



Flitwick Town Council

Land Sale at Steppingley Road Detailed Questions & Answers

1. **Housing Need & Local Benefit**

Why do we need to build more housing in Flitwick?

There is a documented shortage of affordable homes in Flitwick, making it difficult for local families to stay in the community. The site was identified and allocated in the Central Bedfordshire Local Plan, confirming its suitability to help meet this local housing need.

Why has this piece of land been chosen to build on?

The land was selected through a rigorous planning process, deemed suitable for housing in the Local Plan to 2035. It meets an identified need, especially for affordable homes, and has no significant development barriers.

Why not leave the land as it is currently?

Leaving the site undeveloped means missing the opportunity to provide affordable housing for local people and to fund capital projects in the town from the proceeds of the sale.

2. **Infrastructure & Local Services**

Won't more housing put more pressure on already strained infrastructure?

We understand these concerns. However, the development is modest in size, and its relative impact is expected to be low.

How will Flitwick Town Council provide more infrastructure such as doctor surgeries, dentists, etc?

Infrastructure such as doctors surgeries, dentists, etc, are not within the remit of the Town Council. Central Bedfordshire Council will assess any financial contributions required to support local infrastructure. Once known, these will form part of the planning application and help mitigate any additional strain on services.

3. **Land Classification & Suitability**

Isn't the land currently classified as part of the greenbelt?

No. Although it is green in appearance, the land is not within the green belt. It has been properly assessed and included in the Local Plan as a designated housing site.

4. **Financial Considerations & Capital Investment**

How much money will the land sale raise?

The final value received will be based on the planning consent that is secured and other matters (for example, the final amount of S106 commuted sums to be paid by the buyers). However, at this time we are assuming that after all planning and S106 costs have been allowed for, the Council expects to receive no less than £1,675,000, subject to securing planning permission and successful transaction completion.

How has the Council ensured the best value for residents?

The Council worked with a professional Land Agent to secure the highest possible price under current market conditions, ensuring that the community benefits from the strongest financial return.

How will the Council spend the money released from selling the land?

Proceeds will fund the Council's capital works programme to improve the town and its facilities for both residents and businesses. Specific plans will be communicated once the sale is confirmed.

5. **Affordable Housing & Housing Mix**

What does an affordable housing scheme mean?

It means most, if not all of the homes would be considered affordable (for sale or rent) to those who cannot access the private market. This helps local individuals and families secure housing in their own community.

Why have you chosen this approach to delivering affordable homes?

The planning consent will be secured as an open market housing scheme. However, our chosen development partner is a housing association that intends to release the majority, if not all, of the homes as affordable housing. This structure allows the housing association to work closely with Homes England to secure the maximum grant funding. By doing so, we can achieve the best possible value for the land while meeting the community's pressing need for genuinely affordable homes ... enabling local people to remain living in Flitwick.

When we as a Council, speak with local people at our 'Chat to a Councillor' sessions and around the town, one of the most frequently mentioned concerns is the lack of access to and the high cost of good housing. This is highlighted every year in feedback we receive from residents in our Annual Residents' Survey.

Why has the Council partnered with a housing association?

Housing associations have the expertise to develop and manage affordable homes responsibly. This partnership ensures the homes remain accessible and well-managed over their lifetime. Furthermore, Town & Parish councils do not have legal powers to develop housing.

How was the housing association selected?

A Land Agent conducted a rigorous tender process on behalf of the Council. Multiple registered providers were invited to bid, and the final choice was based on financial offer, planning likelihood, conditions, and the reliability of the provider.

What type of housing is being built?

The plan currently proposes around 25 houses to best utilise the space, provide amenity space and meet local housing needs.

Are the houses all for rent or are some going to be available for shared ownership?

The final mix (rent/shared ownership) will be decided in consultation with Central Bedfordshire Council's Housing Officers to address local needs effectively.

Will Flitwick residents be prioritised for the affordable homes?

