LAND ASSEMBLY AND COMPULSORY PURCHASE FOR MAJOR INFRASTRUCTURE 2026

30 APRIL 2026 | LONDON



SARAH JOSS

PROFESSIONAL ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE

ASSOCIATE LAND CONSULTANT

SOCIETY OF LAND REFERENCERS

MOTT MACDONALD

Ahead of the Land Assembly and Compulsory Purchase for Major Infrastructure 2026, taking place on 30 April 2026, **Sarah Joss**, shares the current challenges facing land assembly and how can land acquisition be managed.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU PROVIDE TO DEVELOPERS STARTING THE LAND ASSEMBLY PROCESS?

I would advise setting a wider project boundary and identifying impacted parties as early as possible. A broader boundary allows the project team to accommodate changes resulting from design development, reduces re-work in identifying affected land interests, and helps capture parties who may be indirectly impacted. Building relationships with landowners early, particularly through in-person meetings, supports a better understanding of their priorities, risks, or concerns, and enables these issues to be mitigated much earlier in the project timeline.

HOW CAN LAND ACQUISITION BE MANAGED ALONGSIDE WIDER PROJECT DEVELOPMENT?

Integrate the land acquisition strategy into the wider project development programme and agree key principles as early as possible. Ensuring that the relevant land teams are involved in design development discussions from the outset will help them identify constraints or risks at an early stage. This also provides affected parties with a clearer understanding of how the evolving design may impact them throughout the project journey.

WHAT ARE THE CURRENT CHALLENGES AND RISKS FACING LAND ASSEMBLY? HOW CAN THESE BE NAVIGATED?

The recent changes introduced through the Planning and Infrastructure Act will create a new landscape for developers to navigate, and some challenges are likely as teams adjust to the updated legislation. To mitigate these risks, clear and flexible masterplans should be embedded into project development so designs can adapt more easily to policy changes. Early, transparent engagement with affected stakeholders and local communities is also essential to help reduce the risk of opposition as the project progresses.

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