

MARSTON VALE NEW VILLAGES



Development Brief

FEBRUARY 2021

Consultation Draft

FOREWORD

This Development Brief sets out an ambitious vision and concept for the delivery of the Marston Vale New Villages which is allocated under Policy SA2 of the Central Bedfordshire Local Plan. The Development Brief reflects the allocation's special location at a key gateway to Central Bedfordshire and at the centre of the of the Oxford to Cambridge Arc. It also recognises the exceptional placemaking opportunity to deliver a series of new villages at the heart of the nationally designated Forest of Marston Vale and for the delivery of a substantial element of the Bedford & Milton Keynes Waterway.

The Development Brief has evolved significantly since a draft was included with the Outline Planning Application for the development of the allocation submitted in May 2018 (CBC Ref: CB/18/01969/OUT).

Since the submission of the Outline Planning Application, the Council has progressed its Local Plan through examination with hearings undertaken in the summer of 2019 and in December 2020. Through this process, policy requirements have been established within the Local Plan for the preparation of a development brief which must be endorsed by the Council prior to the approval of planning permission for the allocation. Additionally, the Council adopted its *Development Brief and Design Code Guidance* in February 2020.

Therefore, the approval of this Development Brief is a critical step in the planning process in order to establish an agreed, shared vision and concept for the development which will be used to inform the Council's consideration of the outline planning application proposals in the future.

The Development Brief is the result of a careful process of consultation and engagement with the local community and key stakeholders. It has been subject to extensive discussions with Central Bedfordshire Council Members and officers, consideration by the Stakeholder Reference Group comprised of Parish Councils and representatives from local groups and has been subject to a separate

consultation with statutory consultees. The Development Brief was also subject to public consultation between February and March 2021. A Consultation Statement is provided at Appendix A which describes how the Development Brief has been informed by the stages of consultation undertaken.

The Development Brief has been prepared during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020/21. This crisis has had a profound impact on the way in which people travel, work and live their lives. It has demonstrated the importance of sustainable placemaking and the role of the planning system to provide adaptable, resilient and a built and natural environment which supports the health, wellbeing and prosperity of communities. It has illustrated the value of access to clean open green spaces, of local community facilities which are accessible by walking and cycling, which meet day to day needs and offer the opportunity for flexible working.

The context and fundamental characteristics of the Marston Vale New Villages means that it will be aligned with the changing and lasting priorities resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. Importantly, as well as the new homes, community facilities and employment opportunities it will offer, the Marston Vale New Villages will provide an exceptional, varied, biodiverse, multifunctional and accessible landscape and green infrastructure resource which will benefit all communities in the Marston Vale.

In the context of the timeframe for the delivery of the Marston Vale New Villages (which will extend beyond the Central Bedfordshire Local Plan period (2015–2035)), the current COVID-19 pandemic and the wider priority to support a transition to a low carbon society, highlights the necessity for the Development Brief to secure a flexible and adaptive framework for the development so it can respond to any changes to policy requirements and the opportunities to harness new technologies in the future which can ensure the most efficient use of energy, water and other natural resources over its lifetime.

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