



HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL
Peel Street, Houghton Regis, Bedfordshire LU5 5EY

Town Mayor: **Cllr M S Kennedy**

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Town Clerk: **Clare Evans**

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9th December 2019

To: Members of the Planning Committee

Cllrs: D Dixon-Wilkinson (Chairman), J Carroll, D Jones, M S Kennedy, S Thorne, K Wattingham and T Welch.

(Copies to all Councillors for information)

Notice of Meeting

You are hereby summoned to a Meeting of the **Planning Committee** to be held at the Council Offices, Peel Street on **Monday 16th December 2019 at 7.00pm.**

De Marsh

THIS MEETING MAY BE FILMED/RECORDED

Debbie Marsh

Corporate Services Manager

Agenda

- 1. APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS**
- 2. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

In accordance with approved Standing Orders 1(e)-1(l) Members of the public may make representations, ask questions and give evidence at a meeting which they are entitled to attend in respect of the business on the agenda.

The total period of time designated for public participation at a meeting shall not exceed 15 minutes and an individual member of the public shall not speak for more than 3 minutes unless directed by the chairman of the meeting.

- 3. SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS**

Under the Localism Act 2011 (sections 26-37 and Schedule 4) and in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, Members are required to declare any interests which are not currently entered in the member's register of interests or if he/she has not notified the Monitoring Officer of any such interest.

Members are invited to submit any requests for Dispensations for consideration.

**This meeting may be filmed by the Council for subsequent broadcast online and can be viewed at <http://www.houghtonregis.org.uk/minutes>*

Phones and other equipment may be used to film, audio record, tweet or blog from this meeting by an individual Council member or a member of the public. The use of images or recordings arising from this is not under the Council's control.

No part of the meeting room is exempt from public filming unless the meeting resolves to go into exempt session.

4. MINUTES

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on the 2nd December 2019.
(Attached)

Members are advised, under Minute number 11077, that following clarification from the Planning Officer the Town Council objected to the proposed plans for planning application CB/19/03323/VOC Manor Farm, Sewell Lane, Sewell for the following reasons:

- Overdevelopment.
- The design of the proposed dwellings does not complement or harmonise with the local surroundings, in particular to the adjacent listed building.
- Insufficient parking provision.

Furthermore, the Town Council made the following comments:

The Town Council remains consistent on development in Sewell. There are huge concerns for the safety of highway users exiting and entering Sewell Lane from Watling Street. The Town Council believes this is supported by Highways, following another recent planning application on another site in this area.

Members are advised that approval has already been granted on this site and therefore the applicant may continue with development on what was originally approved.

Recommendation: To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 2nd December 2019 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

5. PLANNING MATTERS

(a) To consider the following applications:

CB/19/04006/FULL	1 Retrospective Front Porch Extension 8 Cumbria Close, LU5 5RY For: Mr B Balding
CB/19/03890/FULL	Conversion of existing garage to 1 Bedroom Flat Land R/O 58 Hillborough Crescent, LU5 5NX For: Mr Lockyear
CB/19/03930/FULL	Construct a new fence 2.2m high between Puddlehill and 28 Bedford Road, Houghton Regis Puddlehill, Bedford Road, LU5 5DJ For: Central Bedfordshire Council
CB/19/03886/OUT	Outline application: Erection of building for office use and creation of access. Land off Townsend Farm Road, LU5 5BL For: Palisander Properties Ltd

CB/19/02130/FULL	Demolition of existing residential dwelling and erection of 121 dwelling including the creation of a new vehicular access, recreational open space, parking infrastructure and associated landscaping and ancillary works The Gates, Land East of Bedford Road, Bidwell <i>Members are advised that revised plans have been submitted for this scheme. The Town Councils Planning Consultant has provided a report, as attached.</i>
CB/19/04046/FULL	Change of use, residential dwelling house to residential institution care centre Residential Care Centre for people with a learning disability and/or autism The Limes, Cumberland Street, LU5 5BW For: Mr H Satra
<i>For noting</i>	
CB/19/03940/LDCP	Lawful Development Certificate Proposed: single storey rear extension 8 Bankside Close, LU5 6JF For: Mr & Mrs Hendry
CB/19/03853/ADV	Illumination of flag poles with two inground lamps The War Memorial, The Green, LU5 5BH For: Houghton Regis Town Council

