

July 2022

Gibraltar Corner, Bedford Vision Document



THE CROWN
ESTATE

savills

Foreword

This Vision Document demonstrates and explains how the growth of Gibraltar Corner can be delivered, not just simply as a means to accommodate growth, but to create a sustainable and integrated place.

The land identified at Gibraltar Corner, has the potential to help deliver a new neighbourhood of over 250 new homes and support the delivery of new open space and community facilities.

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Vision Statement

Gibraltar Corner will deliver a sustainable community. It will be a place with a variety of choices to live, play and opportunities for social interaction. It will be a welcoming and sensitively designed environment, with a strong sense of identity and allow nature and landscape to form an integral part of the development.



01. The Vision



Quality new homes in a landscaped setting

Through this visioning work, the landowners have sought to establish a masterplan to deliver a sensitive and sustainable community at Gibraltar Corner through achieving the following key qualities in place making.

Creating a positive identity to ensure that the development responds to the local landscape and creates a well defined and understandable place, utilising and enhancing landscape features.

Viable and sustainable place, delivering a long term thriving place, which provides much needed new facilities for the benefit of existing and future residents.

Connected and safe walkable neighbourhoods, responding to adjoining areas to integrate with Wood End and Kempston to the east, including links to the existing cycle and

bridleway networks, and underpass to Kempston Rural School and new supermarket

Delivering best practice in development which is responsive to ecology, connecting and protecting features and also creating opportunities for new habitats.

Creating a sustainable place, achieving best practice development to support sustainable and healthy life styles.

Working with landscape assets by incorporating key elements of the landscape as part of the identity of the development and working with local features, such as ridge and furrow.

Provides structural landscape planting to protect the 'local gap' between Wooton and Kempston

Quality of life, with homes for local need, space to live and play, good access to facilities and a place people can be proud of.

Key components of the Gibraltar Corner development could include:

- The opportunity to help deliver over **250 new homes**
- Mix of housing including affordable
- Public open space
- Retained areas of historic ridge and furrow green space
- Improved access to the countryside
- Biodiverse network of green infrastructure
- Multi-functional SuDS network
- Enhanced cycle and walking connections within the development and into Bedford

