

Your ref: Call for Sites
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Date: 14/08/2020

Bedford Borough Council
Planning Policy Team
Borough Hall
Cauldwell Street
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Sent via Email:
planningforthefuture@bedford.gov.uk

Dear Mr Shortland,

**BEDFORD BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN
CALL FOR SITES SUBMISSION
LAND AT COTTON END, BEDFORD**

On behalf of our client, , we welcome this opportunity to submit the land to the east of High Road, Cotton End, Bedford for consideration to the Call for Sites.

The submission includes: this covering letter, a Call for Sites form which has been prepared on behalf of our client and a red line plan showing the site boundary and the point of access.

This covering letter aims to provide some additional information to support the submission and demonstrate that the site is a suitable location for development. It should be read alongside our comments on the Issues and Options Paper, to be submitted in due course, which cover the high-level spatial decisions the Council will need to make in developing the Local Plan.

Two call for site submissions have been made for our clients' land. This submission which includes the wider, more strategic land area and covers some 56.44 hectares. In addition, a separate submission has been made for the smaller site for 21.39 hectares which is considered suitable for the more immediate future. Although many of the points raised in the submission will be similar for both land parcels, the phasing and timeframe for the land coming forward would be different and as such we request that both sites are considered separately.

The site is well located to the existing facilities within Cotton End including the Cotton End Forest School and the public house. Furthermore, the site has good access to the wider road network via the A421 and the existing and planned infrastructure that will come forward as part of the Oxford to Cambridge Arc.

This site was previously submitted to Local Plan at the latter stages of additional site submissions by a promoting third party.

In terms of the proposed development, it is envisaged that the site would provide a mix of uses, including 2.5 hectares of employment land and 1 hectare of mixed use. In relation to the indicative quantum of residential development, this site is considered suitable for some 930 dwellings, this is based on a density of 35 dwellings per hectare and a net to gross ratio of 50%. This would ensure that unsuitable development would not be placed in areas at greater risk of flooding and enable a high quality,

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landscape led development in this strategic location. In addition to the residential element, it would be possible to accommodate 2.5 hectares of employment uses that would support the existing businesses in the area. A mixed use area of 1 hectare is also proposed to accommodate local facilities. This could be a small convenience store, local sports centre or village hall etc. to accommodate local needs and reduce the need to travel for the existing and proposed residents and employees in the area.

Both of the land parcels are considered to have significant potential for residential led development.

Site Description

This 56.44 hectare site is located to the east of the A600 (High Road) which runs from the A421 / Bedford south towards Chicksands and Shefford. The site is well located to the north east of Cotton End and is in close proximity to the existing facilities contained within the settlement.

Shortstown, Cardington and the Cardington Hangers are located to the north of the site. The hangers are large employers for the area and there are also a number of services provided within Cardington and Shortstown.

Wixams is located to the west of the site. Wixams is a growth area with some 4500 dwellings, a town centre and a significant area of employment land are also planned. In addition, the proposed train station for the east west rail link is likely to be located here.

This site is therefore considered well located to both existing and planned development for Bedford Borough.

Topography & Landscape

The land is relatively flat and is currently farmed with both arable crops and pasture land. It is classified as Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Claylands. The main landscape features are the existing field boundaries, with a number of trees and hedges located around the edge of the site and within the field boundaries. There is a strip of deciduous woodland which forms part of the south easterly boarder of the site.

The site is subject to a Nitrate Vulnerable Zones Designation and a Drinking Water Safeguard Zone both of which would be considered as part of any planning application.

Ecology

Given the limited landscape features and the fact that this land has been farmed for centuries the site is considered to have a limited ecological value.

In terms of priority species, the site is considered suitable for lapwings, corn bunting, yellow wagtails and grey partridges.

A full ecological survey would be provided alongside any planning application and appropriate mitigation measures would be proposed if necessary.

Access

Up to two access points would be formed from the A600 'High End Road' to accommodate the development, with an additional access point available through the existing farm yard. Although detailed access drawings have not been prepared, it is clear that given the existing road alignment and good visibility splays, a safe vehicular access can be formed.

There are two existing Public Right of Way (PROW) that run east to west. The first runs in a north easterly direction from High Road towards Southill Road and the second runs from Hermitage Gardens in a north easterly direction to Southill Road.

There is an existing bus service which runs hourly between Bedford and Hitchin. Cotton End is well located to the proposed strategic routes that will come forward as part of the Oxford to Cambridge road and rail schemes including the proposed train station at the Wixams.

The site is just two miles from the A421 which forms an important 'corridor' linking the A1 to Milton Keynes and the west, this is a vital connection and an area with significant employment opportunities and further growth planned. The A428 to the east is soon to be upgraded and will form an improved road link between Oxford and Cambridge. This site is therefore well located along the strategic rail and road corridors that are being developed to help movement through the Arc.

Heritage Assets

There are no known heritage assets on this site and Cotton End does not have a Conservation Area. There are five Grade II listed buildings within Cotton End including Manor Farmhouse and its Dovecote located to the western edge of the Site.

Flood Risk

The majority of the site is within Flood Zone 1, there is some limited areas of Flood Zone 3 and 2 within the site. Development would not be proposed for the high flood risk areas and a comprehensive flood risk assessment would be undertaken so that the masterplan would be able to plan appropriate uses for the higher risk areas. This would ensure that there is no detrimental impact on the existing situation.

Other Considerations

There are overhead cables that would need to be considered as part of the development of this site.

The site is wholly within the ownership of one landowner and is considered available for development immediately. Our client has been approached by a number of developers who wish to promote the land on his behalf.

In terms of school provision, the recently developed Cotton End Forest School currently has some capacity however the site is sufficiently flexible to provide additional school provision should the existing facility be unable to extend.

Conclusions

Given the location of this site in close proximity to existing services and facilities, in addition to its strategic location within the Arc this site is well located to help Bedford Borough Council deliver much needed homes close to existing and proposed employment opportunities. Furthermore, employment opportunities could be provided through the proposed employment uses on site. A small local centre is proposed to serve the local needs of the existing and proposed community, reducing the need to travel as well as ensuring sufficient flexibility within the site to provide any services or facilities that may be required. The site has excellent connectivity to strategic infrastructure and can be delivered in a way that is sensitive to the site constraints including the existing flood risk areas.

This larger site area could be delivered within the 5-10 year period, with the smaller site area (please refer to separate representations for the smaller area only) coming forward within the 0-5 year period.

This site is therefore considered suitable for development and should be considered favourably in the review of the Local Plan.

We trust that the detail within this letter and the enclosed forms is helpful for the consideration of the site. Should you have any queries in respect of this submission, please do not hesitate to contact me.

We very much welcome this opportunity to participate in the preparation of the Bedford Local Plan and would be most grateful if you could confirm receipt of these representations as well as informing us of the next phases of consultation and preparation.

Kind regards

Associate

Enclosures:

- Call for Sites form
- Location Plan Detailing Potential Site Access