

Your ref: Call for sites  
Our ref: 46109  
DD: [REDACTED]  
E: [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 WEST OF BALLS LANE, WILLINGTON**

I write on behalf of my client Taylor Wimpey UK Limited, to submit land west of Balls Lane, Willington 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 is also provided as requested.

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 within 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 west of Balls Lane was put forward for consideration through the development of the adopted Local Plan (reference 288). Willington was classified in the adopted Local Plan as a 'Rural Service Centre' with a housing allocation of 25-50 homes to be delivered through a Neighbourhood Plan. At this time, the Wilstead Neighbourhood Plan has not been submitted to the Council for consideration and there were a number of issues with the pre-submission draft which will need to be addressed prior to the Plan being made.

It is important to note that the 25-50 housing requirement in Willington was identified at a time where there was a lower housing requirement for Bedford Borough than that proposed in the new Standard Methodology outlined in the Housing White Paper published on 6<sup>th</sup> August 2020. The previous requirement of 25-50 dwellings was also based on the capacity of local services, particularly the local school, which appear to have greater capacity than currently acknowledged to support additional housing development.

As will be set out in our Issues and Options response, to ensure the reviewed Local Plan is deliverable, it will be important that the Council takes the lead in allocating sites and does not defer allocations to Neighbourhood Plans which adds undue delay to the delivery of much needed homes in the area. Such an approach also does not allow proper consideration of wider plan making issues, such as the delivery

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of strategic green infrastructure, which is a key consideration in relation to Taylor Wimpey's Willington site, nor the importance of allocating growth on the A421 corridor – one of the strategic options in the Issues and Options paper.

As is set out in the accompanying Vision Document, the land west of Balls Lane extends to some 14 hectares. Of this area, around 10 hectares would be made available for green infrastructure with the remainder delivering 150 dwellings and associated uses. The delivery of green infrastructure in this area is an established policy requirement which will only be realised through allowing an element of enabling development. This should be a key consideration in the assessment and identification of development sites.

The submitted Vision Document provides a more detailed review of the site, its surroundings and its development potential. However, key considerations are that the site:

- is flat with no topographical constraints to development;
- is free of significant trees and vegetation, with any landscape features limited to the site boundaries;
- lies in flood risk zone 1 (the lowest risk flood zone) and is not at risk of flooding;
- is not subject to any national or regional landscape designations. However, it does lie within the locally identified Marston Vale Forest area, a Green Infrastructure Opportunity Zone and the Bedford River Valley Park, each of which are large designations covering a wider area;
- is free from heritage assets, with the closest listed building lying to the north of the site adjacent to the existing residential area of the village;
- has limited ecological value. The nearest ecological assets are County Wildlife Sites, each of which are separate from the site boundary.

Willington contains a number of day to day services to support growth including a primary school and post office/local store. Both of these are within walking distance of the site.

The village is served by public transport with routes 24 and 73 running along Bedford Road, providing access to Bedford town centre in the west and Biggleswade in the east. There is a regular service which can be accessed from bus stops within walking distance of the site

As noted earlier, the site is within the A421 corridor which provides access to the key economic centres of Cambridge in the east and Milton Keynes in the west. Located to the west of the village, traffic can access the A421 without needing to travel through the centre of the village where the highway is more restricted.

## **Conclusion**

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.

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,



Associate

**Enclosures:**

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