

Bedford Borough Council

Bedford Station Quarter
Planning Statement
April 2010

Halcrow Group Limited

Bedford Borough Council

Bedford Station Quarter April 2010

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Summary

This outline planning application is for the redevelopment of Bedford Station Quarter, and is submitted on behalf of Bedford Borough Council.

Should planning permission be granted for this application it will deliver up to 99 dwellings, 23,915 m² of office space (B1), up to 1910m² of retail space and multi-storey car parking.

Also within the application are improvements to the station, including a new station building. Current facilities such as booking halls, platforms and access routes are inadequate to handle the existing and increased footfall that will result from the anticipated growth of the Town.

A detailed review of a wide spectrum of policy and planning guidance has been undertaken, from national through to local level, both statutory and non-statutory, and this has concluded that the proposed development will achieve considerable compliance with policy. This high degree of compliance is due to the fact that this development will provide a beneficial reuse of a derelict and under utilised urban site, whilst also facilitating the improvement of Midland Road.

MKSM Strategy states that the emphasis within the Bedford Growth Area is to strengthen the role of this key sub-regional centre through economic regeneration. Other strategic priorities identified for the area include urban renaissance and improved economic performance.

A key aim of the adopted Bedford Local Plan (2002) is to encourage the beneficial reuse of derelict and under-utilised urban sites in order to expand the range of housing available, foster the vitality and viability of Bedford Town Centre and to encourage the creation of new and additional employment opportunities. The Local Plan also supports the improvement of facilities at Bedford Midland Station. Within the Bedford Town Centre Area Action Plan (2008) there are proposals for the redevelopment of Bedford Station and surrounding area. The Action Plan states that *‘the borough council will actively support Network Rail in achieving a comprehensive commercial redevelopment of the block of property including the rail lands and premises to the south of the station forecourt fronting Ashburnham Road and the DIY*

store. In the context of the growth area agenda, government relocation plans and the future economic vitality of Bedford, there is an urgent need to identify good quality, well connected and centrally located office development sites. When combined with enhanced transport links this will help Bedford to play a key role within the Cambridge-Oxford Arc'.

The proposed development was steered and guided in its early stages by a Steering Group comprising of Bedford Borough Council, Bedfordshire County Council, East of England Development Agency (EEDA), English Partnerships (EP), CABE, Renaissance Bedford and Network Rail. Since then, more focused engagement has taken place with key stakeholders which has seen the scheme evolve to the mix and form of development now proposed.

In light of the above, it is considered that there is considerable support for our proposal and therefore we respectfully request that planning permission be granted for the development hereby proposed, in accordance with section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

1 Proposal Overview

1.1 Purpose of the Statement

1.1.1 This Planning Statement supports the outline planning application for the redevelopment of Bedford Station Quarter and is submitted on behalf of Bedford Borough Council. Figure 1.1 shows the location of the proposal. The application site lies wholly within the Borough of Bedford. The application boundary is shown on Figure 1.2.

1.1.2 The application is for a mixed use development in the area around and including Bedford Railway Station, hereafter referred to as "Bedford Station Quarter".

1.1.3 The scheme will provide up to 99 dwellings, up to 23,915 m² of B1 office space (10,065m² of which could alternatively be developed as a hotel), up to 1910m² of retail space and multi-storey car parking. Also within the application site are improvements to the station including a new station building (which would include up to 500m² of the retail floorspace quoted above).

1.2 Information Submitted with this Application

1.2.1 In line with DCLG Circular 01/2006, information on the following matters is submitted with this application:

- **Use** - see Figure 3.1
- **Amount of Development** - see Figure 3.1
- **Indicative Layout** - see Figure 3.2
- **Scale Parameters**
- **Indicative Access Points**

1.2.2 Detail of layout, scale, appearance, access and landscaping will be submitted for approval as reserved matters.

1.3 Background to the Application

1.3.1 The initial development proposals for the Bedford Station Quarter are set out in the Adopted Town Centre Area Action Plan 2008 (TCAAP). This plan outlines a

vision for the Town Centre, identifies investment priorities and provides guidelines on shaping the form of the Town Centre over the next 15 to 20 years.

1.3.2

1.3.3

One of the key proposals included within the Town Centre Area Action Plan (TCAAP) is to redevelop Bedford Train Station and adjoining land to create a new office quarter, new housing and a new transport interchange at a repositioned station.

1.3.4

This Planning Statement is submitted with other supporting assessments in support of Planning Application No. 08/01042/MAF. The proposals detailed and explained within this document have been informed by extensive stakeholder discussions that have taken place since the submission of the original proposals.

1.4

Supporting Documentation

1.4.1

In addition to this Planning Statement, a Design and Access Statement, Environmental Statement, Tree Survey, Flood Risk Assessment and Transport Assessment (including Interim Travel Plan) have been submitted in support of this application.

1.5

Structure

1.5.1

The structure of the Planning Statement is as follows:

- Chapter Two describes the site and surroundings
- Chapter Three describes the proposal
- Chapter Four sets out the planning history
- Chapter Five identifies the opportunities and threats
- Chapter Six sets out relevant planning and transport policy
- Chapter Seven evaluates these policies
- Chapter Eight sets out the case for development
- Chapter Nine highlights the sustainability credentials of the proposal
- Chapter Ten provides a Statement of Community Involvement
- Chapter Eleven is the conclusion

Insert site location plan 1.1

Insert site application boundary 1.2

2 The Site and Surroundings

2.1 Site Location

2.1.1 The application site is located immediately adjacent to the western edge of Bedford's Town Centre, as shown on Figure 1.1.

2.1.2 The application site comprises two distinct areas; the "Station Site" and the "Sidings Site". The "Sidings Site" is physically separated from the "Station Site" by Ford End Road. The "Station Site" is bound by the railway to the west, Ashburnham Road to the east, Ford End Road (including a bridge over the railway lines) to the south and Bromham Road to the north. The development of this site is identified as a 'Key Area of Change' in the Bedford Town Centre Area Action Plan (TCAAP).

2.1.3 A second area, the "Sidings Site" lies south of Ford End Road and extends south towards the River Great Ouse. The "Sidings Site" is bordered to the north by Ford End Road. To the east the site is bordered by the railway tracks and sidings and an informal car park used by Network Rail. To the west, the land is occupied by three large gas tanks. Part of the site is identified as a 'Key Area of Change', the remaining area falls within a 'Potential Area of Change' in the Bedford TCAAP.

2.2 Site Description and Uses

2.2.1 The application site includes the existing Bedford Midland Mainline railway station, associated rail tracks and platforms, surface car and cycle parking, a DIY store and an assortment of residential, commercial and industrial buildings alongside Ashburnham Road. The car parking areas are fringed and interspersed by linear strips of trees and shrubs. The remaining area of land to the south of Ford End Road largely consists of railway sidings (Sidings Site).

2.2.2 Bedford Midland Mainline station has direct services to Luton, London and Gatwick to the south and Leicester, Derby and Sheffield to the north.

2.2.3 The existing station complex comprises of a single storey station building, four platforms approximately 235m long, one bay platform, four ticket office windows,

three automatic ticket machines, one bank automatic teller machine, public telephone, post box, twelve CIS screens, notice boards, advertisement boards, 595 car parking spaces and 113 premium spaces, 29 set down spaces, 317 bicycle parking spaces, nine disabled parking spaces within 30m of the building and eight taxi spaces.

2.2.4 Other uses within the application site include:

- A workshop and premises at 6 Ashburnham Road
- Business unit and premises on the first floor of 2A Ashburnham Road
- A warehouse and related offices on the ground floor of 2B Ashburnham Road
- Car parking and advertising
- A retail warehousing unit

2.3 *Existing neighbouring uses*

2.3.1 The application site is located on the western edge of Bedford Town Centre and on the eastern edge of Queens Park Local Centre. Queens Park Local Centre comprises a small group of shops, including a newsagents and a general store.

2.3.2 The application site is within a short walk of Queens Park Local Centre and less than a 10 minute walk from the Town Centre.

2.3.3 The Bedford Station Quarter, particularly the Station Site, is surrounded by high density residential properties interspersed with some industrial areas.

2.3.4 As you travel along Ford End Road to the west and Midland Road / Bromham Road to the east the character of the area changes from a predominantly residential area to a local centre and Town Centre respectively.

2.3.5 Immediately along Ford End Road the uses largely consist of a number of convenience stores or leisure uses. There are a number of buildings along Ford End Road that are vacant or in a poor state of repair. As you travel further eastwards along Midland Road there is an ever increasing number of retail units.

North

2.3.6 The application site is bordered to the north by Bromham Road. Bromham Road is one of the main access roads into Bedford Town Centre. To the north of Bromham Road there is a large residential estate, largely comprising two storey

dwelling. Along Bromham Road there are a number of 1970's office blocks. There is also some office accommodation located at the junction of Ashburnham Road and Bromham Road.

2.3.7 Along the north east boundary of the site there are a number of 3 to 4 storey modern flatted developments. These developments are of conflicting styles.

East

2.3.8 There are a number of residential and business premises located along the western side of Ashburnham Road, which back onto the site. These are largely 3 – 4 storeys in height. The age of buildings along the western edge of Ashburnham Road varies from pre 19th Century up to the modern day. In addition, there is a large Focus DIY store and a garage that are both out of character in the area.

2.3.9 The residential properties located along the eastern side of Ashburnham Road consist predominantly of pre 19th Century dwellings. However, there has been some limited infilling of modern residential developments that have done little to enhance the character of the area, for example, the large 7-storey modern apartment block immediately opposite the entrance / exit to Midland Road Railway Station.

West

2.3.10 Land to the west of the railway tracks and north of Ford End Road has recently been developed for housing. It consists of some 300 dwellings that are between 2 to 4 storeys in height. Queens Park Local Centre is located further west.

South

2.3.11 Land to the south of the application site is bordered by the River Great Ouse some 150 metres away, not immediately adjacent to the site. Immediately south of the River Great Ouse the site of the former Britannia Ironworks is currently being redeveloped for housing. Once this development has been completed a footbridge will link the residential development with the northern bank of the river just to the south of the "Sidings Site".

2.4 *Land Ownership*

2.4.1 The majority of the land is within the ownership of Network Rail. However, there a number of properties owned by different parties. The Focus Retail Warehouse,

which is located to the south of the station, has been recently acquired by Bedford Borough Council.

2.4.2 Included in the application site is Number 6 Ashburnham Road, which is held on a freehold ownership by the Marsham Tyre Company. The property is currently being used for light industry. Numbers 2a and 2b Ashburnham Road are included in the application site and are held under freehold ownership by Celtic & Co. Limited of Assembly Buildings.

2.5 *Flora and Fauna*

2.5.1 The ecology of the Station Quarter is limited by its urban location, developed nature and existing high levels of disturbance. Natural features within the Station Site are limited to areas of linear strips of vegetation, mainly trees and shrubs, which form the landscaping of the car park. Some of these trees are protected by TPOs.

2.5.2 The 'Sidings Site' is of greater ecological interest given the lower levels of existing disturbance, greater vegetation cover and direct connection to the River Great Ouse. A review of the BLBRMC records indicates that there are no existing records of protected or notable species or habitats within or immediately adjacent to the development site. However, consultation with Bedford Borough Council indicated that the internationally protected species, great crested newts *Tristatus cristatus* has been recorded in a pond within 100m to the west of the 'Sidings Site'.

2.6 *Cultural Heritage and Archaeology*

2.6.1 There are no protected sites of national importance within or immediately adjacent to the Station Quarter. Consultation with the Bedford Borough Council planning archaeologist indicated that there are no known features of archaeological significance within the site.

2.7 *Visual Character*

2.7.1 The Bedford Station Quarter currently lacks character and distinctiveness and the existing urban fabric is characterised by a poorly designed railway station and unattractive surface car parking area. Landscaping of the car parking areas has introduced a certain amount of vegetation to the site and to the western side of the tracks, a line of mature trees forms the site boundary.

2.7.2

The proposed development is surrounded by a variety of visual receptors including residents of adjacent houses, workers and customers in adjacent commercial properties and users of the adjacent railway, roads and footpaths.

3 Description of the Proposal

3.1.1 The planning application boundary is outlined in red and is shown on Figure 1.2. The site area is approximately 6.3 hectares.

3.2 *Key Principles*

3.2.1 A number of key principles underlie the design of the proposed development. These are set out below:

3.3 *Creation of a new Office Quarter*

3.3.1 The office development at Bedford Station Quarter will be of a quality that is comparable to offices available in Milton Keynes and Northampton. The proposed development will yield a total of nearly 24,000 m² of office space.

