

BROMHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Our ref: BPC/ OM/KJB
24 May 2017

Bedford Borough Council
Local Plan 2035
Consultation Planning Policy Team
Borough Hall
Cauldwell Street
Bedford
MK42 9AP

Dear Sir/Madam

Local Plan 2035 – Planning for the Future Consultation

In response to the Consultation Paper 2017 Local Plan 2035, Bromham Parish Council would like to comment as follows:

New Settlements

As per the preferred strategy growth allocations, the Parish Council would be in support of at least one new settlement – garden village - in the four nominated locations, subject to the level of development being geared to infrastructure capacity. We feel that new settlements would take some of the burden of the new housing away from existing, established and valued rural communities. It provides a sustainable solution, and would continue to provide a further supply of housing beyond the 2035 Local Plan. To increase the level of housing further in the Key Service Centres, and the Rural Service centres, would have damaging consequences for the communities involved. It would seriously affect the dynamics of these communities'. The Parish Council strongly believe it is important that existing villages do continue to retain their own identity and integrity.

Brownfield Sites

The Parish Council support the strategy for development of Brownfield sites as a preference to utilising good quality farmland, or existing green space. In Bromham we would consider the development of Site 48, as being an option to use a " Brownfield" site, and create a small sustainable development.

Sites on the Edge of the Urban Area - Site 25

We have reservations about the development of this site. Although the proposal is for a relatively low density development, it would still have a major impact on the character of the area, when so much of the Great Ouse Valley is already lost to development. We would prefer to see it used as green open space that provides a buffer between developed areas, much along the lines of the proposed woodland between Wootton and Gibraltar Corner.

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Together with the River and Bromham Park, it would provide a clear divide between the urban area and the rural character of Bromham. It is clear from our consultation exercises that Bromham residents value that distinction very highly.

Key Service Centres

Whilst we appreciate that new housing has to be allocated somewhere, there is a huge burden on the Key Service Centres to take over 30% of 8,000 new homes required, and over 90% of development is proposed in the rural area. We have not yet seen any credible justification for this approach, which will seriously impact on existing well established rural communities, as well as putting existing infrastructure under substantial additional pressures.

The current proposal to allocate 500 houses to Bromham represents a considerable 25% increase in the number of houses in this village, which will seriously impact on existing services. Whilst we accept the need for justifiable growth in the Village, further consideration should be given to the scale of growth, particularly if one or preferably more new settlements are provided. The Parish Council, therefore, resists the allocation of 500 homes as proposed in the Local Plan 2035 consultation document, and hopes that an alternative development strategy will enable this level of growth to be significantly reduced in the final version of the Local Plan. Growth needs to help breathe life into communities, rather than swamping the services that underpin their Key Service Centre status.

Bromham Sites

Site 56 / 413

The Parish Council would strongly object to the development of the site known as Oakley Road / Molivers Lane. This takes no consideration for the consultation process from the emerging Neighbourhood Plan or fundamental planning related matters such as access and infrastructure constraints. Respondents to the Questionnaire and to the Issues and Options paper distributed as part of the emerging Neighbourhood Plan, were adamant that they would not support any large scale development that brings increased / additional traffic through the Village.

Although it states that traffic access would be on Oakley Road, the conclusion of the Borough Highways and Transport Access Assessment of the site is that the visibility on Oakley Road is "non-compliant due to the sweep in the road " and that Molivers Lane, whilst able to accommodate cyclists and pedestrians " is a narrow residential road which is not suitable to accommodate a mixed use development of this scale". This site would also be contrary to the findings from the questionnaire, and we must support and respect the views of our residents.

In addition 56/413 is adjacent to the site of ancient woodland "Maulwers Wood", now named Molivers Wood as per the Heritage Gateway Site entry 13201. "It is almost certain that the wood is the remains of ancient woodland, which once covered most of Britain". We would argue strongly that the proposed development would result in the woodland being entirely surrounded by housing, which would almost certainly have a seriously detrimental effect on what NPPF refers to as "irreplaceable habitats "

Site 43/ 49 / 51The findings from our Issues and Options 2016 Paper supported the combination of these sites as one development area. We would support, and actively promote this site, to be the preferred development site in the Village for a reasonable level of

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growth. This site would also provide an opportunity of providing significant additional areas of green space and community facilities - sports etc

There should be consideration for access points on to Stagsden Road and Northampton Road, and limited access through the existing housing. This would need further work in terms of Highways issues, but would help additional traffic to exit the Village directly on to the main road network, without the need to bring traffic through the centre of the village.

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Julie Betts, Clerk
Bromham Parish Council

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