



Brickhill Parish Council: Update from Cllrs Stephen Moon and Sheryl Corp
February 2018

Bedford Borough Council Budget 2018/19

A meeting of Borough councillors on the 7th February will determine the Council's budget for 2018/19.

As in previous years, demand for services is increasing whilst the overall resources available to the Council will remain relatively unchanged. This has required the Council to continue its programme of service efficiencies through its 'Bedford Borough 2020' project.

Bedford Borough 2020 will see the introduction of a 'Digital Operating Model', which is estimated to achieve annual savings of £10.4m by the beginning of the next decade through the improved use of technology. This will include increased opportunities for residents to use 'self-service' functions when interacting with the Council, particularly through the implementation of a new website.

The Council is also continuing its programme of service efficiencies, totalling £3.8m in the coming year. In addition to this, there is a proposed Council Tax increase of 1.75% and a rise of 2% in the Adult Social Care Precept. The revenue gained from the latter must be used on adult social care services, the budget for which has been set at £52.1m next year; a 13.7% increase since 2015/16, reflecting increased demand.

The Council's Capital Programme determines schemes for 'one-off' investment totalling £185.8m over a 4 year period from 2017/18 to 2020/21. This includes several projects of particular note, including:

- Around £19m of Government investment in traffic decongestion schemes at Ampthill Road, Manton Lane and the town centre.
- £5.5m in Disabled Facilities Grants monies from the Government to support individuals to live independently in their own home.
- £59m of investment in schools' facilities, including the continued implementation of the 2 tier system in the Borough.

Local Plan 2035

A new public consultation is giving residents the final chance to comment on the Council's proposed Local Plan, setting out preferred sites for the development of around 8000 homes to the year 2035.

The consultation will end at 5pm on the 5th March. Residents must respond should they wish their comments to be considered once the Local Plan is submitted for consideration to the Planning Inspectorate.

Responses can be submitted via www.bedford.gov.uk/localplan2035 or by emailing planningforthefuture@bedford.gov.uk. Response forms are also available at local libraries and the Customer Service Centre on Horne Lane, while comments can also be sent by post to Local Plan 2035, Planning Policy Team, Bedford Borough Council, Borough Hall, Bedford MK42 9AP.

Putnoe Walk-In Centre

The Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (BCCG), the body responsible for organising NHS services locally, has announced its intention to close the Walk-In Centre (WIC) at Putnoe Surgery in Bedford.

At a meeting of the BCCG's Governing Body last month, it was agreed that the WIC would remain at Putnoe until the end of September 2018. Thereafter, alternative provision will be implemented through an 'Urgent Treatment Centre' (UTC), based on the Bedford Hospital site, which will operate a 'like for like service from the Putnoe Walk In Centre'. It will also link with the Hospital's A & E function, allowing non-emergency patients access to diagnostics should further tests be required, and will receive ambulances and appointments via the 111 phone service.

In addition to the UTC, the BCCG has expressed its intention to extend GP opening hours into evenings and weekends, giving patients more options to book appointments.

The BCCG says it will engage with patients in the coming months to determine the future of services.

Ford End Road Bridge

From the 16th February to August, Network Rail is to undertake demolition and reconstruction of Ford End Road bridge in Bedford as part of works to electrify the railway line through Bedford.

The bridge will be closed to vehicle during this period and traffic will be diverted.

Keeping Warm in Winter

Keeping warm can be difficult during the winter months, particularly for older persons. Age UK Bedfordshire is offering advice to help. For more information call 01234360510 or visit <http://www.ageuk.org.uk/bedfordshire/>

Winter Travel

The Council's website provides a useful section on up to date service changes arising from the winter weather. This includes changes to public, school and adult services transport, waste collections and road gritting.

Search 'Bedford winter updates' for more information.

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