(b) Decision Notices***Permissions/Approvals/Consents:***

CB/19/01925/FULL Erection of part single storey, part two storey rear extension
The Orchard, Bedford Road, LU5 6JJ

Refusals:

CB/19/02584/FULL Erection of one 3-bedroom dwelling
Sewell Manor Lodge, Sewell Lane, Sewell, LU6 1RP

Withdrawals:

None at time of going to print.

6. **HIGHWAYS ACT 1980 – PROPOSED DIVERSION OF HOUGHTON REGIS FOOTPATH NO. 23 AND BRIDLEWAY NO. 44 AND CHALTON FOOTPATH NO. 61**

Central Bedfordshire Council have received an application from the agents for the Houghton Regis Management Consortium who are responsible for the development of the Houghton Regis North super development. The application seeks to divert Footpath No. 23 and part of Bridleway No. 44 to accommodate the routes within the required infrastructure associated with the proposed development. As a reserved matter planning application has yet to be submitted for the housing layout, it is proposed to divert the paths under the Highways Act 1980, rather than under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

Footpath No. 23 would be diverted from its straight line from Sundon Road to the A5-M1 Link overbridge (line A-B on the attached plan) onto a more sinuous route from the Sundon Road

Houghton Regis Town Council
Planning Committee
2nd December 2019 at 7.00pm

Present: Councillors: D Dixon-Wilkinson Chairman
J Carroll
D Jones
M S Kennedy
S Thorne
K Wattingham

Officers: Debbie Marsh Corporate Services Manager
Louise Senior Head of Democratic Services

Public: 0

Also present: Councillor: S Goodchild

Apologies: Councillor: T Welch

11073 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Cllr Welch.

11074 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

11075 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

11076 MINUTES

The Committee received the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 11th November 2019 for consideration.

Resolved To confirm the Minutes of the meeting held on 11th November 2019 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

11077 PLANNING MATTERS

Clarity had been sought from Central Bedfordshire Council in regard to Conservation Area planning applications. 10+ years ago Town and Parish Councils would have been sent a separate consent form for proposals in the Conservation Area. However, this was no longer a process adopted. Generally, it was more likely to receive two applications for proposed works to Listed Buildings. A Listed Building Consent, dependent on what was proposed, might also be accompanied by a full application.

(a) The following planning applications were considered:

CB/19/03323/VOC Variation of condition 13 of planning permission
CB/17/05378/FULL – Demolition of large mechanical
storage unit and abutting dwelling and erection of 4no. semi-
detached cottages.
Manor Farm, Sewell Lane, Sewell, LU6 1RP
For: Mr A Buckland

Comments: No objections, subject to the Corporate Services Manager seeking clarification on the amendments from the Planning Officer.

CB/19/02910/FULL Conservation Area: To replace a 3m 10cm hedge with a 2m
wall.
The Gables, East End, LU5 5LA
For: Miss A Hawes

Comments: Houghton Regis Town Council objects to this planning application on the following grounds:

- **Loss of valuable greenery;**
- **Loss of visual amenity in a Conservation Area**
- **Concerns that part of the land is not in the ownership of the applicant;**
- **The Town Council is committed to protecting and enhancing the Conservation Area**

CB/19/03750/FULL Relocation and extension of existing car park.
Unit 33, Humphrys Road, LU5 4TP
For: Legal & General Assurance (Pensions Management Ltd)

Comments: Houghton Regis Town Council objects to this planning application on the following grounds:

- **Loss of valuable greenery and visual amenity**
- **Increase in car emissions**

The Town Council further comments that more should be done to encourage sustainable transport to and from the site.