3.4 *Creation and Strengthening of the Station to Town Centre Axis*

3.4.1 The connectivity between the Town Centre and the station is weak and not very well defined. Midland Road is the most direct route between the station and the Town Centre but this direct relationship is lost as there is a very weak link between the junction of Midland Road/Ashburnham Road and the station. A new station building is to be provided close to the site of existing building, which will be designed so as to have entrances from both the north and south.

3.4.2 The proposals have sought to provide a direct visual and pedestrian/cycle access link from the Midland Road/Ashburnham Road junction to the southern elevation of the station building. This is to provide the most direct and shortest route possible while also providing the greatest opportunity to ‘announce’ the station building through the design of the Station Quarter development.

3.5 *Creation of a Distinctive Gateway Building to Bedford*

3.5.1 The intention is to provide a distinctive office building at the end of views along Midland Road that has its own clear identity and gives visitors and residents a sense of “arrival”. It is also considered that this location within the site has potential to accommodate some form of public art.

3.6 *Provision of a transport interchange and improved access arrangements*

3.6.1 A transport interchange is to be provided within the proposed development. The design of this interchange in the spaces directly to the north and south of the new station building will prioritise the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and buses in order to encourage a modal transport shift away from the car for those visiting the station.

3.6.2 The scheme is designed around the principle of providing the most direct pedestrian access between the Town Centre and the station and the provision of bus, cycle and pedestrian access and drop-off/pick up points will facilitate the shift to sustainable transportation.

3.6.3 Seven disabled spaces and twenty six short stay parking spaces are provided within a parking court immediately to the north of the station building. In addition the multi-storey car park to the north of the station building would include 38 disabled spaces at ground floor level.

3.6.4 Parking spaces for up to thirty eight taxis would be provided along the western elevation of the multi-storey car park to the north of the station. The taxis would wait in two adjacent rows of parking spaces along the western edge of the multi-storey car park to the north of the building. Taxis would circulate within the site in a 'loop' around the multi-storey car park/office building, entering and exiting the site at different points from Ashburnham Road.

3.7 *Enhanced railway station pedestrian and network capacity*

3.7.1 The improved capacity to cope with growth in pedestrian movements on platforms and within the ticket office and future proofing the potential for an additional platform are key principles of the scheme for Network Rail and the rail industry. The station building is positioned in a central location within the site and will be adjacent to the railway line once it has been widened. Its central location allows the new platforms extending north and south from the repositioned station building to be equidistant in length.

3.7.2 Much of the work required to improve the existing rail infrastructure is likely to be undertaken by Network Rail as permitted development under Parts 11 and 17 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development)

Order. However we understand that a detailed planning application in respect of proposals for the new station building will be submitted by Network Rail.

3.8

Design Objectives

3.8.1

The aim of the design approach is to create a development of the highest quality design. Based on the key principles outlined above, a number of design objectives have both informed and directed the design of the final layout. These are:

- To work with the site configuration;
- To work with the site topography;
- To incorporate existing built forms contiguous to the site boundary;
- To create a distinctive development and sense of place for Bedford;
- To create a movement framework to support a sustainable community;
- To enhance movement between the relocated new station and car parks;
- To establish an approach for sustainable buildings;
- To create a sight line between the Town Centre and the proposed landmark building; and
- To mitigate flood risk as appropriate.

3.9

Option Development

3.9.1

Prior to the submission of the planning application in spring 2008, a number of options for the redevelopment of the site were considered. Since then the proposals have been reviewed and revised, largely in response to feedback from the public and rail operators.

3.9.2

The most significant changes have seen the station building retained in a location close to its existing position and car parking for the station moved to the main part of the application site. Originally it was proposed on the Sidings Site.

3.9.3

A similar mix of uses is proposed which broadly comprise the following:

- Up to 23,915 m² office floor space
- A new station building with floor space of up to 1525 m²
- Up to 1910 m² retail space
- Up to 951 parking spaces to serve the station
- Up to 325 parking spaces to serve the office uses/hotel/retail

- Up to 99 new homes/ 12,725m² residential floorspace
- The following section describes how and where these uses will be accommodated within the application site.

3.10

What will the Quarter look like?

3.10.1

The proposed land use framework is shown on Figure 3.1. The proposed development is divided into three main areas. The 'north area' will comprise the proposed car parking to serve the station and some of the proposed office development. The 'central area' will comprise the station, transport interchange, offices, small scale retail development and small scale housing. The 'sidings site' will accommodate housing. The station site has access points off Ashburnham Road whilst the development on the 'sidings site' will take access off Ford End Road. Figure 3.2 shows the indicative building footprints.

3.11

North Area

3.11.1

The north area comprises car parking to serve the station. The illustrative proposals show this provided as three separate multi-storey car parks. The two car parks proposed at the northern-most end of the site adjacent to Bromham Road are three storeys in height (two decks with parking proposed on the roof).

3.11.2

A third multi-storey car park would be provided to the south of these which would accommodate six floors of car parking (five decks with parking on the roof). The southern and eastern elevations of this car park would be adjoined by five storeys of office or hotel accommodation. The car park would provide parking to serve these offices/ hotel and the station. Taxi waiting ranks will be provided at ground level adjacent to the western elevation of the car park.

3.11.3

Each of the car parks would be accessed from a new access off Ashburnham Road. Taxis would also enter the site at this point but would exit the site through the site's 'Central Area'.

3.12

Central Area

3.12.1

The proposed land uses within the Central Area are organised around the relocated station building. To the north of the new station a transport interchange is proposed which would accommodate short stay car parking, disabled car parking and cycle parking.

- 3.12.2 Commercial development is proposed to the south of the station building. This would be provided within a building that extends up to ten storeys in height, although the majority of the building would be between 3 and 6 storeys in height. Part of the ground floor is proposed for retail uses, with office floorspace proposed above. The office development car parking would be provided within a car parking ‘core’ of the building. Vehicular access would be gained at the junction of Midland Road and Ashburnham Road, via an access road that would extend around the building to its rear adjacent to the railway line.
- 3.12.3 The footprint of the proposed commercial building is shaped so as to create a direct pedestrian route within the Central Area from the Midland Road and Ashburnham Road junction.
- 3.12.4 A two way ‘loop’ access road extends into the Central Area off Ashburnham Road. This is proposed exclusively for buses, with bus stops proposed either side of the access road. A total of 6 bus bays are proposed.
- 3.12.5 The ‘Central Area’ includes two infill sites within the established built up frontage on to Ashburnham Road. It is proposed that the existing non-conforming uses and buildings of poor quality design will be replaced by new residential development. This would take the form of apartments over 4 floors.
- 3.13 Sidings Site**
- 3.13.1 This ‘stand-alone’ part of the application situated on the western side of the railway line would accommodate residential development. The illustrative layout shows how the site could be developed for a scheme predominantly comprising townhouses of up to 79 new homes. We suggested 29 town houses and 50 maisonettes. None of the ground floors comprise ‘habitable’ rooms and may comprise garaging.
- 3.13.2 The layout comprises a continuous perimeter block of development along the site’s northern and eastern boundaries. The townhouse properties face inwards into the site and each has its own private rear garden. The illustrative layout shows how the site could be developed to allow for the future residential redevelopment of the neighbouring site to the west which would otherwise be difficult to redevelop in isolation because of the shape and orientation of the site.

3.14***Housing*****3.14.1**

The total proposed residential component of the scheme will comprise up to 99 units. The proposed housing density is approximately 45 dwellings per hectare (dph) on the Sidings site. The shape of the Sidings site tapers towards its southern end, limiting the potential for this part of the site to accommodate built development.

3.14.2

The maximum height of the proposed housing will range from 3-4 storeys depending upon its location within the application site.

3.14.3

The detailed design of the residential development has not been addressed at this stage, however it is anticipated that this will comprise a mix of one and two bed apartments and three and four bed houses. There is residential development surrounding the site, and the detailed design of our proposals will be developed to relate to this. In total up to 2,910sq metres of residential floorspace is proposed as part of the infill development on the Ashburnham Road frontage and a maximum of 12,725 sq metres on the Sidings Site.

3.14.4

An additional community building to serve existing and new residents of Queens Park has been identified as a need both by community representatives and public service providers with community engagement needs. It is recognised that residential developments across the several re-development sites on the south of Ford End Road could collectively provide for this.

3.14.5

An indicative Plan showing Residential Block Layout is included as Figure 3.3.

3.15***Affordable Housing*****3.15.1**

In line with local authority standards, 30% of housing will be affordable. The affordable housing will be subject to the same design and environmental standards as private housing, with the intention that the two will not be distinguishable to the onlooker.

3.16***Office*****3.16.1**

The office development in the Central Area will shape the approach to the new station building from the Town Centre for pedestrians and public transport. The part of the office building nearest to the Ashburnham Road/Midland Road

junction and which would be particularly prominent to views of the site along Midland Road will be the tallest section of this structure.

3.16.2 The office building will comprise up to 13,850 m² of office floorspace together with a maximum of 190 car parking spaces which would be exclusively for the use of the occupiers of the office accommodation. Access to the car parking would be at a point on the western elevation of the building and via an access road that extends from Midland Road around the southern elevation of the proposed building. Figure 3.4 shows indicative Office Block Layout.

3.17 *The Proposed Office/Hotel building in the North Area*

3.17.1 This will be smaller in scale and height in order to reflect the existing built forms along Ashburnham Road. Flexibility has been built in so that the ground floors could be used for a retail use if required.

3.17.2 This will 'wrap around' the multi-storey car park in an 'L' shape, as the detailed design of an office or hotel is more likely to be compatible with the appearance of existing development alongside Ashburnham Road, screening the car park from views from Ashburnham Road.

3.18 *Station*

3.18.1 The new station facility will form the key rail gateway to Bedford. The new station will be positioned between the boundary of the widened railway line (to the west) and the application site boundary (to the east). The station building would be a stand alone building and have north and south entrances. It will have a maximum gross floorspace of approximately 1,525 sq metres. The maximum height of the new building is 12 metres (the equivalent of 3 storeys) and is determined by the height of the extended footbridge and new lift required to access the platforms.

3.18.2 The decision to have a stand alone building is based on the need to ensure that the station is built by 2010/2011 and this has the advantage of uplifting the land values making it more attractive for future developers/investors/tenants.

3.19 *Size of Station Building*

3.19.1 The size of the proposed station building has been guided by the need to provide increased capacity and includes the possibility of the re-opening of some routes. The design of the station building is based on forecast passenger demand together

with rail related demand on the routes together with any demand emanating from the proposed new housing developments in the Growth Area itself with reference to the proposed station at Elstow.

3.19.2 The station building will comprise a ticket hall capable of handling an envisaged increased passenger footfall, four ticket office windows with enough space for a nine passenger queue, space for 4 automatic ticket machines, spatial provision for nine automatic ticket gates and a bank automatic teller machine. CCTV will be provided within the building and the development as a whole. Provision of extra sheltered waiting areas on each platform is to be reviewed once forecast passenger numbers are known.

3.19.3 Additionally, the station building will accommodate a station back office that will include as a minimum: ticket office with TOWs (Time of the week displays with one to be DDA compliant), secure room, mess room, locker room, manager's office, station reception area, staff toilets/shower room, customer toilets, stores, cleaners' cupboard and plant room. In addition, space will be provided for a new platform and associated tracks.

3.20 Station Forecourts

3.20.1 The station building will have forecourt areas at both its southern and northern entrances. These areas will include bus stops, parking for cyclists and car parking for the disabled and short stay visitors to the station. Both areas would comprise high quality open spaces, including both hard and soft landscaping. Further information about landscaping will be provided at the reserved matters application stage.

3.20.2 The priority in both forecourt areas will be for pedestrians and cyclists rather than vehicles. The southern station forecourt includes an access 'loop' road for buses, although the detailed design of this space will separate vehicle and pedestrian/cyclist movements.

3.20.3 Key features of the station forecourt areas and transport interchange include:

- Bus interchange provision for 6 standard length buses on either side of a one way access 'loop' extending off Ashburnham Road;
- Parking spaces for seven disabled drivers;

- Up to 600 cycle parking spaces
- Thirty eight spaces for taxis will be provided within the North Area.

3.21***Retail***

3.21.1

The ground floor of the proposed office building would accommodate up to 1,410 m² of retail floorspace. It is envisaged that this could comprise four or five separate retail outlets, none of which would be greater than 800 m² in gross floor area. The retail uses would cater for the needs of the pedestrians moving between the station and Town Centre, including for example a café or newsagents. A cycle repair shop could also potentially be accommodated within one of the retail units, with cycle parking proposed between the office and station buildings.

