



Local View ²⁰¹⁵

Thames Valley

Welcome to Local View

Welcome to the latest edition of Local View, our seasonal update on the property markets that matter to you. In here we highlight why we love the Thames Valley as well as showcase some of our favourite sales and lets from last year and look forward to 2015. Please contact your local team for more information and to find out what other opportunities we can offer.

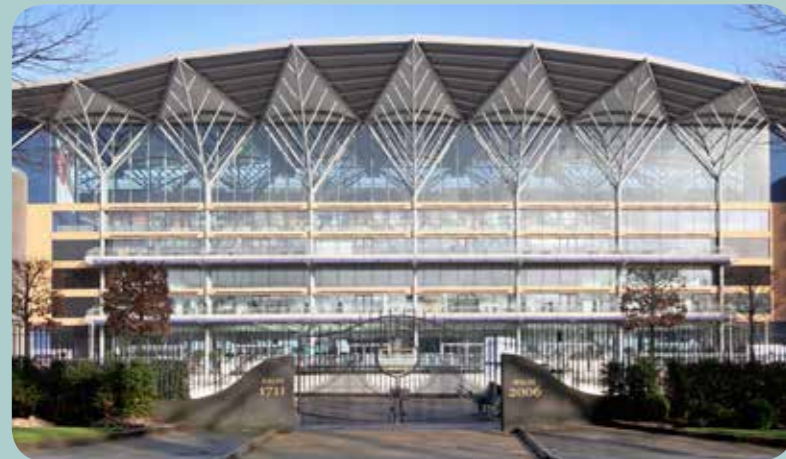
66% of our sales in Ascot in the last 12 months were priced under £1.5m

On average we have achieved **93%** of the guide price on sales in Virginia Water in the past 12 months

41% of our recent tenancies have been as a result of corporate relocation

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James Heron
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Office: Ascot - Office Head
Years of experience: 32

The Ascot area has been my home for over 50 years. Despite moving with the times, it has managed to retain its leafy charm. This together with its excellent accessibility and beautiful and tranquil open spaces makes it a special place to live.



The Ascot and surrounding areas combine the country lifestyle with its fresh air, fine food, and long picturesque walks with easy access into London with its extensive shopping and entertainment. The properties are beautiful and as diverse as the people, providing a comprehensive and well balanced lifestyle.



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Paul Cockerham
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Years of experience: 29

Virginia Water has proved to be so popular because it remains relatively uncongested, tree lined and peaceful, yet everything that is important is so accessible.



Having lived and worked in the Virginia Water area for many years, I can't speak highly enough about this diverse area, which continues to be such a desirable place to live. With excellent travel links, picturesque scenery, brilliant schools, great restaurants and good shopping, the area just gets more popular.



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Years of experience: 11



The country lettings market offers a unique opportunity to rent some of England's most palatial homes. Many of our London clients rent a second home in the area, with the benefit of being under an hour from the capital, providing an easy weekend escape from the hustle and bustle of city life.



Gordon Hood
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Years of experience: 14



Exceptional international and private schooling continues to draw families to Ascot and Virginia Water. I recently housed a family from Scotland who chose the area specifically to educate their children at the local international school. There is also a wealth of recreational pursuits in the beautiful surrounding countryside.



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Years of experience: 9



The area continues to see pockets of exciting new developments being built, a perfect example being Queensbury Gardens, sold by Knight Frank's residential development team - where a number of our investor clients purchased and we have now successfully secured corporate tenants. These types of properties are perfect for the rental market.



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Years of experience: 4



While the area is renowned worldwide for racing at Ascot and golf at Wentworth there is also a wealth of lesser known attractions and places of interest such as Virginia Water Lake, Savill Garden, the River Thames at Runnymede, Windsor Castle and Legoland.



