major junction improvements, new strategic cycle routes etc. For example, as Councillor Boswell is probably aware, the county council have recently been awarded additional capital funding for schools and some of this will be used to finance work identified in the JCS implementation plan. So the approach is working. I do, however, accept that we will need to keep under review our investment plans but this is something all public bodies do on a regular basis. In this context I can reassure Cllr Boswell that a model has been prepared which shows the changed assumptions for CIL income. The forecast CIL income for Norwich based on the rate of CIL proposed to apply from July and assuming this continues to apply throughout the period to 2026 is about £12million lower than that originally proposed in the submitted draft charging schedule – a reduction of around 35% over the original predictions.

The Inspector recommended a reduced rate because he was concerned about the impact that the rate originally proposed would have on development viability. This means that development may not have come forward if the higher rate of CIL was adopted. If this happened then obviously no CIL would be received. In addition the rate of CIL will be kept under review so if at a later date, a higher rate of CIL can justified on viability grounds, then the necessary processes will be followed to get the rate increased. The model does therefore also look at scenarios whereby CIL is increased in 2018/19 by 25% and 35%. Under these circumstances the forecast CIL funding for the city would be £25,863.000 and £30,172,000 respectively.

The priorities for the investment of CIL will be on the infrastructure necessary to deliver the Joint Core Strategy. The provision of strategic infrastructure such as major transport schemes including bus rapid transit measures will require some form of pooling of CIL income between local authorities. This is tied in with discussions on a City Deal for the Greater Norwich area. Any arrangements for pooling, together with the governance process for investment priorities and funding will be developed as part of the City Deal process and subject to further decisions in due course by members of this council. Councillor Boswell is not correct in asserting that Norwich City Council has already committed £10million to the NDR. I realise he has only been a councillor for a short while *and so may not have heard me say on numerous occasions in the council chamber that no decisions have been made as yet as to how we spend CIL income. Indeed he will hear me say it again later in the agenda when we ask council to agree the adoption of CIL. This highlights another error in his question where he states that cabinet agreed to adopt CIL at our last meeting. We did not do that but agreed to recommend to full council that CIL is adopted from 15th July 2013.*

Under the revised CIL regulations (2013) there is a requirement for 15% of CIL funding to be spent on local infrastructure projects to help communities to accommodate the impact of new development (this sum is higher where there is an adopted neighbourhood plan). In rural areas this will be passed directly to parish councils but in the city, the council will retain the Levy receipts and will engage with the communities in the locality of where development has taken place and agree how best to spend the neighbourhood funding in a manner that reflects the investment requirements of the JCS and local priorities. In this respect all the good work we are carrying out on engagement in the neighbourhoods will provide a very solid base for undertaking this particular task."

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Appendix 2 – HCA letter

Homes & Communities Agency

Sandra Easthaugh
Greater Norwich Development Partnership Manager
GNDP
PO Box 3466
NORWICH
NR7 7NX

9th July 2013

Dear Sandra,

The Homes and Communities Agency's Area Wide Viability Model (AWVM) is one of a number of tools available to the industry, which can be used to support local planning authorities in the viability testing of strategic planning policy. This could be during the development of a local plan, establishing an affordable housing policy or gathering evidence to support a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) charging structure.

The AWVM was subject to an independent audit earlier in 2013, undertaken by Lambert Smith Hampton, who determined that the AWVM was sound for its intended use by LAs to test the viability and deliverability of the housing assumptions within core strategies and other supporting planning policies.

The Agency has been engaged with a number of Authorities in the past who have utilised the AWVM for such purposes. This includes Chelmsford City Council who used it to aide development of their CIL policy, Babergh District Council, who used it to assess the viability and deliverability of predicted housing growth based on Babergh District Council's Draft Core Strategy, and Shropshire Council who used it in Shropshire's "Viability Study Final report May 2013 – supporting type and affordability of housing SPD".

On the basis of the information provided to the Agency, the population of the AWVM by GNDP appears satisfactory.

Yours sincerely

Nick Enge MRICS
Senior Area Manager (Large Sites)

Homes and Communities Agency
Eastbrook , Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge. CB2 8BF
0300 1234 500
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Appendix 3 – Errata to Viability Assessment (DV22)

ERRATA TO VIABILITY ASSESSMENT (DV22)

The following tables and text should be substituted for those originally published as some the results relating to Typology 3 relate to an earlier iteration rather than the final version (the previous run was based on build costs of £925 per sq m whereas the submitted appendix 2 sec 8, see page 8 of 21 in DV22 appendices, made clear this should have been £900 per sq m).

4) Consideration of the results and whether they indicate a likelihood of competitive returns to a willing landowner

Table 2: Summary of results of model

Typology	Existing Use Value for site	Residual Value for site	RLV per gross Ha
1	£120,000	£3,166,220	£527,703
2	£100,000	£1,800,543	£360,109
3	£840,000	£18,013,845	£428,901
4	£2,840,000	£28,742,455	£202,412
5	£500,000	£1,898,435	£75,937

Table 3: Summary of results of model – achievement of benchmark value as presented in Appendix 3 (method 2)

Typology	Benchmark value per ha	Site benchmark value	Residual Site Value	Benchmark /RSV
1	£430,000	£2,580,000	£3,166,220	+£586,220
2	£430,000	£2,150,000	£1,800,543	-£349,457
3	£430,000	£10,655,400	£18,013,845	+£7,358,445
4	£370,000	£30,672,000	£28,742,455	-£1,929,545
5	n/a	n/a	£1,898,435	n/a

Table 4: Summary of results of model – achievement of benchmark value using uplift on EUV (method 1)

