

Local Plan 2040- Housing and Employment Land Focus

Meeting with Jon Shortland and Gill Cowie and Conservative Councillors Monday 7th June 2021

Webpage: <https://www.bedford.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy-its-purpose/local-plan-review/>

Executive papers: <https://councillorsupport.bedford.gov.uk/documents/s55106/Item 08 Local Plan 2040.pdf>

Why the rush?

Local Plan 2030 Policy 1 requires a new plan to be submitted by January 2023 if it is not then the Council's housing policies are treated as out of date which means 'speculative' applications start getting approval.

Where are we in the process?

The process is:

- Preparation of a local plan (Regulation 18) – consultees invited to make representations about what the local plan ought to contain
 - Issues and Options held Summer 2020
 - Strategy Options and Draft Policies Consultation- **Summer 2021** ← we are here

BBC has allowed for one more consultation after this current one before the final text of the draft local plan is prepared

- Publication of a local plan (Regulation 19) - **Summer 2022**
- Representations relating to a local plan (Regulation 20) – **Summer 2022**
- Submission of documents to the Secretary of State for examination (Regulation 22) - **January 2023**
- Independent examination (Regulation 24)
- Adoption of a local plan (Regulation 26)

Important to respond robustly at Reg 18 (this stage) as this is when the broad strategy is being set- there will be little time for the council to dramatically revise this later on given the tight timetable to submit by January 2023.

Housing Numbers

Target set by Government is 1275 dwellings pa (970 in the Local Plan 2030). Expect this to change again Spring 2022. Council has looked at whether it could argue for a lower target but concluded that it is too risky.

Scope of the Local Plan 2040

This is a partial review of the Local Plan 2030. Most development management policies will stay the same. Updates are on:

- development strategy and delivery of growth
- town centre and retail policies,
- updated policies on self-build/custom build housing,
- quality of development and residential space standards,
- environmental net gain.

Development Strategy

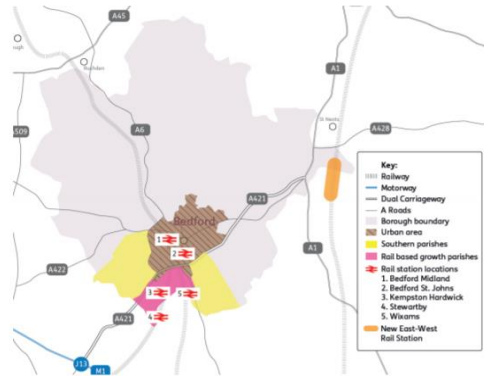
Took the six options in the Issues and Options paper 2020 and looked at ways of combining them. BBC created 4 options that it will be consulting on over Summer 2021 called Options 2a, 2b, 2c, and 2d.

Important note- they haven't entirely discounted the other options in the Issues and Options 2020 paper yet. Those responding to the consultation should also say if they are opposed to/supportive of any of the original 6 options or particular sites as they may come back on the table (developers will be working on their arguments for their preferred strategies).

All 4 options include development on brownfield in Bedford and development around existing railway stations in town centre and to the south of Bedford. Officers say that they have tried to avoid those settlements which have already taken significant growth in the Local Plan 2030 having to take much more growth, however in my view this doesn't seem to quite be borne out – particularly in Option 2d. No strategic preference between Options 2a, 2b, 2c and 2d yet.

Option 2a: Development in and around the urban area, plus A421 transport corridor with rail based growth parishes and southern parishes.

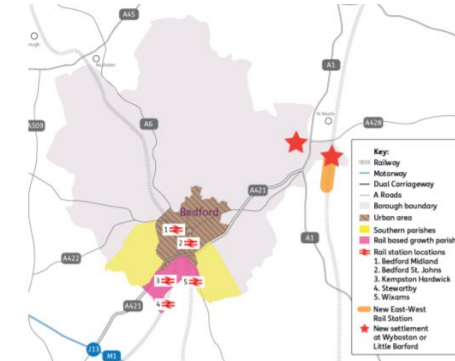
- Within the urban area (1,500 dwellings).
- Adjoining the urban area (1,500 dwellings), up to 51 ha employment.
- Transport corridor – rail based growth: land within the parishes of Kempston Hardwick, Stewartby and Wixams (high option) (7,500 dwellings), up to 80 ha employment.
- Transport corridor – south: land within the parishes of Cotton End, Elstow, Kempston Rural, Shortstown, Wilstead and Wootton (2,000 dwellings).
- Total 12,500 dwellings and up to 131 ha employment



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Option 2b: Development in and around the urban area, plus A421 transport corridor with rail based growth parishes and southern parishes, plus one new settlement.

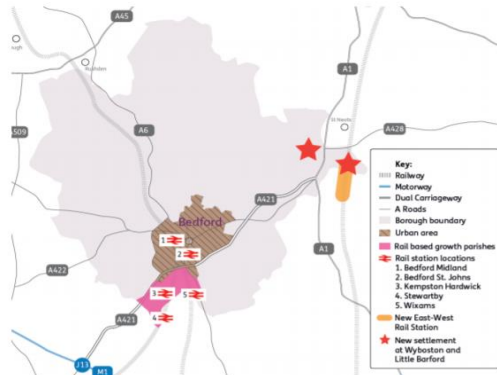
- Within the urban area (1,500 dwellings).
- Adjoining the urban area (1,500 dwellings), up to 51 ha employment.
- Transport corridor – rail based growth: land within the parishes of Kempston Hardwick, Stewartby and Wixams (low option) (5,500 dwellings), up to 80 ha employment.
- Transport corridor – south: land within the parishes of Cotton End, Elstow, Kempston Rural, Shortstown, Wilstead and Wootton (1,500 dwellings).
- New settlement at Little Barford (3,085 dwellings) or Wyboston (2,500 dwellings), up to 20 ha employment.
- Total between 12,500 and 13,085 dwellings and up to 151 ha employment.



