

Borough Monthly

Issue 41

September 2019

Join over 1000 people and have your say on the future of Bedford town centre

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BEDFORD
BOROUGH COUNCIL

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Consultation open on proposed modifications to Local Plan 2030

Bedford Borough Council is consulting on proposed modifications to the Local Plan 2030.

The Council's Local Plan 2030 has been progressing, with hearings held by the Planning Inspectorate in May and June 2019.

Following these hearings, the Council was invited by the Inspectorate to submit a number of modifications to the Plan. These include 'main modifications', which are required for the Plan to be taken forward and considered 'sound'.

The list of proposed modifications can be found at www.bedford.gov.uk/examination along with a representation form for responses.

A version of the Local Plan 2030 showing the proposed main modifications is also available so that proposed changes can be seen in context. Proposed 'main modifications' are shown in red text. Green text shows proposed 'additional modifications' which are minor changes to make the Plan clearer and easier to understand.

All responses to the consultation will be sent to the Planning Inspectorate. This marks one of the final stages of the Examination of the Local Plan 2030, which ends with the Planning Inspectorate's report to Council, which will set out any further modifications that the Plan requires. The Council will then have the option to adopt the Local Plan 2030.

Mayor Dave Hodgson said "This next consultation marks another step forward for the Local Plan 2030. This Plan sets out proposals for growth and development across our Borough, with allocations for homes, jobs, and facilities including schools, transport and shops. This follows a number of consultations and hearings which have seen local people really get involved and have their say."

Unlike previous consultations on the Local Plan, which have seen comments and representations on the Plan as a whole, this consultation will focus solely on the proposed 'modifications'.

There may be a further hearing session in October regarding one particular modification, MM26 - the addition of a new site at land north of Beverley Crescent, Bedford. Provisionally this has been booked for 22nd October, 9.30am at Borough Hall; anyone who makes a representation to the modification and wishes to participate in this is asked to contact the Programme Officer, Louise St John Howe by 5pm on 1 October (PO Box 10965, Sudbury, Suffolk, CO10 3BF. Phone: 07789-486419 Email: louise@poservices.co.uk).

To view and respond to the consultation, visit www.bedford.gov.uk/examination. Hard copies can also be found at borough libraries and the Customer Service Centre (Horne Lane, Bedford). The consultation closes at 5pm on Tuesday 1 October.

Survey reveals 1 in 4 admit 'carefully' littering their rubbish

Bedford Borough Council is joining forces with Keep Britain Tidy to help tackle 'careful littering', a term to describe coffee cups that are left on a window ledge, or a sandwich wrapper abandoned on a park bench.

The campaign follows a YouGov survey, which revealed that more than a quarter of people (27%) admitted to this kind of littering.

Keep an eye out for floor vinyls, stickers and posters in Bedford town centre to help tackle this littering behaviour. These act as gentle reminders that whether 'carefully' placed, or simply thrown on the floor, it is #StillLittering.

In a trial of this campaign across the country by Keep Britain Tidy and the People's Postcode Lottery, areas saw the total amount of litter reduced by a fifth. In some areas, the reduction was up to 57%.

Cllr Charles Royden, Portfolio Holder for Environment said "These stickers, posters and vinyls are going up across Bedford town centre to remind people that whether rubbish is

'carefully' placed or thrown on the floor, it is still littering. We do not tolerate littering - this is enforced by our Environment officers, who have issued 1400 fines for littering since the start of 2019."



GCSE and A Level results

Bedford Borough students' GCSE Average Attainment 8 Score for 2019 was 45.45, which is up from last year. This is the average score obtained by a student for their best 8 GCSE results, mirroring the national picture.

Once again, over 60% of students secured a Grade 4 and above in both English and Maths.

This is the third year of the revised GCSEs which are graded from 9 – 1 with less emphasis on coursework and more on exams. Given these differences in context, grading and assessment, it is not possible to directly compare the new grade scale with the old A* to G grades, though a 9 is roughly the equivalent of an A*, and a 1 is effectively a G. A grade 4 pass is valued as a passport to further education and employment.