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Years of experience: 10

2015 Forecast

2014 saw another steady rise in property values in the UK outside of London, yet the price differential between those and properties in the capital remains at a record level meaning that the country is great value for those looking to trade up and out. However, uncertainty as a result of the upcoming General Election means that the market is undoubtedly going to differ this year. In spite of this, we expect demand will continue to increase, particularly in light of recent tax changes, especially for properties valued below £1m.

Property prices for houses in the country have been rising for seven consecutive quarters, the longest period of sustained quarterly price growth since 2007.

Rising confidence among buyers as a result of more positive economic news, the ripple effect from London and growing demand for family homes has resulted in improved conditions in the market in 2014, helping to release some of the pent-up demand that had built up following the downturn.

Figures released by the Land Registry confirm this. Over the year to September 2014, the number of homes sold for over £500,000 in England and Wales was 42% higher than at the same time last year and 74% higher than the corresponding period in 2010.

Properties in the southeast, within commutable range of a city and close to good schools have sold well. Continued low interest rates and attractive mortgage offers have also encouraged buyers to act.

London have grown by 74% and are 32% above their previous peak, making the country good value for those wishing to trade up and out.

But there are signs that the momentum seen during the first half of the year has eased. Uncertainty over the outcome of the general election, an impending interest rate rise and tighter mortgage lending have all cooled demand during the second half of the year.

There is some positive news however. Reforms to property taxation announced by the Chancellor during the Autumn Statement mean that the majority of home purchasers will pay lower levels of stamp duty when buying a house. As a result of the changes those buying homes worth up to £937,500 will see their tax bills reduced. Additionally, there is an anomaly between £1,000,001 and £1,124,990 where less tax is payable under the new system.

The proposals are likely to be welcomed by buyers, ultimately increasing transaction levels below the £937,500 threshold. That is likely to have a knock on positive impact on consumer sentiment.

Against this backdrop, we are forecasting price growth of 2% across the country market in 2015, with outperformance in some locations driven by increased demand and, in some cases, improvements to infrastructure.

Homes located in town and city markets will see above average price growth driven by demand from those relocating from London and downsizers. Markets within commutable distance of the capital will also outperform. We are forecasting that price growth for family homes in the South East, South West and East of England will outpace local mainstream markets as values are boosted further by the "ripple effect" from London.

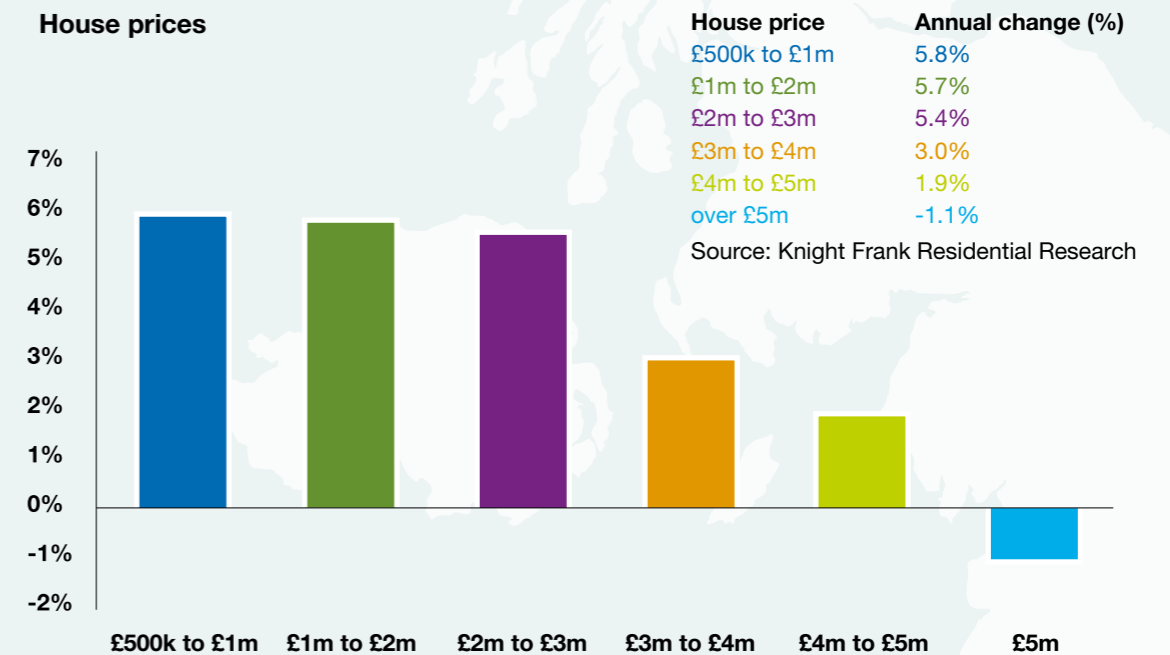
Agents report that demand has been bolstered by an increase in the number of buyers looking to take advantage of the gap between urban and rural values, particularly those moving from London. Prices in the country look good value on a historical basis having experienced several years of static or modest growth since the end of the financial crisis.

