

Your ref: Call for sites  
Our ref: OPP-00978  
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 WOBURN ROAD, KEMPSTON**

I write on behalf of my client the Police and Crime Commissioner for Bedfordshire, to submit land off Woburn Road, Kempston, 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 point 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, this site represents an opportunity to deliver housing within the existing urban area. The site is contained on all boundaries and represents a key opportunity for development of an underutilised site which serves no function. This approach to development is strongly supported in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in paragraph 118a which states planning policies and decisions should promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings.

Land off Woburn Road extends to 4.601 hectares with an estimated capacity of approximately 100 homes at a density of 40 dwellings per hectare (based on a net developable area of approximately 50%). The site is in the ownership of my client.

The site is located within the urban area of Kempston. The site is comprised of an open greenspace. To the north, there is an open field and residential homes, to the east is Bedford Police Headquarters, to the west is a new residential development and to the south is Woburn Road and land associated with the development to the west.

The site has the potential to connect to an approved access onto Woburn Road, this was consented in May 2020 as part of a full planning application for a new police custody suite (application ref: 20/00278/MAF). The road which connects to this access is within the same ownership as the site being

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submitted. My client supports the use of this as a means of access to development on this site. This access road is included within the submitted red line plan area.

Key considerations for this site:

- has no topographical constraints to development.
- is free of significant trees and vegetation, with any landscape features limited to the site boundaries and a line of trees within the site.
- lies in flood risk zone 1. However, an area of land in the south of the site (near to Elstow Brook) is identified as being vulnerable to surface water flooding.
- is not subject to any national or regional landscape designations.
- does not contain any designated heritage assets. Grade II Listed Sailors Bridges Cottages (List Entry 1.114.185) is located to the south-east of the site.
- is not covered by, or close to, any sites designated for their ecological value. There is significant opportunity to deliver biodiversity improvements across the site.
- does not contain any public rights of way.
- is a designated urban green space.
- has potential to connect to and enhance an existing access onto the public highway through land in the ownership of my client.

It is noted that this site has an urban open space designation under Policy AD43 in the Allocations and Designations Local Plan 2013. This is on the grounds that the site provides a green break in the built-up area and provides a linkage with playing fields at Hastingbury Upper School.

However, my client would argue that there are no pedestrian or road connections between this site and the playing fields, that the site is not of high ecological value and that due to recent residential development to the south-west of the site cannot be argued to have any major wider green infrastructure network linkages. The evidence base also fails to provide justification for why a green break is needed in this location. My client would note that their site is currently inaccessible to the public and therefore it serves no purpose for this designation to remain in place. Development of this site presents an opportunity to create an area of publicly accessible open space, with considered design, improved connections to nearby residential areas and with the potential for enhanced biodiversity. This would be more valuable to the public than the existing arrangement on site.

Kempston contains a number of existing day-to-day services to support growth including Kempston Challenger Academy, Ridgeway School and Balliol school all of which are in walking distance of the site. The site is also located near to Woburn Road Industrial Estate, a major employment area. Kempston is also located in close proximity to the centre of Bedford which has a wide-range of services on offer.

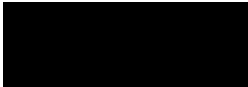
The site is served by public transport with routes 1, 68, A1, C1 and D running along Woburn Road providing regular services to Bedford Town Centre, Central Milton Keynes, Ampthill, Wootton and Stewartby. Services are regular and can be accessed from Oak bus stops, located a 10-minute walk to the north on Woburn Road.

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. The nearest junction onto the A421 is located c450m from the south of the site.

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,



Senior Planner

**Enclosures:**

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