

Monthly Borough Report January 2025

- **Parking error**

An error on the fees and charges report that showed a £2 charge for Sunday parking had not been spotted by any Council members before the new year.

The error has now been corrected to show no charge as originally intended.

- **Glass collection**

In December 2024, Bedford Borough Council announced it would be expanding its glass recycling trial to an additional 12,000 households across the Borough.

The initial phase of the trial demonstrated success through an 28% increase in overall recycling tonnage and minimal disruption to existing collections. The Council will continue to monitor the expanded programme which will see areas of Bedford, Bromham, Kempston, Stewartby, Sharnbrook, Wixams, Odell, Wilden, Renhold and Kempston Hardwick take part in the extended trial.

- **Wixams Station/Universal**

Wixams Station is proceeding smoothly and is currently being funded by S106 resources. A decision on Universal is also being anticipated this year and, if positive, would fundamentally change the station. Increasing its size with financial costs/management being taken up by central Government.

The Mayor and Council officers continue to have ongoing meetings with representatives from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and Universal.

- **Flooding Alliance**

In response to the recurrent and devastating flooding affecting various part of Bedford Borough, the Mayor and North Bedfordshire MP have teamed up to head a new flooding alliance.

The collaborative committee brings together key decision makers in flood planning, defence ect... such as Anglian Water and the Environment Agency to address the region's persistent flooding challenges.

The key objectives are as follows:

1. Flooding and Flood Prevention
2. Flood-Resistant Housing
3. Improving River Quality

4. Addressing Pollution

- **Buses**

The Borough Council has conducted an in-depth review of the Bus network which has found that many rural routes are underutilised, showing extremely low passenger numbers. This indicates the current network does not accurately serve the needs of residents.

The review has provided the Council with an opportunity to reduce these redundant routes, adjust schedules to align with demand with aim of create a more reliable/financial sustainable service overall. There will also be no reduction in overall funding for bus services in Bedford Borough.

- **Temporary Accommodation**

The Council has made a strategic invested into Temprary Accommodation, acquiring 31 self-contained apartments, offering secure, affordable, and supported living environments for individuals and families facing homelessness.

The initiative provides affordable supported temporary accommodation for homeless individuals while reducing the reliance on costly and less suitable nightly or hotel accommodations.

Taken together, there is an estimated annual cost saving of £802,433 when compared to alternative accommodation methods. Additionally, for a specific property, the Council can potentially receive a 40% discount on the acquisition of the property subject to meeting all of Local Authority Housing Fund funding criteria.

- **Strategic Agreement with BPHA**

Bedford Borough Council is embarking on a partnership with BPHA to develop much-needed affordable and sustainable housing across multiple sites. This collaboration includes the redevelopment of the former Robert Bruce and Margaret Beaufort Middle School sites, the Prebend Street Car Park, and the sale of land near the former Greyfriars Police Station.

The partnership emphasises the need for housing to meet local needs with modern, energy efficient homes.