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

12<sup>th</sup> August 2020

Dear Ms Cowie

**Bedford Borough Council Call for Sites August 2020 - Land South of Keeley Lane, Wootton**

Please find attached our call for sites submission promoting land south of Keeley Lane, Wootton (the Site) for residential development of up to 50 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 Wootton. This letter is accompanied by the following information:

1. Call for Sites Submission Form
2. Site Location Plan
3. Site Assessment of land south of Keeley Lane, Wootton (based on the BBC Site Selection Methodology of July 2020)
4. Vision Document, August 2020 (which identifies the proposed point of access to the Site)
5. Topic Papers covering the following technical disciplines:
  - Archaeology and Heritage
  - Preliminary Environmental Appraisals including:
    - Landscape
    - Ecology
    - Arboriculture
  - Civils Technical Note including:
    - Flood Risk
    - Drainage
6. Preliminary Transport Assessment (including proposed vehicular access drawing)

**The Site**

The Site is located to the north of the village of Wootton, situated approximately 4 miles from the centre of Bedford. Wootton is presently defined as a Key Service Centre in the Local Plan 2030. The village has numerous services and facilities, including a Lower School split over two sites, an Upper School, a pre-school, library, Healthy Living Centre (including GP Surgery), pharmacy, three public houses, two village shops of

which one incorporates a post office, two churches, Memorial Hall, village hall, and a community hall is due to open in the near future at Harris Way. The village also accommodates a number of employment uses.

The Site extends to 3.14 hectares and consists of pasture currently grazed by horses, located to the southern side of Keeley Lane. The site is intersected by a hedgerow running north to south and is relatively flat. To the east of the site is residential development along Hollies Walk. Land to the south and east is also in agricultural use, and there is a hedgerow along the shared boundary. There are some residential units to the northwest corner and northeast of the site. There is a further hedgerow along the northern boundary of the Site, to the south of Keeley Lane.

Public footpaths run directly adjacent to the southern and eastern boundaries, with a further footpath beyond the western boundary. These link to the wider footpath network. Keeley Lane also forms part of the National Cycle Route 51, which passes through Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Suffolk and Essex.

The Site has excellent links to the town of Bedford, located to the northeast. Given its location to the north of the village, access to the centre of Bedford does not require travelling on the A421 or A428.

The closest bus stops are located along Wootton Road to the north, located approximately 250m from the centre of the Site. These provide regular services into Bedford, as well as an hourly service to Milton Keynes. Bedford railway station is approximately 4 miles from the Site. This is served by the East Midlands Mainline (40 minutes to London St Pancras), the Thameslink to London and beyond, as well as a West Midlands line to Bletchley. The local station at Kempston Hardwick, located on the Bedford to Bletchley line, is located approximately 2.6 miles from the Site.

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.

The site-specific Vision Statement notes the aim to create a high-quality extension to Wootton that reinforces the identity of the village and is well integrated both physically and socially.

The Site has adequate capacity for up to 50 dwellings. The Site is immediately available, under single ownership and delivery of the Site within five years will positively contribute to BBC's housing land supply.

### **Site Assessment**

This submission is supported by a site assessment for Land South of Keeley Lane based on the BBC 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 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 50 dwellings, including a policy compliant level of affordable housing, plus open space. This would make an important contribution to BBC's housing land supply, including affordable housing and will assist the function of Wootton as a village. 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



Planning Director

Rainier Developments Limited