CB/19/03749/FULL Extension of service yard.
Unit 33, Humphrys Road, LU5 4TP
For: Legal & General Assurance (Pensions Management Ltd)

Comments: No objections

CB/19/03103/TD Telecommunications Development: Proposed
Telecommunications new
Humphreys Road Streetworks 218270, LU5 4SX
For: MBNL (EE Ltd & Hutchinson 3G UK Ltd)

Comments: No objections

CB/19/03104/FULL Telecommunications Development: Proposed
telecommunications upgrade
Humphreys Road Streetworks 218270, Humphreys Road,
LU5 4SX
For: For: MBNL (EE Ltd & Hutchinson 3G UK Ltd)

Comments: No objections

CB/19/03396/FULL Garage conversion/extension
42 Westminster Gardens, LU5 5RT
For: Miss L Coca

Comments: Houghton Regis Town Council objects to this planning application on the following grounds:

- **Concerns that the loss of amenity land could set a precedence**
- **Overdevelopment**
- **Out of keeping**
- **Increase to on street car parking**

Concerns that this development could be used as a standalone unit and not in conjunction with the main residence.

CB/19/03820/RM Reserved Matters: New primary school and amendments to the existing Thornhill Primary School site pursuant to outline permission CB/12/03613/OUT
Thornhill Lower School, Grove Road, LU5 5PE
For: Central Bedfordshire Council

Comments: No objections, however members suggested that they would prefer to see the walkway between the two sites covered.

For noting

CB/19/03789/LDCP Lawful Development Certificate Proposed: Single storey side extension.
1 Therfield Walk, LU5 5QB
For: Unknown

(b) The following decision notices were noted:

Permissions / Approvals / Consents

None at time of going to print.

Refusals:

None received.

Withdrawals:

CB/19/02056/FULL New dwelling.
Greenside, 134 High Street, LU5 5DT

Members were advised that following the Town Council's call in request for planning application CB/19/03158/FULL Treow House, Parkside Drive, LU5 5QL, the following response had been received.

Discussions had taken place in regard to this application in order to work towards a more appropriate scheme.

As a result, the applicant had agreed to set the proposed fence in approximately 1/1.5m from the site boundary and plant a hedge, to closely match with the existing adjacent hedge, in front of this fence. This scheme was thought to provide the applicant with appropriate security measures, whilst taking steps to protect and enhance the conservation area.

Due to the above and subject to the applicant sending in appropriate amended plans, the application would not now be called-in.

11078 BUDGET REVIEW

Members received the Planning budget to date.

Members were informed that a recent notification had been received in regard to revised plans for planning application CB/19/02130/FULL - The Gates, Land East of Bedford Road, Bidwell. Officers were requesting to use budget heading 401-4059 (Other Professional Fees) in order to seek advice from the Town Council's Planning Consultant in relation to these revisions.

Resolved:

- 1) **To note the information;**
- 2) **To employ the services of the Town Council's Planning Consultant to provide a report on the revised plans for planning application CB/19/02130/FULL - The Gates, Land East of Bedford Road, Bidwell and to provide this report to the next planning meeting. The cost for this to be taken from budget heading 401-4059 (Other Professional Fees).**

11079 BUDGET

Members received the officer draft budget for 2020/21 for initial consideration along with explanatory notes.

Resolved: To note the report.

11080 PRE-APPLICATION

At the planning meeting held on the 30th September 2019, following his attendance at the planning training organised by Central Bedfordshire Council, Councillor Carroll informed Members that the Town Council could write to Central Bedfordshire Council requesting that they be included in pre-application advice.

Enquires had been made in respect of this request and the following advice had been received.

