



CALL FOR SITES SUBMISSION
BEDFORD LOCAL PLAN REVIEW
AUGUST 2020

Introduction

Countryside Properties are promoting land at Green End to the Great Barford Neighbourhood plan as an extension to the existing village to deliver the 500 home requirement as set out in policy 3s of the Local Plan 2030 (Figure 1). At the current time, it is not clear when consultation will take place on the Regulation 14 document which will identify any housing allocations.

Countryside has interest in a larger area of land which has previously been submitted to the Call for Sites exercise. This interest comprises land under Countryside control and land which we have agreed with the landowner(s) to promote. The wider land interest is shown in Figure 2 and identifies the relationship between the land being promoted to the Neighbourhood Plan and the potential to deliver a larger community.

This call for sites submission focuses on the land as shown in Figure 2. If the Neighbourhood Plan allocates land for the 500 home requirement (Figure 1), there would be an opportunity to focus longer term growth in this location through the Local Plan Review and enable new homes to come forward in a co-ordinated and cohesive manner.

The whole site, is 150ha in size and indicative early work suggests the site has capacity to deliver approximately 2350 new homes including affordable homes, care home provision, 10ha (gross) of commercial or employment floorspace, education facilities, local centre, community hub, healthcare and associated ancillary infrastructure.

The delivery of the larger site could be seen as either an extension to Great Barford; making Great Barford of a size that can support new and improved physical and community infrastructure, or as a new garden village that could be separate from the existing village but provide facilities that the existing community could benefit from.

In either scenario, good connections to the existing village can be sought.



