

**Bedford Borough Local Plan 2030
Draft Plan for Submission**

September 2018



Extract

- 12.28 The One Public Estate programme is focussed on public organisations working together to make best use of land held within its ownership, A number of sites are being progressed around the town centre. These sites include land around the railway station, the land to the west of the town centred on Ford End Road, and land to the south of the town centre (centred round Kingsway). The One Public Estate programme is an opportunity to develop a coordinated delivery of development in these locations.
- 12.29 The East-West Rail scheme involves a new strategic railway link connecting East Anglia to Oxford, southern and western England. Part of the western section from Oxford to Bicester Village has been completed and is in operation. Work on the second phase of the western section from Bicester Village to Bedford has started and the design work is being refined before a Transport and Works Act Order application is submitted in spring 2018. Trains are expected to operate between Oxford and Bedford Midland in 2022 and Milton Keynes to Aylesbury in 2024. The central section between Bedford to Cambridge is more difficult as the original Varsity railway line has now been built over and a new corridor needs to be determined. The Council's preferred option is for East-West Rail to be routed through Bedford Midland Station. Network Rail has determined that the route will be via Sandy with a preferred route to be announced during 2018.
- 12.30 The Council has received significant funding from the Department of Transport and SEMLEP to address the congestion in and on the approaches to Bedford Town Centre. The Transporting Bedford 2020 project has been developed to include public realm improvements in the High Street, and improvements to roads and junctions in the town centre and into the town centre in order to help reduce congestion and to improve the environment for pedestrians and cyclists. In addition, improving journey time reliability by the use of technology to link and integrate signals is a key strand of the strategy. The scheme has a 3 year delivery timeframe and works will be carried out across the town centre and at key road junctions.
- 12.31 Policy AD35 (Road Schemes) of the Allocations and Designations Local Plan outlines the improvements to the highway network. This policy includes the Dallas Road link and this is no longer required so the policy will need to be replaced. The improvements to the St Johns Area Relief Scheme and Ford End Road link are still relevant and the routes are to be safeguarded and incorporated into the policy below. The safeguarded routes are shown on the Policies Map.
- 12.32 In addition to these major projects, increased demand for development and movement is expected to lead to pressures elsewhere on the highway network and the Council will be seeking improvements to the locations listed below.

Policy 94S - Transport infrastructure and network improvements

The Council will work with its partners, agencies and developers to deliver reduced congestion around the town centre and key strategic routes while promoting sustainable transport modes, through the consideration and the early provision of:

- i. Re-development of Bedford Rail station and additional car parking provision
- ii. Development opportunities around Ford End Road and Prebend Street
- iii. Wixams railway station
- iv. East-West rail scheme (Oxford/Bedford/Cambridge)
- v. Schemes identified in the Bedford Town Centre Strategy (Transporting Bedford 2020)
- vi. Marsh Leys Junction improvements
- vii. A6/A421 junction improvements
- viii. Dualling of the Bedford Western Bypass
- ix. Improvements on Highway England's strategic road network e.g. improvements to the Black Cat roundabout junction.

The Council will support the improvements to the St Johns Area and Ford End Road link and the safeguarded routes are shown on the Policies Map.

Access to the countryside

- 12.33 Public rights of way include footpaths, bridleways and byways open to all traffic which allow access by foot, cycle and horse riders to access the countryside. The public rights of way are shown on the Council's definitive map which is available on the Council's website. The borough has 600km of public footpaths, 350km of Public Bridleways and 34 km of Byways Open to All Traffic.
- 12.34 The Bedford Borough Rights of Way Improvement Plan sets out the proposed aims, objectives and actions for the use of the borough's public rights of way network for the next five years. New developments should provide opportunities for increased health benefits, community use and enjoyment of the public rights of way network.
- 12.35 In addition to the public rights of way network, there are permissive paths, which can help to fill in gaps in the network. These can range from informal paths that have been locally agreed through to a permissive path legal agreement. In the case of a legal agreement, this is made between the landowner and the local authority and can include clauses such as the time limit of the specific path and who is responsible for the maintenance of the path. The legal agreement can then lead onto the formal dedication of a public right of way following the expiration of the initial legal permissive path agreement.