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Bedford Borough Council
Planning Policy Team
Borough Hall
Caudwell Street
Bedford
MK42 9AP

14th August 2020

Dear Ms Cowie

Bedford Borough Council Call for Sites August 2020 - Land South of Northampton Road, Bromham

Please find attached our call for sites submission promoting land south of Northampton Road, Bromham (the Site) for residential development of up to 345 new homes including a policy compliant level of affordable housing. This submission seeks to assist Bedford Borough Council (BBC) in their understanding of the Site and why it represents a logical and sustainable extension to the village of Bromham. This letter is accompanied by the following information:

1. Call for Sites Submission Form
2. Site Location Plan
3. Site Access Drawing – 17246-006-P2
4. Site Assessment of land south of Northampton Road (based on the BBC Site Selection Methodology of July 2020)
5. Vision Document, October 2017
6. Topic Papers covering the following technical disciplines:
 - Agricultural Land Classification Review
 - Air Quality
 - Arboricultural
 - Ecology
 - Flood Risk
 - Ground Conditions
 - Heritage
 - Landscape and Visual
 - Transport
 - Utilities
7. Concept illustrative master plans

The Site

The Site is located west of the village of Bromham, situated approximately 3.5 miles from the centre of Bedford. The village is defined as a Key Service Centre within the adopted Local Plan 2030. The village has

numerous services and facilities, including a primary school, medical centre, village hall, library, supermarket, two public houses, churches and a parade of shops.

The Site extends to 17.21 hectares in area and consists of two fields. The larger western field is in agricultural use. It is separated from the smaller eastern field by a hedgerow, and the eastern plot is laid to grass. The land rises gently across the site to the west.

The Site is located to the south of Northampton Road, a tree lined street that links the north of the village to the A428. The A428, which links Bedford and Northampton, is located to the west of the Site and set in a cutting in this location. The land to the south of the Site is split and is within agricultural use to the western side, and residential dwellings are located on the eastern side. The Site is well enclosed by mature trees and hedgerows along all of its edges.

The agricultural land to the south of the Site is allocated for housing in the Bromham Neighbourhood Plan and at the time of writing, remains subject to a pending planning application for up to 390 dwellings. We note that application is subject to a viability assessment claiming only 3.6% to 5.6% affordable housing is deliverable (compared to a policy target of 30%).

A public bridleway runs along the southern edge of the Site before it crosses into the adjoining field and extends westwards to the A428 and beyond to the wider footpath network. The Bridleway also links the Site to Northampton Road.

The site-specific Vision Document accompanying this submission demonstrates the design rationale that underpins the proposal. This demonstrates the Site has adequate capacity to provide 345 dwellings, with the further ability to provide land for community use, with necessary public open space and drainage attenuation. The proposal also creates a new link connecting woodland and trees and enhances the green infrastructure and a biodiversity net gain on the Site. Community uses previously suggested have evolved following preparation of the Vision Document and have included either a 1FE primary school or community hall and sports fields. Rainier welcome the opportunity to discuss with BBC Officers whether there are any alternative community uses that may be appropriate to provide on the Site, which could include land for a new medical facility.

The Vision Document expands upon other aspects of the Site. This includes the connectivity to social infrastructure, which notes the distance from the centre of the Site to identified facilities in Bromham. Of note, the Site is only an 11 minute walk to the primary school and a 10.5 minute walk to the supermarket (measured from the centre of the Site). The Vision Document also analyses the bus connectivity of the Site which allows regular links to Bedford and Northampton. The bus routes link to Bedford train station, which is served by the East Midlands Mainline (40 minutes to London St Pancras), the Thameslink to London and beyond, as well as the link to Bletchley. Bedford railway station is also expected to be linked to the proposed East-West rail route directly linking Cambridge and Oxford, although the precise route eastwards has not yet been determined.

Rainier has continued to engage with Bromham Parish Council and is committed to working with them to deliver a scheme that would provide a logical and sustainable evolution and expansion of the village. As mentioned above the illustrative Master Plan included in the Vision Document has continued to evolve which is illustrated in the suite of concept Master Plan drawings provided with this submission. We anticipate there will be further iterations to the Illustrative Master Plan to incorporate feedback from the ongoing engagement with key stakeholders including BBC, the local community and Bromham Parish Council.

We believe the Site provides an opportunity to deliver a comprehensively planned extension to the west of Bromham. It is noted that during the initial consultations for the Bromham Neighbourhood Plan, the site was identified as the preferred Site by the Parish Council. At that stage, the Site was the most popular with regard to comments received from the local community. There was continued support for development on this site by the local community throughout the Bromham Neighbourhood Plan consultation process.

Site Assessment

This submission is supported by a site assessment for Land South of Northampton Road based on the Site Selection Assessment Methodology of July 2020. The site assessment confirms that the Site rates positively against the vast majority of relevant sustainability objectives.

The Site scores well in terms of accessibility being within acceptable walking distance of a food store, primary school, and bus stop served by a regular service. There are no known ecological constraints present on Site that would prevent residential development and the proposed scheme would deliver a biodiversity net gain of at least 10%. Development of this Site provides the opportunity to deliver areas of open space through green corridors across the Site that will link with off-site habitats.

The development will deliver energy efficiency standards that go beyond current normal requirements, including a range of measures to reduce carbon emissions, mitigating the effects of climate change, and adaptation measures to ensure the long term resilience of the development to the effects of climate change.

The proposal will include publicly accessible open space, children's play areas and the opportunity for publicly accessible sports facilities.

A full suite of technical studies has been prepared which support the site assessment and confirms there are no constraints that would limit residential development of the Site.

Conclusion

The Site is immediately available, in single ownership, and is able to deliver 345 dwellings, including a policy compliant level of affordable housing, plus land for community use comprising either a 1FE school or community facility and sports fields. This would make an important contribution to BBC's housing land supply, including affordable housing and will assist the function of Bromham as a village completing a logical and sustainable western expansion of Bromham. The Site is therefore commended to BBC for development.

We welcome the opportunity to meet with you and your colleagues to discuss the on-going promotion of this Site. In the meantime, please contact me if you require any further information.

Yours sincerely




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