



BRVP Enabling Development

Vision Document



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Vision Statement:

“To create a thriving leisure amenity by delivering sustainable and high-quality enabling development”

Introduction

Woods Hardwick’s Planning and Architecture teams have been instructed by the landowners to provide planning and urban design input to support a development proposal at Bedford River Valley Park (BRVP). Policy AD23 in the Allocations and Designations Local Plan (ADLP) (2013) allocates land at Bedford BRVP for a mixed-use development. This allocation serves as ‘enabling development’ which will generate sufficient funds to deliver the water sports lake and other leisure opportunities, which are an integral part of the BRVP. Planning permission for the water sports lake was granted in 2006 (LPA Ref: BC/CM/2003/33).

This Vision Statement supplements representations made as part of the ‘Call for Sites’ exercise which set out in more detail the proposed changes to Policy AD23; in brief, the amendments proposed seek to include residential development within the enabling development allocated by Policy AD23. The inclusion of residential development is key to unlocking the viability of the scheme which has been impacted by both site specific matters and wider economic and social transitions, including the planning policy context of the wider area.

The benefits of the delivering the water sports lake are acknowledged by the Council by virtue of the allocation for enabling development in the ADLP. The benefits and importance of delivering this water sports lake are arguably more pronounced than ever as a result of the increasing number of people that are choosing to work from home which will generate a greater demand for easily accessible leisure space within walking distance of people's homes.

This Vision Statement will elaborate further on how the proposed changes to Policy AD23 would fit into the vision for BRVP as a whole. The Vision Statement should be read with the Call for Sites submission and the responses to questions contained in the Issues and Options Consultation.



Site Context & Analysis

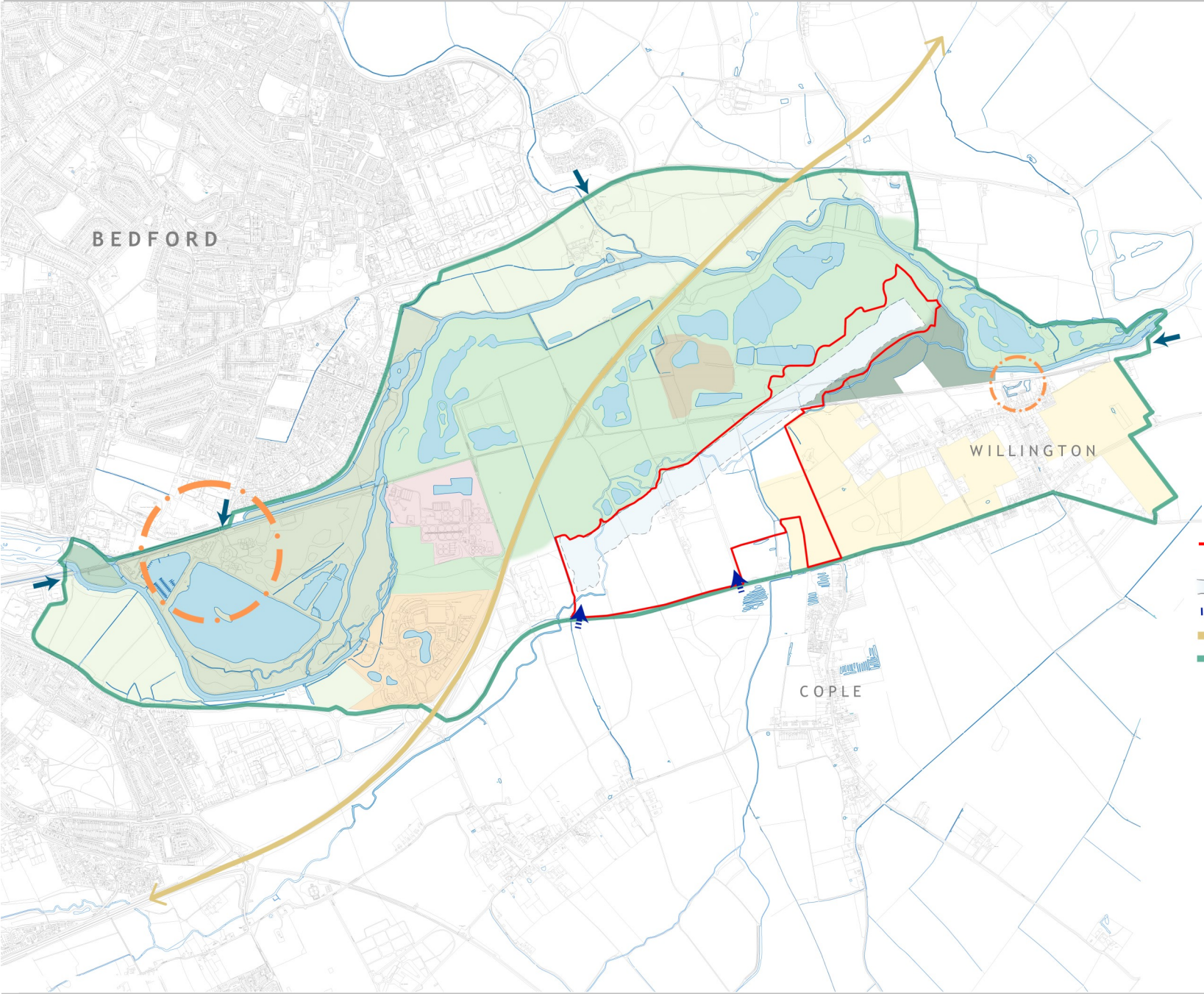
The vision for the site is to create a new water sports lake that will enhance the overall Forest of Marston Vale landscape and will serve to integrate large areas of currently piecemeal green spaces into a single consolidated area of Green Infrastructure. This consolidation of these greenspaces will also foster biodiversity improvements through habitat creation and a sensitive landscaping regime.

