

# Buckinghamshire Council February Report

Provided by Cllr Anne Wight – 18<sup>th</sup> February 2021

## Local Area Flooding

Given the heavy rainfall we have experienced over the past few weeks, I thought it would be useful to remind residents and parish councils who to contact in the event of flooding.

If your problem relates to:

- danger to life or limb - contact the fire and rescue service [999](tel:999)
- burst water main or household stormwater drain - call your water provider [Anglian Water](#), [Thames Water](#) or [Affinity Water](#)
- main river or reservoir - check updates on [Environment Agency Floodline](#) or call [0345 9881188](tel:03459881188)
- less urgent road problems - report it on [Fix My Street](#)
- road flooding emergencies - report it to the Transport for Bucks out of hours line, on [01296 486630](tel:01296486630)

## Bucks Additional Restrictions Grant

If you have been heavily impacted as a result of the COVID-19 restrictions during January 2021 and have not been able to get support through the Local Restrictions Support Grant scheme, you can apply for the Bucks Additional Restrictions Grant.

The grant is open to applicants until 28 February 2021 at midnight, following which the applications window will be closed.

## Eligibility

To be eligible:

- your business must have experienced a reduction in income of 30% or more during January 2021 (you will need to be able to demonstrate the reduction against January 2020)

You will not be eligible if:

- you are already eligible for the LRSB (closed, open or sector) from 1 February 2021
- you are a self-employed individual already receiving support through the government's Self Employment Income Support Scheme (SEIS)

In addition, your business must:

- be based in Buckinghamshire - Milton Keynes based businesses should apply to the Milton Keynes version of this fund
- have been trading immediately prior to 5 November 2020 and not have been insolvent, in administration or under a striking off notice on 1 February 2021
- apply for one premises only
- submit one application only, if you are Self-Employed and have multiple business interests

The amount awarded will be determined by the number of employees in the business:

Criteria	Grant value
If you are self-employed (not already claiming SEISS)	£1,000
Businesses with fewer than 5 employees	£1,500
Businesses with 5 or more employees	£3,000

You can apply for the grant by visiting the Buckinghamshire Council webpage at the link below <https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/coronavirus/coronavirus-business-support-hub/coronavirus-business-grants/additional-restrictions-grant/>

## The Helping Hand Service

Buckinghamshire Council continues to provide its Helping Hand service and is preparing to provide all eligible pupils with a £15 school meal voucher for February half-term break.

Following the success of the Christmas voucher scheme, it will give our most vulnerable families support to buy food over the one-week half-term holiday week [starting on 15 February](#).

10,500 children and young people received support over the Christmas holidays (a total of £315,000 worth of vouchers) and with more parents becoming aware and applying for eligibility for free school meals, we expect this number to increase.

This is being funded from the government COVID-19 Winter Grant Scheme to target families with children and young people eligible for free school meals. As well as the vouchers, the council is using the funding as a 'Helping Hand' to provide support to any household worried about food or warmth this winter.

The council will send a letter to parents and carers, via schools, before the end of term to give them the details of how to claim and activate the £15 digital food vouchers which can be used at Asda, Morrisons, Tesco, Sainsbury's, Waitrose, Marks and Spencer Food and now also Aldi.

Councillor Anita Cranmer, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills said: "The vouchers provided at Christmas proved to be a great success and enabled families to have choice on where they shopped to feed their families. We are really pleased that Aldi has now joined the scheme as they offer families excellent value for money.

I would also like to say a huge thank you to all our schools who have been supporting families during the first part of the spring term; it's been a tough time. Not only are they providing free school meals but are offering remote learning for the majority of students studying at home and in-school learning for the children of key workers."

Councillor Gareth Williams, Cabinet Member for Communities and Public Health said, "The Helping Hand service has been a welcome relief for many families in the county providing support in many different ways to suit individual families. From sourcing winter clothing, providing referrals to foodbanks through to accessing grants to support people with fuel bills or fixing broken boilers, the team are on hand to continue

helping throughout the colder months. If you need help, or you know someone who need help, please contact our team on [01296 531151](tel:01296531151) or complete the contact us form.”

### **Support in the community**

A number of community and voluntary groups are running local programmes which offer support to households. To find out what is available in your area, please put your postcode into the online directory <https://directory.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/>

### **Worried about food or warmth over the winter season?**

The Council has set up a dedicated Helping Hand phone line for households worried about food or warmth over the winter season. Telephone: 01296 531 151 [Monday to Thursday, 9am](tel:01296531151) to 5:30pm/ [Friday, 9am to 5pm](tel:01296531151)

You can also contact us here - <https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/your-council/contact-us/> for more information.

If you call our Helping Hand support line, our advisors:

- will ask questions about your circumstances so that they can provide the best advice and help
- may direct you to agencies and organisations who can offer help and support
- may offer direct support with food, energy and water bills or other essentials

In an emergency, contact our out of hours team on [0800 999 7677](tel:08009997677).

