

## **Borough Council Report to Parish Councils June 2021**

### **Bedford Borough awarded £22.6m by Government for Town Deal**

It has been announced that Bedford Borough will receive £22.6 million from the Government, following a successful bid for a Town Deal.

In October 2020, Bedford Borough Council and Bedford Town Deal Board submitted their Town Investment Plan as part of their bid for up to £25million from Central Government.

This bid has now been accepted. Bedford Borough Council have been awarded £22.6m to rejuvenate the town with a number of projects that must be completed by March 2026.

The projects submitted in the plan include regeneration of the Station Quarter and Midland Road, public realm improvements to St. Paul's Square, improvements to town centre junctions and local pedestrian and cycling infrastructure, and investment in Health, Science and Digital Skills and Full Fibre broadband.

The regeneration of the Station Quarter and Midland Road will bring important investment to these spaces as key gateways to the town centre for visitors in Bedford. The regeneration projects will also see investment in walking and cycling infrastructure, which connects the two areas and creates a vibrant corridor to the town centre.

The suggested public realm improvements to St. Paul's Square will enhance the experience for both shoppers and visitors, increasing the vibrancy of the centre of Bedford and promoting the town as a place to meet friends and family and have fun.

The proposed investment in our roads, pedestrian and cycling network will promote greater accessibility and mobility for residents, while relieving pinch points across the town centre, reducing congestion and creating a safer environment for cyclists and pedestrians.

### **Councillors and Borough Council concerned about restarting face to face meetings**

Bedford Borough Council is concerned about having to restart face to face Council meetings with the number of Indian variant COVID-19 cases rising in Bedford Borough.

In looking for workarounds most Council meetings have been turned into 'virtual workshops'. This allows committees at a later date to have a short face to face meeting of members to formally ratify the decisions of the workshops.

There is now a Government consultation on restarting local authority remote meetings and responses have to be back by 17 June.

Please do submit your own responses at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/local-authority-remote-meetings-call-for-evidence/local-authority-remote-meetings-call-for-evidence>

### **East West Rail Consultation now closed**

The East West Rail Consultation is now closed. East West Rail will now have to go through all the responses they have received and produce a response. The Conservative Group submitted their response which insists that a re-consultation is needed and that either of the routes selected by East West Rail would cause major environmental impact.

### **Fusion facilities now open**

All Fusion facilities apart from Oasis Swimming Pool are now open. Oasis Swimming Pool opened on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> May.

Bookings can be made up to seven days in advance, via download of the Fusion Lifestyle app or visit [www.fusion-lifestyle.com](http://www.fusion-lifestyle.com) to register and use the booking facility.

For centre opening times and timetables please visit [www.fusion-lifestyle.com/centres/mowsbury-golf-and-squash-centre](http://www.fusion-lifestyle.com/centres/mowsbury-golf-and-squash-centre)

### **Boundary Commission update**

On May 11 the Boundary Commission released their latest draft recommendations. They are available to look at on the following website where you are also able to respond:

<https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk/have-your-say/20441>

The deadline for responding is 5th July.

They have also written a report explaining their decisions here: <https://s3-eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/lgbce/Reviews/Eastern/Bedfordshire/Bedford/New%20Draft%20Recs/Bedford%20new%20draft%20recommendations%20report.pdf>

### **Local Plan 2040 Update**

The new Local Plan 2040 draft is now available, a consultation on the plan has now been approved by the Executive, and it is due to happen later this month.

You can find the current draft here: [Item 08 Bedford Borough Local Plan 2040 Report and Appendices.pdf](#)

You can also find a summarising report from one of our group Councillors, Phillippa Martin-Moran-Bryant attached with this report. If you have not received this report but like to see it please contact the group researcher Stephen Vallance on [Stephen.vallance@bedford.gov.uk](mailto:Stephen.vallance@bedford.gov.uk)

### **Bedford Borough appoint Active Chief Executive**

The new Interim Chief Executive of Bedford Borough Council unfortunately had to stand down due to health issues. We hope that he recovers from his health problems.

Recruitment to the permanent post is ongoing with the intention of making an appointment in July.

In the interim, the Council have appointed Mark Stephens as Acting Chief Executive. This was approved at an Extraordinary Full Council that was held on 11<sup>th</sup> June.

## COVID-19 Update

The Government has now set a roadmap out of lockdown, we are now into step 3

<b>STEP 3</b> No earlier than 17 May	<b>STEP 4</b> No earlier than 21 June
At least 5 weeks after Step 2	At least 5 weeks after Step 3 All subject to review
<b>EDUCATION</b> • As previous step	<b>EDUCATION</b> • As previous step
<b>SOCIAL CONTACT</b> • Maximum 30 people outdoors • Rule of 6 or two households indoors (subject to review)	<b>SOCIAL CONTACT</b> • No legal limit
<b>BUSINESS &amp; ACTIVITIES</b> • Indoor hospitality • Indoor entertainment and attractions • Organised indoor sport (adult) • Remaining accommodation • Remaining outdoor entertainment (including performances)	<b>BUSINESS &amp; ACTIVITIES</b> • Remaining businesses, including nightclubs
<b>TRAVEL</b> • Domestic overnight stays • International travel (subject to review)	<b>TRAVEL</b> • Domestic overnight stays • International travel
<b>EVENTS</b> • Most significant life events (30) • Indoor events: 1,000 or 50% • Outdoor seated events: 10,000 or 25% • Outdoor other events: 4,000 or 50%	<b>EVENTS</b> • No legal limit on life events • Larger events

### Borough COVID Information

As of the 6<sup>th</sup> June in Bedford there have been 14,804 cases since the start of the Pandemic and there have been 273 registered cases in Bedford in the last 7 days.

If you would like the latest COVID snapshot (as of 6<sup>th</sup> June) please find it below:

<https://bbcdevwebfiles.blob.core.windows.net/webfiles/Social%20Care%20Health%20and%20Community/Covid19/covid19-weekly-statistics-9june2021.pdf>

The Indian variant, which is believed to spread rapidly is now the dominant strain in Bedford. Bedford Borough are asking residents' to proceed with extreme caution and it is believed that the number of cases will continue to rise.

The Government has also provided additional advice stating that Bedford Borough residents should:

- meet outside rather than inside where possible
- keep 2 metres apart from people that you don't live with (unless you have formed a support bubble with them), this includes friends and family you don't live with
- minimise travel in and out of affected areas

More information available at: <https://www.bedford.gov.uk/social-care-health-and-community/public-health/coronavirus/>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-19-coronavirus-restrictions-what-you-can-and-cannot-do>

### **Vaccinations available for over 18s**

Bedford Borough have now made vaccines available to anyone over the age of 18.

Anyone aged 18 and over can book to get the vaccine at either the Temple or Kings House on Ampthill Road via the website at [www.bedford.gov.uk/vaccinations](http://www.bedford.gov.uk/vaccinations) or by calling 01234 718077