

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 Land at Rushden Road, Milton Ernest**

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. Additionally, the proposal recognises the longer-term needs for economic development and providing support to a prosperous rural economy and post-Covid recovery.

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 Rushden Road, Milton Ernest 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 Rushden Road, Milton Ernest we confirm that this location is free from overriding constraints to availability or suitability and that access can be provided.

The site is considered suitable for redevelopment for employment uses (B1, B2 and B8) and potentially could also make provision for live/work units.



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To ensure sufficient employment land is available to support housing growth, we would emphasise that when evaluating potential options for allocation and existing land use designations, consideration should be given to potential sites that would optimise opportunities for economic development in rural areas as well as potential infrastructure that would improve the delivery of employment sites.

The land off Rushden Road, Milton Ernest is in-part previously developed land and in current employment-generating uses. The location provides a suitable site for designation for employment purposes. The site is not constrained by policy or other 'protection designations' and will not give rise to amenity impacts.

The site lies immediately adjacent to the Milton Ernest Settlement Boundary and is therefore well located to the village's services and facilities which includes a public house and primary school. The Queens Head bus stop, which is within walking distance of the site, provides a regular service to and from Bedford.

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 Rushden Road, would support economic development within Milton Ernest as a Rural Service Centre.

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

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Managing Director