

**Update from Borough Councillors Stephen Moon and
Phillippa Martin-Moran-Bryant
January 2020**

Happy New Year!

Local Plan

The Council has now received the Inspector's report which fundamentally states that the Local Plan is sound with the main modifications, and suitable for adoption. The report is going to be considered by the Executive on 8th January, and Full Council for likely adoption on 15th January.

The Local Plan is now so advanced that officers consider that the Council has a 5 year housing land supply, meaning that applications on land not included in the Plan will not usually be accepted. That at least temporarily ends the risk to villages of speculative developments.

However, officers have noted that it is going to be challenging to keep up the necessary land supply based on the urban allocations, the need to make and deliver Neighbourhood Plan allocations. Planning permissions granted during the time that the Council did not have a 5 year land supply (from 31st March 2019 to end December 2019) will count towards the Council's Local Plan targets. If the Plan fails to deliver houses the Borough Council will once again fail to have a 5 year land supply, and only those areas with a neighbourhood plan under 2 years old will be protected from speculative development (providing the Council's supply doesn't dip below 3 years).

Upon adoption of the Local Plan 2030 a further new Local Plan will have to be completed within 3 years or the Council's key policies will be considered out of date balance in favour of granting consent to speculative applications will apply again.

Council Budget Consultation

The consultation is now live for the 2020-2021 budget. To have your say visit: <https://www.bedford.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/have-your-say/consultations/budget-2020-consultation> The Council is proposing £13m extra for Adult Services to meet demand, to further digitise services, to review its current operations and procurement, look into service change ideas and to increase its commercial activities. Consultation closes **17th January 2020**.

The Council is also consulting on its Capital Programme <https://www.bedford.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/have-your-say/consultations/capital-schemes-consultation/>

This is looking at where the Council is going to invest in schemes and projects to improve the Borough. More details on the proposed schemes can be found here: <https://bbcdevwebfiles.blob.core.windows.net/webfiles/Your%20Council/Consultations/Capital%20Schemes.pdf>

Also residents of the village can consider joining the Citizens Panel if they would like to be more involved to create a strong rural voice: <https://forms.bedford.gov.uk/cprecruitment/>

Highways

We have again raised with the Highways Department regarding very poor state of the road surface around roundabouts over the A421 and we have been assured that the road will be resurfaced at the end of March 2020. In the meantime we have requested that the road markings reminding road users that it is a two way road be repainted.

Inclusion in Schools

The Council and its partners have launched their 'Behaviour, Learning and Inclusions Support Strategy' (BLISS) to promote inclusion and to help vulnerable children to stay in school and reduce exclusions. Schools will be offered enhanced workforce development to assist children who are struggling with behaviour in the classroom. Three documents to assist schools are available online: Behaviour, Learning and Inclusions Support Strategy (BLISS) www.bedford.gov.uk/BLISS, The Little Book of BLISS www.bedford.gov.uk/LBOB and The Early Help and Intervention Graduated Response www.bedford.gov.uk/EHIGR

Corn Exchange Website

The Council has launched a new website for the Corn Exchange which is now responsive and will automatically resize to fit the screen of your device. To visit the website please go to: <https://www.bedfordcornexchange.co.uk>

Rough Sleepers

There has been a reduction in the number of known rough sleepers in Bedford over the last 24 months. The Council has also committed to providing additional emergency beds for rough sleepers every night until 31st March, not just when it is freezing, and the Council is providing wrap around support to try to encourage take up of support and accommodation. If anyone knows anyone who is sleeping rough please contact the Council's Housing Options Team at any time on 01234 267422

Temporary Accommodation for Homeless People

The Council has approved the purchase of a block of 12 flats at 20/22 St Cuthbert's Street, Bedford for use as temporary accommodation for homeless persons. This is to contribute to a target of acquiring 50 units to reduce the reliance on variable quality leasehold premises and short term nightlight lets. This will also reduce the cost of providing temporary accommodation whilst fulfilling the Council's statutory obligations and the Council's own targets.

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