Cllr James Valentine, Portfolio Holder for Education and Children's Services said: "A huge well done to every young person - and all their teachers - who worked so hard to achieve these results in what can be a nail-biting time of year.

"GCSEs are a significant milestone in the lives of children and young people, marking the culmination of many years of hard work. I wish all students every success in the future, as they move on to further education, employment or training."

Meanwhile nearly 99% [98.9%] of pupils achieved at least 1 A* to E grade and 83.8% of students achieved 3 or more A* to E grades at A-level - an increase from 2018.

Cllr James Valentine, Portfolio Holder for Education and Children's Services, said "Well done to everyone receiving their results across Bedford Borough today and the very best of luck as you look ahead towards the next steps into work or onto further and higher education. Thanks to all the parents, carers and teachers who supported and helped our students."

There is advice for students about next steps available from UCAS at www.ucas.com. There is also support available for students at the Jobs Hub, which provides advice about education and training options, help with skills, and job search assistance. The Hub can be contacted on 01234 223510 or email the.jobshub@bedford.gov.uk.

Public Space Protection Orders in Bedford Borough

Two Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs) in Bedford Borough will remain for a further three years following a public consultation.

The PSPOs restrict cycling in the pedestrianised area of the town centre between 9am and 6pm, and manage dog control orders for various locations, including dog fouling across the Borough.

The Jobs Hub is set to stay

The Jobs Hub is set to stay after further funding was confirmed.

Based on Greyfriars, the Hub provides career advice and guidance to people of all ages who live in Bedford Borough, helping them to find work, access training and begin apprenticeships.



Fifty thousand cigarettes seized

Officers from Bedford Borough Council's Trading Standards and Environmental Health Teams, supported by Bedfordshire Police, carried out an operation investigating the sale and supply of illicit tobacco, focusing upon several suspected shops in the Midland Road area of Bedford.

Large quantities of illicit tobacco were found stored in two vehicles associated with the premises, and £4,500 seized from the premises, with three individuals also being arrested as part of the operation.

'Illicit tobacco' describes counterfeit or 'smuggled' foreign tobacco upon which the appropriate duties and taxes have not been paid, and it usually does not comply with UK legislation around packaging. Counterfeit cigarettes are particularly dangerous as the ingredients used come from unknown sources and in many cases found to contain non-tobacco vegetable matter.

The three individuals arrested during the operation were later released, while further investigations are being conducted, with a view to further enforcement action by the Council.

Join over 1000 people and have your say on the future of Bedford town centre

Bedford Borough Council are asking people to have their say on the next steps for Bedford town centre, and over 1000 people have already responded!

Bedford is unique with the beautiful Embankment and river running through the town, a strong business presence with 62% of independent shops in the town centre and 77 new businesses opening in the centre last year, a busy events calendar, cultural attractions, local markets and much more.

However, Bedford faces many of the same challenges town centres are facing right across the country, with the internet and online shopping in particular changing how we shop and how we use our local town centre.

Bedford Borough Council is writing a new Town Centre Plan and wants to hear your ideas.

