



## **Brickhill Parish Council: Great Barford Ward Councillors' Update April 2017**

### **Infrastructure: Ampthill Road and Wixams Railway**

The Government announced in March that a scheme to alleviate chronic congestion on Bedford's Ampthill Road will receive funding.

Last year the Government invited bids for new schemes to receive funding through its Local Growth Funds to boost regional economies. Bedford Borough Council subsequently put forward a bid, via the South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership (SEMLEP), a public / private group responsible for driving economic growth, to receive just under £5m to improve Ampthill Road's traffic flow.

The Southern Gateway project, as it is known, is set to use new technology to link traffic signals, thus enabling them to respond better to congestion. It also includes a planned revision of the road network that could see cycle lanes and footways moved to bridges adjacent to the road, which would allow an additional lane for traffic.

The Government subsequently announced that £59m will be allocated to the South East Midlands region to fund new schemes including the Bedford Southern Gateway. The estimated total cost of the project is £5.4m, including a £600k allocation from the Council. The Council has said its plans are flexible depending on the resources available.

SEMLEP will now undertake a 'due diligence' process to establish how much each of the schemes will receive.

Unfortunately, a bid to move forward long-awaited plans for a train station at Wixams was not included on the shortlist. Nevertheless, an additional bid has been made to the Government under a pot of funding for new railway stations.

### **Mobile Library**

The Council has launched a public consultation on the future of its Mobile Library and Library Link services.

The Mobile Library currently visits 40 communities with 182 stops per month. The Library Link service has 20 routes and visits housebound individuals' homes, residential homes and sheltered accommodation units.

According to the consultation page on the Council's website, a proposed new timetable 'will mean some stops will be more frequent and some less frequent'. The timetable and further information can be viewed via [www.bedford.gov.uk/mobileconsultation](http://www.bedford.gov.uk/mobileconsultation).

The consultation will end on the 9<sup>th</sup> June. You can respond to [consultingbedford@bedford.gov.uk](mailto:consultingbedford@bedford.gov.uk) or by writing to the Council at: Consulting Bedford, Borough Hall, Cauldwell Street, Bedford, MK42 9AP

### **Homelessness Grant**

The Council is to administer a £623k Government grant to provide assistance to rough sleepers.

The grant will fund in the next 2 years a Rough Sleeper Street Outreach Service across Bedford Borough, Central Bedfordshire, Luton Borough and Milton Keynes.

The Council will use the monies to commission organisations across these areas to provide increased support around accommodation, health and benefits. This includes the use of 'Crisis Intervention Workers' who will be tasked with providing intensive support in complex cases.

It is hoped that the grant will support around 700 people across the region. In November, the Council's annual Rough Sleeper Evaluation estimated that there were 59 people rough sleeping on any given night; up from 17 in 2011. The grant will, therefore, offer timely assistance.

### **Domestic Abuse**

Last month the Council publicised its joint website, with Central Bedfordshire Council, to assist those requiring advice in relation to domestic violence issues.

The Bedfordshire Domestic Abuse Partnership website is now said to be more user friendly and interactive. The site, <https://bedsdv.org.uk/>, saw a 1296% increase in visits in the past 6 months after it was relaunched in September.

### **Local Plan Consultation**

As a reminder, a consultation will be held from the 18<sup>th</sup> April – 2<sup>nd</sup> June on the Council's Local Plan 2035. For more information see [www.bedford.gov.uk/localplan2035](http://www.bedford.gov.uk/localplan2035)

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