3.21.2

The station building development itself will incorporate up to 500 sq metres of retail development.

3.22***Multi – Storey Car Parks***

3.22.1

Three stand-alone multi-storey car parks are proposed within the North Areas. These would vary in height from three to six levels of car parking with the top deck of each being uncovered. In total these will provide up to 951 car parking spaces to serve the station and 135 car parking spaces which would serve 10,065 m² of the proposed office accommodation. A fourth car park on separate levels would be provided within the office development adjacent to Ford End Road in the Central Area of the site. This latter car park would comprise a maximum of 190 parking spaces. Currently the station has a provision of 595 car parking spaces with a further 10 unmarked bays.

3.22.2

The amount of car parking to serve the station has been determined following discussions with stakeholders. The parking provided to serve the office accommodation is based on the application of a ratio of one car parking space for every 75 m² of floorspace.

3.22.3

Provision of car parking for disabled persons and parent and child parking will be on the ground floors of the multi-storey car parks. These parking bays will be located as close as possible to the station's northern entrance.

3.22.4

Where lifts are provided within the multi-storey car parks, the lifts shall be compliant with access for all codes of practice. Also all areas of car parking shall be

illuminated to 100 lux and be provided with height restricted barriers on entry, clear way finding and signage and CCTV coverage monitored from the station management area. An indicative plan showing the parking, as well as the bus and taxi arrangements is shown as Figure 3.5.

3.23

Cycle

3.23.1

In order to encourage the use of more sustainable means of transportation a maximum of 600 parking spaces for bicycles will be provided, significantly more than the current provision of 117. These spaces are to be provided in two separate areas immediately either side of the station building to the north and south. The proposed number of spaces has taken into account anticipated growth in passenger numbers as well as an anticipated modal shift from car to bicycle.

3.24

Land Use Schedule

Table 3.1 - Land Use Schedule

		No. of Units (max)	No. of Floors (max)	Total Area m² (max)
Residential Block				
Block 1 of apartments fronting Ashburnham Road		12	4	1,870
Block 2 of apartments fronting Ashburnham Road		8	4	1,040
The Sidings		79	3	12,725
Total		99	-	15,635
Office Block				
Office	North Area (office/hotel)		4-5	10,040
	Central Area		10	13,850
Total				23,950
Retail				
Retail	GF of office building			1,410
	Part of the station building			Up to 500

Total		1,910
Station	3	1,525
Car Parking		
Multi-storey Car Park 1 (serving the station)		168 spaces
Multi-storey Car Park 2 (serving the station)		198 spaces
Multi-storey Car Park 3 (serving the station and office/hotel accommodation)		720 spaces (585 spaces for the station / 135 spaces for the hotel/ offices)
Multi-storey car parking within office development		190 spaces
Total		1,276 spaces

3.24.1

The schedule identifies the potential range of building heights. The maximum length and width of individual buildings is shown on the illustrative layout (Figure 3.2). The minimum length and width dimensions for these buildings should be assumed as 15% less than the footprint dimensions shown on Figure 3.2.

3.25

Phasing

3.25.1

Phasing of the development will need careful consideration in order to ensure that the day-to-day operation of the railway station is not adversely affected. This will need the agreement of the rail operators and will also need to reflect the implementation of wider changes to the rail network, such as the potential electrification of the railway.

3.25.2

The first phase of development will be the redevelopment of the station building which is scheduled to be completed by 2011. Beyond this the following outline phasing timetable has been prepared for the purpose of assessing the impact of the proposals:

- Preliminary Works (2011)
- Phase 1 Relocation of Station building (2011)
- Phase 2 Multi storey and office/hotel to the north of the station (2011-2012)

- Phase 3 Office building in southern half of the central site (2013-14)
- Phase 4 (2016-17)
- Phase 5 (2020)

Insert 3.1

Insert 3.2

Insert 3.3

Insert 3.4

Insert 3.5

4 Relevant Planning History

4.1 *Planning History*

4.1.1 Set out below is a summary of the planning history of the site and surrounding area that is considered material to the application.

4.1.2 No previous planning applications have been submitted to the planning authority for similar developments on the station site itself. However, on the land to the south of Ford End Road, a planning application has been refused for a mixed use development comprising residential, retail and industrial uses (B1, B2 and B8). A subsequent planning appeal was dismissed. (Application Reference 99/01396/OUT).

4.1.3 There are several regeneration schemes in the vicinity of the application site and Bedford Town Centre. A summary of each of the schemes is provided below:

Bedford Town Centre West - St Modwen Scheme

4.1.4 Permission for the redevelopment of Pligrim Square (£200 million) by St Modwen has been granted by Bedford Borough Council subject to a Section 106 agreement. The proposed mixed use scheme covers an area of approximately 7.7ha of land and will comprise about 385,000 sq.ft of retail in approximately 40 units, (including a department store and foodstore) 96,000 sq.ft. of leisure uses including restaurants and a cinema; a hotel; bus station; up to 1,100 parking spaces; and 330 residential units. The land assembly is in progress.

Castle Lane Scheme - Complex Development Projects Scheme (CDP)

4.1.5 A £20 million regeneration scheme to create a vibrant cultural quarter within the remains of Bedford Castle was approved by Bedford Borough Council, London-based Complex Development Projects (CDP) was selected to carry out plans at Castle Lane and will work in partnership with Bedford Borough Council to create 103 one bed and two bed residential units above nine retail units. The residential and retail buildings are up to eight storeys in height. Three bar/restaurants units were developed with terraces overlooking a new archaeological park exposing the inner bailey of the castle. The site is now developed and largely occupied.

Former Rolls Royce Factory (Queen's Works) (Application No. 05/01389/Ful)

4.1.6 Planning permission was granted for the redevelopment of the former Rolls Royce Factory (Queen's Works) for 36 dwellings on an area of 0.356ha. This brownfield site was used for engineering works and offices. The proposed access to the scheme will be achieved through the provision of a new access or by alteration to the existing access. A subsequent application (07/03052/maf for 50 dwellings) was refused and an appeal lodged but withdrawn. It is understood that this site is now owned by NHS Bedfordshire and is proposed to be a health centre including a GP practice and extended health services.

4.1.7 The site is located less than 1km west of Bedford Town Centre in the eastern part of Queen's Park which is characterised by predominantly late 19th century and mostly residential terraces and semi-detached dwellings on a north-south street pattern. The former Queen's factory, to the north of the Rolls Royce Factory, has been already developed for a residential use.

Queen's Works, Ford End Road (Application No. 02/0693/FUL)

4.1.8 An application for residential development on the Queen's Works was allowed on appeal on 30th December 2003 for the erection of 326 dwellings together with ancillary works and associated infrastructure, and is now developed. The appeal was allowed on condition that the scheme provided 91 affordable dwellings as well as the scheme setting out the number, location, size, tenure split and building programme of dwellings and specification of Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) involved.

4.1.9 The Queen's Works site is approximately 4.95ha and used to accommodate the whole of the former Rolls Royce Factory. The site is contained between Hurst Grove, the railway line and Ford End Road and is now developed.

Land at former Gas Works Site (Application No. 03/01660/OUT)

4.1.10 An outline planning application was submitted to the Council for the redevelopment of land at the former Gas Works site at Ford End Road. All matters were reserved except for the means of access. The proposal is for a mixed use development comprising residential and employment uses. The schedule of accommodation includes 8 live/work units, 12 car parking spaces, 9 B1 employment units (836m²), 23 car parking spaces, 146 apartments and 146 car

parking spaces. The proposed density is up to 75 dwellings per hectare (dph). Although approved, the permission has lapsed.

4.1.11 The application site is approximately 2.76ha and is located within the Queen's Park area of Town. The site is located within 750m of the Town Centre's primary shopping area and also falls within the boundary of the inner residential zone. The site has been derelict since the 1970's and the proposed mixed use is complimentary to the predominantly residential Queen's Park area and employment sites within the vicinity.

Britannia Development, Kempston Road (Application No. 05/00642/MAF)
4.1.12 Phase E - Erection of 255 flats in a series of buildings ranging in height from four to eight stories including public and private open spaces, play spaces, footpaths, cycleways, estate roads and car parking. Phase F is expected in due course and is expected to comprise 110 residential units.

4.1.13 We understand that land south of Ford End Road and to the west of the Sidings part of the application site is to be promoted for residential development.

5 Opportunities and Constraints

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 This section of the statement highlights the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that currently exist on and around the site. These are shown on Figure 5.1.

5.1.2 The information in this section has been obtained from a desk-based review of available information and a site visit.

5.2 Strengths

5.2.1 The Bedford Station Quarter lies within easy walking distance of the Town Centre and Queens Park Local Centre. The Bedford Station Quarter is well placed to facilitate growth on the western side of the Town. The residential areas to the north and north east of the Quarter are of a high quality and provide a pleasant approach to the station from this direction whether travelling on foot or by car. In addition, there is a wildlife corridor along the western edge of the application site, which leads to the river and an attractive area of open space to the south of the application site.

5.2.2 The application site lends itself to a higher density scheme as it is surrounded by a considerable number of properties in excess of three to four storeys in height. As such, a scheme of similar height and density would not be out of character with its surroundings.

5.2.3 The railway provides frequent, direct services to London, and lies on a mainline route serving the three main cities of the East Midlands. As such, a considerable number of people pass through the station each day, providing a large potential market for any commercial development.

5.2.4 Pedestrian and vehicular access to the application site is possible from Bromham Road and Midland Road / Ford End Road. Both of these roads provide access to and from the Town Centre. In addition, the application site is located on a strategic cycle network.

- 5.2.5 A number of vacant or under – utilised sites in the Town Centre are currently being developed, such as the former Rolls Royce Factory. These developments are helping to regenerate this part of Town and are improving the image of the area.
- 5.2.6 As Bedford Station is a key gateway, the proposed development will provide a positive and attractive addition to the Town, thereby raising Bedford's profile and demonstrating how the sustainable use of land can create a vibrant new quarter and act as a catalyst for uplift of surrounding areas.
- 5.2.7 The proposed development will be developed comprehensively and will not prejudice regeneration in any other part of the area. Bedford Station Quarter when implemented will act as a catalyst for the regeneration of neighbouring areas especially Midland Road.
- 5.2.8 The proposed quantities of residential and employment development will facilitate the regeneration of the site in a sustainable manner, and have been determined through the need to balance viability and the policy aspirations for the Town.
- 5.3 Weaknesses**
- 5.3.1 Although Ashburnham Road is a main route for traffic passing through Bedford, it is not one of the Town's radial roads. As such, the location of the station is not obvious when travelling to and from the Town Centre.
- 5.3.2 The junctions at the northern and southern ends of Ashburnham Road are currently congested at peak times. A short distance to the east, the junction of Midland Road and Prebend Road is awkward for traffic and may hinder access to the site.
- 5.3.3 Midland Road, which provides the main walking link to the Town Centre, is not a particularly attractive route and has a poor reputation with many local people. Unless it can be improved, the Bedford Station Quarter will remain distant from the Town Centre in the local psyche.
- 5.3.4 Site constraints provide a complex shape for development and the need to provide sufficient car parking will eat into what land is available.

5.3.5 Ford End Road creates a barrier between the northern and southern parts of the site. Even if a way can be found to improve linkages, the piers of the bridge will still create a visual barrier between the southern site and the station.

5.3.6 The possible options for redeveloping the site are limited because of the awkward configuration of the site, limited space and the railway which bisects the site and forms a physical barrier.

5.4 *Opportunities*

5.4.1 The application provides an opportunity to provide an attractive new office quarter on the edge of Bedford Town Centre. This will not only facilitate the redevelopment and relocation of the existing railway station, which is currently at full capacity, it will also provide much needed employment and housing land to help Bedford meet its growth targets over the short to medium term. In addition, there are opportunities to expand the Quarter onto Network Rail land to the south of Ford End Road Bridge.

5.4.2 The development offers the opportunity to create a major gateway for those arriving in the town by rail and a landmark development to those passing through. The development would provide a striking urban form which would give Bedford the instantly recognisable landmark it currently lacks.

5.4.3 The redevelopment creates the opportunity to open up new pedestrian routes and improve existing ones, such as Midland Road. In particular, there is a chance to provide a connection into the new housing development to the immediate west of the station.

5.4.4 A new public square / transport interchange will be created outside the redesigned station building to act as a focus for the Quarter.

5.4.5 The proposal will bring a beneficial re-use to a vacant and under utilised area of land that forms the western approach to Bedford Town Centre. A mixed use development comprising residential and office development would sit well with the mixed use nature of the present surroundings.

5.4.6 There are a number of developments planned in the area around the Station Quarter, and the Quarter redevelopment could be designed to link to these, both physically and in terms of complementary land uses.

