

The Market Report

Professional Ponderings - August 2026

Planning & Development

What a Burnham Premiership could mean for Residential Development

Andy Burnham's arrival in Downing Street could represent a significant shift in the tone and delivery of housing and planning policy. While Burnham has long been associated with a "brownfield first" approach in Greater Manchester, his record also demonstrates a pragmatic acceptance that meeting housing needs ultimately requires strategic urban extensions and carefully planned releases of Green Belt land where sustainable growth demands it.

For residential developers, promoters and landowners across our region, a Burnham administration could therefore create a more favorable environment for edge-of-settlement development than many local planning authorities have historically been prepared to accept.

Strategic Growth rather than Piecemeal Expansion

A defining feature of Burnham's leadership in Greater Manchester was the eventual delivery of the Places for Everyone spatial plan, a strategy designed to accommodate substantial housing growth while coordinating infrastructure, employment and transport investment. Although initially resistant to large-scale

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Green Belt release, Burnham ultimately supported a plan that balanced brownfield regeneration with selective releases where they were necessary to meet long-term development needs.

Applied nationally, this approach would likely favour strategic site allocations and urban extensions rather than piecemeal speculative development. Sites with the ability to offer an opportunity to deliver comprehensive master planned communities may therefore become increasingly attractive.

The East Midlands and East of England continue to experience significant housing pressure due to their proximity to London, the Oxford-Cambridge corridor and major employment centres. It is expected that a Burnham government will be expected to maintain a strong commitment to boosting housing supply, while also seeking to direct development towards locations that can demonstrate sustainability credentials.

For many settlements across North Northamptonshire, West Northamptonshire, Central Bedfordshire, Bedford Borough, Huntingdonshire, South Cambridgeshire, Hertfordshire, Warwickshire and Buckinghamshire, this could translate into a renewed focus on sustainable settlement expansion.

A more flexible approach to Green Belt and "Grey Belt"

Perhaps the most significant implication for landowners concerns Green Belt policy. The revised national planning policy framework introduced the concept of "grey belt" land, recognising that some areas within the Green Belt make only a limited contribution to its strategic purposes and may be suitable for development where housing needs are pressing.

A Burnham-led government is expected to continue this pragmatic approach. While retaining protection for strategically important landscapes, there would be an increasing expectation that authorities review underperforming Green Belt land and before concluding that housing needs cannot be met.

This is particularly relevant in Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Cambridgeshire, where Green Belt constraints around settlements often limit growth opportunities. Sites that are visually contained, influenced by existing development, or make only a limited contribution to Green Belt purposes could find themselves receiving far greater attention during local plan reviews.

Infrastructure First

Andy Burnham's political philosophy has consistently linked housing growth with infrastructure investment, public transport improvements and strong community benefits. This may translate into the most successful development opportunities being those that are capable of demonstrating a wider public benefit. Strategic land promoters will need to show how schemes contribute not only housing numbers, but also schools, healthcare provision, open space, biodiversity enhancements and transport connectivity.

Consequently, larger edge-of-settlement sites capable of supporting comprehensive master planning may enjoy a competitive advantage over smaller, fragmented parcels.

Outlook for the Development Industry

Overall, a Burnham administration is being viewed positively by much of the residential development sector. The clearest opportunities for Landowners are likely to lie in well-located land on the edge of existing settlements. Sites that can demonstrate sustainability, infrastructure potential and alignment with local growth strategies may find themselves increasingly central to the next generation of local plans and housing allocations.

Generally, commentators anticipate a strong growth Agenda from Andy Burnham but taxation and land value capture will undoubtedly also remain on the agenda! if you need any help with any Planning or Development matters then please do not hesitate to contact.

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REPORT FOR THURSDAY 30TH JULY

512 Prime Lambs

Trade eases on the week with a drop in deadweight prices not comparable to the strength in markets. New buyers in the alleys added support with an all in average at 332.64p/kg or £151.63. SQQ 326.81p/kg. Raveley Fen Farms topped with Charollais lambs to 368p/kg and Conington Farms topped overall at £199.50.

Highlights - A G Murdoch & Sons saw a smart show of best end meat with Continental x at 45.5kgs to £155 and 45kgs to £151.50. K Buckby drew their usual stamp of best end Blue Texels seeing highs of £155 for 45kgs and £183 for 55kgs. J Ashby saw a best end run of smart Continentals forward with 45kgs to £150.50. J R Smith & Son drew their best end Texels at 52kgs selling to £181 with followers at £51.5kgs to £181. Raveley Fen Farms saw a tremendous run of Charollais 47.5kgs to £175 or 368p/kg and £174. Conington Farms topped with a best fed show of Texel x at 63kgs for ram lambs flying to £199.50.

