



BIDWELLS

Your ref: Call for sites
Our ref: 46109
DD: [REDACTED]
Date: 14/08/20

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

Dear Sir/Madam

CALL FOR SITES SUBMISSION LAND EAST OF LUTON ROAD, WILSTEAD

I write on behalf of my client Taylor Wimpey UK Limited, to submit land east of Luton Road, Wilstead for consideration as part of the Local Plan Review.

As required, a call for sites form has been prepared detailing the basic information requested by the Council to consider the site. A red line plan showing the site boundary and the point of access has also been provided along with an Illustrative Layout showing how the site could be developed.

This letter sets out in a little more detail why the site is suitable for development and it should form part of the development strategy of the reviewed local plan. 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.

Land East of Luton Road was put forward for consideration through the development of the adopted Local Plan (reference 714). In the development of that plan, the decision was made that Wilstead would be one of the only Key Settlements not to have an element of growth directed to it as part of the development strategy due to its proximity to Wixams.

As will be set out in our Issues and Options response, given the speed at which the Local Plan Review has commenced, none of the neighbourhood plans which were to deliver this growth have been taken forward. This makes it difficult to see how further growth can be directed to these through the Local Plan Review and suggests that sites in those sustainable settlements without any emerging allocations, such as Wilstead, will need to be viewed favourably.

In this regard, Land East of Luton Road is one of the most suitable sites for development in the village with no major constraints to development.

The 3.18-hectare site, which is contained on two sides by significant hedgerows and landscaping, was previously used as a camp site associated with Briar Bank Park to the north. As such, the remains of an amenity block can be seen at the centre of the site, along with the access road. The relationship with the caravan park to the north, the remains on site and the surrounding hedgerows mean that the site has a greater association with the village than the countryside to the south and east.

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The site lies in zone 1 which is the lowest risk flood zone and it is not at risk of flooding. The site is not subject to any landscape designations, nor is it covered by, or in setting of, any historic assets. There are no statutory, non-statutory or local ecological designations for the site. Additionally, the Site does not lie within in the vicinity of any statutory protected wildlife sites.

There is a small strip of land along the site's western boundary which forms part of a designated Village Open Space (see Policy AD40). This designation effectively secures the retention of the hedgerow which characterises the southern entrance to the village.

There are no public rights of way which cross the site or run adjacent to the site. It is currently accessed via Briar Bank Park, but should the site be developed, a new entrance would be created onto Luton Road, as indicated on the submitted indicative masterplan. Full technical details of this access have also been provided demonstrating how safe access to the site would be created.

Wilstead Primary School, including Children's Centre, is located approximately 1km from the site, within a 10-15-minute walk. Other local community facilities, including a post office, mobile library, allotments, play areas, village hall, bowls club, public house, lower school and a church, are also located in the centre of the village, near the school putting them within walking distance of the site. Wilstead also contains a number of local businesses, with local firms offering the potential for a form of sustainable, local employment.

The village is served by public transport with existing bus stops located on Luton Road, within a 400m walk of the site. Routes GP44 and Stagecoach 81 bus services run through Wilstead providing access to Bedford town centre, Flitwick and further afield to Luton. A new rail station, which featured in the Council's Rail Investment Strategy, is also proposed at Wixams with plans for an opening in late 2023, which is in line with the proposed adoption date of the reviewed Local Plan. This station would be around 3.5 km from the site providing realistic opportunities for sustainable travel to employment centres such as London and Luton.

Importantly, as noted on the call for sites form, around 45% of the site is assumed to be retained as undeveloped land including new open space, landscaping, SUDS and retained woodland. As is shown on the Illustrative Layout, this provides sufficient scope for the development to respect the amenity of the adjoining Briar Bank Park and also for the development to respect the edge of village location through setting development back from Luton Road, retaining the Village Open Space identified in the adopted Local Plan.

In all regards, it is considered that the site is suitable for development and should be considered favourably in the review of the Local Plan.

Conclusion

Hopefully this detail is helpful in your consideration of the site. 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**
- **Illustrative Layout**