## **Better Health in 2021**

Seven in 10 adults are motivated to get healthier in 2021 due to COVID-19

Since the pandemic began, a third of people reported snacking on unhealthy food and drinks at least once a day (35%), almost a third (29%) of smokers agreed they smoked more since the second national lockdown and 23% of drinkers claimed that their alcohol intake has increased.

However, almost half of the population (43%) feel more motivated to make changes to their life than they did in January 2020.

That’s why Buckinghamshire Council and Live Well Stay Well are supporting the national Better Health: Let’s Do This .

Live Well Stay Well is a free service that has already helped thousands of people in Buckinghamshire. With tailored advice online and by phone to help you lose weight, get active, stop smoking, manage your drinking or help improve your mental health.

Gareth Williams, Cabinet member for Communities & Public Health said, “The past year has been immensely challenging and being stuck at home much more this year, understandably, has seen some unhealthy habits creeping up on us all. Now is a great time to make a New Year’s Resolution stick, and there are a range of local, free tools and one to one support available to help you achieve your goals in 2021.”

“Live Well Stay Well really can help you to make those changes we all want to make actually stick, as well as provide step by step help to make sure you stay on track,” says Gareth.

To get started visit:

Live Well Stay Well

<https://www.livewellstaywellbucks.co.uk/>

[01628 857 311](tel:01628857311)

To stop smoking, text: 'QUIT' to 85222

Or visit Better Health

<https://www.nhs.uk/better-health/>

## **Bucks Business First Support for Local Businesses**

I thought it might be useful to remind everyone of the Bucks Business First website, and to highlight some of their recent work below. Their website can be found at:

<https://bbf.uk.com>

### **Virtual Business Advice**

If any businesses in your network need ongoing and long term business support, please encourage them to contact our team at Buckinghamshire Business First. They can meet one of our Business Advisers for a one-to-one virtual meeting to discuss their needs and they can be updated on the latest support available for EU Transition, COVID-19, projects that reduce carbon emissions, growth initiatives and much more.

### **Performance Overview**

I would like to share the performance headlines the 9 months to Dec 2020 – it’s been a busy year, even with the challenges of Covid-19 BBF has distributed £6,770,096 in grant funding to businesses at the coalface. This grant funding alongside business support programmes delivered by Buckinghamshire Business First is projected to create 712 new jobs and 311 new products or services. More detail can be found on the website.

### **End of EU transition period**

A new team has been set up within Buckinghamshire Business First to provide businesses with support and advice in regards to the end of the EU Transition period. Activity for this team of 7 staff will help businesses with specialist advice and 1:1 meetings for those who need it.

Our hope is that this activity will help ensure that businesses are aware of the key implications of leaving the EU in regards to:

- Importing and exporting
- Workforce and People
- Regulations and standards
- Digital and data
- Business legal requirements
- IP
- Energy and climate

Please feel free to book a chat with one of our business advisors via email at [BusinessSupport@bbf.uk.com](mailto:BusinessSupport@bbf.uk.com) or you can call on [01494 927130](tel:01494927130).

## Residents invited to online consultation event to comment on SEALR Phase 2

Residents are urged to make their views known on Phase 2 of the South East Aylesbury Link Road before the consultation ends on the 26th February 2021. To access the consultation please go to the [Your Voice Bucks SEALR phase 2 feedback webpage](#).

SEALR Phase 2 is a new project that will deliver an additional 450m of new dual carriageway and a roundabout to the west of the original SEALR. This new roundabout will connect the SEALR Phase 2 with the Stoke Mandeville Relief Road and the proposed South West Aylesbury Link Road. The original SEALR, connecting the A413 Wendover Road and the B4443 Lower Road, will now be delivered as a 'Phase 1' of the SEALR project.

Phase 2 of the SEALR was originally planned to be built by HS2 as part of the Stoke Mandeville Relief Road. This original design would have been built just as a single carriageway with no roundabout to connect to the proposed South West Aylesbury Link Road. Buckinghamshire Council will therefore provide this by building Phase 2 as a dual carriageway with the new roundabout. This will help to prevent Phase 2 from becoming a pinch point and prevent any future disruption from the need to retrofit a roundabout.



Aerial plan showing where SEALR Phase 1 and 2 will be built

The above plan shows where SEALR Phase 1 and 2 will be built.

The construction of the Aylesbury Orbital Link Road is a priority for the Council to help reduce congestion within Aylesbury.

Nick Naylor, Cabinet Member for Transport, said: "We are keen to avoid disruption in the future so delivering this infrastructure now will be a saving for residents. This will also ensure we deliver the infrastructure required for the full Aylesbury Orbital."

Buckinghamshire Council Leader Martin Tett said: "The orbital route around Aylesbury has been a priority for many years. Nevertheless, we want to keep consulting with residents to ensure that we are getting each section of this right."