

Borough Councillor Update January 2017
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Bedford Borough Local Plan 2035

You will recall from previous reports that the Council has been for the past 4 years been undertaking studies and consultations to determine its Local Plan which will agree plans for around 8000 new homes to the year 2035.

The Mayor's Executive has now published its draft Local Plan submission which will be subject to public consultation between 22nd January – 5th March. The final Local Plan, subject to any changes made as a result of the consultation, will be considered by a meeting of all councillors on the 28th March. If agreed, it will then be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for examination.

The timetable set out above has been accelerated after the Government stated its intention for local authorities to be subject to a centralised methodology to determine housing targets, rather than each council undertaking their own assessment as at present. The Council's Local Plan 2035 is allocating sites for development based on a calculated need to provide 950 homes a year. This compares with the new methodology which would require 1281 homes annually, thus increasing the Borough's housing need to 2035 from around 8,000 to 14,000 homes. The rationale for submitting the Local Plan for examination before the end of March is for the Council to benefit from 'transitional arrangements' to avoid the increased target.

A key aspect of the draft submission is the selection of a new settlement to deliver around a third of the new homes to 2035. In this regard, land owners and planning agents submitted 4 sites for consideration, namely: Wyboston; Colworth (Sharnbrook); Twinwoods (between Milton Ernest and Thurleigh), and; Thurleigh Airfield. An additional site called 'Bedford Brickworks' was submitted formally for consideration in November and consists of a plan to build on largely brownfield land to the south of Bedford to deliver 4,500 homes in the Local Plan period, extending to 9,145 dwellings thereafter. This site was recommended by officers in July. The site (reference number 723) covers some 986 ha and proposes the development of up to 9,145 dwellings and in excess of 900,000 sq m of employment buildings, together with ancillary facilities. The submission documents can be viewed on the Council's website at:

http://www.bedford.gov.uk/environment_and_planning/planning_town_and_country/planning_policy_its_purpose/local_plan_2035/call_for_sites.aspx The details are saved in the Stewartby folder.

Since the Mayor signed the Borough up to its share of the 1m new homes along the Oxford Cambridge Arc it is disappointing this site has not been included in the draft plan, particularly since it is precisely where the recent National Infrastructure Commission report indicates that all such new development should be, along the Oxford Cambridge Arc.

The Mayor's draft Local Plan has chosen the Colworth site, adjacent to Sharnbrook and Souldrop, as the preferred settlement which will deliver 2500 homes in the Local Plan period and then up to 4500 in subsequent years. The Executive's report notes that the promise of a new parkway rail station linking the settlement with Bedford and London is a key reason behind its selection.

The draft Local Plan also includes an allocation of 2420 homes in the urban area, which means there is no longer a need for 'edge of urban' sites at Salph End, Renhold and Gibraltar Corner, Kempston. A 500 home allocation for Wilstead has also been removed, while a 600 dwelling development in Sharnbrook will not go ahead if the Colworth settlement, as set out above, is agreed. Conversely, 500 homes are still scheduled in each of Bromham, Great Barford and Clapham.

The below table is taken from the Executive report (which can be in full at [this link](#)) and sets out the allocations to be considered by the Executive. The left of the table shown the plans consulted on last year, while the right side shows the plans included in the draft submission:

2017 consultation paper	Amount of residential development	Local Plan 2035 Plan for submission	Amount of residential development
Urban area	877	Urban area	2,420
Edge of urban area	1,111	Edge of urban area	210
Brownfield site Stewartby Brickworks	1,000	Brownfield site Stewartby Brickworks	1,000
New settlement(s)	2,200	Colworth garden village	2,500
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	600	- Sharnbrook	0
- Shortstown	0	- Shortstown	0
- Wilstead	500	- Wilstead	0
- Wixams	0	- Wixams	0
- Wootton	0	- Wootton	0
Total Group 1 villages	2,600	Total Group 1 villages	1,500
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	0
Total Group 2 villages (mid point)	225	Total Group 2 villages (mid point)	225
	8,013		7,855

Details of the final public consultation will be made available following agreement by the Mayor's Executive on the 10th January.

'Transporting Bedford 2020'

The Council's Environment & Sustainable Communities Committee heard at its meeting in November that plans are being finalised for £22m of investment in decongestion schemes for Bedford town centre.

The 'Transporting Bedford 2020' programme has been backed with £19m of Government investment, while the Council will be using its own funds, including contributions from developers, to add a further £3m. The investment will be undertaken in accordance with 3 themes:

Theme 1 Town Centre Public Realm: Focussing on the High Street, St Paul's Square, the Town Bridge and St Mary's Street. This scheme will seek to improve the visual amenity of this area, including improved access for pedestrians.