“Pre-application advice is not a statutory requirement and a fee is required to be paid. Most customers seeking advice do not wish for it to be made public for various reasons and indeed some pre-application proposals do not result in a planning application. If the advice results in the submission of a planning application, a copy of the advice will be placed on the application file as it is a material consideration in the determination of the application.

Whilst we can't inform Town and Parish Council's about pre-application proposals, we do strongly encourage developers to engage with them at the pre-application stage for early discussions, including about the infrastructure requirements of the area so that these can be considered for any s106.”

Resolved: To note the report.

11081 LOCAL PLAN

On Friday (8 November), CBC officers received a further letter from the Inspectors in relation to the Local Plan. This followed a series of communications where the Council rightly raised concerns with the Inspectors about their approach to the examination. This most recent letter was supportive of the council's approach to further develop the current Local Plan and asked the council to produce a timetable of this work.

As with any Local Plan, but particularly one in an area as complex as Central Bedfordshire, modifications would be required, and officers had already started taking steps to address points raised during the hearing sessions and those raised by the Inspectors.

This was an important milestone for the Council and its commitment to bringing forward a sound and sustainable plan to provide the homes and jobs required to meet the needs of this area.

Central Bedfordshire very much welcomed this latest position from the Inspector. They had already started work on addressing some of the points in anticipation of progressing the Local Plan to examination.

11082 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Members were advised that work was still continuing on the draft Neighbourhood Plan even though the date for the public consultation had been delayed. An update had been provided on the Town Council's website and on social media platforms.

Resolved: To note the information.

**11083 STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT SITES/LOCAL PLAN-
UPDATE/PROGRESS**

Woodside Link – No substantive update to report.

A5 M1 Link – No substantive update to report.

All Saints View – No substantive update to report.

Linnere - No substantive update to report.

Bidwell West – No substantive update to report.

Kingsland – No substantive update to report.

Windsor Drive – No substantive update to report.

Section 106 Monies – No substantive update to report.

Resolved: To note the information

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.05pm

Dated this 16th day of December 2019

Chairman

Application Ref. CB/19/02130/FULL, 121 dwellings at The Gates, East of Bedford Road, Bidwell Amended Plans

1.1 The amended plans seek to address some of the issues raised with the original submission.

1.2 Earlier in 2019, the Committee considered the original proposal, with the following comments:

objections to the scheme for the following reasons:

- The layout of the buildings adjoining the Bedford Road frontage should be changed so that these homes face the road reflecting the layout of the original hamlet and with respect to the setting of the adjoining listed building,
- The dwellings facing Bedford Road should be designed to reflect the materials and scale of the hamlet,
- The children's play area should be relocated elsewhere in the site to avoid placing close to a road and not adjoining a pond for reasons of safety,
- The spine road through the estate should be re-designed to reduce traffic speeds, reduce the lengths of straight carriageway and use the resulting design to introduce more landscaping into the street scene and reduce the appearance of a dense urban setting

1.3 Further the Town Council noted it would review its objections if an amended scheme which addressed these concerns and would look for a s.106 contribution being negotiated towards nearby service, shopping and community facilities and a bus service to connect the site with the facilities in the town centre.

(the report is attached as an annex – below)

Considerations

2.1 Policy: The site, fronting Bedford Road and extending onto land at the rear is not included in the Masterplan Area for Houghton Regis North development and under the current Local Plan (2004) is within a green belt designation. However the application site will be enveloped by the HRN Masterplan proposals with new development around and a landscape belt carrying the current right of way immediately to the east, with housing beyond.

2.2 On balance, the current green belt designation has little relevance. Ordinarily the green belt designation in the adopted local plan would require a high bar of justification to be demonstrated to enable development, then usually only a limited range of types – infill, required in connection with agriculture etc. The approval of the HRN development since 2012 will in the near future leave it as an 'island' and the purposes identified for green belt in the National Planning Policy Framework – to prevent settlements merging, to protect open countryside, have very limited application.