To illustrate this point, houses in the country have risen in value by 5.6% since the market low in 2009 and currently sit 16% below the previous market peak. In contrast, house prices in prime central

Registered voters

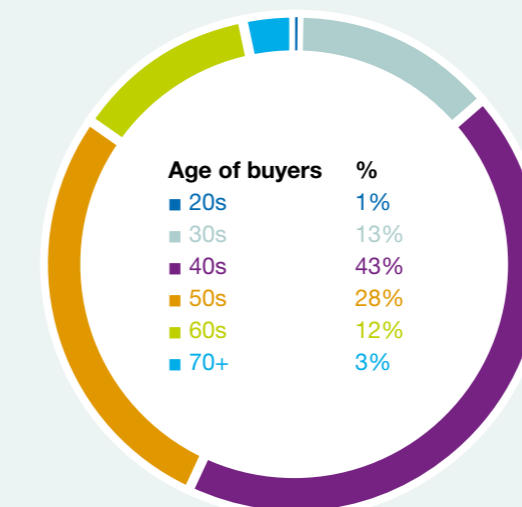
In 2010 there were **45,597,461** registered voters, **3.1%** more than in 2005

House prices



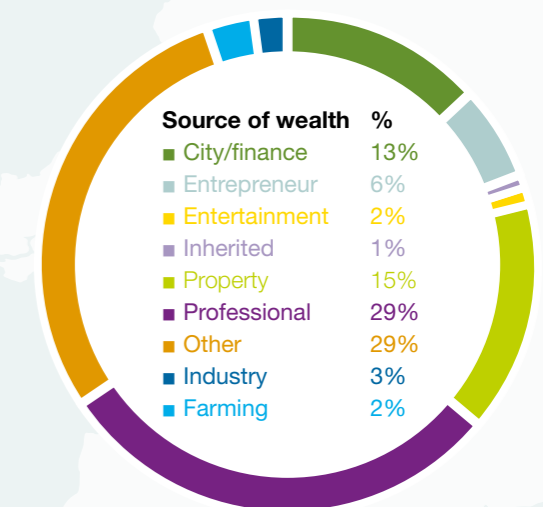
For all sales less than or equal to £2m

Age of buyers



Source: Knight Frank Residential Research

Source of wealth



Source: Knight Frank Residential Research

Highlights of 2014

Here we highlight our top 10 properties sold and let last year.



01

Winkfield, Berkshire
SOLD | GUIDE PRICE £1,000,000

Idyllic setting for this charming detached property which never reached the open market, selling to one of our many 'ready to proceed' registered buyers.



03

Ascot, Berkshire
SOLD | GUIDE PRICE £1,750,000

A major portion of this mansion house of grand proportions, close to Ascot racecourse and the town centre.



02

Ascot, Berkshire
SOLD | GUIDE PRICE £699,999

In a gated development recently built by Berkeley Homes, sold to an investment buyer.



04

A stunning two bedroom penthouse apartment with concierge, a purpose built development for over 50s.