Theme 2 Alleviating Pinch Points: Works will be undertaken to reduce congestion, as per the below overview taken from the Transporting Bedford 2020 document:

- Area 1: A6 Northern Gateway
 - Signalisation of Clapham Road/Manton Lane/Shakespeare Road
 - Enhancement to the operation of the Paula Radcliffe Way/Great Ouse Way roundabout
 - Enhancement to the operation of the Manton Lane/Brickhill Drive Junction
- Area 2: Bromham Road Eastern Gateway
 - Realignment and signalisation of Bromham Road/Shakespeare Road/Ashburnham Road double mini roundabout
- Area 3: Around Hospital
 - Additional lane on northbound approach to Britannia Road/Cauldwell Street/Kempston Road junction
 - Rearrangement of junction layout of Britannia Road/Amphill Road
- Area 4: Amphill Road Southern Gateway
 - Additional lane capacity at Cowbridge
 - New pedestrian footbridges

Theme 3 Urban Traffic Management & Control Technology (UTMCT) Measures: This will focus on using technology, such as with more responsive traffic signals and improved information for motorists, to hasten traffic flows. For more information search 'Transporting Bedford 2020'.

Black Cat / A428 Improvements

Last year Highways England undertook a public consultation on options to reconfigure the Black Cat roundabout as well as providing a new dual carriageway from the Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet.

An announcement on the preferred options was due to be made in the autumn but Highways England has admitted that this deadline will not be met. The purported reason for the delay is that more assessments are required to link the scheme with plans to improve the A1 between the M25 and Peterborough.

Ambulance Response

East of England Ambulance Service Trust (EEAST) representatives attended a meeting of the Borough Council's Adult Services & Health Committee in November to discuss its service provision and performance.

Of particular interest is the adoption by EEAST of the Ambulance Response Programme (ARP) in October which is comprised of the following changes (taken from EEAST's report to the Committee):

- Call handlers have a new way of managing calls to allow earlier identification and recognition of life-threatening conditions and more time to assess patients who do not have life-threatening conditions
- Call categories and response standards have changed; simplifying the system and ensuring all calls are reported against nationally.
- Due to the change in standards and response model, EEAST will be transferring much of its existing staffing from Rapid Response Vehicles (RRV) to ambulances to facilitate an increase in ambulance cover. This will mean a reduction in cars and every ambulance service is going through a similar change in response mix.
- End to end system standards for stroke and heart attack patients.

The Trust has been struggling in recent months with an increase in 'red' category life threatening calls which has put pressure on the service for less urgent calls. It is hoped the new system will address these issues.

Bedford Hospital

The Chief Executive of Bedford Hospital, Stephen Conroy, attended a meeting of the Council's Adult Services & Health Committee in December to update councillors on the merger with Luton & Dunstable Hospital.

The written report to the Committee reiterated that a 'full range of services will continue to be provided for patients on both sites. This includes retaining key services such as A&E, maternity and paediatrics at Bedford Hospital'. A full business case for the merger was submitted to NHS regulators on the 22nd December and a decision should be made within 10 weeks.

Putnoe Walk In Centre

There have been recent media reports about the future of the Walk-in Centre at Putnoe Surgery in Bedford.

The facility is used by residents throughout the Borough to receive non-urgent treatment. The current partners were recently awarded a new contract by the Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (BCCG - which has responsibility for organising local NHS services) to provide GP services but it is unclear as to whether the contract for the Walk-in Centre service will be renewed in March. The BCCG says it is looking at various options but no further details have been released.

Town Centre Police Enquiries Office

On the 18th December the Bedfordshire Police and Crime Commissioner Kathryn Holloway opened a new police enquiries office in Lime Street, Bedford in a move to improve police visibility. The new office will be open to the public from Monday-Friday between 9am and 5pm.

Rights of Way Improvement Plan

The Council is consulting on its updated Rights of Way Improvement Plan for 2018 – 2023. This will assess users' needs and subsequently set out an action plan on improvements to the Council's 1,000Km of public footpaths, bridleways and byways. Should you wish to respond to the Council's questionnaire, search 'Bedford rights of way consultation' or visit the Council's Customer Services Centre on Horne Lane or the Council's 5 library sites in: the town centre; Bromham; Wootton; Putnoe, and Kempston. The consultation deadline has been extended to the 5th February.

'Report It' Tool Guide

The Borough has started an online 'Report It' tool. This allows councillors and residents to bring to the attention of Council officers a variety of issues requiring attention. Below is step by step guide on how to use it. You can report the following matters:

- Potholes
- Bridge issues
- Drainage and flooding
- Grass, hedges, trees and weeds
- Snow, ice and gritting
- Roads
- Pavements
- Cycling
- Lorries
- Signs and lines
- Street lighting

Traffic signals

1. Enter <https://highwaysreporting.bedford.gov.uk/> in your search bar.
2. You will be taken to the below screen. Click 'Continue':

Report a Problem

Please do not complete this report if you consider the problem you are reporting is an emergency. Instead please phone our customer contact centre on 01234 718003.

Please plot the location of new reports on the map then complete the text fields to provide details of problem.

Please note that the details you supply in the Description and Location fields will be displayed on the map and visible to anyone else who reports a problem. Your personal details will not appear on the website.

For updates on existing reports, please use the "Enter road name, parish or postcode" search facility on the map or zoom to the location of the report and click on the coloured pin for information.

Continue

3. You will then come to a map showing the whole of the Borough, as shown in the below screenshot. You can zoom in and out of the map using the + and – symbols in the bottom right hand corner of the screen. If you want to navigate around the map, you need to hold down the left click button on the mouse and move the cursor around the screen. The numbers on the screen show issues that have already been reported; double clicking on them allows you to see details of the issue reported.

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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