To		From		Average	
Standards (32.1-39kg)					
342p	£130	329p	£125	332p	£128
Mediums (39.1 - 45.5kg)					
344p	£155	296p	£120	326p	£141
Heavies (45.6 - 52kg)					
368p	£181	307p	£144	340p	£163
Over 52kg					
344p	£200	308p	£163	333p	£184

151 Culls

More numbers nationally has hampered what felt like the new norm in trade but still holding a best end average of £146.23. Bendis Farm topped the day with Beltex Texel rams to £232. P A McDonald saw a flyer for lengthy meat Suffolk ewes at £210. R & M Arrowsmith topped with their Suffolks to £193 and Texels to £188. C D Hughes saw the top of the mules at £160. All meat ewes sold above £153. Leaner sorts were from £137 and true grazers were £86 to £110.

To	From	Average
£232	£68	£146

REPORT FOR SATURDAY 1ST AUGUST

590 Store Sheep - Auctioneer Jake Wagstaff 07487 526803

Store Lambs - a flyer in comparison to prime averages and no fear for store lamb buyers so far, longest term lambs continue to look the dearest sold with many trying to buy to budget. All in average £108.47. C A & A B Watson topped the day at £175 for best end Texel lambs with A Bennett flying to £145 for Texels again. J Handy topped the Suffolks at £140. Golden Valley Livestock saw Charollais to £140. Smart bred Continental lambs sold at £115 to £130 for mid frames, smaller frame younger lambs sold around £95 to £107. Longest term chancey sorts were in the £80's. Ram lambs were £10-15 less than their comparables.

Feeding Ewes - another strong trade with plenty of confidence averaging £138.17. J & V Short topped at £213 for Continental ewes and T Sawford saw £192 for Zwartbles. Similar trade to the culls with meat over £150. Leaner feeding sorts were £90 to £130.

Pigs - Auctioneer Richard Spendlove 07538 32247

Just a handful, Saddleback gilts from R Daubney to £40 from £8.

Goats - Auctioneer Richard Spendlove 07538 322474

A good entry of goats of all shapes and sizes. M Onourah dispersed her herd of Boer nanny's selling to £195 from £149. GWM Farms also continuing with a major reduction saw £175 for Boer nanny's, £133 for Toggenburg nanny's and £139 for Billy kids from £55.

Top of the day by a long way was S Shah who's Anglo Nubian Wether was fiercely fought over to sell for £324.

Equine - Auctioneer Richard Spendlove 07538 322474

Plenty of horses and ponies on offer saw T Lucas's 17 year old Shetland mare sell to £720 and a 2 year old £620. M Grange sold yearling Colt Sport Horses to £480 from £300.

Store Cattle - Auctioneer Jake Wagstaff 07487 526803

Feeding Cows - P Macintosh saw a nice show of Dexter heifers at 42 months selling to £290. Stimson Co Ltd saw North Devon heifers at 38 months to £400. P R Rogers drew a well framed British White cows at 155 months selling to £1560, with Red Poll crosses to £1300 at 61 months

Stores - R Munns drew a smart run of Angus steers topping to £1980 for 26 months, with 10 month Angus crosses to £1360. a sterling run of homebred

Limousin Shorthorns at 16 months selling to £1780 and followers to £1680 and £1550.

Small Holders Sale Auctioneer Richard Spendlove 07538 322474

Pet Supplies

Dog food to £15 a bag, 4 bags of Guinea Pig Food £10 and Rabbit Food £12.

Sundries

Log Splitter £50, Trough £30, Bench £30, Wheelbarrow £28, Plant Stand £25, Electric Fence £26, Galvanised Bucket £20, Jockey Wheel £15 and a Compressor £15.

Thrapston Forthcoming Events

Thursday 6th August

Prime & Cull Sheep

Saturday 8th August

Store & Breeding Cattle, Calves, Sheep, Goats & Pigs

Thursday 13th August

Prime & Cull Sheep

Saturday 15th August

Store & Breeding Cattle, Calves, Sheep, Goats & Pigs
Breeding Sheep Sale

See Main Advert for further details

*For further information on any of the sales,
please contact a member of the Market Team*

NOTICE

If you would like your stock to be included in the weekly report presale,
please contact the office before 12 noon on Monday.

Bletsoes

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For Sale **Lot 1, Winwick, Huntingdon** **access off Gidding Road** **26.89 acres (10.89 ha)**

Commercial Arable Land at Winwick
For Sale as a Whole



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Thrapston

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Email - woottonfrederick@outlook.com

Agricultural

Capital Grants For Environmental Land Management Now Open

As of 1st August, Defra has confirmed that 75% of the 2026 Capital Grants budget has already been allocated, demonstrating the exceptionally strong demand for the scheme.

