

PREFACE



CPM Consultants
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6 April 1999

Dear Sirs

STATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT REPORT: LAND TO WEST OF THE A1(M) AT STEVENAGE

In August 1997, the Countryside Commission (now the Countryside Agency), the Environment Agency, English Heritage and English Nature published a report entitled "Environmental Capital: what matters and why, a provisional guide." Organisations were encouraged to test out how the new approach might work in different contexts.

Following a request from the Countryside Commission to its co-partners in the innovative Garden City 21 project, it was agreed that the Garden City 21 Partners would commission CPM to prepare a State of the Environment report for the land to the west of Stevenage using the Environmental Capital approach. The Commission also retained CAG Consultants to both monitor and independently audit the work.

For the purposes of the report, CPM piloted Stages A to C of the full five-stage process, assembling and analysing the environmental data and identifying the area's environmental attributes and services in consultation both with professional experts and with members of the local communities.

On the basis of the reports that we have received from the independent auditors and our own more informal assessments, the Countryside Agency is satisfied that CPM has satisfactorily carried out the first stages of an environmental capital study in a professional, rigorous and unbiased manner. We are particularly pleased to learn that the auditors feel that the extensive public participation exercise which was carried on throughout January's two-day Garden City 21 Local Visioning Conference "allowed local residents to truly contribute to the study by highlighting locally valued attributes as a complement (not a challenge) to the expert's views". This type of public consultation is an important element of the environmental capital approach.

The Countryside Agency recognises that the success of the work to date can be attributed, at least in part, to the open-mindedness of the Garden City 21 partners, and especially Persimmon Homes and their readiness to try out this new approach to Environmental Capital. We very much hope that the Partners will be willing to continue the work to complete the Environmental Capital process.

Yours faithfully
Richard Wakeford

Richard Wakeford
Chief Executive

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Working for people and places in rural England