02. The Site

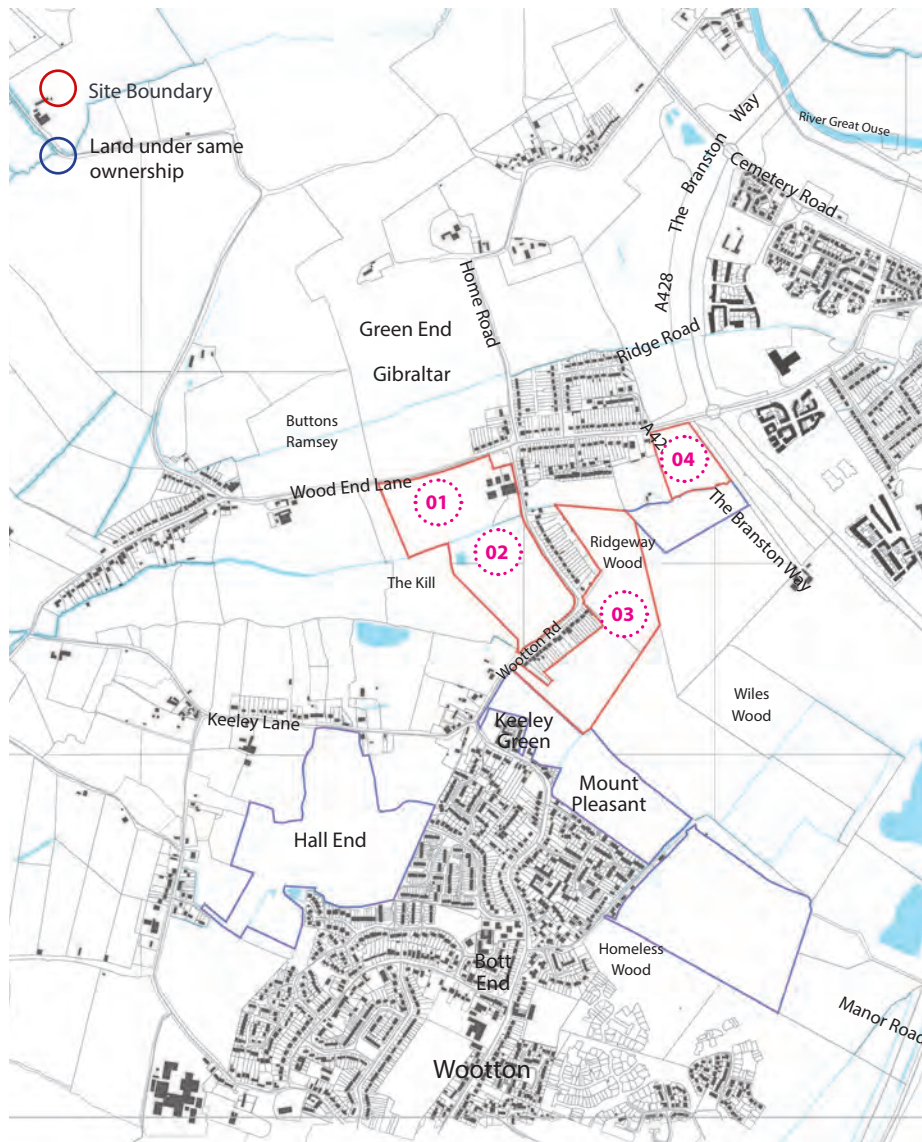


Fig 1: The site

The sites are controlled by The Crown Estate and covers an area of approximately 20.60ha (50.90 acres). The local land use is predominantly paddock and agricultural (arable/ pasture).

The proposed development area, as defined within this document, is a direct response to the physical attributes and constraints of the local landscape, the location of hedgerows and trees, views, connections and the adjoining influences of the existing housing and road network.

A series of background studies has been undertaken to inform this Vision Document, including a preliminary landscape appraisal, an ecological survey and a highway assessment.

The proposals will be further refined as more detailed studies are carried out.

03. Policy Context and Delivering Growth



Post war suburban housing along Ridge Road.



New housing at Kempston, east of the ring road

This Call for Sites proposal reflects the very early stage at which the Borough Council has begun to review its recently adopted Local Plan 2030.

The New Local Plan is needed to address the relatively short timeframe of the adopted Local Plan 2030 and to bring forward a positive response to the national and local issues for which the 2030 Plan was unable to make any realistic provision.

New national planning advice and policy objectives continue to emerge but some of the most relevant are the changes to how Councils identify their future housing needs and

the Government's ambition to see significant development and the infrastructure to support it across the Oxford to Cambridge Arc.

The routes and timing of major transport infrastructure will have significant influence on the spatial arrangements for future growth and these were unknown at the time of adopting the 2030 Plan.

The Local Plan Review begins the conversation about how and where future growth should now occur in response to need and investment. The Council has identified six potential approaches to the location of growth

across the Borough of which four seem obviously aligned to growth at Gibraltar Corner.

The other two, the orange and red options set out in the published consultation would concentrate major housing into a very small number of locations and this would need to be balanced to some degree by much smaller scale development of suitable and available sites elsewhere. Our view is that Gibraltar Corner can make a positive contribution to whichever strategy option or combination is selected.



Fig 2: Land Use and Local Facilities



Fig 3: Movement

04. Assessment Summary



Forest of Marston Vale leisure trail adjoining the site



Wood End, west of the site with local Public House and music venue

Site analysis

A number of preliminary technical studies have been carried out to examine the physical constraints, investigate infrastructure capacity, and establish opportunities to help determine the local development capacity. The following summarises our key findings.

Connectivity

The A428 Ring Road provides a clear break between the Gibraltar Corner sites and the main built up area of Bedford to the east. Wood End Road runs through the middle of the village and connects eastwards to the roundabout junction to the A428. This leads onto Ridge Road to the east of the A428 and provides access to the recent housing developments at Kempston, including the Rural Lower School.

Pedestrian/ Cycle

A pedestrian/ cycle underpass provides a safe access to the school from the villages and is situated to the north east of the settlement.

Ridge Road and Wootton Lane both have public footpaths parallel to the highway, providing good pedestrian connections between the settlements of Wood End, the area of Gibraltar Corner, and Kempston.