5.5 *Threats*

5.5.1 If nothing is done to improve the quality of the public realm on Midland Road, the Bedford Station Quarter will not be perceived as part of the Town Centre and people will be less willing to travel to it on foot. Likewise, the continued presence of vacant and underused sites south of Ford End Road may deter potential investors, customers and residents.

5.5.2 Poor vehicular access to the application site could threaten the future development of the Quarter, particularly at the junction of Midland Road and Prebend Road. Another threat is the lack of parking in the vicinity. Currently, the station provides a significant number of parking spaces for railway users on a surface car park. These will have to be accommodated into any future scheme, as well as additional car parking for the proposal. This problem is even more acute because of the significant parking restrictions that apply on the neighbouring roads.

5.5.3 There are a number of residential buildings along the western side of Ashburnham Road, and part of the site's frontage on to Ashburnham Road is lined by mature trees. Both the existing development and trees may affect the form of development permitted on the site, for example by restricting the height of buildings in certain locations.

6 Relevant Planning and Transport Policy

6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 This Chapter sets out the planning policies relevant to the proposed development. Policy relevant will comprise national guidance, the development plan and other material considerations:

- National Policy Guidance
- Regional Spatial Strategy for the East of England (RSS14) (2008)
- Milton Keynes South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy (2005)
- Bedford Local Plan (2002)
- Bedford Town Centre Area Action Plan (2008)
- Bedford Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan (2008)

6.1.2 The policies listed in this Chapter are not intended to provide a full list of all planning policies relevant to the proposed development. The pages that follow set out the most pertinent policies with regard to the forthcoming planning application.

6.2 National Planning Policy and Guidance

6.2.1 There are a number of national Planning Policy Guidance Notes and Planning Policy Statements which are relevant to this application. These are:

- PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Communities (2005)
- PPG 3: Housing (2006)
- PPS4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth (2009)
- PPG13: Transport (2001)
- PPS25: Development and Flood Risk (2006)

Planning Policy Statement 1 – Delivering Sustainable Development, February 2005

6.2.2 *PPS1* sets out the Government's objectives for the planning system. Sustainable development is the core principle currently underpinning planning. A spatial planning approach, which goes beyond traditional land use planning to integrate policies for the development of land with other policies and programmes that influence places and how they function, should be at the heart of all planning to ensure sustainable development.

6.2.3 The Government is committed to developing strong, vibrant and sustainable communities, including the promotion of a vital, stable and productive economy that aims to bring jobs and prosperity for all. As a result *PPS1* requires planning authorities to:

- Recognise that properly planned economic development can have positive social and environmental benefits
- Recognise the wider benefits of economic development, from the sub-regional level upwards
- Ensure suitable locations for employment uses are available so that the economy can prosper
- Recognise the dynamic nature of local economies and be sensitive to changes and the implications for development and growth
- Ensure the provision of sufficient, good quality, new homes in suitable locations that reduce the need to travel
- Ensure that infrastructure and services are provided to support economic development and housing.

6.2.4 To deliver sustainable economic development, the general approach of planning authorities should include: bringing forward sufficient land of a suitable quality to meet expected housing and industrial development needs; and promoting a more efficient use of land through higher density mixed-use development and the use of suitable previously-developed land and buildings.

6.2.5

Planning and Climate Change – Supplement to PPS1 sets out how planning should contribute to reducing emissions and stabilising climate change. Tackling climate change is a key priority for the planning system. The key objectives include:

- Deliver patterns of urban growth and sustainable rural developments that help secure the fullest possible use of sustainable transport for moving freight, public transport, cycling and walking; and which overall reduce the need to travel especially by car
- Reflect the development needs and interests of communities and enable them to contribute effectively in tackling climate change; and
- Respond to the concerns of business and encourage competitiveness and technological innovation in mitigating and adapting to climate change.

Planning Policy Statement 3 – Housing (2006)

6.2.6

PPS3 puts in place a new national policy framework for housing. The key Government objective is to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to live in a decent home. In order to achieve this, the Government is seeking to ensure that a wide range of housing types are available to meet the needs of all members of the community, deliver a better balance between housing demand and supply in every market and to improve affordability where necessary, and create sustainable, inclusive, mixed communities in all areas. Developments should be attractive safe and designed and built to a high quality, and located in areas with good access to jobs, key services and infrastructure.

6.2.7

PPS3 has four main housing objectives. These are as follows:

- To achieve a wide choice of high quality homes, both affordable and market housing, to address the requirements of the community;
- To widen opportunities for home ownership and ensure high quality housing for those who cannot afford housing at prevailing market prices, in particular those who are vulnerable or in need;
- To improve affordability across the housing market, including by increasing the supply of housing;

- To create sustainable, inclusive, mixed communities in all areas, both urban and rural.

PPS4 – Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth (2009)

6.2.8

Planning Policy Statement 4 (PPS4) sets out the Government's comprehensive policy framework for planning for sustainable economic development in urban and rural areas. This replaces *Planning Policy Guidance 4: Industrial, Commercial Development and Small Firms* (PPG4) and *Planning Policy Statement 6: Planning for Town Centres* (PPS6) published on 21 March 2005 which were of relevance to our proposals.

6.2.9

To help achieve sustainable economic growth, the Government's objectives for planning are to:

- build prosperous communities by improving the economic performance of cities, towns, regions, sub-regions and local areas, both urban and rural
- reduce the gap in economic growth rates between regions, promoting regeneration and tackling deprivation
- deliver more sustainable patterns of development, reduce the need to travel, especially by car and respond to climate changes promote the vitality and viability of town and other centres as important places for communities. To do this, the Government wants:
 - a) new economic growth and development of main town centre uses to be focused in existing centres, with the aim of offering a wide range of services to communities in an attractive and safe environment and remedying deficiencies in provision in areas with poor access to facilities
 - b) competition between retailers and enhanced consumer choice through the provision of innovative and efficient shopping, leisure, tourism and local services in town centres, which allow genuine choice to meet the needs of the entire community (particularly socially excluded groups)
 - c) the historic, archaeological and architectural heritage of centres to be conserved and, where appropriate, enhanced to provide a sense of place and a focus for the community and for civic activity

- raise the quality of life and the environment in rural areas by promoting thriving, inclusive and locally distinctive rural communities whilst continuing to protect the open countryside for the benefit of all

PPG 13: Transport (2001)

6.2.10

PPG13 refers to the need for a safe, efficient and integrated transport system to support a strong and prosperous economy. It sets out that by shaping the pattern of development and influencing the location, scale, density, design and mix of land uses, planning can help to reduce the need to travel, reduce the length of journeys and make it safer and easier for people to access jobs, shopping, leisure facilities and services by public transport, walking, and cycling, and in this regard PPG 13 actively encourages mixed use developments.

6.2.11

The objectives of PPG13 are to integrate planning and transport at the national, regional, strategic and local level to:

1. promote more sustainable transport choices for both people and for moving freight
2. promote accessibility to jobs, shopping facilities and services by public transport, walking and cycling; and
3. reduce the need to travel, especially by car

PPS25 : Development and Flood Risk (2006)

6.2.12

The aim of this PPS is to ensure that flood risk is taken into account at all stages of the planning process to avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding, and to direct development away from areas at highest risk.

6.2.13

Key Planning Objectives in Reducing Risk are:

- Safeguarding land from development required for current and future flood management
- Reducing flood risk to and from new development through location, layout and design incorporating SUDS

- Using opportunities offered by new development to reduce the causes and impacts of flooding

6.2.14

When determining planning applications, LPAs should:

- have regard to PPS 25 and the Regional Spatial Strategy and note they may override policies in the Development Plan if it doesn't reflect this PPS;
- ensure they are supported by site-specific flood risk assessments;
- apply the sequential approach, matching vulnerability of land use to flood risk;
- give priority to the use of Sustainable Urban Drainage schemes (SUDs);
- ensure development in flood risk areas is suitably flood resilient and that any residual risk is safely managed.

The sequential test should show there are no reasonably available sites with a lower risk of flooding appropriate to that type of development or land use.

6.3

Regional Policy Guidance

6.3.1

East of England Plan (RSS 14) 2008

6.3.2

The East of England Plan document provides the statutory framework for all local authorities in the region to update their planning policies through Local Development Frameworks. The RSS is adopted, although it is currently being challenged in the High Court by Hertfordshire County Council and St Albans District Council over the levels of development proposed for an already congested area, which they claim are too high.

6.3.3

According to the RSS, the minimum sub-regional (Bedfordshire & Luton) housing distribution sees 59,100 dwellings required to be built between April 2001 to March 2021. Within Bedford / Kempston / northern Marston Vale 19,500 dwellings are required between 2001-2021.

6.3.4

With respect to affordable housing, Policy H2 states that at the regional level, delivery should be monitored against the expectation that some 35% of housing coming forward as a result of planning permissions granted after the adoption of the RSS are affordable.

6.3.5 Policy SS3: Key Centres for Development and Change states

'To achieve sustainable development and the aims of policies SS1 and SS2 new development should be concentrated at the following locations: Bedford/Kempston/Northern Marston Vale.'

6.3.6 Policy E1: Job Growth 2001-2021 states

'The following indicative targets for net growth in jobs for the period 2001-2021 are adopted as reference values for monitoring purposes and guidance for regional and local authorities, EEDA and other delivery agencies in their policy and decision making on employment matters. Local development documents should provide an enabling context to achieve these targets. They may be revised through the review of RSS in conjunction with review of the Regional Economic Strategy or, exceptionally, through testing as part of LDD preparation; Bedford/Mid Beds 27,000.'

6.3.7 Policy E5: Regional Structure of Town Centres states

'The cities and towns of strategic importance for retail and other town centre purposes are:

- *Regional centres: Basildon, Cambridge, Chelmsford, Colchester, Ipswich, Norwich, Peterborough, Southend, Watford; and*
- *Major town centres: Bedford, Bury St Edmunds, Great Yarmouth, Harlow, Hemel Hempstead, King's Lynn, Lowestoft, Luton, St Albans, Stevenage, Welwyn Garden City.*

'Major new retail development and complementary town centre uses should primarily be located in the above centres and be consistent in scale with the size and character of the centre and its role in the regional structure.'

6.3.8 Policy T4 from the Regional Transport Strategy sets out that within urban areas, particularly the Key Centres for development and change, LTPs, LDDs and other plans or strategies should identify ways to bring about a significant shift away from car use and to public transport, walking and cycling. This should be achieved through the following types of measures, in combination as appropriate to the local circumstances:

- Ensuring that urban extensions and other major developments are linked from the outset into existing urban structure through safe, well designed pedestrian and cycling routes and a high standard of public transport

- Capitalising on opportunities provided by new development to achieve area wide improvements in public transport services, footpaths and cycle networks;
- Promotion of public transport through quality partnerships or other agreements to deliver enhanced services, improved interchange, increased access, higher levels of visibility, better travel information and appropriate traffic management measures; and
- Improvement to local networks for walking and cycling, including increasing the attractiveness and safety of the public realm

6.3.9

Policy T5: Inter Urban Public Transport states

Improvements to inter-urban public transport should be focussed on the Regional Transport Nodes: Basildon, Bedford, Brentwood, Bury St Edmonds, Cambridge, Chelmsford, Colchester, Great Yarmouth, Harlow, Harwich, Hatfield, Hemel Hempstead, Ipswich, King's Lynn, Lowestoft, Luton/Dunstable, Norwich, Peterborough, St Albans, Southend, Stansted, Stevenage, Thetford, Thurrock and Watford.

The priorities for improvements to inter-urban public transport will be: (i) to facilitate movement between the Regional Transport Nodes; (ii) to facilitate access to London and to national networks, and, (iii) within the Regional Transport Nodes, to improve the interchange between modes and the integration of strategic and local networks. Measures should include:

- *improved access, particularly by sustainable local transport, to main line railway stations;*
- *facilities to support and encourage high quality interurban bus / coach services, particularly east-west links and other situations where rail is not available, co-ordinated with rail and local public transport; and*
- *strategic Park and Ride with the aim of reducing car use'.*

6.4

Sub - Regional Planning Policy

6.4.1

Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy, March 2005

6.4.2

The MKSM is driven by the Government's Sustainable Communities Plan. The national plan, published in February 2003, aims to spread the economic success of London to the wider South East region and ensure that the international competitiveness of the region is sustained. The plan identifies four key growth areas where new or expanded communities are needed to achieve these national goals.

