

## **Borough Councillor Update – October 2020**

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### **Bedford Covid Update**

In the up to the 4<sup>th</sup> October there were 118 cases of coronavirus in Bedford Borough. This is an increase of 46 on the week before, and the latest figures show that cases are continuing to rise.

The Government recently announced its 3 tier strategy, this comprises 3 tiers, 1, 2 and 3. Bedford Borough is currently tier1 and classed as medium risk (there is no lower tier).

What are the restrictions in the different tiers?

Areas with the lowest rates of infection will be placed in **Tier One**. They will face the basic national rules currently in force including:

- Pubs, bars and restaurants will have to close at 22:00 BST
- The rule of six (number of people who can meet up) applies both indoors and outdoors

Areas in **Tier Two** face an extra level of restrictions:

- No mixing between different households indoors
- The rule of six only continues outdoors

The highest level of restrictions are in **Tier Three**. Areas where transmission is rising most rapidly will be placed in this category. The government said it would work with local councils on the additional measures for each area. The prime minister said the Liverpool City Region (Liverpool, Knowsley, Sefton, Wirral, St Helens and Halton) - currently the only area facing Tier Three restrictions - will have the following restrictions from Wednesday 14 October:

- Pubs and bars will be closed, except where serving substantial meals
- Households cannot mix indoors or outdoors
- Gyms, leisure centres, betting shops and casinos will also close
- Shops, schools and universities will remain open

Anyone displaying symptoms should stay at home and only leave the house to get tested. Testing remains available locally for anyone displaying symptoms; high temperature, new persistent cough, loss of taste or smell. To book a test visit [nhs.uk/coronavirus](https://nhs.uk/coronavirus) or call 119.

### **Odell Road Development, Harrold**

The latest we have is that the Planning Inspectorate asked for updated statements of case by 22<sup>nd</sup> September, but have agreed (at the appellant's request) to extend that to 22<sup>nd</sup> October. Once they see an update from both sides we anticipate they will set dates. It seems likely that the new Inquiry will be in the first few months of 2021, rather than this year,

although we can't say that for sure until we hear from them. It may also be an electronic event, but again, we can't tell at this stage.

### **Bedford Council awarded money for High Street from HSHAZ programme**

Bedford will receive £1.76 million to deliver building works from the Government HSHAZ programme (High Street Heritage Action Zone) a cultural programme to help revive town centres. The South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership, Historic England and LoveBedford are contributing funding.

Bedford Borough Council has currently earmarked 43 buildings as eligible for funding under the HSHAZ programme. Improvements to these buildings could include:

Reinstatement of traditional shopfronts.

Conversion of vacant floor space for retail and/or residential use.

Repair and reinstatement of architectural details to the façade of buildings.

Undertaking structural works to help achieve these improvements.

If you are a building owner in Bedford Borough and your premises falls within the High Street Heritage Action Zone, you can speak with the HSHAZ team about possible refurbishments to your property. If you would like to get in touch, please contact Jessica Mittler, HSHAZ Project Manager:

- Email: [jessica.mittler@bedford.gov.uk](mailto:jessica.mittler@bedford.gov.uk)
- Tel: 01234 276452

### **1m of Bedford 'Town funds' deal brought forward**

Following recent announcements of increased financial support for Bedford from the Government, the Borough has now been given an additional £1 million thanks to the £3.6 billion Towns Fund. Bedford will benefit from a range of regeneration and growth projects thanks to a Government scheme to respond to the impact of the coronavirus pandemic.

### **Bedford Council given money to help end rough sleeping**

Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP announced that 274 Councils including Bedford would receive funding to provide interim accommodation and support as part of the Government's commitment to end rough sleeping.

Bedford Council has been given a fund of £450,000 by the Government to provide vulnerable adults in the area with a safe place to stay during these unprecedented times caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/274-councils-set-to-receive-housing-support-for-vulnerable-people>

### **Financial Impact of COVID-19 for Bedford Borough Council**

Bedford Borough Council's Executive discussed the financial impact of COVID-19 following a report highlighting that the council is facing a financial gap of between £22 and £36million over the next five years with the impact of COVID-19 causing a significant pressure. More news available: <https://www.bedford.gov.uk/news/Latest-News/2020-09-22-financial-impact-of-covid-19-for-bedford-borough-c/>

### **School Admissions**

Bedford Borough Council's online admissions system is now open to all parents and carers whose children are due to transfer to secondary or upper school in September 2021.

Parents who live within the Borough who have a child in year 6 at primary school or year 8 at a middle school will need to transfer their child to a secondary school or upper school in September 2021. The transfer to Secondary 2021 round and the transfer to Upper 2021 round is available from 12 September 2020 via the Council website, closing 31 October 2020.

For parents who have a child due to transfer to middle school in September 2021, the transfer to middle school application form will go live from 26 September 2020 until 15 January 2021.

For children starting school in September 2021 (date of birth between 1 September 2016 – 31 August 2017), applications will open 26 September 2020 and will close 15 January 2021.

For further information go to [www.bedford.gov.uk/onlineadmissions](http://www.bedford.gov.uk/onlineadmissions)

### **Veolia Awarded Waste Contracts for Bedford Borough**

With the current contracts to treat residents' black bin residual waste coming to an end, Bedford Borough has been taking part in a procurement process to award a new contract for this service. The process received only two bids, both of which included the waste being treated at an Energy Recovery Facility. The Mayor and his Executive felt that Veolia represented the best option in terms of quality and price saving. As part of the contract, Veolia are intending to treat the Borough's black bag waste at the Energy Recovery Facility at the Covanta Rookery South Facility.

### **DfT looking for new Chairperson for East –West rail**

The Department for Transport announced that they are currently looking for a new chairperson for East-West rail.

### **Track and Trace App**

The government has released new legislation as part of its efforts to drive down the rate of coronavirus infection and support the test and trace system.

On Friday 18th September it became law for hospitality venues to enforce the rule of 6 or face a fine of up to £4,000 and to log contact details for customer, visitors and staff as part of NHS Test and Trace.

From today, Thursday 24th September, this has been extended so that it will be a legal requirement to display an official NHS QR code poster to help people check in to venues.

The NHS COVID-19 App also launched today across the country. It can be downloaded via <https://covid19.nhs.uk/>

### **Council Increases Access To Waste and Recycling Centre**

Changes at Bedford Borough's household waste recycling centre now mean more vehicles will be able to access the site and more booking slots will be available for anyone looking to drop off their waste and recycling.

From today (Thursday 17 September) vans and most trailers will be able to return to the site as they had prior to Covid-19. Like neighbouring authorities a booking system for the site remains in place to manage capacity, reduce waiting times and traffic congestion and keep everyone safe. Additionally the number of available slots has been increased, providing a further 448 slots a week.