There are numerous off road public rights of way, bridleways and footpaths in around the site and in particular in the form of a leisure route to the west of the sites as part of the Forest of Marston Vale. This provides a strong activity route running north-south from Wootton Road northwards to Wood End Lane.

Bus

Bus stops are located around each of the sites, running along Ridge Road, Wood End Lane and also Wootton Road, covered by the number 53 and C1 services, linking Bedford with Milton Keynes.

Train

Kempston Hardwick provides the nearest rail station, located some 1.5 miles to the south-east of the site. There are two mainline rail stations in Bedford, Bedford (mainline - East Midlands Trains, London Midland and Thameslink) and to the south Bedford St John's (London Midland), which links Bedford to Bletchley. Each are just over 4 miles from the site.

The site is therefore considered to be located in an accessible area by walking, cycling and public transport. On this basis it accords with national and local policy guidance, encouraging travel by means other than the private car.



Paddocks on Parcel 2



Arable land on Parcel 3



The Forest of Marston Vale greenway

Landscape character

The site comprises a number of fields enclosed by deciduous native trees and hedgerows:

Parcel 1: Pasture

Parcel 2: Pasture

Parcel 3: Arable

Parcel 4: Pasture / Meadow

Each of the sites are visible from the public highway and local footpaths.

There are no on-site statutory landscape designations.

To the western boundary is part of the Forest of Marston Vale, known as Bedford's Green gateway, which is a linear swathe of new community woodland that runs for 2.5km. This currently includes local areas of Buttons Ramsey, the Kill, Ridgeway Wood, Wiles Wood and Van Diemen's Land, which runs between Wootton and Kempston. Together, these woods create a green wedge between these expanding communities and 'green' the southern approach to Bedford. The Gateway woodlands were planted between 2001 and 2007, all on former farmland totalling more than 40 hectares. It is

due to expand further in coming years as more woodland is planted, providing even more natural space for the benefit of local people and wildlife.

Ecology

The habitats at the site are typical of the wider landscape and comprises arable farmland, pasture and associated boundary features such as ditches and hedgerows. Smaller areas of woodland, ruderal vegetation and buildings were also present.

The following potential ecological constraints were identified at the site: with recommendations made as follows;

- Neutral semi-improved grassland on ridge and furrow pasture
- Hedgerows
- Invertebrates
- Great Crested Newt
- Reptiles
- Breeding birds
- Bats
- Badger
- Water Vole
- Brown Hare and Harvest Mouse
- Hedgehog and Polecat

The potential protected species constraints are unlikely to preclude development of the site but may require careful and sensitive management in the development process. The potential presence of important habitats within the site, and those adjacent to the site (the Forest of Marston Vale), presents exciting opportunities to create a sustainable development within a coherent network of ecologically rich habitats. This could help to deliver a highly desirable development whilst also making a significant contribution to green infrastructure in the area.

Heritage

The heritage assessment establishes that there are no designated heritage assets (World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, Registered Battlefields, Registered Historic Parks or Conservation Areas) within the proposal site.

There are four Listed Buildings in close proximity to the site; The Cottage (National Heritage List for England Reference 1114285) and Kempston House (ref. 1114284), c.10m and c.80m north of the northern field, 157 Bedford

Road (Reference 1039547), c.100m south-east of the site and Ramsey Cottage (ref. 1321547), c.280m west of the site. There is also the listed building of Keeley Farmhouse to the west of the Woodland area. This is heavily screened by mature trees along its boundary.

Development of the site will involve change within the setting of these Listed Buildings. However, the alteration in the setting of these buildings is unlikely to be sufficient to prevent allocation of the study site and it is considered that development of the site will cause less than substantial harm to the significance of the Listed Buildings. Any identified harm could be alleviated through appropriate design of the development scheme.

There are three archaeological assets recorded within the study site on the Bedfordshire Historic Environment Record (HER); part of a postulated Roman Road (HER 485), Medieval ridge and furrow earthworks (HER 3665) and a Medieval headland associated with the ridge and furrow (HER 10291). A possible northern arm of a moat (HER 3435) associated with Keeley Farmhouse is located just within the western boundary of the Woodland area.

