



## HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Peel Street, Houghton Regis, Bedfordshire LU5 5EY

Town Mayor: **Cllr T K McMahon**

Tel: 01582 708540

Town Clerk: **Clare Evans**

E-mail: [info@houghtonregis.org.uk](mailto:info@houghtonregis.org.uk)

2<sup>nd</sup> March 2020

**To: Members of the Planning Committee**

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

(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 9<sup>th</sup> March 2020 at 7.00pm.**

*Debbie 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 17<sup>th</sup> February 2020.  
(Attached)

**Recommendation: To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> February 2020 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.**

#### 5. PLANNING MATTERS

*Members are advised that, on receipt of a planning application Central Bedfordshire Council will send the Town Council a full set of plans and a copy of the planning application form only. All supporting documents, that have previously been printed and posted, will only be available on their website. Therefore, members are advised that should they require sight of these documents that they request them prior to the meeting.*

**(a) To consider the following applications:**

- |                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| CB/20/00478/VOC  | Variation to Condition 2 & 29 to planning permission CB/16/03378/REG3 (phased construction of a new Independent Living Scheme 168 apartments with support facilities etc). Vary roof covering to the main roof phase 1.<br>Former Co-Op supermarket, High Street, LU5 5QT<br>For: Vistry Partnerships   |
| CB/20/00492/VOC  | Variation of Condition 7 of planning permission CB/18/03034/FULL (change of use from office to 2 residential dwellings) Reinstatement of a door opening to replace an existing window, creating access to the ground floor flat and internal alterations<br>104a High Street, LU5 5BJ<br>Listed Building Grade: Ecclesiastical Two.<br>For: Mr G Martuccio  |
| CB/20/00471/FULL | Loft conversion with dormer extension to rear roof slopes and rooflights to front roof slope.<br>36 Woodlands Avenue, LU5 5LJ<br>For: Mr & Mrs Hewitt   |
| CB/20/00457/FULL | First floor side and rear extension and provision of pitched roof over existing single storey flat roof to side and front<br>118 Houghton Road, LU5 5AE<br>For: Mr A Parciu   |
| CB/20/00348/RM   | Resubmission: Reserved Matters: following Outline Application CB/15/00297/OUT 'hybrid' planning application with details of main access routes, primary road network and associated drainage in detail only and layout in outline with details of landscaping, appearance and scale reserved for later determination. Development to comprise: Up to 1,850 residential (C3) dwellings (including affordable housing), 2FE Primary School (D1), employment land (Use Classes B1 [a-c], B2 & B8, local centre comprising retail (A1, A2, A3, A4 & A5) and |



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	<p>community/leisure uses (D1 &amp; D2), layout of public open spaces including sports pitches and changing rooms, natural wildlife areas and all associated works and operations including engineering operations and earthworks. Reserved Matters for access, appearance landscape, layout and scale for 160 dwellings on phase CA2 Upper Thorn Green.</p> <p>Land to West of Houghton Regis, Watling Street For: Abbey Developments Ltd</p>
CB/20/00388/RM	<p>Reserved Matters; following outline application CB/12/03613/OUT Outline planning permission with the details of access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale reserved for later determination. 5,150 dwellings (use class C3) 202,500sqm of additional development in Use Classes A1,A2,A3,A4,A5,B1,B2,B8,C1,C2,D1,D2 all development, works and operations to be in accordance with the Development Parameters Schedule and Plans. Reserves matter for 153 dwellings with access, Phase 1, Parcel Three Houghton Regis, North Site 1 Houghton Regis For: Bellway Homes Ltd</p>
CB/20/00579/VOC	<p>Variation of Condition 3 of Planning Permission CB/19/02214/FULL (Double storey side extension) to read – The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out except in complete accordance with the details shown on the submitted plans, numbers AD 163/FP-200 Rev/C I Fareham Way, LU5 5RE For: Mr &amp; Mrs Michalski</p>
CB/20/00552/FULL	<p>Part single/part two storey side and rear extensions 42 Douglas Crescent, LU5 5AT For: Mr J Saulle</p>
CB/20/00416/REG3	<p>Erection of fence between Puddlehill and Thomas Whitehead CE Academy School Puddlehill, Bedford Road, LU5 5DJ For: Central Bedfordshire Council</p>
CB/20/00449/RM	<p>Reserved Matters: following Outline Application CB/12/03613/OUT Outline planning permission with the details of access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale reserved for later determination. Development to comprise: up to 5,510 dwellings (Use Class C3); up to 202,500 sqm gross of additional development in Use Classes: A1, A2, A3 (retail), A4 (public house), A5 (take away); B1, B2, B8 (offices, industrial and storage and distribution); C1 (hotel), C2 (care home), D1 and D2 (community and leisure); car showroom; data centre; petrol filling station; car parking; primary substation; energy centre; and for the laying out of the buildings; routes and open spaces within the development; and all associated works and operations including but not limited to: demolition; earthworks; engineering operations. All development, works and operations to be in accordance with the Development Parameters Schedule and Plans. Reserved matters planning application for 309 new homes, public</p>

