

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

Bedford Borough Council  
Planning Policy Team  
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Sent via Email:  
[planningforthefuture@bedford.gov.uk](mailto: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 a Call for Sites form which has been prepared on behalf of our client. A red line plan showing the site boundary including 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.

Our client is currently promoting some 78.83 hectares in this location, the land has been submitted under two call for site submissions. This submission which covers a smaller parcel of land (21.39 hectares) and a second submission which is considered to be more suitable for the medium to longer-term development of Cotton End and covers some 56.44 hectares.

This site is considered to have significant potential for residential led development. It 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.

The site has previously been submitted to the Local Plan at the latter stages of additional site submissions by a promoting third party.

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

**Site Description**

The site is approximately 21.39 hectares. The site effectively wraps around the north east of Cotton End with the access proposed to the south of the former Cotton End Primary School.

The site is located to the east of the A600 (High Road) which runs from the A421 to the north to Chicksands and Shefford in the south. There is sufficient space and visibility splays to provide a safe access.

The site is well located to the existing facilities within Cotton End as well as a wider network of service and employment opportunities including the Cardington Hangers located to the north and the larger service centres of: Cardington, Shortstown, Bedford, Wixams and Shefford.

The site is located in the heart of the growth proposed for the Oxford to Cambridge Arc, including the proposed station on the Oxford to Cambridge railway line proposed for Wixams. In terms of road links, the site is just two miles south of the A421 which links Milton Keynes to the A1.

The majority of the site is currently pasture land, however there is also some arable land. There is a footpath which runs from the end of Hermitage Gardens through the site to the north east towards Southill Road.

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 a vital 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.

This site is considered suitable to accommodate some 400 dwellings. This is based on the assumption that 50% of the gross area will be developable and based on a density of 35dph. This density will allow for a landscape led development which reflects the surrounding urban area.

### **Access**

The existing access to the farm could be used to access the site, this access comes directly from the A600 'High End Road' and has good visibility splays in both directions. An emergency access could be provided via Wood Lane where there is an existing field access. This would be for emergency vehicles only. The proposed points of access are illustrated on the plan submitted in support of this proposal.

There is an existing Public Right of Way (PROW) that runs east to west 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.

### **Landscape and Topography**

The topography of the landscape is relatively flat and is currently in arable production and grazed pasture land. Hedges form the field boundaries which are the main landscape features of the site. There are a number of trees within the hedgerows of the field boundaries and a strip of deciduous woodland to the south east of the site.

The proposed development could be well contained in terms of visual impact on the existing landscape and a landscape led proposal would be developed as part of any planning application coming forward.

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 in arable and pasture grazing, there is considered to be limited ecological value at present. This could however be improved as part of any planning application.

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.

## 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 site is entirely within Flood Zone 1 and therefore considered to be at the lowest risk of flooding. There is a field drain which runs through the site. This field drain would be accommodated as part of the proposed development.

## Other Considerations

The site is within a single ownership. The landowner has been regularly approached by developers who are interested in the site. The site is therefore considered to be developable and deliverable within the short term.

## Conclusions

The site is well located to the existing services and facilities within Cotton End, in addition the site connects well to the wider services on offer within the surrounding towns and villages including Shortstown, Cardington, Shefford, Bedford and Chicksands. All of these areas are already large employment areas. There is a significant amount of development planned for this area as part of the Oxford to Cambridge Arc. This site is in the heart of the Arc and is well located to the existing and proposed infrastructure.

The site consists of some 21.39ha of land and would be able to accommodate some 400 dwellings. These dwellings would be well located to the existing services and facilities within Cotton End in addition to the employment opportunities within the wider area.

There are no constraints to development which would hinder development coming forward within the next 5 years, providing much needed housing in this growth area. The site is therefore considered suitable and available 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, however please do not hesitate to contact me in respect of any queries to this submission.

The opportunity to participate in the preparation of the Bedford Local Plan is very much welcomed and we would appreciate confirmation of 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