Ridge and furrow

Ridge and furrow is an archaeological pattern of ridges and troughs created by a system of ploughing used in Europe during the Middle Ages, typical of the open field system. Ridge and furrow topography was a result of ploughing with non-reversible ploughs on the same strip of land each year. It is visible on land that was ploughed in the Middle Ages, but which has not been ploughed since then.

Development within the site should not affect the ridge and furrow earthworks, with existing areas being proposed for retention as open space. The headland and the ridge and furrow earthworks within the proposal site are not of high or 'national' importance, and do not form a fundamental constraint to the promotion of the site.

Archaeological assessment of the site has also considered the potential for as-yet to be discovered archaeological assets within the study site, and has concluded that it has a moderate/high potential for significant Late Prehistoric/Romano-British evidence, low/moderate potential for significant evidence dating to the early/mid Prehistoric and Saxon periods and a low potential for significant evidence dating to the Medieval and Post-Medieval periods. The current evidence is appropriate to support the promotion of the proposal site. However further more detailed evaluation of the site's archaeological potential, and the effects on the setting of Listed Buildings in the surrounding area, will be required to informed detailed design and any future application for planning permission, and to ensure that development proposals are compatible with published policy at national and local level.

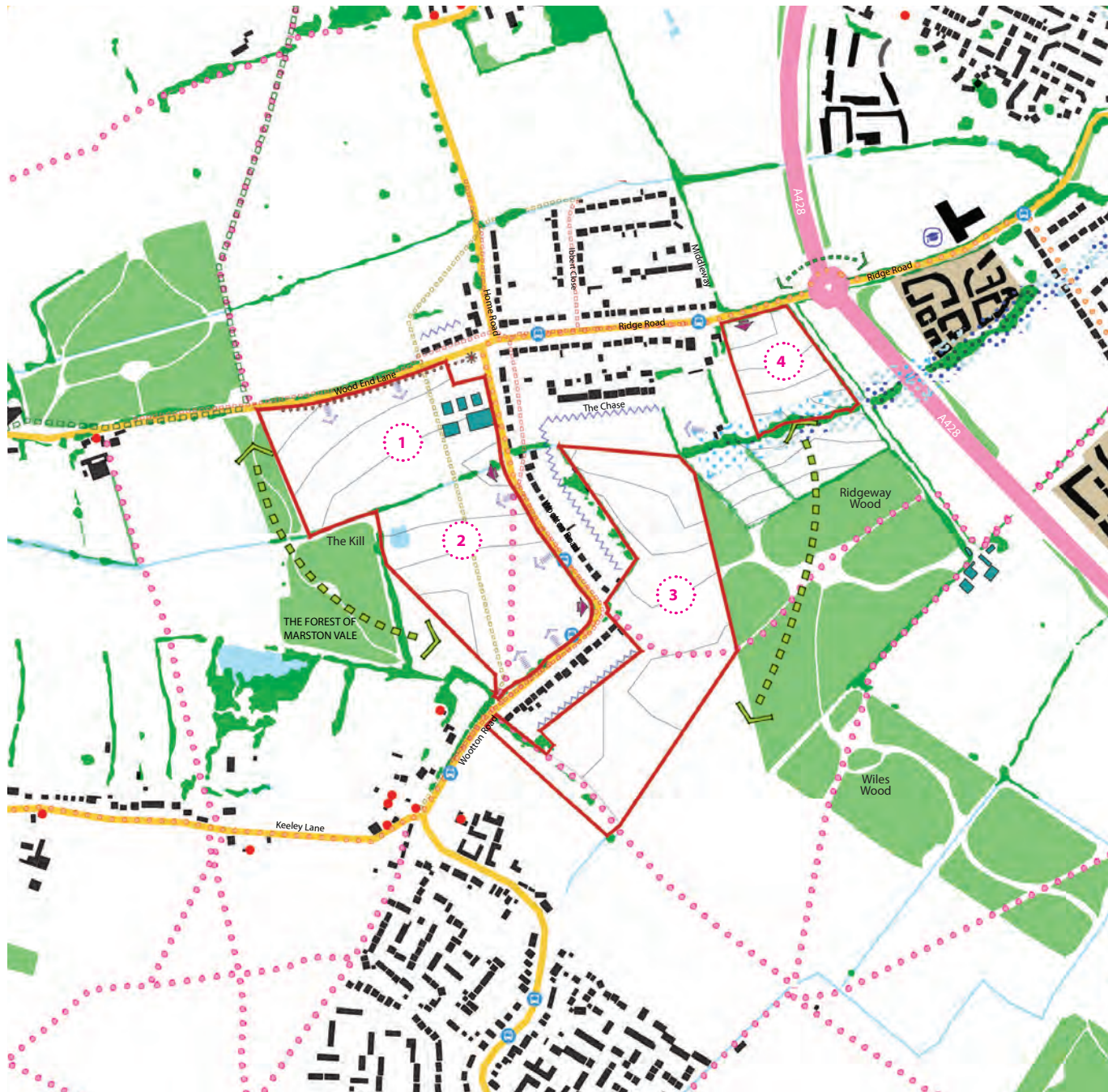
Hydrology

A small part of the site, to the Southern Boundary of parcel 4 and is subject to medium to high flood risk (flood zones 2 to 3). We are not proposing any development in the flood zone.

Development will incorporate a range of SuDS measures in order to provide surface water attenuation, water quality improvement and biodiversity enhancement in accordance with local and statutory adoption requirements.

Utilities

All services are available in the vicinity of the site. Detailed utilities surveys will need to be carried out prior to any development commencement.



























-  Site Boundary
-  Woodland
-  1m contours
-  Listed buildings
-  Water
-  Bus stop
-  A Road
-  Minor Roads
-  Public Rights of Way
-  On-road route on the National Cycle Network
-  John Bunyan Trail
-  Pedestrian/ Cycle path underpass
