Bedford Borough Council already has a Local Plan in place up to 2030. With changes to national planning policy and proposals around the Oxford to Cambridge Arc – which Bedford Borough is at the heart of - we now need to look further ahead, so we are carrying out a Local Plan Review and want to hear your thoughts.

**Local Plans set out where growth and development will take place - everything from homes and jobs to schools and infrastructure.**

Review of the Bedford Borough Local Plan

The next local plan will mainly focus on developing a strategy to guide housing and employment growth and identify the infrastructure needed to support it.

It will also look at policies around tackling climate change, protecting the natural environment, quality of development, the provision of open spaces, self and custom build homes, the location of food outlets to ensure a healthy Borough, and the town centre.

Further details are in our consultation paper and this leaflet sums up the key points.
How much growth should there be?

Councils are required by the Government to plan for a certain level of housing growth in their local plans and reach a minimum number of new home completions each year. We may need to make new allocations to provide between 5,000 and 15,000 additional new dwellings over a plan period to 2040, depending on the Government’s formula. If the timescale is longer, then more housing sites must be allocated to meet the Government’s minimum target. Additionally, as plans start to further into the future, the assumptions they must make become more unpredictable as local and national policies and plans change. Development will need to be a balance of homes, jobs and other supporting uses.

Where should development be located?

Deciding the best locations for growth will be an important part of the next local plan. The diagrams below show different locations where growth might take place along with some of the pros and cons. They do not represent strategy options for the local plan; it may be that the local plan strategy will need to combine elements from more than one of these locations to achieve the scale of growth required. Can you suggest other locations?

### Brown – Urban based growth

- **Growth in and around the Bedford / Kempston urban area, together with extensions to Rushden and St.Neots.**
- **Building at higher densities in and around urban areas could deliver a significant number of homes.**

#### Pros – advantages
- **Supports services, facilities and businesses in urban areas, particularly Bedford town centre.**
- **Urban locations have the greatest potential for residents to make sustainable travel choices (walking, cycling and public transport).**
- **Increasing development density improves public transport viability.**
- **Makes good use of brownfield and under-used land. Higher density development more appropriate in urban locations.**
- **Needs less for growth in rural areas.**
- **More employment uses (e.g. business services) within centre will improve viability and create direct benefits of other associated business uses such as retail and leisure.**

#### Cons – disadvantages
- **Opportunities for growth within urban areas are limited, so most growth would be an edge of urban area and closer to existing villages.**
- **Very high density schemes could be out of character and affect local distinctiveness.**
- **Growth may overstretch existing services, facilities and infrastructure in towns.**
- **Expansion of Rushden and St.Neots (within Bedford Borough) may not be supported by those towns.**
- **Existing sites would miss the benefits associated with growth.**
- **Restricted sites sizes can restrict scheme options and opportunities to mitigate risk for investors.**
- **More development at high density in the urban area may contribute to places or poor quality issues.**

### Yellow – A421 based growth

- **Growth along the A421 road corridor where there are already good road links and opportunities to improve road-based public transport.**
- **It could involve growth around the south side of the Bedford / Kempston urban area and the expansion of villages between Stewartry and Great Bedford.**

#### Pros – advantages
- **Takes advantage of existing and proposed road infrastructure improvements.**
- **Close to existing employment areas with good connections.**
- **Continues the regeneration of the Marston Vale and the creation of the Community Forest.**
- **Reduces need for growth in other rural areas.**
- **Opportunity to extend the established settlement at Wixams with access to the new railway station.**
- **Provides the opportunity to phase growth, linked to upgraded infrastructure.**
- **Could incorporate a western expansion of St Neots or a new settlement at Wyboston.**
- **Capitalise on proximity and reduced travel time to high-value Cambridge market.**

#### Cons – disadvantages
- **Could encourage car use and increase pressure on A421 junctions.**
- **Requires improved connections into urban areas in order to access facilities otherwise residents may travel on to larger towns.**
- **Could appear as urban sprawl and jaw up nearby villages.**
- **Other locations would miss the benefits associated with growth.**

### Pink – Rail growth

- **Growth along the planned route of the East – West railway taking advantage of the sustainable connectivity that it could bring with south west and west of the Bedford / Kempston urban area where the railway already runs and centrally benefitting from the interchange at a redeveloped Bedford Midland Station.**
- **There would be significant potential for growth around Tempsford to the east.**

#### Pros – advantages
- **Combines some of the benefits of urban and A421 growth location options.**
- **Opportunity to extend the established settlement at Wixams with access to the new railway station.**
- **Provides the opportunity to phase growth, linked to upgraded infrastructure.**
- **Reduces need for growth on villages.**
- **Opportunities for high-tech employment development in association with East-West rail services in balanced communities with the option to live and work locally.**
- **Increases employment opportunities in the urban area, and sustainable methods of transport for those residents in most deprived areas.**

