



Brickhill PC: Report from Cllrs Moon and Corp December 2017

Local Plan 2035

A national consultation closed last month on plans for increased housebuilding across the country. At present, the Council's Local Plan 2035 is allocating sites for development based on a calculated need to provide 950 homes a year. The Department for Communities and Local Government has now proposed a new methodology which, if agreed, will require the Council to plan for 1281 homes a year. If this goes ahead, Council planning officers have said this will increase the Borough's requirement to allocate new sites for housing growth from around 8,000 homes to 14,000.

The Government's consultation document stated that it is looking to apply a 'transitional arrangements' for those local authorities that have already embarked upon drafting their Local Plan. This will allow local authorities to continue with their own housing target if their Local Plan is submitted before the 31st March 2018. The Council is considering amending its timetable to take advantage of this.

In terms of the allocation of sites for development, you will recall that the Council has consulted on an option to develop 1 or more new settlements in the north of the Borough to accommodate around a quarter of the current 8,000 target. The possible sites are located in Wyboston, Sharnbrook, Twinwoods (between Milton Ernest and Thurleigh) and Thurleigh Airfield. Each settlement could provide around 4,000 – 6,000 dwellings (although it is thought that only 2,000 could be developed within the Local Plan period to 2035).

There has now been an update in that a new site has been submitted for consideration. A stretch of land to the south of Bedford of 986 hectares has been put forward with the possibility that it would deliver 4,500 in the Local Plan period, extending to 9,145 dwellings thereafter. It would also provide land for employment.

The promoters of the site have argued that it is suitable given its position on a high proportion of brownfield land and its position adjacent to the A421, A1 and M1. They have also stated that the site ties in with a recent report from the National Infrastructure Commission's which highlighted the opportunities around the Cambridge – Milton Keynes – Oxford corridor for 1m new homes and associated infrastructure by 2050. This strategy was backed in principle by the Chancellor in his November Budget.

The Council is now undertaking consultation work to consider whether or not to include the Stewartby site, a map of which is provide at Appendix 1 of this report.

As far as the urban area is concerned, last month we reported on a consultation that had taken place on the 'Bedford Masterplan' which set out plans for redevelopment in the town centre, particular in areas south of the river and around the train station. Council officers are now reviewing the consultation responses and assessing the possible inclusion of these proposals within the Local Plan.

Budget

The Chancellor's Budget backed key infrastructure schemes which will benefit Bedford. Firstly, it was announced that the western section of the East West Rail line from Oxford to Bedford will be running by 2024. A new 'East West Rail Company' is also being established to accelerate delivery of the next part of the line from Bedford to Cambridge.

Secondly, the Government committed to an 'expressway' between Oxford and Cambridge which will improve Bedford's eastern and western transport links. Earlier in the year Highways England consulted on plans for a new dual carriageway from the Black Cat roundabout to Caxton Gibbet.

'Transporting Bedford 2020'

The Council's Environment & Sustainable Communities Committee heard at its meeting in November that plans are being finalised for £22m of investment in decongestion schemes for Bedford town centre.

The 'Transporting Bedford 2020' programme has been backed with £19m of Government investment, while the Council will be using its own funds, including contributions from developers, to add a further £3m. The investment will be undertaken in accordance with 3 themes:

Theme 1 Town Centre Public Realm: Focussing on the High Street, St Paul's Square, the Town Bridge and St Mary's Street. This scheme will seek to improve the visual amenity of this area, including improved access for pedestrians.

Theme 2 Alleviating Pinch Points: Works will be undertaken to reduce congestion, as per the below overview taken from the Transporting Bedford 2020 document:

- Area 1: A6 Northern Gateway
 - Signalisation of Clapham Road/Manton Lane/Shakespeare Road
 - Enhancement to the operation of the Paula Radcliffe Way/Great Ouse Way roundabout
 - Enhancement to the operation of the Manton Lane/Brickhill Drive Junction
- Area 2: Bromham Road Eastern Gateway
 - Realignment and signalisation of Bromham Road/Shakespeare Road/Ashburnham Road double mini roundabout
- Area 3: Around Hospital
 - Additional lane on northbound approach to Britannia Road/Cauldwell Street/Kempston Road junction
 - Rearrangement of junction layout of Britannia Road/Amphill Road
- Area 4: Amphill Road Southern Gateway
 - Additional lane capacity at Cowbridge
 - New pedestrian footbridges

Theme 3 Urban Traffic Management & Control Technology (UTMCT) Measures: This will focus on using technology, such as with more responsive traffic signals and improved information for motorists, to hasten traffic flows.

For more information search 'Transporting Bedford 2020'.



Ambulance Response

East of England Ambulance Service Trust (EEAST) representatives attended a meeting of the Borough Council's Adult Services & Health Committee in November to discuss its service provision and performance.

Of particular interest is the adoption by EEAST of the Ambulance Response Programme (ARP) in October which is comprised of the following changes (taken from EEAST's report to the Committee):

- Call handlers have a new way of managing calls to allow earlier identification and recognition of life-threatening conditions and more time to assess patients who do not have life-threatening conditions
- Call categories and response standards have changed; simplifying the system and ensuring all calls are reported against nationally.
- Due to the change in standards and response model, EEAST will be transferring much of its existing staffing from Rapid Response Vehicles (RRV) to ambulances to facilitate an increase in ambulance cover. This will mean a reduction in cars and every ambulance service is going through a similar change in response mix.
- End to end system standards for stroke and heart attack patients.

The Trust has been struggling in recent months with an increase in 'red' category life threatening calls which has put pressure on the service for less urgent calls. It is hoped the new system will address these issues.