-  Enclosure and Amenity
-  Farm Buildings
-  Existing Access
-  Views across site
-  Backs of properties
-  Electricity substation
-  Pylons
-  Foul Water Rising Main (Anglian Water)
-  Foul Water Sewer (Anglian Water)
-  Low Flood Risk: Between 1 in 100 (1%) and 1 in 1000 (0.1%)
-  Medium Flood Risk: Between 1 in 30 (3.3%) and 1 in 100 (1%)
-  High Flood Risk: Greater than 1 in 30 (3.3%)

Fig 4: Summary of key constraints

Development character

Gibraltar Corner is made up largely of suburban post-war ribbon development and occasional cul-de sac of later Twentieth Century development. Generally properties are two storeys, with occasional single storey bungalows (in particular in Wood End to the west of the site). Properties are normally set back 2-3m behind a private garden and private drive.

There are a small number of late Victorian and Edward properties, as well as a cluster of farm buildings on site at the Wood End Lane/ Wootton Road corner.

There are a number of farm buildings in the area, the most relevant being a courtyard of farm buildings within the north-east corner of parcel 2, in close proximity to the Wood End Lane/ Wootton Road junction.



View 1 - View looking south-east towards site along Wood End Lane



View 2 - Suburban properties facing the northern boundary of the site, set back from Wood End Lane



View 3 - Wood End Lane/ Ridge Road/ Wootton Road junction



View 4 - Farm Building on parcel 2 (Wootton Road)



View 5 - Paddock of parcel 2



View 6 - View of parcel 2 from the southern boundary along Wootton Road



View 7 - The Forest of Marston Greenway (Hoo Corner to the south-west of parcel 2)



View 8 - View looking south-east across parcel 4



View 9 - View of Home Road looking south



Fig 5: Aerial photograph and photograph viewpoints

05. Concept Design

Key design influences

Significant progress has been made over recent years to plant up the Forest of Marston Vale. A key part of the Forest is located between Gibraltar Corner and Bedford, immediately to the south and east of the study area. This area is known as Wiles Wood and has a number of recreational footpaths permeating through the woodland linking Bedford and Wootton.

Ridgeway Wood which lies to the west of Wootton Road is another part of the Forest. The landowners have significant land holdings surrounding these existing portions of the Forest.

Development around Gibraltar Corner could offer the opportunity to create significant new areas of the Forest of Marston Vale which could link these existing areas.



