

Marketing Report

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Client – Welbeck Strategic Land III Limited

Site – Land at Wakeham’s Farm, Pett Level Road, Fairlight

Dated – 05/01/2026

Report – Marketing report to assess the sites overall viability on the open market and what impact age restricted dwellings have on the deliverability of the scheme.



Location and context

The site is located at Fairlight, a coastal village within the Rother District of East Sussex, approximately 3 miles (5 km) east of Hastings and around 8 miles west of Rye. It lies just south of the A259, which provides onward connections west towards Hastings, Bexhill and Eastbourne and east towards Rye and Ashford. Fairlight forms part of the wider High Weald National Landscape (formerly AONB) and sits immediately inland of the English Channel coastline at Fairlight Cove.

Surrounding area

The settlement is predominantly residential in character, comprising a mix of bungalows and detached housing, with local facilities including a village hall, church and limited local services. A broader range of retail, education, healthcare and employment opportunities is available in nearby Hastings and Ore, accessible by road and local bus services, with mainline rail connections from Hastings to London, Brighton and Ashford International.

Housing Market

According to recent sales data, the average sale price for properties in Fairlight over the past year was about £517,528. Detached houses — the dominant type in Fairlight — sold for an average of around £537,265 over the same period. Flats and apartments fetch a much lower average — around £182,000. On a per-square-foot basis, recent data for postcode sector TN35 4 (Fairlight) show a median of £361/sq. ft, with the middle 50% of recent sales in the range £301–£419/sq. ft. Over the past 12 months, average prices per square metre in TN35 4 reportedly fell by 4.8% nominally (–8.4% after adjusting for inflation).

On a 5-year horizon, real returns look weak — over the last five years, inflation-adjusted value change in Fairlight’s sector is negative. In the wider district Rother (which contains Fairlight), as of September 2025 the “average house price” was around £335,000, though this reflects many lower-value properties and likely under-represents Fairlight’s higher-end market.

So, while Fairlight remains a relatively high-value enclave compared with many parts of Rother and wider East Sussex, the trend for the last year has been downward — at least on a per-square-metre/foot basis.

Development market conditions

The development market has been on a downward trend over the last 24 months and doesn’t currently show signs of improvement in the short term. Housebuilders and property developers are reluctant to purchase land with high borrowing costs and continual increases in build. For a scheme to be attractive to buy and build out it must be as developer friendly as possible. This relates to the mix of housing, affordable housing tenure and any planning restrictions the site may come with. Buyers of sites are still operating in the market however they can be more selective with a saturation of opportunities to choose from which in turn drives land value down.

Wakeham's Farm, Fairlight

The scheme in its current form could generate a modest amount of interest if a planning permission is achieved and we market the site in the right way. Whilst Fairlight is a desirable location the sales values against build costs are still heavily in favour of the build and as such the proposed land value for this scheme will be impacted negatively.

Planning history

Refused application – Outline for up to 43 dwellings with 40% affordable housing and 50% age restricted dwellings to over 55s. Ref: RR/2020/151/P

The site has been presented to the market on two previous occasions. Breakdown as follows.

Marketing campaign 1 – January 2022

Market offering	Subject to planning*
SME's approached	26
PLC's approached	5
Housing associations approached	8
Total approaches	39
Retirement developer approaches	6
Marketing period	8 weeks
Offers received	1 offer received

**Subject to planning – the site was offered to potential purchasers subject to the planning application being approved at local level. The site was subsequently refused which is why marketing campaign 2 is subject to the appeal being allowed. Sites are often brought to market on a subject to planning basis especially when they are allocated as the prospect of planning permission is more secure than applications on speculative land. Any offer received would be conditional on planning being granted.*

Summary

The site was marketed to a list of companies that all operate within the immediate and surrounding areas and typically develop sites of this size. We also included the relevant larger PLC housebuilders with a view that they may need a small site to fill a gap in production. Given the high percentage of affordable housing on site we also gave several housing associations the opportunity to submit offers on the whole site as well as the affordable element. Throughout the 8 week period it was clear that little to no interest was being received and with the over 55s restriction on the site we felt it pertinent to cover off several retirement developers however all felt it was an unsustainable location for their use class. The marketing campaign concluded that whilst Fairlight is a desirable location and one in which our potential purchasers liked, the overwhelming reason for not coming forward with an offer was due to the age restricted units. The one offer received was conditional on the over 55s restriction being removed.

Marketing campaign 2 – July 2022

Market offering	Subject to appeal*
SME's approached	26
PLC's approached	5
Housing associations approached	8
Total approaches	39
Retirement developer approaches	6
Marketing period	8 weeks
Offers received	1 offer received

*The second marketing campaign mirrored the first other than them being 6 months apart. The time of marketing was within a buoyant market in 22/23 where land was highly sought after. Throughout this period, we have disposed of similar sites within the surrounding area that sold with no issue. these are as follows:

*The one offer received in the second marketing campaign was the same company as the first campaign and under the same condition of the over 55's restriction being lifted.

- Manchester Road, Ninfield – 80 units
- Bexhill Road, Ninfield – 65 units
- The Paddock, Northiam – 34 units
- Holmhurst St Mary, St Leonards – 208 units

All the above schemes had policy compliant affordable housing however no private or affordable units were age restricted.

Reasons for lack of interest during marketing

- Over 55's age restricted units – we could not get any interest from housebuilders due to the age restriction. This is for both private and affordable age restricted homes. Whilst Fairlight's population is towards the elder categories, the issue with age restricted units is the value in which you can charge for them and more importantly the impact it has on the owner to sell the house on again in the second hand market. The reduction in value the developer would need to list these properties at is likely to make the site unviable.
- Limited interest from housing associations – the affordable housing market is extremely limited. The HAs / RPs do not have the required funding to take on more affordable homes as it stands which impacts the schemes deliverability and value. If there is the ability to deliver the affordable housing as an intermediate tenure, whether first homes or shared equity, the schemes deliverability will significantly increase. 6 housing associations were approached during the initial marketing campaign and 0 offers were received.

Conclusion

The new build housing market relies on housebuilders wanting to deliver the sites that achieve permission, if a buyer isn't found then the site can't contribute to the current deficit of housing being supplied by Rother DC. For Wakeham's Farm to be delivered and contribute to Rother District Councils housing supply it is important that there are no age restricted units associated with the permission and if possible, a mechanism within the S106 allowing the units to be delivered as intermediate, shared equity or first homes. On the basis both these viewpoints can be accommodated then I believe the scheme can be presented to the market in a way that will generate acceptable offers to allow the scheme to be built out.

Yours Sincerely

Adam Galbraith
Director
Searls Land Ltd