Rights of Way Improvement Plan

The Council is consulting on its updated Rights of Way Improvement Plan for 2018 – 2023. This will assess users' needs and subsequently set out an action plan on improvements to the Council's 1,000Km of public footpaths, bridleways and byways. Should you wish to respond to the Council's questionnaire, search 'Bedford rights of way consultation' or visit the Council's Customer Services Centre on Horne Lane or the Council's 5 library sites in: the town centre; Bromham; Wootton; Putnoe, and Kempston. The consultation ends on the 8th January 2018.

Keeping Warm in Winter

Keeping warm can be difficult during the winter months, particularly for older persons. Age UK Bedfordshire is offering advice to help. For more information call 01234360510 or visit <http://www.ageuk.org.uk/bedfordshire/>

Winter Travel

The Council's website provides a useful section on up to date service changes arising from the winter weather. This includes changes to public, school and adult services transport, waste collections and road gritting.

Search 'Bedford winter updates' for more information.

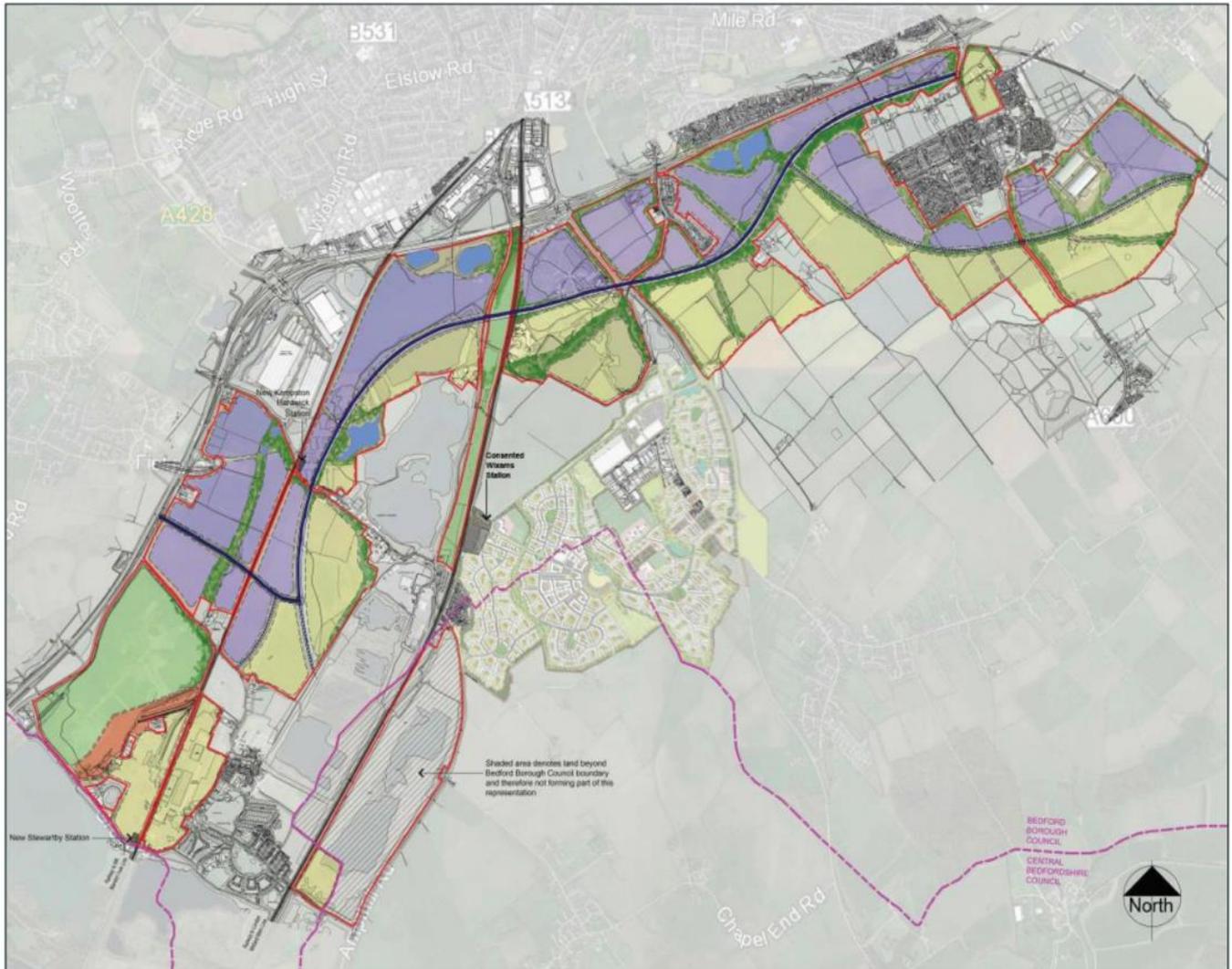
We would like to wish you a very merry Christmas and a happy New Year

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Appendix 1

Map of the proposed Stewartby Local Plan site (taken from planning documents submitted)



Legend:

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Proposed Residential Development
 Circ. 304.85 Hectares (753.3 Acres)
 Approx. 9145 units (@ 30 units per hectare)
- 
Proposed Employment Land / Mixed Use
 Circ. 292 Hectares (721 Acres)
- 
Proposed Education Land
 Circ. 14.2 Hectare (35.1 Acres)
- 
Proposed Public Amenity Space
 Linear Park Circ. 23.3 Hectares (57.5 Acres)
 Eco Park Circ. 75.3 Hectares (186.1 Acres)
- 
The Green Spine
- 
Proposed Park Avenue
 Primary distributor road
- 
Proposed new major access roads