6.4.3 The MKSM sub-region is one such growth area, with aspirations of balanced demographic and economic growth supported by well designed, high quality and attractive places in which people will choose to live and work. Such a way forward will warrant the creation of sustainable communities, not least by ensuring that economic, infrastructure, social and cultural needs are met in step with housing growth. Within this strategy, one of the locations stated for growth is the Bedford/Kempston/Northern Marston Vale, where the emphasis should be on strengthening the role of this key centre through economic regeneration and growth. Priorities will be urban renaissance and improved economic performance.

6.4.4 To achieve these goals and ambitions, the framework focuses most of its development in certain key towns. These include Aylesbury; Bedford; Corby, Kettering and Wellingborough; Luton; Milton Keynes and Northampton. Growth and development in all these towns will be underpinned by key common operational objectives including:

- Effective use of previously developed land
- Provision of a range of high quality housing in sustainable locations
- Provision of a range of high quality employment opportunities
- Provision of necessary services in the field of education, training, health and social care, recreation, and other community activities
- Provision of green infrastructure of all kinds

6.4.5 Other broad operational objectives underpinning development in the key growth towns include an integrated approach to accessibility, aimed at reducing dependence on private car use through an improved public transport network.

6.4.6 In addition to these principles, the document also identifies strategic priorities for each growth town. With regards to the Bedford Growth Area, the MKSM states that the key priorities for Bedford and the northern Marston Vale include:

- achieving the revitalisation of Bedford Town Centre and enhancing retail, cultural and leisure facilities. This will involve completing a range of redevelopment, refurbishment and environmental improvement projects;

- developing the local economy to provide a significant increase in employment, by identifying and fostering a range of growth sectors, particularly in high value knowledge-based sectors, with appropriate effort going into business support and skills development. This will include creating a focus for offices in the Town Centre, through the provision of a range of accommodation; and
- securing a significantly higher rate of housing delivery in the area principally through the implementation of existing commitments; reducing the need to travel by private vehicle by integrating land use and transport planning, achieving a step-change in the attractiveness of public transport, including quality bus corridors and park and ride schemes, improving the attractiveness of walking and cycling, and implementing travel demand management measures. Priorities will include revitalising the Bedford Bus Station area and creating improved interchange arrangements, including convenient and attractive access to railway stations.

6.4.7

The Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy (MKSM SRS) sets a dwelling requirement for the Bedford Growth Area of 16,270 for the period 2001-2021. Approximately 2,433 dwellings have been completed in the period 2001-2006. These completions are below the requirement for the 2001-2006/7 by 867 dwellings. In order to achieve the MKSM SRS target the Bedford Growth Area needs to increase its completions to 988 dwellings per annum for the next 14 years.

6.5

Local Planning Policy

6.5.1

Bedford Borough Local Plan (adopted 2002)

6.5.2

The Borough Council is now embarking upon the preparation of the Local Development Framework, which will replace the Local Plan. This is, however, still at an early stage. On 27th September 2007 all local plan policies would have expired unless the Secretary of State issued a Direction (under paragraph 1(3) of Schedule 8 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004) to identify which local plan policies were saved beyond that date. The majority of policies were 'saved' by a Direction from the Secretary of State on 14th September 2007. Some of those policies have now been deleted following the adoption of the Core strategy and Rural Issues Plan on 16th April 2008 and the Town Centre Area Action Plan on 8th October 2008. There are still however some policies that are saved that are relevant to the application.

6.5.3 A key aim of the Plan is to move towards more sustainable forms of development and policy states that the Council will use its influence and resources to encourage the beneficial reuse of derelict and under-utilised urban sites in order to expand the range of housing available, foster the vitality and viability of Bedford Town Centre and to encourage the creation of new and additional employment opportunities.

6.5.4 The application site is located immediately adjacent to the Town Centre Boundary. The site is within the urban area boundary. The Bedford Station Quarter is not protected by any landscape designations. However, the site is situated directly alongside a Conservation Area, an area designated for its special architectural or historic interest, the boundary of which flanks the eastern side of Ashburnham Road. The Local Plan proposals map shows the following designations on all or part of the application site:

- Strategic Cycle Routes / Junction Facilities (Policy T14)
- Wildlife Corridors (Policy NE7)
- Urban Area Boundary (Policy S3)

6.5.5 An extract of the Local Plan is shown on Figure 6.1.

6.5.6 Policy BE9 states that: *"The Borough Council will seek to protect the character and appearance of conservation areas shown on the Proposals Map, through the careful control of development and by general support for enhancement schemes. Within such areas proposals which fail to preserve or enhance their character will not be permitted"*.

6.5.7 Policy BE 11 states that: *"The Borough Council will ensure that all new development within, adjoining, or likely to affect the setting of conservation areas, preserves or enhances its character or appearance"*.

6.5.8 Policy T14 states: *"The Borough Council will require the protection, enhancement and promotion of cycle routes and facilities including those shown on the proposals map"*.

6.5.9 Policy NE7 states that: *"The Borough Council will seek the protection and enhancement of the network of wildlife corridors shown on the proposals map. Proposals for development which would have an adverse impact on such a corridor will be resisted, unless satisfactory alternative provisions can be agreed, or it can be clearly demonstrated that there are reasons for the proposal which outweigh the need to safeguard this network"*.

6.5.10 Policy S3 states that: *“The Borough Council seeks to protect the character of Bedford and Kempston by defining on the proposals map the extent of the urban areas, which marks an outer limit to their expansion”.*

Other pertinent policies

6.5.11 Policy SH12 and SH16 state that the primary shopping area and district centre are the preferred locations for new comparison and convenience retail floorspace.

6.5.12 Proposals for new retail development outside these centres will not be permitted unless a need for the development consistent with retail policies can be demonstrated. Any development must not have a negative impact on the vitality and viability of the town, district and local centres and it must be demonstrated that the site is easily accessible by means of transport other than the car.

Bedford Town Centre Area Action Plan (2008)

6.5.13 The Town Centre Area Action Plan covers the central area of Bedford and identifies key areas of change and details policies and proposals for the regeneration of Bedford Town Centre. The Bedford Station Quarter development has been identified in the Town Centre Area Action Plan as one of 8 Key Areas of Change. The remaining part of the site is identified as a ‘Potential Area of Change’. An extract of the TCAAP is shown on **Figure 6.2**.

6.5.14 Within the Town Centre Area Action Plan there are proposals for the redevelopment of Bedford Station and surrounding area. The Action Plan sets out that the site offers a key opportunity to achieve a major new office quarter in the Town Centre. Paragraph 4.21 states that

‘Development is required to achieve this major new office quarter as the rail industry is unlikely to be able to fund such a dramatic remodelling of the station. Accordingly the Borough Council will actively support Network Rail in achieving a comprehensive commercial redevelopment of the block of property including the rail lands and premises to the south of the station forecourt fronting Ashburnham Road and the DIY store. In the context of the growth area agenda, government relocation plans and the future economic vitality of Bedford, there is an urgent need to identify good quality, well connected and centrally located office development sites. When combined with enhanced transport links this will help Bedford to play a key role within the Cambridge-Oxford Arc’.

- 6.5.15 Policy TC13 of the TCAAP identifies the Station Quarter as representing an important opportunity for comprehensive redevelopment and states that the key principles of development, to be secured by condition and / or legal agreement, will include:-
1. the creation of a new office quarter and transport interchange with some residential elements including affordable housing;
 2. relocation of the station concourse and ticket office adjacent to the Ford End Road Bridge;
 3. provision of revised access arrangements via Ashburnham Road with appropriate provision for bus, taxi, cycle and pedestrian access and drop off / pick up points;
 4. provision of a new forecourt to the railway station;
 5. provision of on and off site highway improvements including park and ride bus drop off point accessed from Ford End Road and pedestrian over bridge;
 6. re-provision of car and cycle parking;
 7. incorporation of sustainable forms of construction, energy conservation measures and renewable energy.
- 6.5.16 The document states in paragraph 4.22: “A masterplanning exercise has been commissioned to help drive this proposal forward. This will take technical and commercial considerations into account and generate an outline scheme likely to be acceptable to stakeholders including the rail industry. The exercise may also identify the potential for the site to extend to the south of Ford End Road.”
- 6.5.17 Paragraph 6.20 says of the site: “This quarter has significant office development potential which, linked with the re-provision of the station, improved network infrastructure and parking facilities, can resolve the isolation of the existing interchange, generate employment and improve pedestrian flows along Midland Road. The redevelopment could include a residential element and improved bus connectivity.”
- 6.5.18 Policy TC23 also envisages for the site: “improved bus/rail interchange as part of the Station Quarter development proposals including forecourt improvements at

the railway station, park and ride drop-off point, facilities for taxis/ private hire vehicles and revised bus routing.”

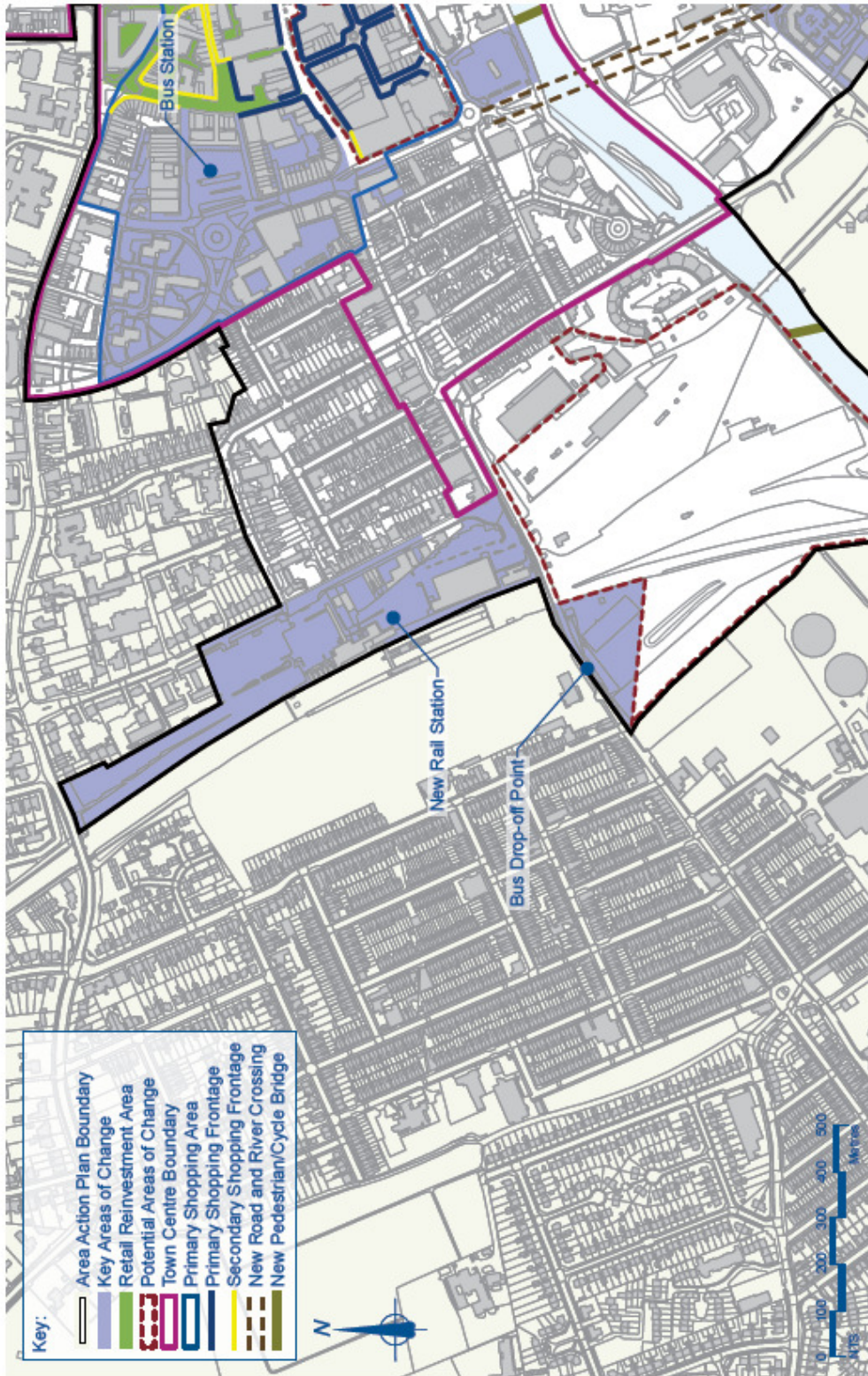
Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan (2008)

The Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan, forming part of the Development Plan, is a key part of the Bedford Development Framework as it sets out the vision and high level planning policies for the borough as a whole.

It makes several references to the redevelopment of the area around the station. Policy CP28 states that the Council will support the re-provision of Bedford Railway Station.