2.3 Design and layout: The key points regarding the amended scheme remain:

- Concern over the elevations and appearance from the Bedford Rd frontage,
- Safety issues over the location of the children's play area,
- traffic speeds and safety on the estate main access road.

1. Description

1.1 Bidwell is a small group of mostly homes and farm buildings either side of the Bedford Road, currently separate from Houghton Regis, located at the foot of the hill north of the town centre. The site is situated on the eastern side of Bedford Road, with a frontage onto the road and includes the paddocks at the rear which extend to the southern edge of the Rugby Club. A footpath / right of way (Chiltern Way) runs north-south along the eastern boundary. There is a small row of terraced houses fronting Bedford Road north of the site and the Red Cow Farm, a grade II listed building to the south.

1.2 The site is not included in the Masterplan Area for Houghton Regis North development and under the current Local Plan (2004) is within a green belt designation. The proposed Local Plan (the Examination period has recently concluded and the Inspectors' conclusions are awaited) contains one allocation for development at Bidwell – HAS28 in the Small / Medium Allocations, for 40 homes on the Bidwell Gospel hall site.

1.3 The Design & Access Statement supporting the application illustrates that the HRN Masterplan proposals will see Bidwell including the application site, enveloped by new development; immediately to the east of the site will be a landscape belt carrying the current right of way with housing beyond.

1.4 The site is just over 4ha in size, a gentle slope to the north, currently with a house and various out-buildings. There are trees and hedges on the site mostly along its boundaries and between the house and Bedford Road, otherwise the site comprises rough-grazing / pasture.

1.5 The proposal is wholly residential, demolition of the existing buildings and 121 new homes made up of a mix of houses and flats:

Private Dwellings (Total 85); 7 x 4 Bed Houses; 46 x 3 Bed Houses; 23 x 2 Bed Houses;
9 x 2 Bed Flats.

Affordable Dwellings (Total 36); 1 x 4 Bed House; 6 x 3 Bed Houses; 10 x 2 Bed Houses;
13 x 2 Bed Flats; 6 x 1 Bed Flats.

1.6 The balance between private and affordable dwellings accords with the Central Beds requirements. The affordable dwellings are in two groups: one near the boundary with the rugby club and the other on the southern edge.

1.7 The site would be served by a single road access point from the Bedford Road frontage with pavements either side, leading to a spine road connecting to a number of cul-de-sacs. The scheme includes two areas of open space, one with a play area adjoining an attenuation pond on the Bedford Road frontage next to the access road, the second a ribbon of grass and planting along the eastern boundary retaining the hedgerow and trees plus an access pathway.

1.8 There are 236 car parking spaces shown, a mix of allocated / on-plot spaces and unallocated / visitor parking. A Travel Plan report accompanies the application which highlights the walking / footpath opportunities, cycling and bus stops / routes close to the site. The location of the development means that access to local school(s), community facilities, shops and Houghton Regis centre would be the most important to facilitate to avoid unnecessary car-based journeys. The Design & Access Statement describes the facilities available in Houghton Regis, those which will be

provided within the HRN development, and the excellent (car-based) connections northwards to the A5 dual carriageway and southwards to Houghton Regis and Dunstable.

2. Planning Policy

2.1 The Planning Statement supporting the application balances three policy matters: the requirement to determine applications in accordance with the adopted local plan (2004), the anticipated matters which the draft Central Beds Local Plan will need to embrace before that can be adopted, and thirdly the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) support for sustainable development.

2.2 The recent Local Plan Hearings have given rise to a considerable number of issues which, it is likely, the Inspectors will require further work by Central Bedfordshire to produce evidence or justification, and which may itself involve a period of further consultation.

2.3 This is unlikely to affect the progress of the Houghton Regis North 1 and 2 developments, where sites are already commenced with levelling and infrastructure being installed.

2.4 The Statement with this application also refers to the HRN Framework (2012) which guides the HRN development, however as stated above Bidwell is not included in the Framework area.

