

Your ref: Call for sites
Our ref: 44723
DD: [REDACTED]
Date: 14/08/20

Bedford Borough Council
Planning Policy Team
Borough Hall
Cauldwell Street
Bedford
MK42 9AP

Dear Sir/Madam

**LOCAL PLAN REVIEW
CALL FOR SITES SUBMISSION
LAND OFF BEDFORD ROAD, GREAT BARFORD**

I write on behalf of my client Axiom Great Barford Limited ('Axiom'), to submit Land Off Bedford Road, Great Barford, for consideration as part of the Local Plan Review.

A Call for Sites form has been prepared detailing the basic information requested by the Council to enable consideration of the site. A red line plan showing the site boundary and the point of access and a Vision Document of the proposals has also been provided. This letter sets out in more detail why the site is suitable for development and should form part of the development strategy within the Local Plan Review.

Land off Bedford Road was previously put forward for consideration through the development of the adopted Local Plan (site references 116 and 127). Great Barford was classified in the adopted Local Plan as a 'Key Service Centre' with a housing allocation of 500 homes to be delivered through a Neighbourhood Plan allocation process.

At this time, despite work progressing in the background, the Great Barford Neighbourhood Plan has not been submitted to the Council for consideration. We understand that Covid-19 has resulted in a delay to its completion due to the issues surrounding consultation and meetings and the Neighbourhood Plan Team have therefore found it difficult to progress at speed in these unrepresented times. However, it is important to note that the detailed work undertaken by the Parish Council's consultants, AECOM, provides a favourable assessment of Land Off Bedford Road.

Given the difficulties facing Neighbourhood Plan teams across the Borough, we consider that it is important for the Local Plan Review process to consider and assess sites even in areas where site allocation has been delegated to Neighbourhood Plans. Whilst Axiom's preference is to work with the Parish Council in preparing their Neighbourhood Plan, the reassessment of sites also allows the opportunity to consider how they may support the delivery of the emerging spatial strategy for Bedford Borough, which may need to accommodate further growth on top of existing commitments. Undertaking a thorough assessment of the suitability of all sites, supported by the information provided by site

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promoters, is a key first stage in the process of considering which sites can deliver sustainable development and should be allocated under the Local Plan Review.

As is set out in the accompanying Vision document, the land off Bedford Road extends to 18.2 hectares with an estimated capacity of approximately 350 homes. The site is split over two ownerships with approximately 5.2 hectares owned by the Southall family (Home Farm) and the remaining 13 hectares (Coalville Farm) owned by Bedford Borough Council. Axiom have agreement from both owners to promote the site for development as an extension to Great Barford.

The site is comprised of a range of rural uses with the farm business and associated yard, agricultural dwelling and buildings of Home Farm in the north of the site and the open fields of Coalville Farm to the south. The site has existing access off Home Farm Drive and two tracks off Bedford Road.

The attached Vision Document provides a comprehensive overview of the site's opportunities, constraints and development potential. However, key considerations are that the site:

- Has no topographical constraints to development. The site rises gently from east to west, away from the village but is generally on lower ground within the wider River Great Ouse Valley corridor. The area of higher ground to the west / north-west of the site provide a logical area to create a new landscaped edge to the village.
- Contains no significant areas of trees or vegetation. The landscape features are predominantly limited to the site boundaries with limited hedgerows within the site.
- Lies in zone 1 and is not at risk of flooding.
- Is not subject to any national or regional landscape designations.
- Does not contain any designated heritage assets. The site lies outside of the conservation area covering Green End Road, which contains a number of listed buildings. However, site is away from the historic core of the village to the east.
- Has limited ecological value and is not covered by, or close to, any sites designated for their ecological value. There is a significant opportunity to deliver a net gain in biodiversity across the site.
- Does not contain any public rights of way. However, it is close to the existing network of routes within the village with footpath 21 terminating opposite an existing site access off Bedford Road, which could be extended into the site.
- Has existing access to the public highway but also has an opportunity to create a new point of access, commensurate with the scale of the development, on to Bedford Road. This would act as a gateway entrance to the village and provide traffic calming.
- Is of a scale where new services and facilities could be provided on site to support the sustainability of Great Barford as a Key Service Centre for the village's wider hinterland. These can be located in an area of the site accessible by both new and existing residents.

In addition to those services that could be provided on site, Great Barford contains a number of existing day-to-day services to support growth including the village hall, doctor's surgery, Post Office/Local Shop and Great Barford Primary Academy, each of which are within c.500 metres of the site.

The village is served by public transport with routes X5 and 27 running through the village providing access to Bedford town centre and local villages, as well as major centres such as Cambridge, Bedford, Oxford and Milton Keynes. Services are regular and can be accessed from bus stops on Bedford Road within walking distance of the site.

The site is within the A421 corridor which provides vehicular access to the key economic centres of Cambridge, Bedford and Milton Keynes and the nearest junction onto the A421 is some 2.25km to the south west of the site on Bedford Road. In all regards, it is considered that the site is suitable for development and should be considered favourably in the Local Plan Review.

Should you have any queries in respect of this submission, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



Enclosures:

- **Call for Sites form**
- **Location Plan**
- **Vision Document**