

BEDFORD LOCAL PLAN REVIEW – CALL FOR SITES SUBMISSION ON BEHALF OF FCC ENVIRONMENT - ELSTOW SOUTH

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 Axis PED Limited (Axis) has prepared this document on behalf of FCC Environment (FCC) to provide supplementary information in relation to their Call for Sites submission.
- 1.1.2 The submission relates to FCC's site at land west of Wilstead Road, Elstow (Elstow South). This document provides greater detail on the Site using the sections provided within the Call for Sites Submission Form.

1.2 Background

- 1.2.1 The Elstow South Site is shown on Figure 1 and is located to the southwest of Bedford. The Site was formerly used for clay extraction, and in its current un-restored state exists as two areas of flooded clay pits and a smaller area of land not previously extracted.
- 1.2.2 The Site is sustainably located on the edge of the urban area. It is bordered by deciduous tree belts to the east, south and west and by the Council owned landfill to the north. The A6 trunk road runs close by to the east. Recently built residential properties at Wixams are located to the southeast, with an extensive industrial estate immediately to the west of these. A large area south-west of the Site is being developed for further residential and employment development. The Elstow Aggregate Railhead facility is located to the west of the Site. Further west beyond the railway line is a large site known as Bedford Business Park. A planning application is pending for the development of 233,360m² of B2 and B8 floorspace.
- 1.2.3 The Site is covered by planning permissions granted in 1949 and 1980 for mineral extraction and restoration. Both the 1949 and 1980 permissions provide the opportunity for delivering a number of restoration options, including full or partial backfilling.
- 1.2.4 FCC are now preparing a comprehensive application pursuant to the above permissions for the approval of a final restoration scheme which includes dewatering the void and the creation of a development platform suitable for built development. The approach to infilling the voids has been discussed and in principle agreed with

the Council. The voids are being dewatered and site investigations underway to inform the technical specification for infilling. It is anticipated that the discharge of condition application will be submitted this calendar year. Further details on delivery timescales are provided in Section 1.5 below.

1.3 Proposed Use and Access

- 1.3.1 FCC wish to promote the land at Elstow South for employment / commercial uses. Figure 2 submitted with this call for sites submission sets out the broad parameters that could be developed across the Site. The land to the south could deliver approximately 120,000m² of employment (B2/B8 Use Class) floorspace across a range of different building sizes, ranging from 2,500m² to 50,000m² or alternative sizes depending on demand.
- 1.3.2 The land to the north would be suitable for retail, offices or commercial uses and would provide additional facilities associated with the existing services to the north. This land would be access off the roundabout to the north east where the A6 joins the A421. The size of this area is 3.9 hectares.
- 1.3.3 Access to the Site currently exists to the south east off Wilstead Road. Vehicles enter Wilstead Road at the roundabout with the A6 to the north east of the Site, Wilstead Road then runs from north to south along the Site's eastern boundary before turning into the Site.
- 1.3.4 FCC has undertaken initial feasibility work to explore options of providing a new link road from the A6 in the east across the Site to provide direct access to the land to the west of the railway line known as Bedford Business Park. The new road would be taken from the existing roundabout to the north east of FCC's site, route through the Site to join the roundabout proposed as part of the Bedford Business Park development. The purpose of the link road would be to reduce congestion between central Bedford and the Bedford Business Park.
- 1.3.5 The link road would provide a direct route between the Bedford Business Park and the A421 which forms part of the trunk road network. This would be beneficial to HGVs which are more likely to use the A421 than to route into central Bedford.
- 1.3.6 ADC Infrastructure (ADC) has undertaken initial assessments of the proposed link road from the A6 to Bedford Business Park. ADC has tested the capacity of the A6/Wilstead Road roundabout in the morning and evening peak hour periods using traffic flows factored to 2030 levels (the end of the current Local Plan period).
- 1.3.7 Improvements would be provided to the Wilstead Road site access arm to accommodate flows in the evening peak hour. The approach currently provides a

single lane entry, a two-lane entry would be provided to ensure sufficient capacity to accommodate the development traffic.

1.4 Availability and Achievability Considerations

1.4.1 The Site is in the sole ownership of FCC and there are no restrictive covenants or third party interests.

1.4.2 The Site would be developed by FCC in partnership with developers who deliver this type of development internationally and discussions continue in regards this partnership arrangement.

1.5 Deliverability and Developability Considerations

1.5.1 The Site is located within the void of the former clay extraction operation at Elstow Quarry. Permission exists to restore the Site through dewatering and the creation of a level, site. Contracts are in place with major infrastructure providers to supply the necessary fill material needed to restore the Site.

1.5.2 Dewatering activities are anticipated to take 2 years, the infilling of the void would take a further 5 years. The dewatering is expected to commence in 2022 and the associated infill will be complete in 2029.

1.5.3 Subject to allocation it is expected that an application for employment uses on the Site would be prepared in 2023/2024. Employment development could therefore commence on Site in 2029, the Site could therefore contribute to the Council's 6-10-year employment land supply.

1.5.4 The Site is appropriately located to deliver large scale strategic employment development within the proposed Plan Period in accordance with the Council's growth aspirations.

1.6 Conclusions

1.6.1 This document has been prepared on behalf of FCC to support the Call for Sites Submission of their Site at Elstow South.

1.6.2 FCC are preparing detailed submission for the dewatering and filling of the void to create a suitable development platform to accommodate the proposed use.

1.6.3 The delivery of the link road from the A6 to Bedford Business Park through FCC's site is a significant benefit of the proposed allocation. This would reduce congestion around the outskirts of Bedford and provide a more direct route for HGVs from Bedford Business Park to the trunk road network.

- 1.6.4 The Site is suitably located to deliver large scale employment development in this location. The Site is available and deliverable within the Plan period.