

Monthly Borough Report December 2023

- **Flooding**

Due to excessive amounts of rainfall this December period there has been an increase in flood related incidents across the Borough.

The Council is encouraging everyone to check their journey before departure as there have been a significant number of road closures.

Residents are advised to:

- Stay out of flood water
- Don't drive through flood water
- Only ring 999 if there's a risk to life
- Roads and pavements might be blocked so check your journey before you travel.

- **Universal News**

Universal Studios have recently acquired land in Bedford for a potential park and resort – this is at the very early stages of exploring its feasibility at this time.

Much more detail is required before any final decisions are made however, the interest by Universal is positive for Bedford Borough.

This opportunity could be really transformative for the Borough and would bring in high amounts of investment through increased tourism and many high paid jobs.

The Borough Council will continue to work constructively with Universal to ensure plans align with the interests of our residents.

- **Debenhams**

The Borough Council plans to buy the former Debenhams site which forms part of the Mayor's Town Centre rejuvenation plans to create a thriving hub for the Bedford Borough community.

The Council is the preferred bidder and further plans for what the building would be used for will be released in due course.

- **GPs**

Over the last decade Bedford Borough has lagged behind other regions and slipped into the top ten worst areas for patients per GP.

During an extraordinary Full Council meeting in December the Council agreed to the Mayor's £9 million in Capital Funding to help secure GP surgeries for areas most in need, including new GP Surgeries in Wootton and the Wixams, a new Health Hub in Kempston and Primary Care Services in Great Barford.

- **Domestic Abuse Strategy consultation**

The consultation has concluded, and the information is now being collated. This information forms part of a needs assessment for Bedford Borough Council.

All this will form a part of the strategy and plans for domestic abuse services – the results from the published on the council website.

- **GLL/new Leisure provider**

Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL), has been appointed to run the various Council leisure facilities as the new contractor.

As mentioned above – the current administration has allocated funding for essential works at leisure sites to ensure they are safe and operational to avoid the risk of closure due to a historic lack of maintenance.

The new contract commences on 1st February 2024.

- **Local Plan 2040**

The Borough Council is in the process of evaluating its options in light of the Inspector's feedback on the Local Plan.

More information on the Council direction will be available in due course.

Wider Borough Items

- **Paula Radcliffe Way**

Work has been finished and the road has been fully reopened.

The original competition was pushed back to December 15th as crucial repairs were needed to repair the road surface, drainage system, road barriers, and bridges along Paula Radcliffe Way to keep the road safe and compliant.

- **Blackcat Roundabout**

Work has started on the Black Cat roundabout with a new 10-mile dual carriageway between the Black Cat roundabout and Caxton Gibbet roundabout that better links Bedford with Milton Keynes and Cambridge.