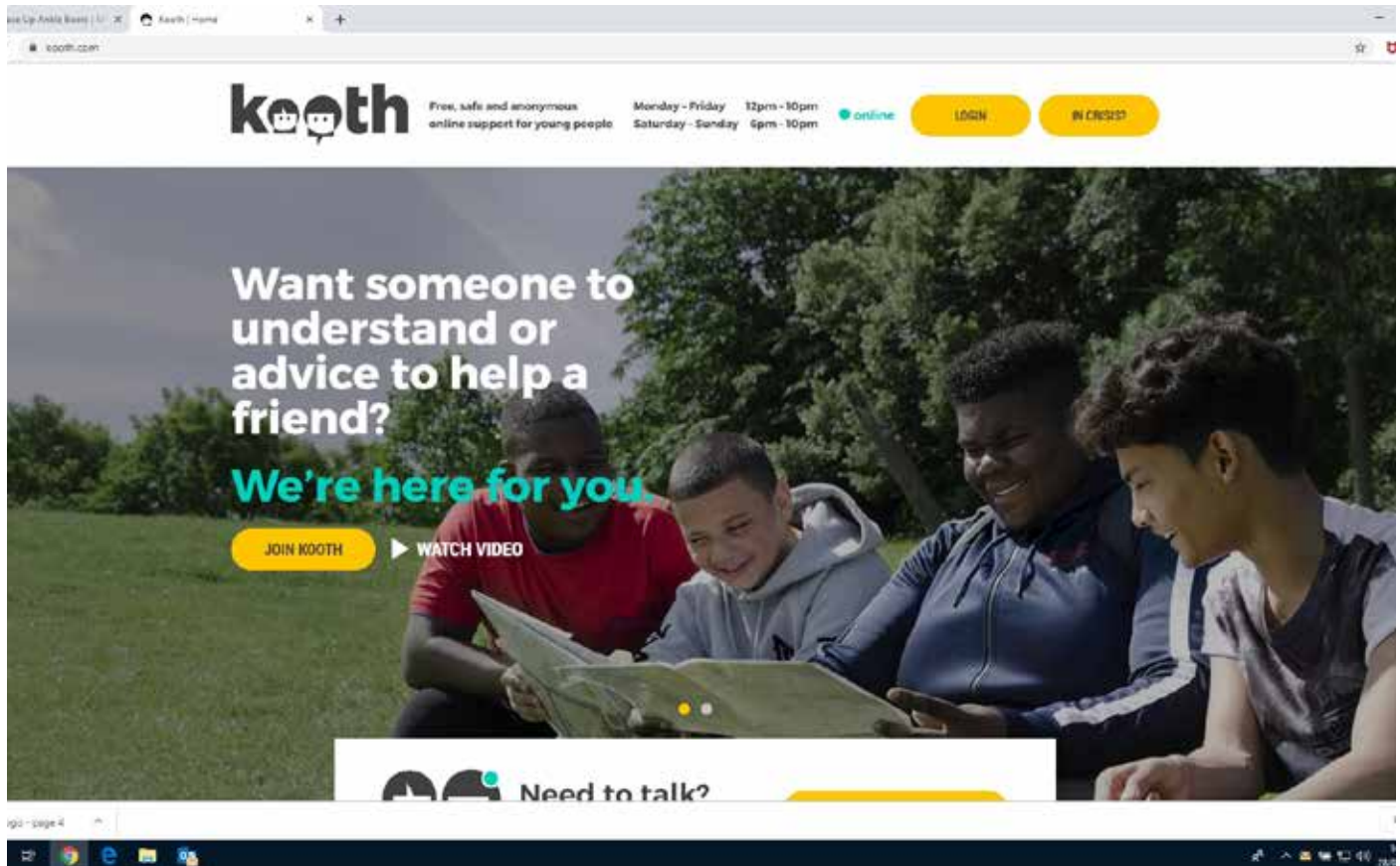
Cllr Henry Vann, Portfolio Holder for Town Centres said, “People in Bedford Borough care deeply about their town centre, and it has been genuinely great to see the level of responses and engagement that this consultation has sparked so far. The drop-in sessions saw a good turnout and people telling the team what they love about the town centre and what would encourage them to visit. Bedford town centre belongs to all of us and it really is what we make it. Please respond to the consultation and give us your thoughts and ideas.”

The survey is open until Friday 27 September 2019. It is available online on the Borough website at <https://forms.bedford.gov.uk/TCS/>.

There are also paper copies available at Borough Hall, the Customer Service Centre and local libraries, which can be sent to Consulting Bedford, Bedford Borough Council, Borough Hall, Cauldwell Street, Bedford, MK42 9AP.



New online counselling and emotional wellbeing service available for children and young people



A free, online counselling service for children and young people experiencing emotional and mental health issues has launched in Bedford Borough.

Kooth is provided by XenZone, an online mental health provider commissioned by Bedford Borough Council and Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group, as part of a wider partnership with neighbouring councils and health commissioners.