Last year, the available funding was fully allocated in less than a month. With three-quarters of the budget already committed, we strongly encourage anyone considering an application to submit it as soon as possible, rather than waiting for further funding updates, to maximise their chances of securing a grant.

Funding is available on a first come, first served basis, and applications will close once the available budget has been allocated.

For advice on eligibility or help preparing and submitting an application, please contact Rob Russell on 01832 732241.

Agricultural Water Resilience Grant Funding Now Available

The launch of the new Agricultural Water Resilience Grant Scheme is welcome news for farmers, growers and horticultural businesses across Cambridgeshire. As weather patterns become increasingly unpredictable and pressure on water resources continue to grow, investing in water efficiency is no longer simply about reducing costs; it's about strengthening the long-term resilience of farm businesses. With £1.3 million of funding available, grants of between £2,000 and £50,000 are available to support projects that improve water efficiency and strengthen resilience to future water shortages.

The scheme has been introduced in response to increasing pressure on water resources across the county due to climate change, population growth and environmental demands. Grants are available for projects located within Cambridgeshire and will fund up to 50% of eligible project costs, with applicants providing the remaining 50% through match funding.

Support is available for both straightforward capital investments and more innovative approaches to water management projects. Eligible works include rainwater harvesting systems, precision irrigation technology, trickle and drip irrigation systems, soil moisture monitoring equipment, improvements to water storage and distribution, water reuse and recycling systems, together with other projects that improve water efficiency or strengthen resilience to drought. Applicants should be able to demonstrate how their proposed investment will reduce water demand or make better use of available water resources.

Although applications can be submitted until 17 January 2027, funding will be allocated across a series of assessment rounds and may be fully committed before the final deadline. We would therefore encourage anyone considering improvements to their business to begin planning their project as early as possible. Obtaining quotations, reviewing project costs and preparing the necessary supporting information in advance will help ensure applications are ready to submit at the earliest opportunity.

If you are considering investing in irrigation, water storage or other water management improvements, now is an excellent time to review the opportunities this scheme offers. Our Agricultural Team can advise on whether your proposed project is likely to meet the scheme objectives, discuss the funding available and provide support throughout the application process.

If you would like to discuss the scheme in more detail, please contact the Agricultural Team on 01832 732241.



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For further information, or to place an advert,
please contact Hanneke Soans on 01832 732241 or hanneke.soans@bletsoes.co.uk

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ATTENTION LANDOWNERS IN BEDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL
Bedford Borough Local Plan – Call for Sites



BEDFORD

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Following the withdrawal of the Bedford Borough Local Plan to 2040, Bedford Borough Council are now preparing their local plan to 2050. As part of this process, they have opened a call for sites consultation which is open until midnight on the 30th October.

Bedford Borough Council will consider land capable of **delivering 5 or more dwellings, or 0.25 hectares of employment development**. Nothing below these thresholds will be considered.

This an opportunity for landowners within the administrative boundaries of Bedford Borough Council to promote their land for development to the local authority.

If you have land in this area and wish to submit it to the Local Authority, we would be pleased to discuss it directly with you.

Please contact one of the Planning and Development team below:

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SATURDAY 8th AUGUST

STORE & BREEDING SHEEP

R & S Garley

65 Store Lambs

J & S Livestock

1 Hampshire Feeding Ram

1 Pedigree Beltex Shearling Ram

STORE & BREEDING CATTLE

Park End Farming

24 Aberdeen Angus Steers and Heifers

11 - 12 Months

G W M Farms

12 Limousin Steers & Heifers

12 Months

2 Blue Heifers

18 Months

1 Hereford Heifer

18 Months

2 Limousin x Heifers

18 Months

Messers Charles Hopperton-TB4

3 Aberdeen Angus Steers

18 Months

YP Genever & Daughters - TB4

12 Aberdeen Angus Heifers

18 - 20 Months

P C Bath Ltd

1 Longhorn Steer

29 Months

NOTICE

Please ensure Entry Forms and all relevant paperwork accompany your entries when bringing livestock into the Market.

Entry Forms can be found on our Website, in the Market Office or alternatively please contact the Main Office.

Please ensure you sign the Wash Out Declaration Form if you are washing out at home. This is a DEFRA requirement, and you will be charged if you haven't signed it. It is in the Market Office!



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NOTICE

To ensure your entries are listed in the Saturday Store Sale Catalogue,
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Winsey Farm, Sharnbrook, Bedford



Breeding Sheep & Ram Sales

Saturday 15th August

Catalogue Entry Deadline – Wednesday 5th August

Saturday 19th September

Catalogue Entry Deadline – Wednesday 9th September

**Please contact us with your entries,
for cataloguing & advertising purposes.**

Entry forms can be found on our Website or Market Office

Jake Wagstaff 07487 526803 / Richard Spendlove 07538 322474

market@bletsoes.co.uk

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— EST. 1881 —

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