

# **Bedford Borough Local Plan 2030**

**Adopted version** (this document contains the final text which will be typeset in due course)

**January 2020**



## Sustainability appraisal

- 1.6 A key element of the planning system is the requirement to undertake sustainability appraisal. This is to ensure that the local plan is compatible with the aims of sustainable development. Sustainability appraisal is carried out as the local plan is prepared and involves assessing strategic alternatives and policies against social, economic and environmental objectives. Where necessary the plan is modified in response to the results to ensure that harmful impacts are avoided or mitigated. A sustainability appraisal report setting out the Council's work has been published alongside this document.

## The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 1.7 The revised NPPF was published just before the Local Plan 2030. The revised NPPF provides transitional arrangements for plans in their latter stages of preparation and this means the Local Plan 2030 will be examined against the 2012 NPPF. For this reason, references within the local plan are to the 2012 NPPF.

## Reviewing Local Plan 2030

- 1.8 Due to the changes to national planning policy, in particular the need for the borough to plan for higher housing numbers beyond this local plan, the Council will undertake an early review of the local plan once adopted. Significant infrastructure proposals such as the A428 road link between the Black Cat roundabout on the A1 and Caxton Gibbet, the redesign and reconstruction of the A421/A1 junction itself, the A421 expressway, East/West rail link and potential A1 north/south realignment between the A1/A14 intersection and south of Biggleswade will bring very significant change and potentially new and better connected development opportunities both within and beyond the borough.
- 1.9 The government is currently exploring prospects for strategic growth within the Oxford-Cambridge Arc. The local plan review will provide the opportunity to reflect those decisions with future housing and employment growth aligned with infrastructure delivery timetables. Working with nearby authorities either through the duty to cooperate or jointly on cross boundary strategic plans the Council will seek to deliver sustainable solutions to the challenge of increasing housing delivery.
- 1.10 The local plan review may also provide the opportunity for the Council to make site allocations in the rural part of the borough if neighbourhood plans have failed to deliver them in the timescale anticipated (see Policy 4S).

## **Policy 1 Reviewing the Local Plan 2030**

The Council will undertake a review of the Local Plan 2030, which will commence no later than one year after the adoption of the plan. An updated or replacement plan will be submitted for examination no later than three years after the date of adoption of the plan. In the event that this submission date is not adhered to, the policies in the Local Plan 2030 which are most important for determining planning applications for new dwellings will be deemed to be 'out of date' in accordance with paragraph 11 d) of the National Planning Policy Framework 2019.

The plan review will secure levels of growth that accord with government policy and any growth deals that have been agreed. The planning and delivery of strategic growth will be aligned with the delivery of planned infrastructure schemes including the A421 expressway, Black Cat junction, East West Rail link and potentially the A1 realignment.

The review will also serve to build stronger working relationships with adjoining and nearby authorities and may result in the preparation of a joint strategic plan based on a wider geography.

### **Other plans and strategies**

- 1.11 The Local Plan 2030 will align closely with other plans and strategies prepared by the Council and its partners. Key documents are listed below.

#### **Sustainable Community Strategy 2009 – 2021:**

- 1.12 The Sustainable Community Strategy was produced in 2009 by the Bedford Borough Partnership. Whilst the deregulation Act 2015 removed the duty for local authorities to prepare a Sustainable Community Strategy, the existing Strategy still sets the overall strategic direction and vision for promoting and improving the economic, social and environmental well-being of the borough. Its preparation was overseen by the Partnership Board which brought together representatives from Bedford Borough Council, the Police, NHS Bedfordshire, parish and town councils, schools, voluntary organisations, business and community groups. Those representatives no longer meet under the umbrella of the Partnership Board but continue to work jointly on a range of strategic and local issues.
- 1.13 The Strategy sets out the Partnership's vision for the future of Bedford borough and the goals that the Partnership was seeking to achieve. In a series of aims, it explains what the Partnership planned to do to meet those goals. The goals and aims are still relevant today; many have direct links to the Local Plan 2030 and can be delivered by the local plan's policies.