The proposal will serve to become a gateway into the east side of Bedford by providing pedestrian and cycle links to the north of the site which connect to the existing Public Right of Way and Sustrans network. This will provide convenient pedestrian and cycle access into the main part of Bedford and will incentivise more people from nearby settlements, most notably Cople and Willington, to walk into Bedford.

The site's existing features, including the Grade II listed Octagon House and existing tree planting/landscaping, have been carefully considered and an appropriate design response has been adopted to ensure these features are afforded the required level of protection and recognition.

The Call for Sites submission submitted previously enters into greater detail on the site-specific technical considerations and it is not proposed to rehearse these details here.

Context Plan



KEY

- Proposed BRVP Enabling Development Site Boundary
- Proposed Approved Watersports Lake
- Proposed Vehicular Access Points
- A421
- Bedford River Valley Park (BRVP) Boundary
- Meadows
- Willington Woods
- Floodplain Forest
- Priory Country Park
- Formal Park
- Rivers/Waterbodies
- Recreational Access Points
- Sewage Treatment Works
- Minerals Processing Area
- Priory Business Park
- Willington Fields
- Activity Hubs



Concept Plan/The Vision

The vision for the proposal is to create a new water sports lake set within the attractive landscape being created in the BRVP.

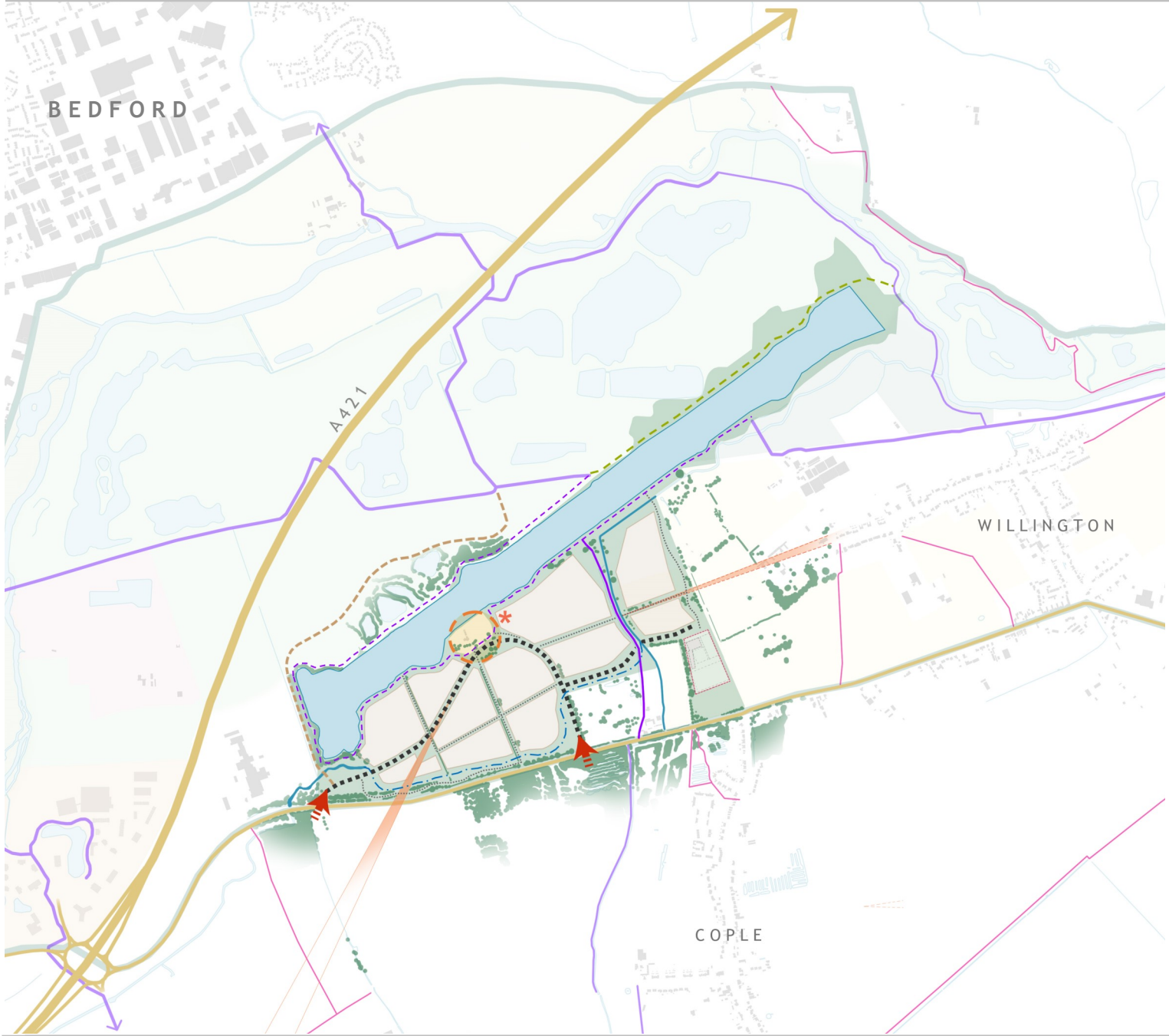
To fund the delivery of the water sports lake, a mixed-use development comprising a new sustainable living environment around a fully integrated community, with new homes, an educational facility and other amenities, is proposed. The proposal will focus on establishing a strong ‘sense of place’ and community, as well as providing a high standard of living across all tenure types.

The water sports lake is at the core of this vision and will provide substantial levels of amenity for occupiers of the proposal but also people from the local area. The vision for the site has at its heart a desire to make best use of the water sports lake and to maximise the benefit it will offer to the local population.

Water sports Lake

The water sports lake was granted planning permission in 2006 (LPA Ref: BC/CM/2003/33). The water sports lake is envisaged to be a multi activity area that will provide substantial amenity benefits for local people. The proposal includes provision for a comprehensive pedestrian and cycling network around the water sports lake as well as the delivery of specific facilities to serve the uses at the water sports lake.

The water sports lake will be developed alongside a high quality, residential scheme set within the attractive confines of the circa 800ha BRVP landscape, providing a quality, contemporary residential environment based on sustainable design principles. The site would be capable of accommodating circa 700 - 850 dwellings based on an assumed low - medium density range.



