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By email to: planningforthefuture@bedford.gov.uk

Dear Gill,

Crown Estate Response to Regulation 19 Consultation for Bedford Borough Local Plan 2040 in relation to proposed allocation of land at Gibraltar Corner, Kempston Rural.

Savills (UK) Ltd are instructed to respond on behalf of our client, The Crown Estate (TCE) to the current consultation into the Reg.19 Submission version of the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2040. Our clients have noted the preferred spatial strategy is to focus future growth of homes and employment into the area to the south of but close to Bedford. They are supportive of this sustainable approach to focus growth on the A421 transport corridor which is properly evidenced in the Sustainability Appraisal. It is also noted that the Bedford Infrastructure Delivery Plan allows for the Gibraltar Corner site to come forward without reliance on any prior off site infrastructure being committed or delivered. These representations are made in relation to policies HOU12 and HOU13 accordingly.

The importance of an overarching vision for the area where significant growth and change are proposed is recognised and the approach taken in proposing policy HOU12 is supported. We see it as vitally important to the successful delivery of the growth and associated infrastructure that landowners and developers are involved in the process of preparing the strategic place making framework. It is also important that early progress is made to engage all partners in the shaping and detail of the proposed supplementary planning document, so as to allow the process to flow into preparation of site specific masterplans and design codes as described in subsequent policy allocations. TCE would urge that sufficient resources are made available by the Local Planning Authority to ensure the timely preparation of these documents so that the bringing forward of much needed new homes is not delayed. TCE welcomes the opportunity to engage in this process in the coming months.

In terms of policy HOU13 TCE is pleased to see that delivery of sustainable development at Gibraltar Corner has been recognised and that an allocation is proposed. We would confirm that



TCE land remains available and deliverable and we support the delivery of a sustainable mix of uses in this location, including housing, education and strategic green and blue infrastructure improvements. Because of the scale of the proposal and the fact that not all of the proposed allocation is within a single ownership or control we agree with the proposed approach of the preparation of a masterplan and design code. Given the policy objectives to match new homes with necessary community and green infrastructure it is vital that a partnership approach be taken to the design and agreement of a masterplan and the appropriate mechanism for sharing of the costs and benefits of the infrastructure to be delivered.

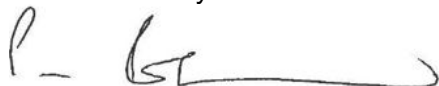
We would expect that the masterplan process would be used to identify the extents of land required to deliver the supporting infrastructure in consultation with landowners and the community and that the Council does not see the indicative land use areas on their proposals plan at Figure 6 of the Plan as being necessarily fixed at this stage but allowing for further refinement during the masterplan process. It would be prudent to amend the wording of Policy HOU13 to allow for the submission of a planning application before the final approval of the masterplan, as later stages of this process could take place in parallel, allowing the earlier implementation of the development.

The Gibraltar Corner Vision Document (Annex 1) demonstrates how a sustainable new neighbourhood can be delivered on TCE landholdings and we look forward to building on this work alongside the adjacent landowners, the community and the Council as part of the masterplan SPD. Further technical investigations have been ongoing in recent months and the Crown Estate proposes that the area of the allocation be extended southwards to enable the incorporation of a second access option off Bedford Road, as illustrated on the attached vision document. It had previously been thought that ridge and furrow remains would preclude this access option however further archaeological work suggests that ridge and furrow remains are not present on the area immediately south of the allocation boundary, enabling a second access option to be incorporated. Initial technical work also indicates the additional access would meet highway visibility and geometry requirements. The option of a second access will provide improved sustainable travel and connectivity opportunities.

In summary, this representation-

- 1 supports the strategy and evidence underpinning the allocation of the land at Gibraltar Corner
- 2 encourages stakeholder engagement in the early preparation of SPD and masterplans
- 3 supports the early delivery of housing on the site which is not constrained by major infrastructure requirements and seeks a minor change to policy HOU13(i) to allow a planning application to proceed in parallel with adoption of a masterplan
- 4 seeks an amendment to the boundary of the allocation to allow a second vehicular access to be provided

Yours sincerely



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Director