Typology	Benchmark value per gross ha	Site benchmark value	Residual Site Value	Uplift on EUV	Benchmark /RSV
1	£200,000	£1,200,000	£3,166,220	x26.39	+£1,966,220
2	£200,000	£1,000,000	£1,800,543	x18.01	+£800,543
3	£200,000	£8,400,000	£18,013,845	x21.45	+£9,613,845
4	£200,000	£28,400,000	£28,742,455	x10.12	+£342,455
5	£200,000	£5,000,000	£1,898,435	x3.8	-£3,101,565

Table 5: Summary of results of model – achievement of benchmark value using method 3				
Typology	Benchmark value per ha	Site benchmark value	Residual Site Value	Benchmark /RSV
1	£570,000	£3,420,000	£3,166,220	-£253,780
2	£570,000	£2,850,000	£1,800,543	-£1,049,457
3	£570,000	£14,007,000	£18,013,845	+£4,006,845
4	£495,000	£40,612,000	£28,742,455	-£11,869,545
5	n/a	n/a	£1,898,435	n/a

The three approaches to benchmark value give a range of results. These show the range of residual values against benchmark to be as follows:

Typology 1 – Highest +£1,966,220 Lowest -£253,780

Typology 2 – Highest +£800,543 Lowest -£1,049,457

Typology 3 – Highest +£9,613,845 Lowest +£4,006,845

Typology 4 – Highest +£342,455 Lowest -£11,869,545

GNDP
July 2013

Appendix 4 – Evidence Supporting an Improving Housing Market

There is increasing evidence of clear signs that the housing market is improving in terms of prices and lending and set out below are extracts from a cross section of sources' recently published reports and trading statements that support this.

House Prices

Land Registry – UK House Prices January to March 2013

Broadland – Annual change in house prices +13.3%
Quarterly change in house prices + 6.7%

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/spl/hi/in_depth/uk_house_prices/html/33uc.stm

Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors – June 13 Residential Market Survey

'After what has seemed like a very long wait we are finally starting to see what looks like the beginning of a recovery in the housing market. It is important to remember that activity levels still remain depressed by historic standards but the various initiatives designed to encourage the provision of finance into the market do appear to be paying dividends'

http://www.rics.org/uk/knowledge/news-insight/press-releases/prices-rise-and-demand-increases-as-property-market-begins-to-recover/

BBC News Website – (09.07.13)

'Surveyors are expecting house prices to keep rising as the UK housing market starts to record some momentum following a sluggish few years.

Members of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (Rics) expect prices to go up by 1.5% over the next 12 months, its latest survey found.

This comes after a prediction of static prices at the start of the year.

Over the next five years, they predict a 4% a year average increase in property values.

At the beginning of 2013, they said there would be a 2.5% rise'

http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-23231520

Lending

Bank of England – Statistical Release (01.07.2013)

'Lending secured on dwellings increased by £0.3 billion in May, compared to the average monthly increase of £0.6 billion over the previous six months. The three-month annualised and twelve-month growth rates were both 0.5%'

http://www.bankofengland.co.uk/statistics/Pages/mc/2013/may/default.aspx

Council for Mortgage Lenders – Market Commentary (20.03.13)

'Funding conditions, helped by the funding for lending scheme, continue to look favourable and are supporting more competitive mortgage pricing and availability and a gradual resumption in lenders' risk appetite

Our forward estimate of gross mortgage lending in May resonates with other survey evidence of strengthening house purchase activity'

http://www.cml.org.uk/cml/publications/marketcommentary/433

Halifax House Price Index – June 2013

'Activity has also improved in recent months. Both home sales and mortgage approvals for house purchase – a leading indicator of sales – increased in May.'

http://www.lloydsbankinggroup.com/media1/press_releases/2013_press_releases/halifax/040713_HPI.asp

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House Builders

Persimmon plc – Trading Update 2nd July 2013

'Visitors to our sites during the first half of the year were 13% stronger than the prior year'

'The Government's "Help to Buy" 20% shared equity scheme, introduced in April 2013, has generated a positive response from prospective homebuyers, bringing additional momentum to the traditionally stronger spring sales season'

http://otp.investis.com/clients/uk/persimmon-plc/rns/regulatory-story.aspx?cid=106&newsid=350771

Taylor Wimpey plc - Trading update for the period ended 30 June 2013

'We have welcomed signs of significant improvement in the housing market in the first six months of 2013 where we have seen increased consumer confidence, underpinned by both generally improved access to and affordability of mortgage finance and by the recent Government measures'

'During the first half of 2013, we have been operating in a UK housing market that has shown measurable improvement for the first time since the downturn of 2007/2008.'

http://plc.taylorwimpey.co.uk/InvestorRelations/AnnouncementsPresentations/2013/2013+Half+year+trading+update.htm

Barratt – Half year trading update

Housebuilder Barratt Developments says its full year profits will be stronger than expected, with the government's Help to Buy scheme boosting sales.

It said its sales rate was up 17.9% in the second half of its financial year, and up 34.7% since the launch of Help to Buy in April.

Barratt said full year pre-tax profits would be about £192m, "ahead of the top end of analysts' expectations".

The firm is the latest in the industry to report a boost from Help to Buy.

Redrow, Taylor Wimpey and Persimmon are among those to have benefitted. Recent house price surveys from the Halifax and Nationwide have also pointed to a recovery in the housing market.

"Momentum is continuing to build and with forward sales up substantially, we are confident we can improve our performance still further in the year ahead," said Barratt chief executive Mark Clare.

The company also has also stepped up its land-buying - with more than £1bn worth of purchases.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-23251744