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	open space, landscape and associated infrastructure pursuant to Conditions 3 and 4 For: Barratt
CB/20/00245/FULL	Change roof covering from profiled steel to interlocking concrete tiles, re positioning of flat entrances to Walkley Road, bricking up entrance doors of double doors in Walkley Road and changes in fenestration Bearings House, Units 4 and 5, 22 Queen Street, LU5 5BT For: Mr M Saluja
CB/20/00717/DOC	Discharge of Condition 4 against planning permission CB/18/04641/REG3 (The development of a 20 unit, 3-storey transitional housing scheme with associated access, parking and landscaping.) Land adjacent to St Thomas Meeting House, Windsor Drive For: Central Bedfordshire Council
CB/20/00485/VOC	Variation of condition 10 of planning permission CB/16/03379/LB Phased Construction of a new Independent Living Scheme for Older Persons comprising 168 apartments with support facilities, a Restaurant & Bar, Retail Units, Café, 2no Reablement Suites, the conversion and Change of Use of a Grade 2 listed building and the demolition of an existing Sheltered Housing scheme with associated parking and landscaping. Amendment sought to vary roof material. Former Co-Op Supermarket, High Street, LU5 5QT For: Vistry Partnerships
CB/20/00674/NMA	Non-material amendment to planning permission CB/19/03232/RM (Reserved Matters: Appearance, scale and landscaping for residential development of 336 dwellings on Development Parcels 5a and 5b Bidwell West, Houghton Regis. Outline application 9CB/15/00297/OUT) was supported by a full Environmental Statement (ES)). Amendment sought to red line boundary Parcels 5a and 5b Bidwell West, LU5 6JQ For: Countryside Properties (UK) Ltd
CB/20/00675/VOC	Variation of condition 19 of planning permission CB/19/03232/RM Reserved matters: Appearance, scale and landscaping for residential development of 336 dwellings on Development Parcels 5a and 5b Bidwell West, Houghton Regis. Outline application (CB/15/0297/OUT) was supported by a full Environmental Statement (ES). Variation to approved plans list (condition 19) to align with amended red line (subject to separate NMA application) Substitute approved plans Parcels 5a and 5b Bidwell West, LU5 6JQ For: Countryside Properties (UK) Ltd
CB/20/00626/RM	Reserved Matters: Following Outline Application CB/15/00297/OUT 'hybrid' planning application with details of main access routes, primary road network and associated drainage in detail only and layout in outline with details of landscaping, appearance and scale



reserved for later determination. Development to comprise: Up to 1,850 residential (C3) dwellings (including affordable housing), 2FE Primary School (D1), employment land (Use Classes B1 [a-c], B2 & B8), local centre comprising retail (A1, A2, A3, A4 & A5) and community/leisure uses (D1 & D2), layout of public open spaces including sports pitches and changing rooms, natural wildlife areas and all associated works and operations including engineering operations and earthworks. Reserved matters sought relating to matters of appearance, landscaping, layout and scale for the construction of 109 no. dwellings.

Parcel 1, Bedford Road

For: Storey Property Developments (Houghton Regis) Ltd

## **(b) Decision Notices**

### ***Permissions/Approvals/Consents:***

None at time of going to print.

### ***Refusals:***

CB/19/03396/FULL

Garage conversion/extension  
42 Westminster Gardens, LU5 5RT

### ***Withdrawals:***

None at time of going to print.

## **6. LINMERE**

Members are advised that representatives from the Linnere development will be attending the meeting to provide members with an update in relation to an impending Reserved Matters planning application for the Visitor Centre element of the site.