The online service is available for young people aged 11-19 living in Bedford Borough, Central Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes, who have access to articles written by young people, forums where they can receive peer-to-peer support, access to self-help materials and a daily journal.

The regular forums cover a range of topics from exam stress and anxiety to eating disorders and grief.

Young people can also drop-in or book a one-to-one online 'chat' session with a trained counsellor between 12pm and 10pm on weekdays, and from 6pm and 10pm at weekends, all year round.

Cllr Louise Jackson, Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing said, "This innovative service enables children and young people to access expert counselling and emotional wellbeing support all year round in a way they feel comfortable, without the need to share their name or personal details."

Dr Sanhita Chakrabarti, Clinical Lead for Children, Young People and Maternity services at Bedfordshire

Clinical Commissioning Group said: "In Bedfordshire the CCG and partners are focused on improving access to children and young people's mental health services, and children and young people's mental health is a critical component of the NHS Long Term Plan. I am delighted that local young people will be able to get support through this ground-breaking new service."

Children and young people can sign up to the service via their laptop, tablet or smartphone and can access all the self-help materials, articles and forums linked to emotional wellbeing at www.kooth.com.

Oasis Beach Pool Refurb

Oasis Beach Pool has had an upgrade this summer.

Following a short three-week closure for refurbishment of the flumes and some important maintenance work, the Oasis Beach Pool re-opened, along with the outside pool, offering customers the chance to swim in the open air. The whole building has been given a refresh, with new flooring installed in the reception area.

There is also a brand new fully stocked shop in the foyer selling a range of swimming gear and pool essentials.



Run, swim, race - Bedford's Junior Aquathlon is back!

The Bedford Junior Aquathlon returns to Bedford Park and Robinson Pools & Fitness on Sunday 6 October 2019.

The Aquathlon is a combined swimming and running event for children from school years 3-11. There will be five age categories from 'Tristar Start' - with year 3's challenged to swim 66 metres and a 600 metre run - all the way up to 'Tristar 4' with years 10 and 11 students swimming 400 metres and completing a 2.8 km run.

The deadline to book a place is Tuesday 24 September at 5pm. It costs £8 per child to enter and you can book at www.bedford.gov.uk/aquathlon.

Gentle exercise classes for the over 70s now available

A new series of gentle exercise classes and activities for the over 70s has begun in Bedford.

A new timetable of classes and sessions has been available since Monday 19 August, with activities at Bedford Central Library, Bedford International Athletics Stadium and John Bunyan Sports & Fitness.

There is a huge variety to choose from, with chair-based Pilates and yoga, volleyball, rounders, table tennis, line dancing, and indoor archery.

There is no need to book, and all sessions are just £4 per person. All abilities are welcome. Visit www.bedford.gov.uk/over70s, pop into Bedford Central Library, or call the Bedford Borough Council Sports Development Team on 01234 718835 to find out more.

Book now for 'Active Adults' courses

Booking is now open for 'Active Adults' Sports Courses - relaxed, informal sports sessions aimed at those aged over 35, ideal for people who haven't done a sport for a long time or who would like to have a go at something new.

As well as Badminton, Tennis, FitSteps, Golf, Indoor Bowls, Martial Arts, Nordic Walking, Pilates, Walking Football and Yoga, there are some new activities this term. These include Clubbercise, Dance Yourself Fit, Fit in the Park, Just Play Football, SwingStreetJazz Solo Dance Class and Yoga in the Evenings.

The courses start the week beginning 23 September, and run for 8 weeks. Unless otherwise specified, all the courses are for beginners with no special equipment required. Visit www.bedford.gov.uk/activeadults to find out more.

Do you own an Empty Property?



You could be:

- Receiving rents;
- Selling it for a handy lump sum;
- Cutting your council tax bill;
- Reducing the risk of squatting & damage.

Bedford Borough Council is using Compulsory Purchase Powers to tackle long-term empty properties.



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To discuss your options please contact us on:

 **01234 718581 or 718585**

 **housing.strategy@bedford.gov.uk**