Figure 1- Land promoted to Great Barford Neighbourhood Plan

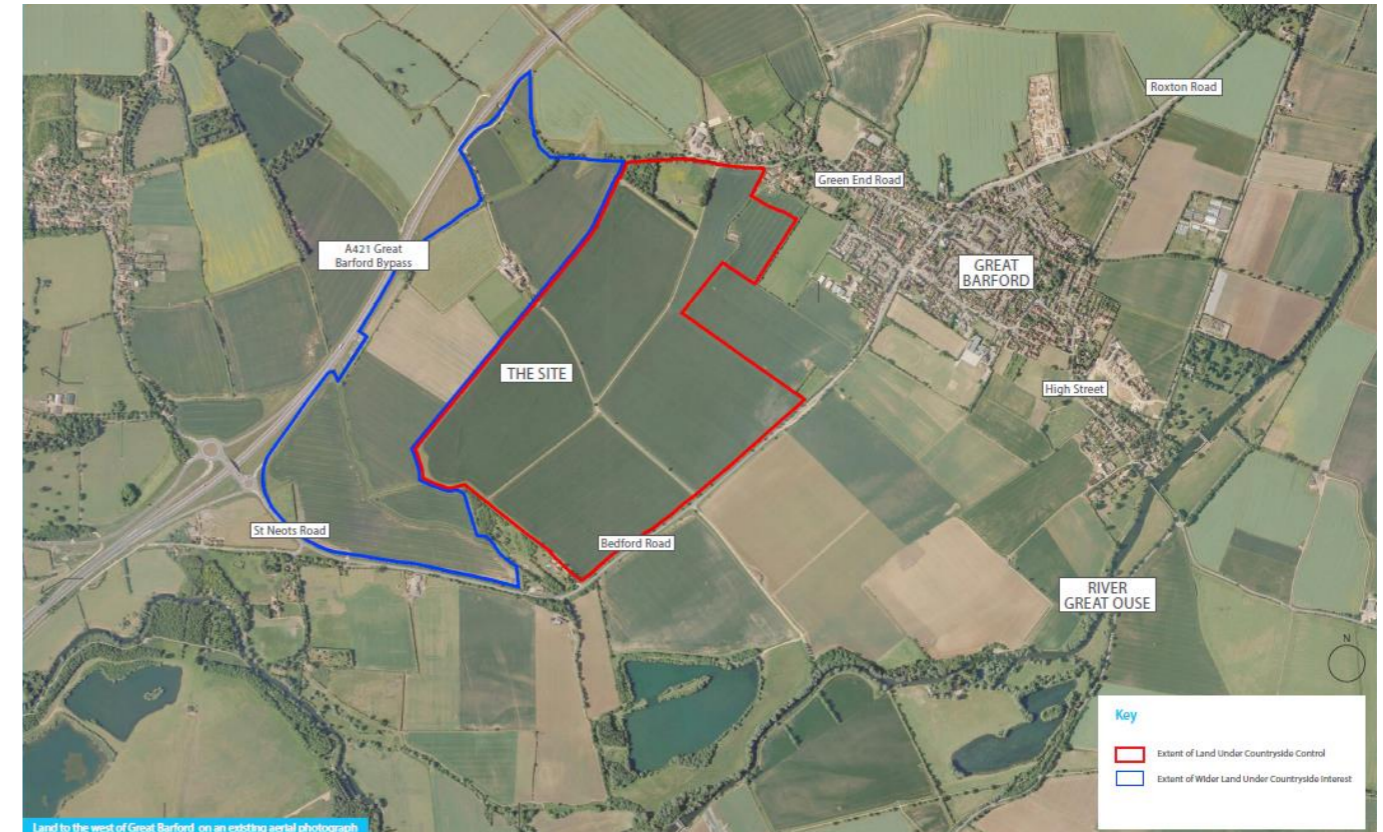


Figure 2- Countryside's wider land interests in Great Barford

The location of the village within the Oxford-Cambridge corridor with direct links from the A421 suggests that this location is capable of accommodating additional growth, whether seen as a new garden village or making Great Barford a sustainable community/settlement.

Countryside's role as promoter, strategic infrastructure provider/master developer and housebuilder would ensure that new homes and infrastructure would be delivered.

About Us

Countryside is a top 10 PLC Housebuilder and Master Developer specialising in place making and urban regeneration. Countryside's expertise also incorporates mixed-use, mixed tenure and commercial development schemes alongside Strategic Land.

Countryside is recognised as being at the forefront of the delivery of sustainable new communities. Their reputation is founded on being regarded as a responsible developer, working closely with local authorities, communities, and landowners. In the last financial year, Countryside completed 5,733 homes across multiple tenures. Countryside's achievements are exemplified by the receipt of more than 370 awards for design and sustainability since 2000.

Countryside's role as Master Developer and Housebuilder

Countryside's values and approach are driven by the guiding principles of creating Places People Love. To achieve this, Countryside articulate a vision for each development and use its placemaking skills to secure a planning permission that creates places of character and quality. Whilst the vision and principles may evolve over time, it is this long-term commitment and visibility that sets Master Developers apart from the market, ensuring the creation of a destination and place that all stakeholders can be proud of.

Countryside build homes, infrastructure and communities – they are much more than a promoter of land. This approach enables the business to forge close relationships with local authorities, statutory authorities and other public agencies. They work in partnership with all stakeholders in order to create cohesive and unique places of lasting value.

The role of a Master Developer provides a range of benefits including:

- Being in control of timings for delivery and providing accurate forecasts for bringing new homes forward. This provides the local authority with confidence on its land supply position.
- Undertaking the master planning and planning process to agree the strategic principles for the overall layout of a new development.
- Providing statutory providers with a single point of contact to agree the process and delivery framework of the strategic infrastructure.
- Negotiating, agreeing and managing the delivery of community infrastructure such as schools, retail, community buildings and transport infrastructure.
- Providing the planning authority and other stakeholders with a single point of contact, which allows meaningful engagement and relationships to be built.
- a Master Developer will be present at inception until the final handover of public open space when the scheme is complete.



