

Borough Councillor Update – October 2018

**Contact Borough Councillor Alison Foster by telephone on 07773371190
or email at ajfieldfoster@gmail.com**

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 |

The Council's Local Plan, outlining sites for housing to the year 2030, is currently subject to public consultation. The closing date for responses is the 30th October. For more details search 'Bedford Local Plan 2030'.

Putnoe Walk In Centre to Remain Open

The Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (BCCG), the body which organises NHS services locally, has announced that the Putnoe Walk in Centre is to remain open to May 2020, albeit with reduced hours.

The BCCG recently stated 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 and will reduce pressure on the Hospital's A & E function.

The BCCG undertook a consultation on these plans in August. However, the consultation closed early following the receipt of over 1900 responses, with the BCCG acknowledging the strength of local feeling to retain the Putnoe Walk in Centre.

The BCCG has now agreed with partners at Putnoe Medical Centre that the Walk in Centre continue for at least 2 more years. While weekend opening hours will continue as 8am – 5pm, it will close at 2pm on weekdays, as opposed to 6pm currently. The UTC opened as planned on the 1st October.

Wixams Station

The Borough Council has announced a proposal to invest £14m to build a train station at Wixams.

In 2006, the Wixams housing developer, Gallagher agreed to deliver a train station or otherwise contribute a maximum £13.4m towards the scheme, although spiralling costs have seen the project stall.

The Council now proposes to invest £14m to the overall estimated £27.4m cost of the scheme. This would be funded from borrowing and paid back from the station's income. The plan is in its early stages and £200k has been set aside to undertake a feasibility study.

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.

Ward Fund

As Borough Councillors we have 'Ward Funds' to contribute to community projects. We would urge all organisations and voluntary bodies to discuss with us any schemes you would like us to consider. We are subject to the following deadlines: litter bins, salt bins and salt bin refills - 23rd November 2018; projects to support local organisations - 14th December 2018.

Childcare

Since September 2017 the Government has provided 30 hours free childcare for 3 and 4 year olds for 38 weeks of the year (i.e. excluding school holidays). For more information on eligibility see <https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/>