

**Local Plan 2030**

The Mayor's Executive amended the Local Plan, determining sites for housing and employment growth, at its meeting on the 5<sup>th</sup> September.

At the Executive's meeting in May 2018 it was recognised that the proposed Colworth Garden Village, adjacent to Sharnbrook and Souldrop, could not proceed because it was too close to the Santa Pod Raceway. Colworth was expected to contribute 2500 new homes to the year 2035 and up to 4500 thereafter.

Colworth's absence means that consideration has been given to alternative options; this included the viability of the proposed Garden Villages at Thurleigh Airfield, Twinwoods and Wyboston as well as the proposed Stewartby Brickworks development covering land to the south of Bedford. The three alternative Garden Villages have been rejected for a variety of reasons. It is not clear why the 'Brickworks' option has been rejected; that is a brownfield site and capable of taking 1000+ homes, not just the 100 it has been allocated. This rejection of a brownfield site and at the same time the selection of yet another greenfield site in Sharnbrook for 500 houses is not easily explained and is almost certain to be challenged.

The Local Plan period is now reduced from the year 2035 to 2030, thus lowering the housing need figure and it will be subject to a new public consultation from 18<sup>th</sup> September – 30<sup>th</sup> October. We are pleased that the revised Local Plan confirms again that the original proposal for a 500 dwelling development at Salph End will not be taken forward.

**Putnoe Walk In Centre to Remain Open**

The Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (BCCG), the body which organises NHS services locally, has announced that the Putnoe Walk in Centre is to remain open for at least another 2 years, albeit with reduced hours.

The BCCG recently stated its intention to close the Putnoe Walk In Centre from Spring 2019. This was linked to plans to open a new Urgent Treatment Centre (UTC) on the Bedford Hospital site. The UTC will provide 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 and will reduce pressure on the Hospital's A & E function.

The BCCG undertook a consultation on these plans in August. However, the consultation closed early following the receipt of over 1900 responses, with the BCCG acknowledging the strength of local feeling to retain the Putnoe Walk in Centre.

The BCCG has now agreed with partners at Putnoe Medical Centre that the Walk in Centre continue for at least 2 more years. While weekend opening hours will continue as 8am – 5pm, it will close at 2pm on weekdays, as opposed to 6pm currently.

The UTC remains on track to open on the 1<sup>st</sup> October.

**Flu Vaccine**

With autumn fast approaching, the Council and NHS are publicising the availability of free flu vaccinations for pregnant women and children aged between 2 – 9. Contact your GP for further details.

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