Paragraph 4.44 acknowledges that the railway station is the focus for redevelopment within the Town Centre.

Paragraph 4.69 states that the regeneration of the Town Centre includes various objectives including a better connected centre by improving access to the Town Centre through the provision of new public transport interchanges, and improving the number and quality of the connections within the Town Centre particularly between the centre, the river and the railway stations.



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Bedford Station Quarter Planning Statement
 Extract From Town Centre Area Action Plan - Figure 6.2

7 Planning Policy Evaluation

7.1 *Introduction*

This Chapter demonstrates how the application responds to the policies identified in the previous chapter and highlights the many areas of conformity.

7.2 *National Planning Guidance*

PPS1

7.2.1 The proposed development will be in accordance with PPS 1 because it supports sustainable development which brings economic and social benefits. Furthermore, this policy encourages the more efficient use of land through higher density mixed use developments and the re-use of suitable previously developed land and buildings and encourages the provision of new employment opportunities and new homes in highly sustainable locations. As such this proposal will be in compliance with PPS1.

PPS3

7.2.2 The proposed development will be in accordance with PPS3 because we are proposing a residential re-use on land that is currently under – utilised, which is located in a highly sustainable location. Paragraph 30 states that sufficient land should be provided to meet the housing requirement set in the relevant RPG (in this case RSS9). It also states that, when identifying land for housing, previously-developed land should be identified first, followed by urban extensions.

PPS4

7.2.3 The proposals will meet the main objective relevant to this development by providing economic growth in a high quality environment.

PPS13

7.2.4 Our proposal will provide a new state of the art railway station, as well as a mixed use development comprising of new jobs and homes in a highly sustainable location. As such, our proposal meets the objectives of PPG13. Our proposal will improve access to jobs, shopping, and leisure facilities by improving the existing station facilities and accessibility and by maximising the use of sites that surround the station.

PPS25

7.2.5 The flood risk to development of the site has been taken into account at all stages of the process in developing proposals for the site. Although the Sidings Site is within Flood Zone 2, it meets the requirements of the Sequential Test.

7.3 *Regional Planning Guidance (RSS 14)*

7.3.1 The proposed development includes the improvement of the existing Midland Road Railway Station whilst also developing the surrounding area for a mixed use development comprising of residential and employment units. This is in compliance RSS 14 because this document encourages the integration of transport and land use planning policy to create sustainable developments, particularly on previously developed sites. The document supports good public transport accessibility, use of previously developed land and reaffirms the focus on attractive town centres, reducing the need to travel, and enhancing the built and natural environments.

7.4 *Milton Keynes South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy*

7.4.1 One of the priorities of the MKSM strategy is to develop Bedford's local economy to provide a significant increase in employment, which will include creating a focus for office development. Given that this application is proposing to create new office accommodation, immediately adjacent to Midland Road Railway Station on the edge of Bedford Town Centre, it is considered that this application is in full compliance with MKSM. In addition, our application will help meet the housing targets included in MKSM.

7.5 *Bedford Local Plan 2002*

7.5.1 The application will provide a beneficial reuse of derelict and under utilised urban site, which will also expand the range of housing available and will create additional employment opportunities; this is in compliance with the development strategy as outlined in Policy S1.

7.5.2 The proposal supports Policy T8 as this proposal will facilitate the relocation and redevelopment of the Midland Road Railway Station, which will continue to promote Bedford as an important station on the national rail network.

7.5.3 The other policies in the Local Plan seek to ensure that proposals protect and enhance adjacent Conservation Areas and other landscape designations. The proposal will fully accord with these policies and the design policies as outlined in detail in the Local Plan. A scheme has been carefully designed to ensure that it does not negatively impact upon the adjacent Conservation Area designation or other landscape designations and respects and enhances the local character.

7.5.4 The Sidings site was identified as an Opportunity Area in the Local Plan as part of a larger site including land owned by British Gas. The site formed part of a Single Regeneration Budget bid and the brief shows a mixture of employment and residential uses.

7.6 *Bedford Town Centre Area Action Plan*

7.6.1 The Town Centre Area Action Plan supports the development of office development; a residential element to the scheme; improvements to the Station and its facilities; increased capacity and accessibility; and an improved transport interchange, thus the application complies with this document.

7.7 *Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan*

7.7.1 The Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan supports the re provision of Bedford Railway Station, the fact that it should be a focus for redevelopment in the Town Centre and that it will assist in improving access to the centre.

7.8 *Planning Policy Appraisal Summary*

7.8.1 A detailed review of a wide spectrum of policy and planning guidance has been undertaken, from national through to local level, both statutory and non-statutory, and this has concluded that the proposed development will achieve considerable compliance with policy. This high degree of compliance is due to the fact that the development will provide a beneficial reuse of a derelict and under utilised urban site, whilst also facilitating the improvement of the Station.

8 The Case for Development

8.1 *Sustainable Communities Plan*

8.1.1 In 2003, the Government published its Sustainable Communities Plan. This Plan seeks to provide economic and housing growth in and around the South East in a controlled manner and sustainable manner. It identifies four Growth Areas. These are:

- Ashford
- Thames Gateway
- London-Stansted-Peterborough-Cambridge
- Milton Keynes/South Midlands

8.1.2 In 2005, a Sub-Regional Strategy was published for the Milton Keynes/South Midlands (MKSM) growth Area. This identified Bedford/Kempston/Northern Marston Vale as one of the key growth nodes within the Sub-Region, setting a growth target of 19,500 new dwellings for the key centre between 2001 and 2021. Employment growth for the Bedford Borough/Mid Beds District (Bedford growth town) was set at 19,800 jobs for the period between 2001 and 2021.

8.1.3 The Milton Keynes/South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy (MKSM SRS) identifies the Bedford/Kempston/northern part of Marston Vale as growth locations in respect of the north of the county. The MKSM SRS provides for urban renaissance in Bedford/Kempston to deliver new housing, economic development and new jobs. The Strategy envisages the continued regeneration of Marston Vale.

8.1.4 The revitalisation of Bedford Town Centre together with the provision of new employment is seen as integral to strengthening the town's regional centre role. The East of England Development Agency identified Bedford as an Urban Priority Area and supported several economic initiatives within the town including the Priory Park Innovation Centre and the Bedford Enterprise Hub.

8.1.5 The key priorities for Bedford and Northern Marston Vale include the revitalisation of Bedford Town Centre and improving the retail offer, cultural and

leisure facilities. This will entail redevelopment, refurbishment and environmental projects. The proposed redevelopment of Bedford Station Quarter will contribute to achieving this priority. Creation of a focus for offices is a priority in Bedford and the current proposed development by providing approximately 23,950 m² of office floor-space fulfils this objective. The residential component that will provide around 99 residential units within the Town Centre greatly contributes to the anticipated increased housing delivery rate. Also the proposed transport interchange together with a new station with capacity to handle increased footfalls to 2030 will provide an attractive alternative to the car.

8.2 ***Housing supply***

8.2.1 According to the Bedford Borough Council Annual Monitoring Report 2007/2008 (published in December 2008), house completions within the Bedford growth area in the period 2001-2007/8 were 2,985 dwellings. These completions are below the MKSM SRS requirement of 4,882 dwellings for the period 2001-2007/8 by 1,897 dwellings. In order to meet the MKSM SRS target of 16,270 by 2021, an increased rate of delivery of 1,063 dwellings per annum for the next 12 years will be required.

8.2.2 Housing completions are below their requirement, but the current allocations in the Local Plan provide housing land to enable the Borough to meet the projected annual completions in the housing trajectory and accelerate housing delivery in the later years of the plan. Achieving the 1,063 completions per annum will depend on the housing market, particularly with regards to the recovery from the current economic downturn and provision of infrastructure by developers.

8.2.3 Table 8.1 below shows the Regional Housing Provision (Policy H1) for the period 2001-2021. According to the Table below the growth area target is 19,500 dwellings of which 2,380 dwellings had been built between 2001-2006. The remaining 17,120 dwellings had to be built between 2006 and 2021. Based on the 17,120 requirement, the delivery rate would have to about 1,141 dwellings per annum for the period 2006-2021. Again this delivery rate is higher than the rates achieved so far.

Table 8.1 Regional Housing Provision 2001-2021 (Policy H1)

Area /District	Minimum Dwelling Provision, 2001-2021 (net increase, with annual average rates in brackets ⁱⁱ)		
	Total build April 2001 to March 2021	Of which already built April 2001- March 2006	Minimum still to build April 2006 to March 2021
MKSM Strategy Area: Bedford/Kempston/Northern Marston Vale	19,500	2,380 (480)	17,120
MKSM Strategy Area: Luton/Dunstable/Houghton Regis together with Leighton Linslade	26,300	4,400 (880)	21,900
Rest of Bedford BC	1,300	1,020 (200)	280 (20)
Rest of Mid Beds	11,000	3,120 (620)	7,880 (530)
Rest of South Beds	1,000	170 (30)	830 (60)
Bedfordshire & Luton	59,100	11,090 (2,220)	48,010 (3,200)
Cambridge	19,000	2,300 (460)	16,700 (1,110)

Source: East of England Plan

i Due to rounding adjustments the annual average rates in brackets may not match the totals. Totals take precedence.

ii The total for Bedfordshire and Luton includes 45,800 for which provision is made at two broad locations for growth identified in the separately published Milton Keynes South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy (MKSM SRS). These are Bedford/Kempston/Northern Marston vale and Luton/Dunstable/Houghton Regis together with Leighton Linslade. The MKSM SRS set out targets for how much the total should be built in the period 2001-2006 but monitoring shows the actual totals achieved during this period differ. The figures in H1 set out revised figures for 2006 to 2021 in order to achieve the totals for 2001-2021 in the MKSM SRS, which remain unchanged. Phasing for 2006-2021 shown in MSM SRS policies Bedford & Luton 2(a) and 2(b) will need to be amended accordingly in LDDs to achieve the unchanged totals.

8.2.5 Table 8.2 shows the MKSM SRS, housing targets for the Bedford/Kempston/Northern Marston Vale for the period 2001-2021 within 5 year intervals. The requisite annual average rate for 2001-2006 was 750 dwellings but in reality the achieved annual average rate was only 480 dwellings. The increased annual average rate of 1,050 dwellings means a doubling of the current delivery rate. Achieving this rate of delivery will be particularly challenging as to date the lower delivery rates have not been met.

8.2.6 **Table 8.2: Dwelling Provision in Bedford/Kempston/Northern Marston Vale 2001-2021**

	2001-2006	2006-2011	2011-2016	2016-2021	Total 2001-2021
Total	3,750	5,250	5,250	5,250	19,500
Annual average rate	750	1,050	1,050	1,050	975

Source: Milton Keynes & South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy, (March 2005)

8.2.7 Table 8.3 below shows the progress on Local Plan housing allocations as at 31/03/08. The Table below highlights a low completions rate of only 1,215 dwellings with 9,860 dwellings outstanding. Meeting the challenging target of the MKSM will be particularly challenging if the reasons for the industry's low delivery rate is not resolved. Despite the availability of housing land supply the building appears to have remained relatively low.

8.2.8 **Table 8.3: Progress on Local Plan Allocated Sites as at 31/03/2008**

Site (Policy)	Site Capacity as stated in Local Plan	Completions at 31/03/2008	Outstanding at 31/03/2008
Britannia Iron Works (H2)	180	237	485
Austin Canons Kempston (H3)	25	24	24
College Street	20	56	0
Biddenham Loop (H6)	1,450		

Land west of Kempston (H7)	730	249	2,750
Land north of Bromham Road (H8)	900		1,200
Shortstown (east and west of A600) (H9)	170+260	251	1,100
North of Brickhill (H10A)	400	196	304
North of Norse Road (H10B)	200	193	157
Cannons Close Wooton (H23)	9	9	0
Land south of Fields Road Wooton (H11)	340		500
Land north of Fields Road Wooton (H12)	450		580
Stewartby (H13)	330		610
Wixams (H14)	2,250		2,250
Total	7,714	1,215	9,860
		11,075	

Source: Bedford Borough Council Annual Monitoring Report 2007/2008 (December 2008)

8.2.9

If Bedford Borough Council is to meet the MKSM SRS residential development targets action is required especially in resolving the low annual delivery rates. Apart from providing an additional 98 dwellings and contributing to the annual delivery target the proposed development offers an opportunity to increase the attractiveness of Bedford as a destination and a place to live and work. The proposed development will contribute to Bedford's aspiration in respect of high quality office offer, city living and accessibility with the proposed transport interchange.

