

Borough Councillor Update – December 2022

Financial Settlement

The Levelling Up Secretary Michael Gove has today (19 December 2022) confirmed an almost £60 billion package for councils in England for the next financial year. The settlement means councils across England will benefit from an additional £5 billion – a 9% increase on last year's settlement.

The agreement for next year includes a one-off Funding Guarantee that ensures every council in England will see at least a 3% increase in core spending power before any local decisions around council tax are taken.

Councillor Ward funds

There will be Ward Fund Allocations for 2023 – 25, actual figures have not yet been provided but it is suspected that the funds will need to be slightly higher than the previous allocation as we have had an increase in electorate across the Borough.

Bedford Council use Government funding to give thousands of Bedford Borough families shopping vouchers this Christmas

Funded through the DWP's Household Support Fund, Bedford Borough Council will continue to provide each eligible child £15 per week.

DFE funding accepted by Bedford Borough Council

The Council has accepted funding by the Department of Education, £9833.02, to support the development of a Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) employment forum to increase the number of young people (aged 16-25) benefiting from Supported Internships.

Dept. for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities funding accepted by the Mayor

The Council accepted up to £2.3m awarded by Dept. for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities to deliver the High Street Heritage Action Zone (HSHAZ) Government scheme. This will enable the Borough to deliver projects proposed in the UK Shared Prosperity Investment Plan for the period April 2022 – March 2025.

For example, the plan focuses on three key priorities with town centre improvements among them, projects such as the Midland Road regeneration are an example of this.

Bedford received grant from DFT and £2 bus fare.

The Council accepted a grant of £69,509.50 from the Department for Transport to protect socially necessary bus services from January to March.

Additionally, residents across Bedford Borough are set to benefit from a £2 cap on single bus journeys from January to March 2023. This £2 fare cap is being made possible by a £60 million Government initiative that aims to protect bus services across the country.

Bedford Borough Council uses government funding to replace trees on residential streets

These replacement trees will be purchased via the Local Authority Treescapes Fund which is part of the government's Nature for Climate Fund. The funding will be used to reinstate historic tree pit locations across the Borough, who will receive £159,800.00.

Potential charges for green waste collection left open

At Full Council the Mayor refused to rule out the possibility of a charge on green waste collection. Charges typically range from £35 - £45 for a single green bin, with a 1-year subscription plan.

Butterfly Bridge Refurbishment

Refurbishment works are planned at Butterfly Bridge, Bedford with the bridge closing from 9th January for up to 4 months.

Bedford Borough Climate change fund

Great Denham Community Hall is receiving funding for the installation of 71 solar modules on the hall roof and battery storage, in the sum of £20,000 from the Borough Councils Climate change fund.

The Climate Change fund 2020-2024 can provide up to 50% match funding (from £5,000 up to £20,000) for improvements that reduce carbon emissions and energy costs of community buildings within Bedford Borough. Projects can be made up of multiple building improvements up to the maximum grant available.

Local Plan 2040

A consultation took place between 15th June 2022 and 29th July 2022. A total of 1,449 individual representations were received from 595 respondents.

The Council is required to prepare a summary of the main issues raised during consultation on the Plan for Submission and to submit the summary along with the plan. This is being considered at Full Council and, if signed off, will be sent for formal examination

At the end of the examination, the Inspector produces a report for the LPA setting out recommendation(s) and the reasons for them.

Currently, Bromham is not effected by the local plan and at this stage, the council is not required to prepare responses to issues raised during the consultation.

For brevity issues will not be listed however, they can be accessed through the appropriate portals on the [council's website](#).

Council Tax for 2023/2024

As part of current budget setting process, the January Executive will consider:

- That a provision of 1.50% be made in the Council Tax Base in respect of losses on collection.

For further detail please view related documents via the council's [online portals](#).