Fig 6: Rationale Concept Plan



Historic OS mapping from 1956 showing the early development of Gibraltar Corner as a settlement

Overarching design principles

New community facilities to create a sustainable settlement

The design has now evolved to respond to the existing built form and the surrounding Forest of Marston Vale, from the early conceptual sketches to the current masterplan concept.

Providing Gibraltar Corner with a new local centre would dramatically change the nature of the settlement from isolated housing to a sustainable village, where all housing was within walking distance of the new facilities.

It the council decided to deliver a primary school, it would best be positioned close to the cross roads at the centre of the village, to ensure that such a key facility would be within walking distance of the existing and new houses.



Open space and landscaped areas would provide recreational opportunities for the community



The green infrastructure network could accommodate allotments



The existing bus routes would run through the heart of the village



Streets and spaces would be designed to be pedestrian focused



Retention of the ridge and furrow area



Cycle routes could link Gibraltar Corner to Kempston and Bedford



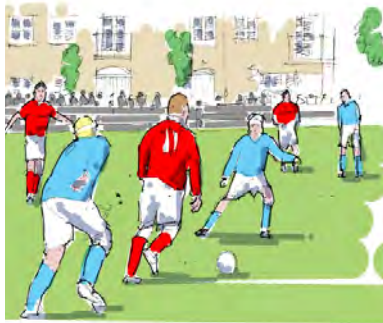
Streets and spaces would be designed to be pedestrian focused



Small employment opportunities could be accommodated in the local centre



A green infrastructure network would permeate through the scheme



Opportunities for new recreational facilities



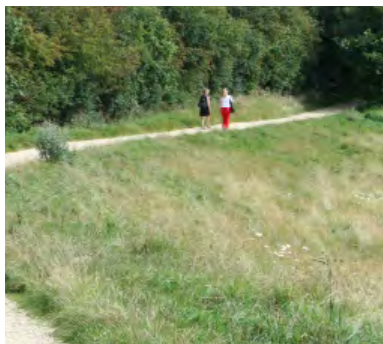
Balancing ponds could be a key feature of the layout



There is potential for a local primary school to be delivered in Parcel 1.



The development edge would be defined by woodland glades



The alignment of existing footpaths would be respected



Outward facing development overlooking the countryside edges

A sinuous north-eastern edge

A new edge could follow a sinuous line from Keeley Green in the south area and then curve inwards into Gibraltar Corner as the new development edge would track north. This would extend the development area outwards from the existing edge of Gibraltar Corner by approximately 100-115m.

Maintaining the 'local gap'

The proposed scheme does not encroach into the designated local gap between Gibraltar Corner and the edge of Bedford. This separation between the two will be maintained in order to retain the separate character of Gibraltar Corner.

'Glades' reach into the edge

The intention is to retain an informal green space on parcel 2 and retain the relationship of ridge and furrow to the Forest of Marston Vale to the west of the site.

A key part of the concept is 'pulling' forest glades into the edge of the development, to create open spaces which are easily accessible to the existing settlement and intertwine the open countryside with the settlement edge.

Forest of Marston Vale

Owing to the location of the site within the Forest of Marston Vale, the scheme will make appropriate provision for this. The matter of how this provision will be made, will be a consideration at the time of the planning application.

Concept Masterplan

The options for the provision of new homes at Gibraltar Corner would see a comprehensive approach to the growth of the settlement.

This option would deliver the following:

- Total of approximately 250 new homes
- Significant open space provision on parcels 2 and 4
- Structural landscape in key locations to the south and west of the site

Land Use Table

Development Parcels		Site Area (ha)
	Proposed Developable Area	7.12ha
	Structural Landscape	0.78ha
	Open Space	8.77 ha
	Local Centre	2.4 ha
Density 32.5 dph	Estimated No. of Dwelling	250
	Estimated Population	622











-  Indicative housing layout
-  Drainage feature
-  Proposed new trees
-  Ridge & Furrow/
Open Space
-  Existing Trees
& Hedges
-  Local Centre
-  Community Centre
-  Retail Facilities

Fig 7: Masterplan concept

06. Next Steps

A joint approach

In preparing this document, the landowners have demonstrated that the site is suitable for development and that this will be deliverable and contribute to the Council's housing requirements. The landowners look forward to continuing to engage with the Local Plan review process going forward and to developing the proposal in consultation with the local community and stakeholders.

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