

Borough Councillor Update – August/September 2018

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Local Plan 2030

The Mayor's Executive agreed the direction of its revised Local Plan, determining sites for housing and employment growth, at its meeting on the 5th September.

At the Executive's meeting in May 2018 it was agreed that the proposed Colworth Garden Village, adjacent to Sharnbrook and Souldrop, could not proceed due to opposition from the Santa Pod Raceway over the need for noise mitigations given the close proximity of the site to the proposed development. Colworth was earmarked to underpin the Local Plan, contributing 2500 new homes to the year 2035 and up to 4500 thereafter.

Colworth's absence means that consideration has been given to alternative options to meet the Borough's housing need. This included the viability of the proposed Garden Villages at Thurleigh Airfield, Twinwoods, Wyboston and 'Bedford Brickworks' (covering land to the south of Bedford). It is now thought that all these sites have issues that make them unviable at present.

It is, therefore, the intention now to reduce the length of the Local Plan period from the year 2035 to 2030, thus decreasing the housing need figure from 7855 to 4356. The below table sets out the proposed allocations for specific areas, comparing the version of the Local Plan consulted on at the beginning of the 2018 on the left with the revised allocations on the right which will be subject to a new public consultation from 18th September – 30th October.

Local Plan 2035 Plan for submission	Amount of residential development To 2035	Local Plan 2030 Plan for submission	Amount of residential development to 2030	Amount of residential development after 2030
Urban area	2,420	Urban area	1,785	747
Edge of urban area	210	Edge of urban area	211	
Brownfield site Stewartby Brickworks	1,000	Brownfield site Stewartby Brickworks	100	900
Colworth garden village	2,500		0	
Group 1 villages – Key Service Centres		Group 1 villages – Key Service Centres		
- Bromham	500	- Bromham	500	
- Clapham	500	- Clapham	500	
- Gt Barford	500	- Gt Barford	500	
- Sharnbrook	0	- Sharnbrook	500	
- Shortstown	0	- Shortstown	0	
- Wilstead	0	- Wilstead	0	
- Wixams	0	- Wixams	0	
- Wootton	0	- Wootton	0	
Total Group 1 villages	1,500	Total Group 1 villages	2,000	
Group 2 Villages – Rural Service Centres		Group 2 Villages – Rural Service Centres		
- Carlton	25-50	- Carlton	25-50	
- Harrold	25-50	- Harrold	25-50	
- Milton Ernest	25-50	- Milton Ernest	25-50	
- Oakley	25-50	- Oakley	25-50	
- Roxton	25-50	- Roxton	25-50	
- Stewartby	0	- Stewartby	0	
- Turvey	25-50	- Turvey	25-50	
- Willington	0	- Willington	25-50	
Total Group 2 villages (mid point)	225	Total Group 2 villages (mid point)	260	
	7,855		4,356	1647

Putnoe Walk In Centre Consultation Halted

The Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (BCCG), the body which organises NHS services locally, recently has announced its intention to close the Putnoe Walk In Centre from Spring 2019.

This was linked to plans to open a new Urgent Treatment Centre (UTC) on the Bedford Hospital site. The UTC will provide same-day appointments for minor illnesses over a 12 hour period, 7 days a week via referrals from A & E and the 111 phone service. The BCCG says the rationale of the UTC is to reduce pressure on the Hospital's A & E function and allow clinicians to access diagnostic services (such as X-rays) if necessary.

The BCCG undertook a consultation on these plans which was due to end on the 19th August. It was announced on the 10th August, however, that the consultation would close early following the receipt of over 1900 responses. The BCCG now says 'it is clear that we need to reconsider our proposals on the future of urgent care in Bedfordshire'.

East West Rail

Plans have been submitted by Network Rail to the Secretary of State for Transport to begin works as early as 2019 on the western section of the East – West Rail link.

East West Rail will see the development of a new train line between Oxford and Bedford (western section). It is then planned to open a line from Bedford to Cambridge (central section) by the mid-2020s, with the scope in the future for it to extend further into the east of England. Trains running from Oxford to Bedford will stop at: Oxford Parkway; Bicester; Winslow; Bletchley; Woburn Sands, and; Ridgmont. Visit www.eastwestrail.org.uk for more details.

Homelessness Grant

The Borough Council has received a grant of £307k from the Government to invest in services supporting rough sleepers.

The funding will be used to employ 6 additional support workers and a Rough Sleeper Outreach Co-ordinator who will ensure that the Council works efficiently and effectively with partner organisations. Furthermore, 36 additional units of accommodation will be provided, as well as more emergency accommodation beds during the winter months.

The additional funding follows the opening earlier in the year of the 29 bed Complex Needs Unit on St John's Street, Bedford. This facility provides 24/7 intensive support to help break the cycle of homelessness.

Knife Crime

It was widely reported in July that knife crime increased by 22% in the past year in England and Wales. Bedfordshire Police has subsequently moved to reassure the public that it is taking action to address this.

Bedfordshire Police participates in Operation Sceptre, a national initiative which sees a week of action twice a year to crack down on knife crime. In addition to this, days of action are being held each month and officers are undertaking 'weapons sweeps', to look for discarded or hidden knives, and targeted patrols are held in 'hotspot' areas.

Other actions include test purchases at shops, to ensure the law is being adhered to in not selling knives to those below 18 years of age, and raising awareness in schools.

Flu Vaccine

With autumn fast approaching, the Council and NHS are publicising the availability of free flu vaccinations for pregnant women and children aged between 2 – 9. Contact your GP for further details.

Electoral Registration

All households should recently have received electoral registration forms in the post as part of the Council's annual canvass. Residents are being asked by the Council to check that their details are correct and to respond to ensure that they are able to vote in the Borough elections in May 2019.