Great Oaks, Wickhurst Green



Beaulieu, Chelmsford



Kingsmere Bicester

Case Studies

Great Notley Garden Village,
Braintree

2,000 new homes

100 acre Country Park

500,000 sqft employment Park

Community facilities

New bypass



Beaulieu, Chelmsford

Sustainable Urban Extension to the city

3,600 new homes

All through school

176 acres of parks and open space

New railway station and relief road

Subsidised bus service

620,000 ft² commercial floorspace



Priors Green, Takely

An extension to the village of 860 new homes

Nursery and 2FE primary school

Village centre with anchor store and small-scale units

Community centre

LEAP/NEAP and pocket parks

Utilities upgrades that improved services to the existing village



Context

Great Barford is located 6 miles from the centre of Bedford to the west, 5 miles from Sandy to the south-east, and 7 miles from St Neots to the north-east; these towns have railway stations with regular connections to London. The village benefits from good access onto the A421 which forms part of the proposed Oxford to Cambridge Expressway, a strategic route that incorporates Milton Keynes and Bedford, which will become a focus of housing and employment growth over the next 30 years.



Access

The site is located close to the A421 Great Barford bypass which may realise benefits from the Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet improvement scheme. Access to the site could be delivered from the A421 via St Neots Road and Bedford Road without increasing traffic in the village, which can be considered one of the key benefits of this site. The A421 junction can be enhanced with improvements and no new junctions or significant highways works would be required to facilitate growth in this location.

An existing Public Right of Way runs west from Great Barford along the site's north-eastern boundary, passing below the bypass into the countryside to the north. Another existing public right of way runs towards the river from close to the site's south-eastern corner. These rights of way will be incorporated into the development.

Topography

The centre of the site comprises a plateau, with gentle slopes downwards to the south-east towards the Bedford Road boundary and the south-west. Along the site's northernmost boundary, another stream runs eastwards through the site into Great Barford, the slopes towards this stream is steeper.

Flood risk

The site is located within Flood Zone 1 (less than 1 in 1000 annual probability of fluvial flooding). The majority of the site is also at very low risk of surface water flooding.

7 Land to the West of Great Barford

Gas pipelines

A high-pressure gas pipeline runs below ground north to south through the north-western part of the site. This can be incorporated into the development layout. Countryside have experience of incorporating these features into development such as at Beaulieu.



Incorporating utilities within the development at Beaulieu, Chelmsford

Landscape and Ecology

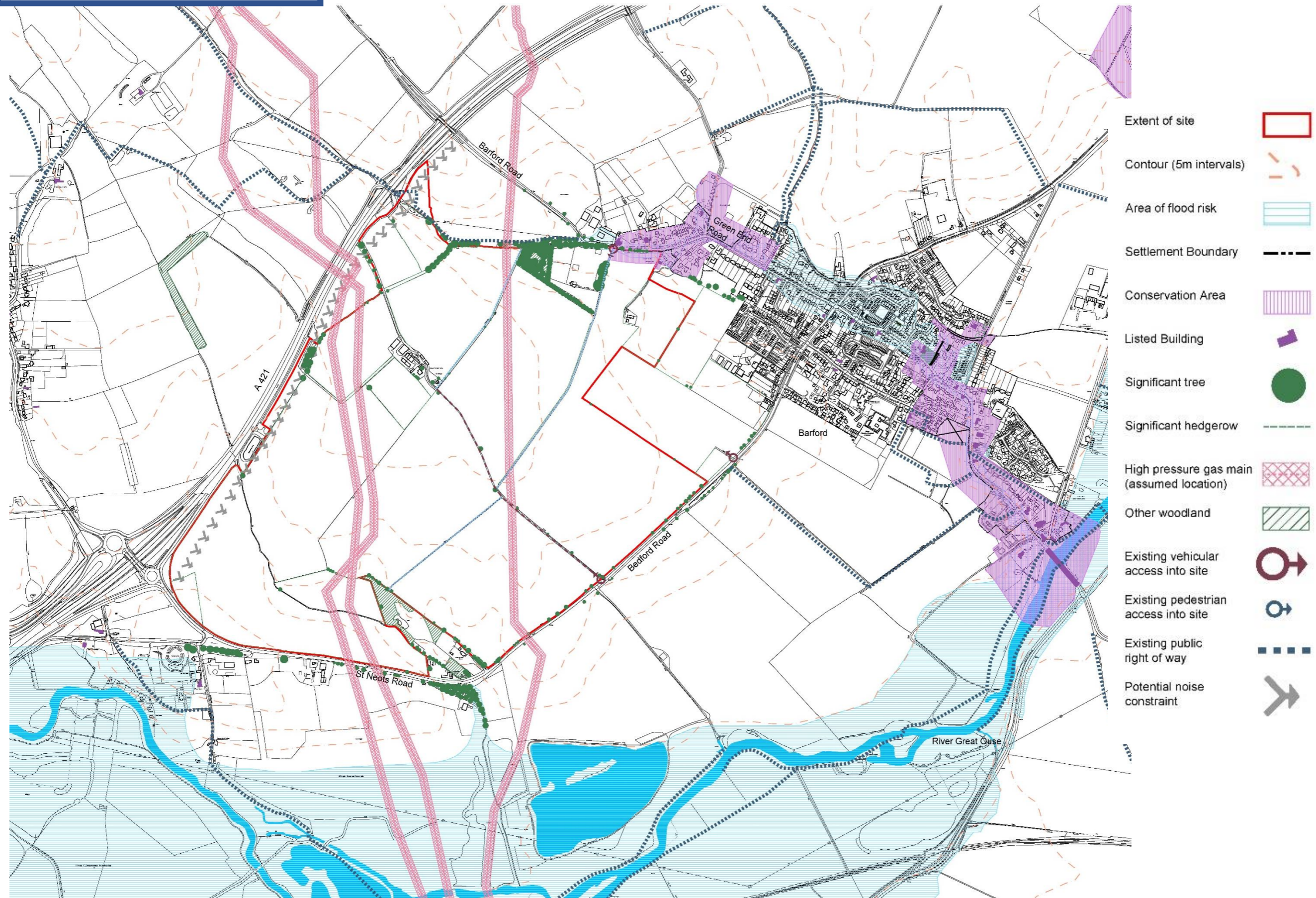
The site generally comprises large agricultural fields, with an open relationship with adjoining agricultural land to the south and west. Field boundaries generally comprise low hedgerows with occasional trees.

