



BIDWELLS

Your ref: Call for sites
Our ref: JB60329
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 OFF VICARAGE LANE, WILSTEAD

I write on behalf of my client the [REDACTED], to submit land off Vicarage Lane, 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 enable consideration of the site. A red line plan showing the site boundary and the potential points of access has also been provided.

This letter sets out in a little more detail why the site is suitable for development and 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.

As will be set out in our Issues and Options response, development in this location represents an opportunity to deliver housing to meet a local need and to support the viability of local services. The site, which extends to approximately 3.713 hectares, lies adjacent to the western edge of the defined settlement boundary of Wilstead. To the north, the site is contained by the village recreation ground and bowls club, which whilst outside the defined village boundary, are a functional part of the village.

To the south and west of the site, beyond mature hedgerows which define the boundary of the site, is open countryside, formed of small, pastoral fields.

It is considered that at 3.713 hectares, the site could accommodate 40 dwellings at a density of circa 20 dwellings per hectare (based on a developable area of 50%).

The site is comprised of the existing vicarage and agricultural land. Access to the site can be achieved via adopted highway (Vicarage Lane) in the south east corner of the site and from the existing access to the Vicarage. The potential access points have been marked on the submitted site location plan.

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Key considerations for this site:

- It lies adjacent to the settlement boundary of Wilstead and has a functional relationship with the recreation ground and bowls club to the north.
- It is flat and, other than the vicarage, is free from any built form such as barns or stables.
- An area of woodland, through which the existing site entrance runs, defines the character of the site entrance. This area is not subject to any Tree Preservation Order but it is expected it would be retained as part of any development.
- There is a small brook beyond the eastern boundary which has an associated are of flood risk. This does not affect the site which is lies in flood risk zone 1.
- It is not subject to any national or regional landscape designations.
- The site is not covered by any ecological designations nor does it contain any priority habitat. There is significant opportunity to deliver biodiversity improvements as part of the development of the site, particularly through enhancements to the woodland located in the area around the vicarage.
- There are two listed buildings in close proximity to the site - The Parish Church of All Saints, which is grade II* listed, and Little Church Farm House, which is Grade II listed. The site has limited inter-visibility with these heritage assets due to the intervening woodland. The size of the site also means there is an opportunity to design a sensitive scheme which respects the setting of both buildings.
- It does not contain any public rights of way, but footpath 4 runs near the site entrance, with the right of way providing direct access to recreational walks, outside the village, to the south
- It has potential to connect directly into the recreation ground and the facilities on offer, subject to the relevant agreements.
- The main services and facilities of the village are some 500 metres from the site entrance making them within easy walking distance via existing footpaths.
- The nearest bus stop is under 300m from the site entrance, making public transport accessible for any future residents;

As a settlement Wilstead contains a number of day-to-day facilities commensurate with its defined role as a Key Service Centre. Facilities include a lower school, community centre, shops, post office, pubs, church, and some employment opportunities. Development of this site would support these existing services, ensuring that they continue to be viable. Importantly, the majority of these facilities would be within easy walk of the site.

Additionally, as noted above, the village (and the site) is well served by public transport. Routes 44 and 81 pass along Luton Road which provide regular services to Bedford town centre and Ampthill in around 20 minutes, making the location ideal for those who travel into Bedford to work. The route also serves Wixams which, in time, is likely to have a new rail station, furthering the sustainability of the location.

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,

Land off Vicarage Lane, Wilstead

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Associate

Enclosures:

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