8.3

Urban Housing Capacity Study (2002)

8.3.1

A review of the Bedford Urban Capacity Study undertaken in July 2002 (Edaw and Buro Happold) concluded that approximately 3,222 dwellings were identified in the unconstrained capacity and about 1,631 dwellings were identified in the

constrained capacity up to 2016, albeit these figures are higher than those in the Structure Plan Review.

8.3.2 The study had reservations on the appropriateness of the density multipliers that were initially adopted for the original Urban Capacity. According to the initial study the adopted densities for Bedford were Core 80-100 dwellings per hectare (dph); Inner Residential 60-90dph; and Remaining Areas/Villages 30-50dph. The initial study did not specify proportion of potential development sites that lie within public transport corridors or close to transport nodes, where higher densities are encouraged.

8.3.3 The Bedford Urban Capacity Study (2002) concludes that identified capacity could be increased by including other land and buildings which are currently in employment use and under-used and potentially surplus open space as well as increasing the density on sites along public transport corridors above whatever their prescribed character area density was. However, given that the density multipliers applied on some sites were too high, it was logical to reduce both the unconstrained capacity and constrained capacity estimates.

8.3.4 The national annual target is that at least 60% of all new housing should be developed on previously developed land. The proposed development will contribute towards Bedford Borough Council meeting the 60% annual target of development on previously development land. This target is supported in the RSS.

8.4 *Sustainable Location*

8.4.1 Bedford Station Quarter is located within an established residential area, as well as a newly established residential area to the west. Proximity to the Town Centre makes this location easily accessible to the local community as well as shopping facilities.

8.4.2 The railway station forms part of the scheme and is therefore highly accessible. The proposed transport interchange will greatly improve accessibility. Included in the proposal are connections with the cycle path and pedestrian paths. It is proposed to widen the existing footpath along Ford End Bridge to facilitate pedestrian movement, improving accessibility to the station as well as the Town Centre.

8.4.3 The location of the railway station and the proposed interchange as well as proximity to the proposed new bus station in the Town Centre will make this

location easily accessible to areas of employment within Bedford for future residents of the proposed development.

8.5 *Employment - Offices*

8.5.1 Bedford's established designation as a Growth Area offers an opportunity to capture some of the anticipated regional growth. Historically, Bedford has had poor office property investment conditions. However, this is likely to change through Bedford's designation of Growth Status that will act as a catalyst for future growth through infrastructure and supporting business growth. Substantial regional growth is anticipated in the business and financial services. Bedford could attract some of this growth if the right kind of property market is created. Also Bedford has the advantages of a skilled labour force and rail access to London.

8.5.2 Bedford continues to be regarded as a secondary commercial location when compared to Milton Keynes, Luton and Northampton. However, with improved accessibility and infrastructure improvements such as the upgrading of the A421 to dual carriageway up to its junction with the A1, the proposed Thameslink project seeking to upgrade the rail line and double its passenger capacity will assist in raising Bedford's profile as a commercial location.

8.5.3 The Employment land Review for Bedford Borough Council undertaken by the Halcrow Group Ltd, in June 2006 forecast a structural change in the Bedford employment sector in the period 2001-2021, and the study established that B1 class uses accounted for approximately 20.6% of all employment premises in Bedford. However, the demand for B1 employment land was forecast to increase by 54-61% between 2001 and 2021 depending on the scale of growth achieved by the Borough. The forecast demand against existing supply yield up to the period 2021 was a land requirement of 34.7 ha.

8.5.4 Table 8.4 below shows the change in employment in Bedford between 1999 and 2004. The B1 use class showed the highest increase of 27.8% compared to the other sectors. The increase in B1 use is a positive indication of a possible trend in the growth of office use. However, the rate at which this trend grows will depend on the competitiveness of the quality of the office offer as well as a carefully planned marketing strategy.

8.5.5

Table 8.4: Employment by Use Class

Key Use Classes	% Employment in Bedford in 2004	% Change in employment in Bedford between 1999-2004
B1	27.4%	27.8%
B2	14.1%	-13.2%
B8	9.2%	-6.7%
Other	49.3%	17.3%
Total	100.0%	11.6%

Source: Annual Business Inquiry Data 2000 and 2004, PACEC

8.5.6

Reinforcing Halcrow's findings are the ODPM statistics in the Table below showing an increase of 15% in office floor space stock in Bedford in the period 2000-2004.

8.5.7

Table 8.5: Change in Floor space stock between 2000-2004

Key Use Classes	Bedford 2000 ('000 m ²)	Bedford 2004 ('000 m ²)	% Change between 2000-2004
Office	219	251	15%
Factory	659	593	-10%
Warehouse	511	664	30%
Total	1,389	1,508	9%

Source: ODPM Statistics, 2000 and 2004 Annual Business Inquiry Data 2000 and 2004, PACEC

8.5.8

The Table below shows employment growth targets and trends for the growth area. Job growth is expected to be 570 jobs per annum cumulating to a total 11,400 between 2002 and 2021. There are variations in the job growth figures, however these variations underscore the fact that if Bedford is to achieve the MKSM SRS employment targets action needs to be taken. The Bedford Station Quarter provides an opportunity to show case a substantial high quality office offer at the proposed Bedford gateway.

8.5.9

Table 8.6: Employment Growth Targets and Trends

Indicator	Job Growth p.a.	Total Growth	Time period (years)	Source
Growth Area Study	570	11,400	2002-2021	Entec, 2003
Economic Vision	700	14,000	2002-2021	GHK, 2005
BLEDP	800	16,000	2002-2021	JEDS, 2005
ABI 6-year trend	1,649	8,246	1999-2004	ABI 1999 and 2004 data, PACEC
ABI 14-year trend	502	7,030	1999-2004	ABI 1999 and 2004 data, PACEC

8.5.10

Latest Spring 2009 forecasts by Oxford Economics in their East of England Forecasting Model suggest a trend-based Bedford employment growth of 9,300 compared with the RSS job growth target of 16,000 with a scenario envisaging the achievement of RSS housing targets by 2021 (looking very unlikely) delivering a job growth between 2001 and 2021 of only 11,500 compared with the 16,000 target.

8.5.11

The table below shows the percentage change in B Use Classes up to 2021 based on three growth scenarios ranging from low to high growth. In the all the scenarios there is an indication of a positive change for B1 Use which ranges from +51% in the low growth scenario to + 61% in the High Growth scenario. Some of this increase could be accommodated within the proposed office floorspace at the Bedford Station Quarter Scheme.

8.5.12

Table 8.7: Percentage Change in B Use Classes to 2021 (ha)

Use Class	Low Growth (11,400)	Medium Growth (14,000)	High Growth (16,000)
B1	+54	+58	+61
B2	-21	-18	-15
B8	-12	-8	-8

Source: Employment Land Study, Halcrow 2006

8.5.13

Based on the Halcrow study the net employment land requirements for B1 Use Class are shown in the table below. Implications on land requirements from the low growth scenario are 99 ha, about 102 ha for the medium growth scenario and 104 ha for the high growth scenario.

8.5.14

Table 8.8: Net Employment Land Requirements by 2021 (ha)

Use Class	Low Growth (11,400)	Medium Growth (14,000)	High Growth (16,000)
B1	99.0	101.6	103.5
B2	153.0	158.8	164.6
B8	80.2	83.9	86.6
Total	332.2	344.3	354.7

Source: Employment Land Study, Halcrow 2006

8.6

Market Demand

8.6.1

An Office Market Study carried out in 2007 by DTZ indicated that there were 23,400 m² of office floorspace in the pipeline and this equated to a 10-year supply based on the take-up rate that was suggested by local estate agents. However, research indicated a strong interest in the Bedford Station Quarter opportunity albeit being cautious about the viability of a major office market. Clearly economic circumstances have changed since 2007, although this does suggest that as the property market recovers, Bedford will be well placed to compete as a location for new office development.

8.6.2 Although it is a challenge creating a new office market, there are precedents where new office development has been delivered required the staging of a carefully planned supply approach together with a marketing strategy. Bedford Station Quarter with its proposed new image and high visibility to both residents and visitors offers an opportunity for orchestrating a marketing campaign to attract would be investors as well as an anchor tenant.

8.6.3 The DTZ study identified several hooks that could be harnessed in the creation of an office market in Bedford. The growth area status and associated investment in infrastructure will lead to further growth in the future. In addition, demand might arise from relocation from existing stock but in order to capture this demand, Bedford Town Centre should offer good quality office premises which are currently lacking. With the intended high quality office offer in the Bedford Station Quarter combined with an effective marketing campaign, it is possible to capture and increase the share of the sub-regional office market demand.

8.6.4 Although to date there has not been new office development in the Town Centre, local agents have indicated that there was an unsatisfied latent demand particularly as there was limited remaining space at Priory Business Park. There appears to be a rationale for developing speculative office space at the Bedford Station Quarter. However, a flexible approach needs to be adopted with regards to building sizes and specifications so as to appeal to a wide range of occupiers. The proposed office offer at Bedford Station Quarter is an opportunity to establish a market office within the town and capture some of the expected sub-regional growth.

8.6.5 In considering the office market a sequential analysis has been undertaken both in terms of the Bedford Town Centre Area Action Plan and in response to this proposal. This analysis concluded the Bedford Station Quarter as an edge of Town Centre location offered the best opportunity to promote an office lead proposal in conjunction with a transportation hub and mixed use scheme.

8.7 Retail

8.7.1 This statement sets out the retail context, provision, rationale and impact of the proposals for the application site.

(a) Context

- 8.7.2 In retail terms the Bedford Station Quarter site is an 'Edge of Centre' location as defined in PPS4. It is well connected to the primary shopping area (Bedford Town Centre) and is within easy walking distance (5-10 mins) of the centre.
- 8.7.3 As an edge of centre location the site is considered a location which would not be attractive to retail operations requiring a central location. However, as part of a mixed use proposal combined with a significant public transport interchange, a number of retailers have a preference for mixed-use developments. These types of uses are useful value drivers and would compliment development at the Bedford Station Quarter.
- 8.7.4 The site is in close proximity of the secondary retail area along Midland Road, which links the town centre to the west of the site along Ford End Road. The retail offer in this area consists of mainly a number of newsagents, fast food outlets, public housing and a small number of professional office services.
- (b) Provision and Proposals
- 8.7.5 In support of this application and based on market research, DTZ have assessed the retail and leisure floorspace likely to be associated with a proposal of this scale and in this location. They have identified likely market interest and capacity of the proposal which creates a list of the likely types of occupiers they consider would assist in creating a sustainable vibrant mixed use development which would be attracted to the Bedford Station Quarter.
- 8.7.6 The proposal is for 1,910 sq.m. of gross retail floorspace to be provided within the application site, 500 sq.m. of which is provided within the cartilage of the new railway station itself. The scale and range of provision is commensurate with the functioning of the overall station quarter and provides ancillary retail floorspace for the commercial development. There is demand from outlets such as Marks & Spencer's Simply Foods, Sainsbury's Local and Tesco Express for space within mixed-use developments especially if they are adjacent to major transport interchanges. The rent payable would be dependent on the competition for the scheme and the type of unit available (Tesco is currently seeking units of between 3,500 and 5,000 sq ft and dedicated parking is not required in certain locations).
- 8.7.7 These types of uses are value drivers for mixed-use developments due in part to the attractiveness of the sector as an investment. Complimentary retail uses which

would compliment development at the Station Quarter include the provision of a food offer to service the office element in addition to coffee shops and other A3 outlets.

8.7.8 Retail planning precedent on the site is set by the existing retail consent, the condition on which is a restriction on food sales. Currently there is a 5,000 sq.m. Focus DIY store located on the site. In this respect the proposals are for significantly lower retail provision on site, albeit for a variation in use from the current provision.

(c) Impact

8.7.9 The following impact have been considered

(i) Impact on planned investment

The DTZ market study identifies the range of planned investments in the vicinity of the Station Quarter (including major schemes like the Town Centre). The scale and nature of retail floorspace proposed is not considered sufficient to compromise other planned investment. It is ancillary to the main development and as such will serve a local catchment and not divert expenditure from elsewhere.

(ii) Impact on Town Centre viability and vitality

As noted above, the Station Quarter will not attract retailers interested in town centre sites but be attractive to specific operators interested in mixed use, transport orientated schemes.

(iii) Impact on Midland Road

(iv) Appropriateness of Scale

(v) Impact on wider expenditure

8.8 General Market Conditions

8.8.1 The 2007 DTZ market report commented on overall market conditions. It concluded that whilst the retail market remains tenant friendly and demand for prime property remains strong there has been a notable downturn and impact on secondary locations. This outlook has changed since the report was prepared,

however it does give an indication of the likely strengths of the local property market as the economy recovers.