An area of woodland is located within the northernmost part of the site, associated with the adjoining stream, adjoining an existing cricket field.

No internationally designated sites have been identified within 10km of the site. A number of county wildlife sites are located closer to the site, however most of these are separated from the site by significant physical barriers (such as the A421).

The site is relatively unconstrained with no significant environmental constraints to impede delivery of new homes.

High Level Constraints Plan



- Extent of site 
- Contour (5m intervals) 
- Area of flood risk 
- Settlement Boundary 
- Conservation Area 
- Listed Building 
- Significant tree 
- Significant hedgerow 
- High pressure gas main (assumed location) 
- Other woodland 
- Existing vehicular access into site 
- Existing pedestrian access into site 
- Existing public right of way 
- Potential noise constraint 

Constraints Mapping

Great Barford Neighbourhood Plan

Great Barford Parish Council are preparing a Neighbourhood Plan to direct where the requirement of 500 homes as set out in the Bedford Local Plan 2030 will be allocated. Countryside have been promoting land capable of delivering this full 500 homes requirement and associated community facilities in one location. The Neighbourhood Plan Group facilitated a Meet the Developer event in November 2019 where residents were given an opportunity to consider all sites put forward.

Our proposals for the site showed the potential for:

- up to 500 new, high-quality homes
- a care home for the local community
- a new bus stop
- affordable homes for young people, first-time buyers and local people
- health care facilities
- areas for community food production including allotments and orchards
- new community facilities within a neighbourhood centre including a small shop
- new recreational landscaped spaces including sports pitches, play parks,
- multi-use games area, outdoor gym facilities

A concept plan was submitted, which also included Bedford Council owned land. The concept plan is shown in Figure 3.

At the time of writing, consultation on a draft Neighbourhood Plan is currently unknown and we continue to keep in contact with Parish councillors as the plan progresses.

If the site is identified for allocation within the Neighbourhood Plan, new homes may come forward from 2024/2025. We would undertake regular engagement with the Parish Council and local stakeholders to ensure that we utilise local knowledge and understanding to inform our proposals.

It is hoped that this land is allocated for development within the Neighbourhood Plan. If the Neighbourhood Plan identifies alternative sites, we will continue to promote this site through the Local Plan Review along with the additional land under Countryside control (Figure 2).



