

Browne Jacobson appoints Will Thomas as Partner in planning team

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Browne Jacobson's planning expertise has been strengthened by the appointment of Will Thomas as Partner.

He joins the UK and Ireland law firm's planning and environment law team from Shoosmiths, where he was Principal Associate.

Will specialises in planning and compulsory purchase law. He acts for public and private sector organisations, including land promoters, developers, investors, landowners, local planning authorities and government bodies.

He said: *"At a time when the government wants to turbocharge new housing and infrastructure developments, while encouraging closer collaboration between the public and private sectors, Browne Jacobson is extremely well placed to advise clients across the planning ecosystem."*

"There are a broad range of challenges for local authorities, developers and landowners to overcome, and I enjoy steering clients through what remains a complicated planning system with clear and commercial advice."

Will, who is recognised in both the Legal 500 and Chambers as an expert in planning law, returns to Browne Jacobson, where he trained and spent seven years previously.

He has more than 10 years' experience advising on a range of planning matters. These include complex Section 106 agreements, planning appeals, planning land use advice and due diligence, biodiversity net gain requirements, High Court challenges, development consent orders and compulsory purchase orders.

His expertise includes advising on the full spectrum of land types and schemes, such as strategic land, immediate development and regeneration projects.

Laura Hughes, Partner and Head of Public, Planning and Environment Law at Browne Jacobson, said: *"Planning law is top of the agenda for our public and private sector clients as they grapple with the government's sweeping planning reforms, so we're excited to have the opportunity to strengthen our expertise with someone of Will's calibre."*

"Will is particularly adept at dealing with complex Section 106 agreements at the strategic land stage, as well as overseeing land assembly and compulsory purchase elements of brownfield regeneration schemes. Our clients will benefit from his calm confidence, intelligence and deep knowledge of challenging areas of law."

Browne Jacobson's planning team works with a wide range of private sector clients, including private developers, luxury goods, food and drink, and value retailers. It also acts for more than 150 public sector clients – including government agencies, local authorities, health and education services – plus social landlords.

The firm has specialists in environmental law and experts in development, construction, property acquisition and disposal, property disputes, highways, compulsory purchase and regeneration.

Key projects its team has been involved in include advising on the planning aspects of Otterpool Park, a 770-hectare garden town in East Kent with potential to accommodate up to 10,000 new homes; working with a public body on the development consent order for the £9bn Lower Thames Crossing project; and supporting a public body to negotiate a planning framework and Section 106 agreement for a 5,000 home urban extension in the West Midlands.

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