8.8.2 Market research shows that the rate of high street rental growth was fairly flat in 2006, standing at 2.3% in September 2007, and it was not expected to change dramatically over the next two years. Retail warehouse performance has slowed markedly from its peak of 6.4% in March 2005 to 3.6% pa in September 2006. In contrast to this, shopping centre rental growth has performed well increasing to 4.7% pa in August 2006 compared to 3.4% in the same month in 2005.

8.8.3 In January 2007 there were reported to be 40 requirements for retail investment in Bedford, four more than July 2006. Promis estimates that Bedford Town Centre provides 0.91 million sq.ft with prime rents standing at £100 per sq.ft. Promis reports that this represents a significant increase on the end 2005 rental level for prime rents in the Bedford Town Centre.

8.9 *Indicative Scheme*

8.9.1 In support of this application and based on market research, DTZ have assessed the retail and leisure floorspace likely to be associated with a proposal of this scale and in this location. They have identified likely market interest and capacity of the proposal which creates a list of the likely types of occupiers they consider would assist in creating a sustainable vibrant mixed use development which would be attracted to the Bedford Station Quarter.

8.10 *Local Shops*

8.10.1 A strong network of local shops and centres is essential in meeting individuals' needs and requirements on a day to day basis. The local shopping and services in the vicinity of this proposal are contained on Midland Road linking toward the Town Centre and to the west of the site along Ford End Road. The retail offer in the vicinity consist of mainly a number of news agents, fast food outlets, public housing and a small number of professional office services. It is not envisaged the retail elements contained in this proposal will adversely affect these facilities and will over time enhance the wider physical and economic regeneration of the locality particularly along Midland Road.

8.11***Heritage***

8.11.1

A Heritage Statement has not been produced to support this application. The required information is however in Chapter 13 ‘Archaeology and Cultural Heritage’ in the Environmental Statement.

8.12***Health Provision***

8.12.1

Paragraph 6.3.4 of the Environmental Statement addresses health provision. It states that:

In total there are fifteen GP surgeries, twenty dentists and eleven pharmacies. Bedfordshire Primary Care Trust were unable to provide information concerning the number of patients registered at each general practice surgery. However, they were able to provide information concerning the number of doctors practicing at each surgery. Without knowing the number of patients registered it is not possible to provide any estimates of capacity at each surgery. UK GP patient list sizes tend to vary between 1,700 and 2,000 patients per GP, using this knowledge it is possible to estimate that the total number of doctors registered at the fifteen surgeries are likely be able to cater for between 75,000 and 90,000 patients. Therefore, with an estimated population of 36,599 (2001 Census) within this area, there is spare capacity.

8.12.2

Also included within the Environmental Statement is a plan showing health facilities within 1.5 miles of the Station and a list of the names of the GP and Dental Practices within 1 mile.

8.13***Benefits of the Proposed Development***

8.13.1

Redevelopment of the Bedford Station Quarter will provide a modern and up to date gateway to Bedford.

8.13.2

There is no scope for increasing capacity within the existing station building. However, with the proposed redevelopment of the station building the passenger handling capacity will be increased. Given the short rail journey time to London an improved station will attract more people to live in Bedford and out-commute.

8.13.3

The proposed improvements on the ThamesLink will provide additional capacity and choice for travellers. Increased frequency of trains and destinations will raise the profile of Bedford as an interchange.

8.13.4

The new station building together with a reconfigured forecourt will:

- Increase operational train and passenger capacity;
- Provide a station design that allows for railway infrastructure growth in terms of current capacity and ability to expand this capacity for East/West rail and Bedford/Northampton when these projects occur;
- Ensure that the station plan is designed to optimise passenger access and interchange to all parts of the site and surrounding urban network;
- Improve a multi-modal transport interchange hub;
- Act as the catalyst for regenerating other sites around the station;
- Increase connectivity to the Town Centre and surrounding area by opening up new pedestrian links across the site albeit through railway controlled infrastructure and not public footpaths;
- Be “Secured by Design” acceptable to BTP, this may include provision for removing vehicular access to the station frontage in times of high alert.

8.14

Other Benefits

- Provision of a public realm through the creation of high quality public spaces complimented by new hard and soft landscaping zones;
- Introduce a new cycle route and footpaths to connect with its hinterlands, together with more secure cycle parking;
- Form a strong and attractive gateway thereby providing a positive image and strong identity for local resident;
- Offer legibility and a sense of place to an area which is currently nondescript;
- New employment opportunities will be created;
- Significantly increase Bedford’s supply of high quality office space.

9 Sustainability

9.1 Introduction

9.1.1 A sustainability evaluation has been undertaken based on the application parameters (as described elsewhere in this document) and against saved policies in the Bedford Local Plan and emerging policies in the Bedford Town Centre Area Action Plan.

9.1.2 The proposal's sustainability credentials have been established in consultation with the proposal promoters and the wider public sector Stakeholder Group for the project consisting of Network Rail, Bedford Borough Council, Government Office for the East of England, East of England Development Agency and the HCA.

9.1.3 This statement also takes into account national planning and spatial policy in particular Sustainability Supplement to PPS1, the East of England Regional Plan, building control regulations and, national guidance on best practice (for example the CLG- Code for Sustainable Homes).

9.2 Overarching Objectives

9.2.1 In sustainability terms the overall objectives for the Bedford Station Quarter project are as follows,

- To make best use in the recycling of brownfield and operational rail land for a high density mixed use development which satisfies the aspirations and policy requirements of Bedford Town Centre Area Action Plan.
- To contribute to medium and long term carbon emission reduction, consistent with national policies and support the Government's overall objective of reaching zero carbon development by 2016.
- To seek significant improvement in design and sustainability by evaluating best practice examples from the UK and Europe.
- Seek to achieve significant building performance improvements by using the Code for Sustainable Homes and BREEAM Office Excellence to promote

greater energy efficiency and to make the greater use of renewable energy resources.

9.3

Key Considerations

9.3.1

At this stage specific process and technologies have not been prescribed in detail proposal, this is consistent with guidance contained in national policy PPS 22. However a number of key indications have been incorporated into the design parameters to guide the development process. These are:

- A combination of energy efficiency measures in buildings, with a minimum of 20% of energy supplies from renewable sources.
- A mixed use layout which maximises the use of the site and integrates social and economic factors.
- All housing (market and affordable) will meet the requirement of Code for Sustainable Homes- Level 3, with an aspiration to meet the Government's target of Code Level 6 from 2016. (This will need to be feasibility and viability assessed at the appropriate time).
- All office and retail development will aim to meet BREEAM 'Good' standards.
- An appropriate percentage of affordable housing to ensure a balanced and vibrant community which responds to local housing needs and pressures.
- The Station Quarter will become an important location for employment and jobs bringing high quality jobs into the Town Centre which will support the growth and vitality of the Town Centre.
- Use of higher housing densities and a mix of housing sizes to create a vibrant urban environment where residents can access services locally and are very close to having access to good public transportation links.
- Contribution towards off site public open space and the delivery of a community facility for Queens Park
- Subject to feasibility and viability testing the re use of surplus heat/energy transfer
- Use of central and local heating transfer systems
- Subject to feasibility and viability testing the use of innovative waste management and transfer
- Production of a Green Travel Plan to support development proposals

- Water reduction, in comparison to current market consumption levels, through a combination of water saving technologies appropriate to Code Level 3 for residential properties and BREEAM Good for office development. Use of permeable materials and green roofs to reduce run off and contribute to rain water harvesting.
- Increased provision of cycle parking and storage within the proposal associated with the new station and other development and the provision of a north-south cycle route through the site consistent with local aspirations.
- Provision of retail and leisure facilities.
- Good accessibility and ‘containment’ for residents and workers to access employment, movement, retail, faith centres and local services which will result in shorter distances and thus car reliance.

9.3.2

In conclusion sustainable development is about achieving a balanced response across a wide range of social, environmental and economic objectives. This approach is recognised in guiding principles as set out in the UK Governments sustainable development strategy; Securing the Future and is consistent with national and regional planning and spatial policies in particular- PPS1, PPS4, PPS13 and PPS22. The proposal also responds to the emerging policy aspirations of the Bedford Town Centre Area Action Plan.

10 Statement of Community Involvement

10.1 *Introduction*

10.1.1 This chapter sets out the consultation that has taken place with regard to this proposal. It illustrates how the general public and a range of stakeholders have been engaged since the original conception of Station Quarter redevelopment proposals. Throughout the design of the Bedford Station Quarter, the planning and design team has made concerted efforts to ensure that all interested parties were engaged and their views considered.

10.2 *Partnership Working*

10.2.1 The proposed development was steered and guided from inception to the submission stage by a Steering Group comprising of East of England Development Agency (EEDA), English Partnerships (EP), Bedford Borough Council, CABE, Renaissance Bedford, Network Rail and Bedfordshire County Council. The Steering Group held approximately 7 meetings including a Steering Group Workshop in July 2007 to discuss five possible options for the development of the station and its environs.

10.2.2 The location and nature of the proposals mean that there are a wide range of views and opinions to reflect, many of which are directly opposing. In Spring, 2008 the outline planning application was submitted, however the pre-application consultation identified a number of concerns regarding the proposals and the applicant entered into an extensive period of further consultation with partners. This has led to submission of the latest proposals.

10.3 *Public Consultation*

10.3.1 A public exhibition was held at Bedford Midland Railway Station for three days in March, 2008 an attendees given the opportunity to complete a questionnaire. A stakeholder 'clinic' was then held at the Town Hall. Attendance was by invitation and an explanation of the proposals was provided and questions could be asked of the applicant's consultants.

10.3.2 Since March 2008 a number of meetings with key stakeholders have been held and iterations of the scheme were prepared in response to comments and views

expressed and the plans of Network Rail, which were becoming more certain as time passed.

10.3.3

Representatives of local resident associations have been included in this process and more recently a public consultation was held (June, 2009) to inform local residents of progress with the plans and to provide the opportunity for people to comment.

10.4

Consultation Responses

10.4.1

The most recent consultation raised a number of issues, many of a general nature and reflected broad areas of interest and concern raised during the 2008 consultation. Broadly, issues raised included:-

- General support for a thriving Station Quarter
- Cycle parking
- New cycle bridge alongside Ford End Road
- Taxi spaces
- Scale of the proposed development

10.4.2

Once the latest proposals and copies of the complete set of supporting assessments and surveys has been submitted to the Local Planning Authority and registered, a further public consultation exercise will be undertaken.

11 Heads of Terms

11.1.1

The following is a list of the Heads of Terms that we envisage will form the Section 106 Agreement/Planning Obligation attached to any planning consent.

- Affordable Housing in line with Local Policy requirements
- Education – commuted sum to cover impacts of the development of our site only as appropriate
- Off site sports pitch contribution as appropriate for either the provision of or the provision and maintenance of.
- Provision of Play Equipment in the sidings residential area and its maintenance as appropriate
- Possible off site highway improvements as appropriate.

12 Conclusion

12.1.1 This Planning Statement supports the outline application for the redevelopment of Bedford station Quarter, and is submitted on behalf of Bedford Borough Council.

12.1.2 The proposals comprise:

- Up to 23,915 m² office floor space
- A new station building with floorspace of up to 1,525 m²
- Up to 1910 m² retail space
- Up to 951 parking spaces to serve the station
- Up to 325 parking spaces to serve the office uses/hotel/retail
- Up to 99 new homes/ 12725m² residential floorspace

12.1.3 The proposals have a high degree of compliance with policy due to the fact that this development will provide a beneficial reuse of a derelict and under utilised urban site, whilst also facilitating the improvement of Midland Road. The proposals are supported in newly adopted Local policy in the form of the Bedford Town Centre Area Action Plan, and the Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan

12.1.4 The revitalisation of Bedford Town Centre that the proposals will help to deliver, together with the provision of new employment is seen as integral to strengthening the town's regional centre role.

12.1.5 It is considered that the benefits that the proposals will provide, outweigh any perceived adverse impacts. As such in light of the strategic importance of the development we would ask that planning permission is granted for the development.

Appendices

Appendix 1: References

Bedford Borough Council (2002) *Bedford Borough Local Plan*. Adopted Version

Bedford Borough Council (2008) *Bedford Town Centre Area Action Plan*. Bedford Development Framework

Bedford Borough Council (2008) *Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan* Bedford Development Framework

GVA Grimley, in association with Urban Initiatives and MVA (2005) *Bedford Town Centre Development Framework Study*. Report for Bedford Borough Council

Halcrow Group Ltd, in association with Bruton Knowles and PACEC (2006) *Bedford Employment Land Study*. Final Report for Bedford Borough Council