

## **Borough Councillors Report August 2021**

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### **Bedford Borough Local Plan Consultation**

Bedford Borough is consulting on its new Local Plan 2040 from Tuesday 29 June to 5pm on Friday 3 September 2021. I would encourage residents in the Ward to read the Local Plan Development Strategy Paper which can be found on the Borough's website under Local Plan 2040 and respond to the consultation and have a say in where development goes. Either write directly to Planning Policy Team at Borough Hall, Cauldwell Street, Bedford MK42 9AP or email your comments to [planningforthefuture@bedford.gov.uk](mailto:planningforthefuture@bedford.gov.uk) or complete the consultation response form on the Borough's website. The Borough needs to allocate land to enable a minimum of 25,500 homes between 2020 – 2040 therefore it is important to have your say.

The Development Strategy Paper identifies 7 potential development areas. The Planning Policy Team at Borough Hall recognise options 2a, 2b, 2c and 2d as the best options. These are the along the A421 transport corridor and fulfil sustainability criteria with potential new stations at Stewartby, Kempston Hardwick and Wixams, maximise the use of previously developed and lower quality agricultural land, increasing the use of public transport, cycling and walking and resulting in lower CO2 emissions.

However, two very large new settlements in our area, at Twinwoods and Colworth (Sharnbrook) also feature at options 3a – 3c. Choice of these options could require further development at Harrold, Carlton, Milton Ernest, Oakley and Turvey with up to 35 homes each and a further 500 homes at Sharnbrook and Clapham, in addition to the 500 already provided for in the current Local Plan. This level of development on either of these two new settlement sites and in our villages will have huge impact an impact on the A6 and our rural roads and villages.

I would like to encourage residents to write in support of options 2a – 2d. Development along the A421 corridor will help maintain the character our Great Ouse Valley.

You can find the current draft here: <https://www.bedford.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy-its-purpose/local-plan-review/>

### **Council Submits £15m Bid For 'Levelling Up Fund'**

Bedford Borough Council has bid for £14.9m from the Government's 'Levelling Up Fund' to make major improvements in Kempston town centre; investing in regeneration and transport infrastructure to improve the economic vitality of Kempston.

Bedford Borough have said that if successful, this fund would be invested in regeneration around the Saxon Centre including improving the public area and making the area safer, and creating better connections between the shops, employment and leisure sites.

### **Additional £1m to be spent on Roads and Pavements**

Bedford Borough Council has claimed an £11.78m underspend on the 'Covid-19' section of the 2020/21 budget. As you can see on the below table, this led to a total underspend of £1.457m.

	<b>Current Net Budget</b>	<b>Outturn</b>	<b>Variance</b>	<b>%</b>
	<b>£ million</b>	<b>£ million</b>	<b>£ million</b>	
Adult Services	50.330	46.213	(4.117)	(8%)
Children's Services	33.416	33.286	(0.130)	0%
Business Transformation and Organisational Design	17.507	24.230	6.723	38%
Enabling Services	2.704	5.252	2.547	94%
Environment	26.958	29.861	2.903	11%
Chief Executives	4.192	4.134	(0.059)	(1%)
Public Health	0.000	0.000	0.000	-
Covid-19	0.000	(11.780)	(11.780)	-
<b>Operational Net Cost</b>	<b>135.107</b>	<b>131.194</b>	<b>(3.913)</b>	<b>(3%)</b>
Capital Financing	3.282	4.998	1.716	
Contingency	0.500	0.000	(0.500)	
Corporate Budgets	(6.842)	(5.602)	1.240	
<b>Non Operational Budgets</b>	<b>(3.060)</b>	<b>(0.604)</b>	<b>2.456</b>	
<b>Total</b> (Note there may be differences in rounding in this table.)	<b>132.047</b>	<b>130.590</b>	<b>(1.457)</b>	<b>(1.1%)</b>

The Borough Council have therefore decided to add this money to the general fund which means as of 31 March 2021 there is £17.8m.

This has led to revisions to the Capital Programme 2021/22 to 2023/24 which includes an additional investment of £1m into Roads and Pavements.

### **Bedford Borough provide meals and activities for children in the summer holidays**

Following funding from the Department of Education's Holiday Activities and Food Programme Bedford Borough have been able to provide food vouchers and activities for children who receive school meals in term time.

Parents will be able to find out if they are eligible and able to register for free school meals at [www.bedford.gov.uk/schools-education-and-childcare/education-welfare-service/free-school-meals/](http://www.bedford.gov.uk/schools-education-and-childcare/education-welfare-service/free-school-meals/)

The holiday programme started on Monday 26 July and continues for six weeks with different activities spread across school holidays.

For more information on the holiday clubs and how to book visit <https://localoffer.bedford.gov.uk/hafsummer21>

### **Phase Two of High Street Improvement Works**

Since February 2021, there have been works to Bedford High Street in order to permanently make it one lane only for traffic and create more space for shoppers and pedestrians.

Phase one of these works, which ran from St Peters Street to Mill Street are now complete and the Council began phase two on Monday 26 July, with traffic calming measures being put in place. The second phase of works stretch from Mill Street down to St Paul's Square and is planned to last until November 2021.

As part of these works, the Council will be making the pavement wider and repaving this section of the high street with high quality York paving and granite kerbstones. Speed cameras will be installed along the road to enforce the 20mph speed limit on Bedford High Street.

### **Bedford Borough receive £208k from Department of Transport to boost cycling and walking**

Bedford Borough Council has received £208,906 from the Department of Transport as a further part of the Cycling and Walking plan for England which started in 2020.

This money will be used to boost cycling infrastructure, which includes new cycles lanes and to support walking schemes throughout the Borough.

The Government also announced that along with this funding they will be updating the Highway Code and will publish this in autumn.

### **Borough COVID-19 Update**

As of the 25<sup>th</sup> July in Bedford there have been 17,617 cases since the start of the pandemic and there have been 593 registered cases in Bedford in the last 7 days.

If you would like the latest COVID snapshot (as of 25<sup>th</sup> July) please find it below:

<https://bbcdevwebfiles.blob.core.windows.net/webfiles/Social%20Care%20Health%20and%20Community/Covid19/Covid19-weekly-statistics-28Jul2021.pdf>

The Delta (Indian) variant is now the dominant strain in Bedford. Bedford Borough are asking residents' to proceed with extreme caution as cases are continuing to rise.

More information available at: <https://www.bedford.gov.uk/social-care-health-and-community/public-health/coronavirus/>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-19-coronavirus-restrictions-what-you-can-and-cannot-do>

### **Vaccinations available for over 18s**

Vaccinations are now being offered to all over 18s in the Borough. If you have yet to receive your first jab, or if it's been eight weeks since your first vaccine, you can book an appointment at one of the below seven pharmacies, or at Bedford Heights.

Bedford Pharmacy, 9 Greenhill Street

Kidman's Surgical Chemist, Castle Road

The Village Pharmacy, Meiklejohn Centre, Unit 3, Kingswood Way, Great Denham

Meiklejohn Pharmacy, Harrowden Road

Janssens Pharmacy, Ampthill Road

Bromham Pharmacy, Avoca House, Molivers Lane, Bromham

Smarta Healthcare, Stephenson Court, Fraser Road, Priory Business Park

Residents can either book direct at the pharmacy or go through the national booking centre to get their vaccine at Bedford Heights.