Figure 3-Phase 1 Concept Plan

Local Plan Review

Following adoption of the Local Plan 2030 in January 2020, Bedford Council committed to an immediate review of their adopted Local plan to have a plan that responds appropriately to longer term growth requirements, such as the Oxford to Cambridge Arc, as well as give the council an opportunity to review progress with delivery of sites for which the Local Plan relies on.

The Local Plan Review will be based upon the governments standard method for calculating housing need, a housing target that is 35% above the current identified need. As such, Bedford are required to review and establish the quantum of land available to meet the increased housing requirements and create a spatial strategy accordingly.

Land to the west of Great Barford is considered a suitable location for growth in the local plan review as it could deliver approximately 1850 new homes and employment floorspace in addition to the 500 home requirement set within the Neighbourhood Plan, and community infrastructure including education facilities, health care provision, community hubs and community food production.

Great Barford is already identified as a location that can accommodate growth through the Local plan 2030 and will continue to see growth as proposals for the Oxford-Cambridge corridor emerge.

A development of the scale proposed and, in this location, has potential to support and enhance existing local services and provide new social and community facilities/infrastructure and new jobs. There are also opportunities to bring forward wider sustainability benefits with co-location of jobs and homes, opportunities for enhanced sustainable transport options such as the X5 service and enhanced pedestrian and cycle links to Bedford.

Our proposals also utilise a landscape led approach focusing on the edible landscape thereby supporting sustainable food production.



The site facing towards Green End Road

Vision and Overarching Principles

West of Great Barford will create a new community that provides new homes and jobs centred around local food production, integrates with the historic core of Great Barford, retains and enhances the landscape and green infrastructure network, and provides opportunities to connect to the river and the countryside.



Relationship with Great Barford Village to the east

Using a landscape led approach, we have established the following principles for our phase 1 proposals that can be used to incorporate the whole development.

- The retention of existing trees and hedgerows
- Generous areas of multi-functional green open spaces
- Extensive recreational routes
- Community food production
- Formal recreation provision such as 5-a-side pitches
- Formal and informal play opportunities
- The creation of new habitats
- Integration of sustainable drainage features
- New buffer planting where appropriate.
- Surface water run-off will be attenuated through sustainable drainage features on site, connecting to the existing green / blue infrastructure grid
- Foul drainage will connect to existing sewers
- Infrastructure connection points exist adjacent to the site boundaries
- Provision of electric vehicle charging infrastructure
- Retention and integration of utilities into the proposed development layout.

Conclusion

The key elements of the proposal are:

- 2350 homes including affordable homes
- Care home provision
- 10ha of employment floorspace including flexible office and incubator spaces
- Local centres and community hubs with retail provision
- The primary vehicular access via new junctions on Bedford Road and St Neots Road. Traffic arriving from the A421 will not need to pass through the existing settlement in order to access the development
- Bus access into the development, and improved service for existing residents of Gt Barford.
- The layout will incorporate an extensive network of pedestrian and cycle routes
- Opportunities for pedestrian and cycle linkages with the existing village and the wider countryside.
- Health facilities
- Education facilities

A high-level concept plan has been prepared by Countryside to show how the site could come forward regarding access, landscaping and development parcels. Should the site be allocated, we would work with key stakeholders and the local community to develop a Masterplan in order to understand what community and social facilities would be required and what a new place could look like. The concept Plan does not include the land owned by Bedford Council but can be included if required.

West of Great Barford is a sustainable location in the centre of the Oxford-Cambridge corridor. The site is close to the A421 and improvements to the junction could be delivered within land under our control. There are no significant constraints to delivery as access can be achieved, and necessary physical infrastructure can be delivered.

- A large-scale development in this location would benefit from sustainable links and the potential to improve bus links too local transport hubs, as well as walking and cycling improvements. As well as new homes and jobs, Countryside deliver community infrastructure for the benefit of new residents and existing communities such as new open space and sports facilities and community gardens, enhanced walking and cycling links.

Proposed Concept Masterplan

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COUNTRYSIDE

Places People Love