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Option 2c: Development in and around the urban area, plus A421 transport corridor with rail based growth parishes, plus two new settlements.

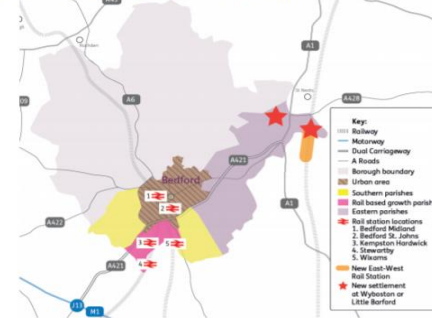
- Within the urban area (1,500 dwellings).
- Adjoining the urban area (1,500 dwellings), up to 51 ha employment.
- Transport corridor – rail based growth: land within the parishes of Kempston Hardwick, Stewartby and Wixams (extra low option, this being the residual required to meet need) (3,915 dwellings), up to 80 ha employment.
- New settlements at Little Barford (3,085 dwellings) and Wyboston (2,500 dwellings), up to 20 ha employment.
- Total 12,500 dwellings, up to 151 ha employment.



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Option 2d: Development in and around the urban area, plus A421 transport corridor with rail based growth parishes, southern parishes and east parishes, plus one new settlement.

- Within the urban area (1,500 dwellings).
- Adjoining the urban area (1,500 dwellings), up to 51 ha employment.
- Transport corridor – rail based growth: land within the parishes of Kempston Hardwick, Stewartby and Wixams (low option) (5,500 dwellings), up to 80 ha employment.
- Transport corridor – south: land within the parishes of Cotton End, Elstow, Kempston Rural, Shortstown, Wilstead and Wootton (750 dwellings).
- Transport corridor – east: land within the parishes of Cardington, Cople, Great Barford, Little Barford, Roxton, Willington and Wyboston (750 dwellings), up to 28 ha employment.
- New settlement at Little Barford (3,085 dwellings) or Wyboston (2,500 dwellings), up to 20 ha employment.
- Total between 12,500 and 13,085 dwellings, up to 179 ha employment.



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Which sites will be allocated?

We don't know yet, however, officers said that when looking at the 4 strategy options this should be read in conjunction with the call for sites submissions and the analysis done so far – this should give an indication of where housing and employment land is likely to go. Council hasn't done a full analysis of all sites yet- still work in progress. A few more sites may be submitted at this consultation.

Call for Sites information: <https://bluefoxtech.co.uk/demos/bedford-published-sites/#/center/-0.4399,52.1458>

If a key piece of information is missing from the call for sites analysis please let the council know in your consultation response! Local knowledge is helpful.

Sites will be assessed based on suitability (which includes location and other limitations), availability and achievability. See here: [HELAA #](#)

They will be subject to a [Site selection assessment](#) (click link for info). The completed forms will be available before the start of the consultation but are not currently available.

Neighbourhood Plans

BBC working with PCs to see if they would like to make/update NDPs to allocate sites. Big strategic sites such as a new settlement would be made by the Borough. If PCs want some local incremental growth they can plan for it through an NDP even if they are not allocated a specific number of houses.

Delivery of Housing/Infrastructure

BBC looking an infrastructure first approach so more of the housing might be delivered later in the plan period once infrastructure is in place.

What has informed this consultation?

Issues and Options Consultation responses- apparently there was a broad consensus of focussing on the existing urban areas and the A421 corridor <https://www.bedford.gov.uk/planning-andbuilding/planning-policy-its-purpose/local-plan-review/>

They have also had traffic data and a new strategic flood assessment commissioned.

Strategic Flood Assessment: <https://www.bedford.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy-its-purpose/technical-reports/> (There is an interactive flooding map - *Works better in Explorer - some elements don't work well in Chrome*)

Density

No assumed densities yet- if you want to know about site densities then look at the call for sites information provided by site promoters

External Factors affecting the Local Plan

- East West Rail

A reconsultation wouldn't change this plan as there isn't time for it to be submitted by January 2023. The station based growth is all based around existing stations in any case.

- Ox-Cam Arc

Government is developing an arc wide strategy – this has been slightly delayed but expecting a consultation in autumn 2021 on this. It will affect Bedford. This is expected to include significant growth (a figure of 1 million houses within the arc has been discussed) and there may be development corporations set up which could take away planning power from BBC.

- Changes to Planning System

These are expected following on from the consultation in Autumn 2020, but councils have been told to carry on with their plans anyway.

Consultation Dates:

28 June to Friday 3 September 2021

Other matters in this consultation

In particular there are draft town centre policies which we need to review but I suggest we should look at this separately.

Take away points

- This is a consultation on the broad locations for housing and employment growth up to 2040.
- It could impact rural areas along the A421/A603 and may include new settlements near St Neots.
- There is a very tight timetable for BBC to complete this plan. If it fails it will be very hard to reject 'speculative' planning applications.
- Important to engage at this stage to shape the strategy- allocations of sites will follow the strategy.
- Must read the strategy with the call for sites submitted to see what is likely to be allocated under each option.
- Previous ideas for growth are not full off the table so please also still comment on those (the 6 options in the Issues and Options paper) to avoid them coming back.