#### Cons – disadvantages
- **Would also have the disadvantages of growth focused on the urban fringes, including visual impact of strategic-scale growth on local landscapes.**
- **Exact route of the railway not yet known.**
- **Rail station north of Bedford is unlikely to be possible without a northern station.**
- **Other locations would miss the benefits associated with growth.**

### Orange – East-West rail northern station

- **Growth along the A1(M) corridor and the creation of the Community Forest.**
- **Continues the regeneration of the Marston Vale landscapes.**

#### Pros – advantages
- **A new parkway rail station north of Bedford could reduce traffic congestion in the town and provide parking.**
- **It could also serve any new settlements north of Bedford.**
- **Reduces need for growth on villages.**
- **Opportunities for high-tech employment development in association with a new East-West rail station providing option to live and work locally.**
- **Provides opportunities for sustainable and active transport links, both between new settlements and to the urban area.**

#### Cons – disadvantages
- **May require growth in communities that have no or very few facilities. This may encourage more car use as residents have to travel further, making walking and cycling less attractive.**
- **Would still require significant growth in and around Bedford if it were to take its proportionate share.**
- **Lack of a focused critical mass of development makes providing new strategic infrastructure more difficult.**
- **Unlikely to facilitate employment growth due to dispersed nature.**

### Grey – Dispersed growth

- **Growth spread proportionately across the borough.**
- **Could be growth in and around the urban area and some expansion in all villages.**

#### Pros – advantages
- **Every community contributes proportionately to achieving the growth target.**
- **The impact of growth on infrastructure is spread around the borough rather than focusing on a smaller number of locations.**
- **Would open up new markets, assist in providing small housing sites and help easy delivery of new homes.**
- **A greater number of communities see the benefits of growth for example in supporting local services and facilities.**

#### Cons – disadvantages
- **Potential for sustainable growth using garden village principles, creating self contained new communities with good infrastructure provision.**
- **Would reduce the amount of development that must be accommodated in other locations.**
- **Detached ‘village’ setting enables property construction and create ambience which higher value occupiers aspire to.**
- **Provides opportunities for sustainable and active transport links, both between new settlements and to the urban areas.**

### Red – New settlement based growth

- **In addition to expansion of Wixams a number of new settlements could be developed. During the course of the preparation of the Local Plan 2030 four potential new settlement options were discussed but were not taken forward at that time. These and other new settlement options that have yet to be put forward could be considered as part of this plan.**

#### Pros – advantages
- **Potential for sustainable growth using garden village principles, creating self contained new communities with good infrastructure provision.**
- **Would reduce the amount of development that must be accommodated in other locations.**
- **Detached ‘village’ setting enables property construction and create ambience which higher value occupiers aspire to.**
- **Provides opportunities for sustainable and active transport links, both between new settlements and to the urban areas.**

#### Cons – disadvantages
- **New settlements take a long time to plan and build, leading to short to medium-term housing supply shortages.**
- **There could be an adverse impact on local landscapes, loss of agricultural land and countryside.**
- **Issues with new settlement proposals previously put forward would need to be resolved before they could be allocated.**
- **Significant new infrastructure may be required to accommodate growth.**

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**Call for sites - Are there any sites we should specifically consider?**

The new local plan will identify land for development by allocating sites. If you know of a site that may have development potential, or if you are a landowner, business or developer and have a site you would like to bring to our attention, please complete a site submission form. All sites proposed will be considered for inclusion in the plan. We would prefer you to do this online using our consultation system. Alternatively forms can be downloaded, completed and then emailed, or submitted by post if necessary. (See next page Have your say). **Please submit your sites to us by 5pm on Friday 14th August 2020.**
Have your say

We would prefer to receive your comments using our online consultation system:

🌐 www.bedford.gov.uk/localplanreview

However you can download a response form to email to us:

✉️ planningforthefuture@bedford.gov.uk

Or Post it (with a stamp) to:

✉️ Planning Policy Team
Bedford Borough Council
Borough Hall
Cauldwell Street
Bedford, MK42 9AP

You can request a paper copy of the consultation paper and/or the response form by calling:

📞 01234 718070

This is a summary leaflet and covers key issues only. The full consultation paper can be seen at www.bedford.gov.uk/localplanreview and can be read by appointment in the Customer Service Centre, Horne Lane, Bedford MK40 1RA, 01234 267422. It will be placed in local libraries if they re-open during the consultation period.

We have recorded a presentation which explains the key aspects of the information set out in the consultation paper. The link can be found at www.bedford.gov.uk/localplanreview

You may have questions or require more information before you feel able to comment. Ordinarily we would hold drop in sessions around the borough, however due to current COVID19 restrictions we are unable to do this.

We have created an FAQs page at www.bedford.gov.uk/localplanreview which covers common queries and information which may help you. If not, you can email your question to planningpolicy@bedford.gov.uk, or call us on 01234 718300 where you can leave an answer phone message and we will return your call.

The consultation will close at 5pm on 4th September 2020

Please note the closing date for submitting potential development sites is 14th August 2020 – see call for sites above.