

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

Dear Sir or Madam

Re: Review of the Bedford Local Plan 2030 – Call for Sites Submission for Station Road, Oakley

On behalf of client Bedfordia Developments Ltd we are pleased to submit details of the above site for consideration as part of the Review of the Bedford Local Plan 2030 – Call for Sites submissions.

In commencing an immediate Review in accordance with Policy 1 of the adopted Plan the Council is, as required, seeking to ensure that future needs for growth are provided for in-line with government policy i.e. local housing need calculated using the standard method. This will entail meeting a significant (up to c.35%) increase in the minimum annual requirement for development for at least the period 2020-2040 upon adoption of the Review, expected in 2023.

The Review of the Local Plan is an important opportunity to address issues regarding flexibility and choice in a variety of locations for growth, as well as ensuring a balanced allocation of land for development sufficient to meet future needs.

The scope for the Review has been enhanced as a consequence of the foreshortened plan period of the current Plan, and its strategy of apportioning specific (albeit minimum) values for the distribution of housing across the settlement hierarchy and the deferral of site allocations to Neighbourhood Plans. Equally, the challenges of housing delivery must also reflect realistic timescales to 'unlock' developable sites in the Urban Area, as well as ensuring necessary supporting infrastructure in other locations.

The Borough Council has acknowledged this through consideration of a diverse range of spatial options to inform the Local Plan Review. As stipulated by national policy this is an opportunity to ensure that Plans are positively prepared in terms of seeking opportunities for sustainable development.

Our client's site at Station Road, Oakley should be considered in this context. The details submitted illustrate the opportunity for a sustainable contribution towards an appropriate spatial strategy that would satisfy key elements of the proposed Sustainability objectives and requirements for development.

As part of the details submitted for our client's site at Station Road, Oakley we confirm that this location is free from overriding constraints to availability or suitability and that access can be provided.

The land provides an opportunity to provide for a carefully considered mixed residential development area, including a new and better located sports facilities for the Lincroft Academy and a revised road

system that will create a new dedicated access to the school and access distributor road.

The proposal would deliver, in effect, a new, self-contained Lincroft Academy campus with the existing school sports facilities, a new traffic managed, through route would be created on the eastern periphery of the site, which would also provide for the creation of a new dedicated school entrance drive, and would also serve as a development access road and serve the new housing area which could provide up to 250 residential dwellings including the provision of affordable housing. Suitable landscaping, together with noise mitigation and the physical boundary of the Midland Mainline would maintain separation with Clapham to the east.

In light of the extensive scope for the Review of the Local Plan 2030 we consider that an appropriate strategy will require a combination of multiple spatial options over the plan period. In the case of our client's land at Station Road, Oakley this option would contribute to a 'Dispersed' strategy for the rural area. The submitted details would achieve a logical and comprehensive development option for Oakley that will respond to the Village's development needs over the plan period on a single site. The submitted details support the review of the housing requirement for Oakley and the reconsideration of its role as a Rural Service Centre.

We would invite the Council's Planning Policy Team to consider the previous site assessment findings for this location when assessing the submitted details. In the case of our client's Land at Station Road, Oakley, the site was considered favourably in the Council's 2017 Consultation Paper as part of preferred options for site allocation. The Council's 2018 HELAA records the site as suitable, available and achievable for development and in its 2017 Assessment of Site Options the Council identified scope for a positive contribution towards several plan-making objectives.

The northern portion of the site (c.2ha) is allocated for development under Policy HG1 of the Oakley Neighbourhood Plan. A review of these earlier findings should be considered in the context of the Review of the Local Plan 2030. Specific planning considerations regarding our client's land (including meeting the needs of Lincroft Academy and associated highways improvements) supports the conclusion of opportunities to provide for an increased contribution towards the Borough's housing requirements in this location.

Details of the development opportunity outlined as part of the details submitted are illustrated on the Concept Masterplan enclosed with this letter, which also illustrates that area allocated for development in the Oakley Neighbourhood Plan. A separate submission is advanced by the Sharnbrook Academy Federation in relation to its interests at Lincroft Academy and should be read alongside this letter.

We look forward to future updates regarding preparation of the evidence base for the Local Plan Review. We would be happy to answer any questions or requirements for clarification as part of the Council's assessment of the site within the next version of the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment and ahead of future stages of consultation regarding the Local Plan Review.

Yours Sincerely


Managing Director

ENC: Drawing SK09B Land at Station Road, Oakley Masterplan Concept