Concept Plan

KEY

- Indicative Proposed Residential Development
- Indicative Proposed Education Facility
- Indicative Proposed Activity Hub/Local Centre
- Indicative Location for Care Home
- Indicative Proposed Green Space
- Approved Proposed Watersports Lake
- Proposed Elstow Brook Diversion
- Potential View Corridor to Cardington Hangers
- Potential View Corridor to St Lawrence's Church
- Indicative Existing Trees
- Existing Cycle Network
- Existing Public Footpaths
- Proposed Vehicular Access into Site
- Indicative Proposed Primary Vehicular Routes
- Indicative Proposed Cycle Paths
- Indicative Proposed Diversion of NCR51
- Indicative Proposed Informal Footpaths
- Indicative Haul Road Diversion

Mix of Development

The proposal is envisaged to comprise a mixed use development that will constitute a self-contained community. The range of dwelling and tenure types will reflect this objective and will serve to meet the varied demands of local people, including older and infirmed peoples. Affordable dwellings and those appropriate for starter homes will also be provided. A care home is also being considered and this will further bolster the range of specialised housing being delivered.

The proposal will include an educational facility and a new local centre which is envisaged to provide a small number of shops and other services/amenities.

In summary, the vision for the proposal is one of a self contained community in which many of the day-to-day services and amenities are provided within walking distance. The mix of development proposed will contribute markedly to this objective.

Open Space and Landscaping

The proposal is designed around a network of functional areas of green space and pedestrian friendly streets and corridors which will give a verdant and loose feel to the development. Lines of tree planting and areas of habitat creation are also proposed to compliment the areas of open space.

The water sports lake and the area surrounding will represent a substantial area of open space and it is proposed to create a comprehensive network of footpaths to maximise amenity value and to ensure that this area is well integrated with the built form.

Overall, the open space and landscaping strategy will ensure the

proposal is a liveable and functional development that meets the leisure and amenity demands of future occupiers.

Pedestrian and Vehicular Movement

Vehicular access into the proposal is to be taken from two new priority junctions onto Bedford Road. An access road will pass through the spine of the proposal and will provide access to the educational facility in the east. Pedestrian and cycle access throughout the proposal will be prioritised as much as possible through the use of footpaths, shared surfaces and dedicated pedestrian/cycle corridors.

The new footpath and cycleway provisions have been designed to integrate with existing Public Right of Way and Sustrans network in this area, thus providing seamless pedestrian and cycle access into Bedford and beyond.

Green Infrastructure

The proposal will greatly enhance the Council's portfolio of Green Infrastructure by bringing together an array of piecemeal green space into a consolidated and defined area of Green Infrastructure. This consolidated Green Infrastructure asset will improve links between existing Green Infrastructure assets and will also serve to deliver integrated social, economic and environmental benefits that contribute to the quality of life in Bedford Borough. The creation of this consolidated Green Infrastructure will also enhance the overall Forest of Marston Vale landscape, biodiversity and the historic environment of the area.

The proposal will provide an opportunity to implement comprehensive measures to improve the biodiversity quality of the

area through habitat creation and a sensitive planting regime. A Sustainable Urban Drainage System will also be implemented which will offer additional opportunities to deliver ecological and landscape enhancements.





Conclusion

This Vision Statement demonstrates how the water sports lake could be delivered in conjunction with the overall vision for the BRVP. The water sports lake would represent a monumental enhancement to the leisure and amenity opportunities that currently exists in Bedford and would become a major attraction for the local area and one which it would become synonymous with.

This is a commendable objective and one which should carry substantial weight. The benefits associated with the water sports lake are even more pronounced in the context of the increasing numbers of people choosing to work from home.

The delivery of enabling development, including residential development, is key to the delivery of the water sports lake. The site has been demonstrated as being eminently capable of delivering residential development, whilst also creating high-quality, sustainable development that adopts an appropriate scale and density. Key urban design principles have been incorporated into the design of the proposal and which will ensure that a high-quality environment, that is also verdant and accessible, will be achieved.



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