

## **Borough Councillor Update – November 2018**

**Contact Borough Councillor Alison Foster by telephone on 07773371190**

**or email at [ajfieldfoster@gmail.com](mailto:ajfieldfoster@gmail.com)**

### **Government Budget**

The Chancellor presented the Government's Budget to the House of Commons on the 29<sup>th</sup> October. The following announcements are of particular relevance to the Borough Council:

- Small retailers will benefit over the next 2 years from a 1/3 cut in their business rate bills.
- A £675m Future High Street Fund will be established. Councils will be encouraged to bid for funds to support urban regeneration.
- The Council is to receive £620k in the current year to assist with adult social care pressures. The Council will also receive a share of an additional £410m for adults' and children's social care next year.
- £20m has been committed to accelerate planning for the East West Rail link between Bedford and Cambridge.
- English councils will receive £420m this year to repair potholes.

### **Urgent Treatment Centre**

Bedford Hospital's new Urgent Treatment Centre (UTC) opened its doors on the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2018. The UTC provides same-day appointments for minor illnesses over a 12 hour period, 7 days a week via referrals from A & E and the 111 phone service as a means of reducing pressure on the Hospital's A & E function.

The UTC saw 250 patients in its first week. The Council's Adult Services & Health Committee will review the performance of the facility in the coming months.

### **Visitor Information Centre**

On the 17<sup>th</sup> October a new Visitor Information Centre opened at St Paul's Church, Bedford. Opening initially on Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays between 10.30am – 4pm, it has been established by volunteers wanting to promote the Borough a tourist destination.

### **Covanta**

On the 10<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> October the High Court heard a Judicial Review of the decision of the Environment Agency to grant a permit to US firm Covanta to build a waste incineration plant at Stewartby. The case was brought by the campaign group Bedfordshire Against Covanta Incinerator. The High Court has now ruled in the Environment Agency's favour meaning the plans can go ahead.

### **National Adoption Week**

The Council marked National Adoption Week in October by urging people who are interested in adopting a child in care to get in touch. The Council's Adoption Team can provide more information via 01234 718718 or [adoptionandfostering@bedford.gov.uk](mailto:adoptionandfostering@bedford.gov.uk).

## **Flu Vaccine**

The Council has issued a reminder to parents and guardians that 2 and 3 year olds are eligible to receive the flu vaccine to protect them in the colder months. Children aged 4 are also eligible if they were 3 years old on the 31<sup>st</sup> August 2018.