Sunningdale, Berkshire
SOLD | GUIDE PRICE £650,000



05

A well presented family home which generated good interest, 16 viewings and selling to a property investor within 4% of the asking price.

Englefield Green, Surrey
SOLD | GUIDE PRICE £975,000



A townhouse situated in Virginia Park, selling within days of launching to the open market. Sold within 1% of the asking price.

Virginia Water, Surrey
SOLD | GUIDE PRICE £795,000



06



07

An attractive home which generated good interest, selling to an international buyer moving out of London and drawn to the area for good schools and access to London.

Virginia Water, Surrey | **SOLD | GUIDE PRICE £1,475,000**



08

This one bedroom penthouse apartment has been successfully let and managed by Knight Frank. Within walking distance of Ascot High Street, this is a perfect example of a great buy to let investment.

Ascot, Berkshire | **LET | GUIDE PRICE £1,150 PCM**



09



A prime example of a popular townhouse within a gated development with leisure facilities - such properties offer tenants a great place to live when they arrive in the area for the first time.

Virginia Water, Surrey
LET | GUIDE PRICE £3,500 PCM



10



This detached family home was successfully rented by Knight Frank to a corporate tenant with children attending the international school.

Virginia Water, Surrey
LET | GUIDE PRICE £7,500 PCM

London Expansion

The London property market has always driven activity outside of the capital, as Londoners sell or let their homes and seek greater value for money in different parts of the UK.

Outside of Prime Central London, we have seen growth in traditionally affordable areas, with sales price increases of up to 14% in parts of zone two over the last 12 months. These increases see those sellers in North West London and along the River Thames achieving record prices for their homes.

At Knight Frank, our team of experienced analysts are continually looking for the next hotspots in order to embrace the increased demand in these areas. We were therefore delighted to open four new offices in London in 2014. The addition of these offices in Barnes, Clapham, King's Cross and Chiswick means our London network now totals 24, and there are plans for further expansion this year.

This increased catchment area means we are better placed than ever to drive cash buyers to our country properties. In addition, the considerable growth of our lettings division has meant that we can assist those clients who are not yet looking to cash in their investment, but still wish to move out of London. The lettings team work closely with our relocations team to place international corporate tenants, often for up to three years, to ensure buyers from London still have the steady stream of income needed to facilitate a move.

With the net widening it is vital that any agent with a London presence covers the key growth areas. A move to the country is no longer the leap it might once have been considered by many hardened city dwellers, as what are described as "London's villages" are becoming increasingly prevalent. Moving to one of these areas first is becoming the preference amongst many families, with them acting as a stepping stone to the countryside further out of London. James Williams, head of Knight Frank Barnes says:

"It is fantastic to now have a shop front in such a wonderful location. It is such a friendly environment to work in". With the fashion being a two-stage move, we can now nurture long-term relationships with our clients. So whether they are looking for a different pace altogether or a move to a smaller town or city, we are able to put them in touch with a Knight Frank agent for every step they wish to take.

If you have a property that might be of interest to one of our London buyers, please call your local Knight Frank office for a complimentary market appraisal.



"A move to the country is no longer the leap it once might have been considered by many hardened city dwellers"

About Us

In 2014, throughout the UK, Knight Frank sold:

2,740 swimming pools

68 shoots 4,336 new developments

1,166 listed buildings

2,852 properties with concierge 2,678 gyms

14 golf courses

604 tennis courts

1,127 properties with equestrian facilities

131 fishing facilities 1,719 properties by the water

207 farms and estates 1 houseboat

150 development plots

518 penthouses

For more information on the services we provide visit KnightFrank.co.uk

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first-mover advantage

If selling or letting a property is one of your plans for 2015, now is the time to speak to an expert. Whilst others are waiting on the outcome of the forthcoming election, we are anticipating a busy start to the year.

So, at a time when staying one step ahead has never been more important, will you be one of the first movers in 2015?

For your complimentary market appraisal, call us today on:

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