

Brickhill Parish Council - Borough Councillors' Update – May 2018

Local Plan 2035 Update

The Council's latest consultation on its draft Local Plan, setting out preferred sites for the development of around 8000 homes to the year 2035, ended on the 29th March.

Planning officers have now reviewed the responses. Following this, the Mayor's Executive will decide whether or not to make any amendments to the document. If changes are made, there may be a requirement for a further round of consultation. If not, the Local Plan for submission will go to a vote of all councillors at a meeting on the 16th May.

If and when the Local Plan is approved by councillors, it will then be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate. The role of the Planning Inspectorate is to make comments and, where appropriate, suggestions for modifications so that the Local Plan complies with national policies and legal requirements. Local authorities are not obliged to take on board the views of the Planning Inspector, but doing so could assist in ensuring the Local Plan is deemed to be 'sound' should it be subject to challenge from developers in the future. Depending on the workload of the Planning Inspectorate at the time of submission, it may take several months for the Council's Local Plan to be reviewed.

Licensing Policy

The Borough Council is set to agree a new Statement of Licensing Policy 2018 – 2023 that will introduce a presumption against new applications being granted for licenses to sell alcohol in Mildand Road, Tavistock Street and the High Street. This is in response to a review which has demonstrated a link between the proliferation of premises selling alcohol in these areas and instances of crime and anti-social behaviour.

Should the 'Cumulative Impact Policy' (CIP) be agreed at a meeting of all councillors on the 2nd May, applicants will subsequently have to demonstrate that their application for an alcohol licence will not have a detrimental effect.

New Special School

The Government has announced plans for a new special school in Kempston. The Bedford Inclusive Learning and Training Trust will offer 200 places for children aged 3-19 with learning difficulties. For more information see: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-measures-to-support-children-with-send>

Hospital Merger

Bedford Hospital's proposed merger with Luton & Dunstable Hospital is now unlikely to take place until April 2019.

The original merger target date of April 2018, which was acknowledged to be ambitious, will be missed. This is due to the need for further discussions with NHS England, the Department for Health and NHS Improvement around the financial arrangements underpinning the merger.

Included in the merger business case is a request for around £150m of capital investment across both hospital sites. Both Chief Executives have stated their optimism that the merger will be supported with capital when the Government releases its next round of funding, possibly in the summer.

The merger was announced in the autumn of 2017 with a commitment to retain key services such as A&E, maternity and paediatrics at Bedford Hospital.

'ReportIt' Tool

Should you wish to report an array of issues such as broken street lights, potholes or flooded drains you can do so via the Council's online 'ReportIt' tool at <https://highwaysreporting.bedford.gov.uk/>

River Festival 2018

The River Festival 2018 will be held on the 14th and 15 July on Bedford's Embankment. The event attracts around 300,000 people with attractions including live entertainment, river events, funfair and arts and crafts.

Parenting Support

Parents and carers of children aged 0 – 12 years old are being offered support through the Council's Positive Parenting Programme. This is a scheme lasting 8 weeks from May – July providing information and support on parenting skills. For more information contact triplep@bedford.gov.uk or call 01234 276367.

Adult Disability Sport

Bedford International Athletics Stadium (BIAS) and the Bunyan Centre provide a range of sports and activities for adults (16+) with disabilities and additional needs:

- Between 1.45pm – 2.45pm on Mondays at BIAS there are a range of sports to try such as badminton, basketball and football amongst many others.
- Disability football sessions are held at BIAS on Mondays from 10.30am – 11.30am.
- The Bunyan Centre provides activities including table tennis and tennis on Tuesdays from 5.30pm – 6.30pm, as well as tea and coffee from 6.30pm.

The cost is £3 per session, which can be paid on the day, and attendees can be accompanied by a carer for free. For more information contact haylee.elphee@bedford.gov.uk or call 01234718839.

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