Yes, a Section 106 agreement will ensure that local residents have priority access to shared ownership properties. Affordable rent homes will be allocated by Central Bedfordshire council in accordance with the statutory social housing allocation guidance.

6. Planning & Consultation Process

When will the planning application be submitted?

A specific date is yet to be confirmed. Once finalised, we will inform residents and provide details on how to participate in the consultation process.

How long will the planning process take?

A typical planning application can take 18-26 weeks after submission to be determined, though more complex projects may take longer.

How can residents give their views on the proposal?

A public consultation will be held, and residents can also make representations directly to the planning authority during the application process. We will share more details on how and when you can have your say and when the planning application is live on the CBC Planning Portal.

What is the proposed build timetable?

Design finalisation, planning application, and obtaining approvals could take up to 15 months. Construction could start by Q1 2026, with completion in 2027, subject to approvals.

What will these houses look like?

Design details will be developed during the pre-application process and shared with residents before finalising the full planning application. We will welcome feedback during this stage.

What size will the houses be?

Most homes will likely be two and three bedroom units, suitable for families and local households seeking affordable options.

Why aren't you including larger family-sized houses with more bedrooms?

Growing families with the need for more than 2 bedrooms generally prefer houses with gardens. The chosen format aims to maximize the number of homes within the site constraints while meeting local demand.

Why only 25 houses rather than more or larger homes?

Site constraints, including the need for flood-risk management features, limit the number of dwellings if fewer, larger homes were built. Providing more, smaller houses allows us to meet target numbers and ensure viable delivery of affordable housing.

Who will build the houses?

The selected housing association have an approved build partner who will oversee and fund the construction, taking responsibility for delivery and risk.

Can the Council ensure local firms and suppliers are used?

While the housing association will manage the construction, they aim to use local supply chains where practical and beneficial.

How long will construction take?

The construction phase is anticipated to last around 18 months, once the building work commences.

7. **Construction Quality & Standards**

Will the foundations require piling like the senior housing facility nearby?

No, they will not need a piling design like that of the care home next door. The proposed housing is less complex structurally and has different load requirements.

Will houses have energy-efficient features like insulation and solar panels?

Energy efficiency standards will be integrated wherever feasible. Specific features will be detailed as the design progresses and must comply with Future Homes Standards and local policies.

8. **Environmental & Ecological Considerations**

Has any environmental assessment been carried out?

Yes, early-stage ecology and biodiversity assessments have been done. Further surveys and mitigation plans will be part of the planning application.

The area is prone to flooding. How will this be addressed?

Flood risk management features, like attenuation ponds and swales, are planned. These measures will help manage surface water and minimize flood risks.

It is the intention that the delivery of this new development will likely alleviate future flooding rather than exacerbate historic flooding on this land.

The reality is that a) part of this site has historically been subject to flooding and b) the reason the land was not used for allotments previously was because it was too boggy / waterlogged over winter. The new development will only secure planning if a purposely designed and adequate flood mitigation system is constructed and delivered. Therefore, for the first time in many years the impact of flooding will be actively managed and reduced.

What measures will preserve wildlife and bird habitats?

An Ecology and Biodiversity Plan will form part of the planning application, identifying measures to protect and enhance habitats.

Are all the current trees being retained?

A detailed arboriculture report will guide tree retention and new planting. Preserving important trees and adding new greenery is a priority.

9. **Allotments & Community Amenities**

Will current allotments be affected by the new access road?

Two allotment plots will be directly impacted; these allotment holders have been contacted and an agreeable arrangement has been made with the affected plot holders.

Why hasn't this land been used for allotments instead of housing?

This land was once allotment space, but it was poorly suited due to excessive wetness. It has remained underused for years, making it suitable for much-needed housing now.

What if more allotments are needed in the future?

The Council currently provides over 190 allotment plots across two sites. This land is unsuitable for allotments; Council would review options should demand exceed supply.

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