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## Welcome to e-Update!

Welcome to the very first e-Update from DPM! In this issue, we'll be looking at the Community Infrastructure Levy and the possible effects it will have on planning costs. We've also taken a look at how the recession has affected bigger development projects, RSS and the green belt and how the Centrum project in the Midlands has benefited from DPM's input. Finally, DPM have a new website which is full of useful information at [www.dpm-ltd.uk](http://www.dpm-ltd.uk).

Enjoy the visit!

Regards

Paul Tolley, Director

## Centrum 100 benefits from DPM activity

For several years, DPM have been involved with the massive Centrum 100 project at Burton-upon-Trent in Staffordshire. This mixed-use business park has already created 3,000 jobs, with hundreds more due to come on-stream as the multi-phase project nears completion.

DPM have been acting as development managers on behalf of Centrum developer SCPD - a subsidiary of pub group M & B - to promote the various plots at Centrum and co-ordinate extensive road works with the Highways Agency and local councils.

Known as 'Junction D' and costing over £3 million, the six-lane transport link will open up further developments at Centrum East and Centrum West as well as relieving traffic congestion in rush-hour Burton.

With the infrastructure in place, DPM have been working with SCPD to negotiate sales of plots to a broad cross-section of clients:

- Punch Taverns, for instance, will be opening a prestigious eco-friendly 44,000 sq ft office block.
- An office and car showroom development – branded 'Gateway 38' – is being promoted by G F Tomlinson.
- DPM are currently seeking occupiers for a hotel and proposed public house, whilst additional land has been sold to create school playing fields.



> Punch Taverns' new offices



> Part of 'Junction D' at Centrum

## Community Infrastructure Levy deferred until the Autumn

If you're in any way involved with the planning and development process, you will be aware of the proposed Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) which will shortly become law as part of the Government's Planning Bill.

What you may not know is that the regulations to implement CIL have been put back from the Spring of 2009 until October. This means that much of the details about CIL which are published in the regulations will only be available for consultation from May of 2009 at the earliest.

The financial implications of CIL are substantial for all concerned. Local authorities will have powers to apply a charge on all new residential and commercial developments to fund infrastructure projects such as roads, flood defences, medical facilities and schools.

The effects of this delay may vary depending on the type and size of development as well as the local authority concerned and its CIL policy. What is clear, however, is that landowners will pay CIL from the moment development work begins on their land. The levy may also vary according to development type – greenfield, brownfield or regeneration.

The level of uncertainty surrounding CIL is a major talking point right now. Is CIL, for instance, a back-door way for local authorities to raise more revenue at the expense of developers? Will the parallel S106 regime be scaled back sufficiently for CIL to be comparable with current levies? Or will developer contributions towards affordable housing (which fall outside CIL) result in CIL becoming a development tax?

## Look out for details of our new website in the next issue



## Planning appeals system improved

A package of changes to the planning appeals system will come into force in April 2009. The aim is to make the system more proportionate, customer-focused and efficient. It should also cut down on red-tape as well as the delays and uncertainties of the planning process.

The main focus will be on householder appeals, with the Planning Inspectorate speeding up the process for dealing with written representations. As Chief Executive of the Planning Inspectorate, Katrine Sporle, explained:

"These changes allow us to deliver real improvements in the time taken to determine appeals, whilst maintaining the Planning Inspectorate's reputation for quality decision making."

A key change includes the introduction of a Householder Appeals Service which will speed up the procedure for dealing with written representations. The time limit for appealing against a refusal of consent will be reduced from six months to twelve weeks.

Information used at the appeal will be the same as for the original application, so paperwork will be reduced. This will include an appeal form, the original application form and the local planning authority's decision notice. Additional material will be supplied by the local planning authority.

Other changes include:

- An option for the Planning Inspectorate to deal with appeals through written representation, a hearing or local inquiry
- The nine-week written comment stage to be removed from all hearings and inquiries
- Extending the costs regime to written representation cases which will ensure that the process can be used in all types of procedure.

## Regeneration schemes dropped or scrapped

Billions of pounds of regeneration projects have been affected by the economic downturn, according to a report in the Financial Times.

With finance harder to obtain and property values and rents falling, 32 of the biggest 100 schemes in the UK have been delayed – and some have been scrapped altogether.

These include Eastgate Quarters, a proposed shopping centre, and 600 flats in central Leeds which developers Hammerson have halted for the foreseeable future.

Similarly, developer St Modwen has admitted that its regeneration project at the former MG Rover site in Longbridge could be delayed for years.

Among the schemes to be scrapped are the £290m King Alfred project in Brighton and the £266m Weavers' Triangle scheme in Burnley.

## RSS saves Nottingham Green Belt

The final version of the East Midlands' Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) has rejected controversial proposals to develop Green Belt land around Nottingham in favour of reviewing land availability in and around the city conurbation.

To deliver the 430,000 new homes required in the East Midlands region by 2026, the RSS will focus growth in the cities of Nottingham, Derby and Leicester where almost half the region's population live. In addition, development should also be concentrated in the growing towns of Corby, Kettering and Wellingborough.

It seems that the RSS has drawn a line in the sand to prevent – or at least slow down – the ongoing attrition of the UK's Green Belt areas. In view of increasing pressures to build ever-greater numbers of affordable homes in the next 50 years or so, it remains to be seen whether this will be a sustainable government policy.