3. Issues

3.1 **Policy:** Ordinarily the current green belt designation in the adopted local plan would require a high bar of justification to be demonstrated to enable development, then usually only a limited range of types – infill, required in connection with agriculture etc. However the approval of the HRN development in 2012 and the subsequent reserved matters approvals for its implementation, around Bidwell, which will in the near future leave it as an ‘island’ between HRN and Houghton Regis means that the purposes identified for green belt in the National Planning Policy Framework – to prevent settlements merging, to protect open countryside, have very limited application.

3.2 It should be noted that other applications for development between Houghton Regis and Bidwell have been approved –

CB/17/02512/OUT

Outline Application: Residential development of up to 1.03ha of the site with formation of two accesses, sustainable urban drainage and associated landscaping
Land South of the bungalow, Bedford Road, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 6JS

CB/19/00668/OUT

Outline application for the erection of 7 detached dwellings with associated access, turning and parking.
Land East of Bedford Road, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, Beds LU5 5ES

CB/18/00067/OUT

Outline Application: Formation of a new access to serve existing residential development and a residential development of up to 24 dwellings together with an enhanced footpath link and associated landscaping
Highfield Barns, Bedford Road, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 6JP

3.3 On balance, the current green belt designation has little relevance or justification. However the development will have little in the way of local community facilities, schools or retail opportunities until the development on HRN progresses, and a S.106 agreement is recommended to contribute towards these and to support public transport into Houghton Regis.

3.4 **Scale and Density:** The design and layout achieves 121 dwellings on a little over 4ha, a density of approximately 30 to the hectare which is in the medium / high range, more akin to an urban setting

rather than a village or hamlet. There is no specific policy in the Local Plan in relation to Bidwell and its future development except the site at Gospel Hall, but NPPF paragraph 122. States

Planning policies and decisions should support development that makes efficient use of land, taking into account:

- a) the identified need for different types of housing and other forms of development, and the availability of land suitable for accommodating it;*
- b) local market conditions and viability;*
- c) the availability and capacity of infrastructure and services – both existing and proposed – as well as their potential for further improvement and the scope to promote sustainable travel modes that limit future car use;*
- d) the desirability of maintaining an area's prevailing character and setting (including residential gardens), or of promoting regeneration and change; and*
- e) the importance of securing well-designed, attractive and healthy places.*

3.5 Reference to an area's prevailing character and setting is a consideration but with the exception of the listed building adjoining to the south there is little to justify major changes to the scale or density. However some issues regarding design and layout may affect the overall number of houses on the site.

3.6 Layout & Design: The main concerns are with the southern part of the site fronting Bedford Road. This part of Bidwell still retains characteristics of a small hamlet and the site frontage should reflect this. The dwellings nearest the Bedford Road frontage present the side elevation / gable end to the road and should be re-designed so the front elevations are fore-most, and would be more in keeping with older houses nearby. This front elevation should have design features which reflect the simplicity of the local vernacular.

3.7 A major part of the scheme's appearance from Bedford Road is the pond and open space with houses placed around it on two sides and the estate spine road on the third. However placing the children's play area next to the pond and the spine road raises concerns over safety and the play area should be relocated elsewhere in the site. The pond and open space is the main landscape feature and the rest of the site lacks planting with the houses presenting an 'urban' appearance which would be relieved with more landscaping.

3.8 The purpose of the two footpath connections shown leaving the site on the eastern boundary should be clear, e.g. links to proposed facilities in new development.

3.9 the scheme as it stands makes no mention of traffic calming / speed restrictions on the spine road, and this should be incorporated to help reduce traffic speeds as a safety feature for pedestrians, cyclists and children. The scope for road bends and narrows would also allow more new planting.

3.10 In order to justify being considered 'sustainable' the scheme should show electric charging points for dwellings and parking spaces, with solar panels and water heating panels incorporated in the house designs.