## **7. RESERVED MATTERS PRESENTATION - LINMERE**

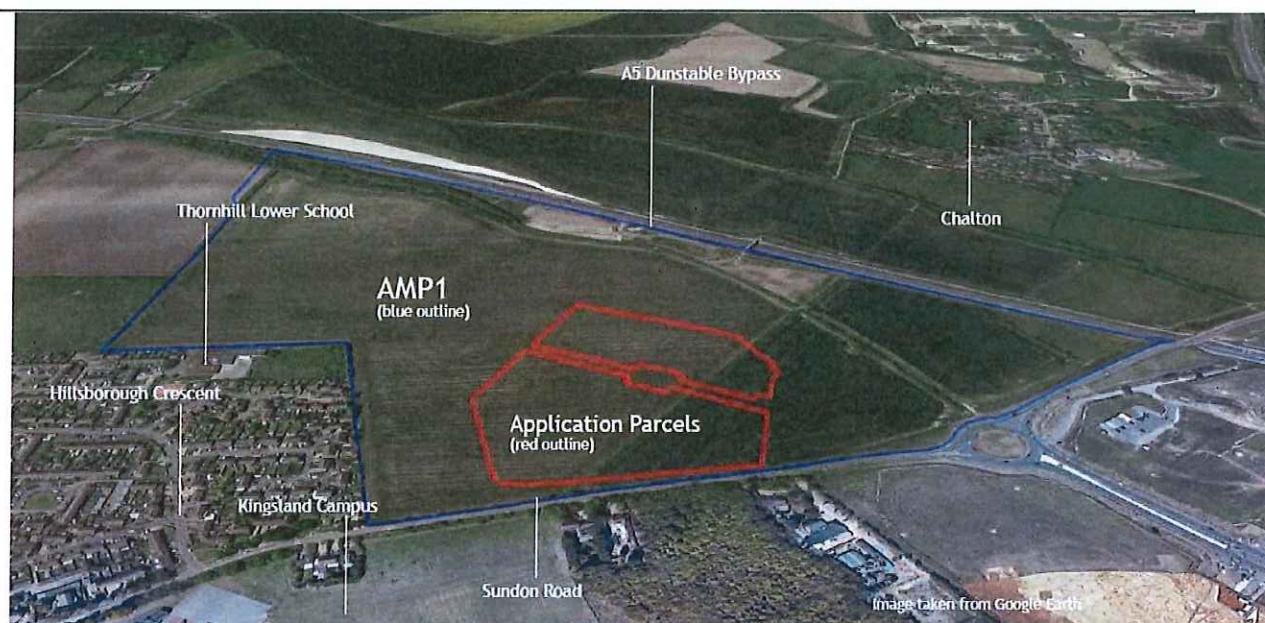
Members are advised that representatives from Barratt Homes will be in attendance to present to members their Reserved Matters proposals for one of the first phases of development within AMP1.

A map is included below to identify the location.

An application has been submitted to Central Bedfordshire Council and in the near future the Town Council will receive copies of the plans.

Those attending would like the opportunity to speak with Councillors about the proposals in a little more detail, show some of the proposed designs and allow members to ask questions and discuss any local issues.

In attendance will be representatives from Barratt Homes and the architect (CYMK) and Planning Consultant (ACD).



**8. PLANNING APPLICATION CB/19/04242 - LAND AT SUNDON ROAD, LOWER SUNDON, LU3 3NZ**

Members are advised that a planning application for change of use of land and development of new sports facility for the relocation of Luton Rugby Club comprising the formation of three full sized pitches (including two all-weather pitches with floodlighting), four junior pitches, two storey clubhouse (including changing rooms, fitness suite and physio rooms, spectator seating and viewing areas, dining room with kitchen and bar, stewards living accommodation and ancillary storage etc), creation of new access of Sundon Road, parking provision, landscaping and associated works, has been registered with Central Bedfordshire Council.

This proposed development is outside of the Parish, however Members are informed that a letter of objection has been received by the Dunstablians Rugby Union Football Club, Bidwell Park, copy attached.

Members are further advised that the Town Councils Planning Consultant was informally advised of this application who has provided the following feedback.

*HRTC may wish to comment that permitting this development might undermine the provision of sporting facilities as part of the HRN developments and the existing club at Bidwell.*

**Recommendation:** **To consider whether the Town Council wished to respond to this application and what response they wished to make.**

**9. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

Members are advised that the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group at its last meeting, held on the 19<sup>th</sup> February, discussed the need to confirm with Central Bedfordshire Council whether the Neighbourhood Plan was subject to screening. If so, this could lead to a further 6-8-week delay in being able to undertake public consultation.

**Recommendation:** **To note the information.**





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**Houghton Regis Town Council**  
**Planning Committee**  
**17<sup>th</sup> February 2020 at 7.00pm**

Present: Councillors: D Dixon-Wilkinson Chairman  
J Carroll  
Y Farrell Substitute  
D Jones  
M S Kennedy  
S Thorne

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

Public: 1

Apologies: Councillor: K Wattingham

Also present: Councillor: S Goodchild

**11153 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

Apologies were received from Cllr Wattingham (Cllr Farrell substituted).

**11154 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

None.

**11155 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr Kennedy declared an interest in planning application CB/20/2001545/FULL as the applicant was known to him personally. Accordingly, Cllr Kennedy left the room during discussion of the application.

**11156 MINUTES**

The Committee received the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2020 for consideration.

**Resolved To confirm the Minutes of the meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2020 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.**

**11157 PLANNING MATTERS**

**(a) The following planning applications were considered:**

***Non - Delegated***

CB/20/00154/FULL Single storey rear extension  
29 Dellmont Road, LU5 5HU  
For: Mr & Mrs S Dye

Cllr Kennedy left the room for discussion of this application.

**Comments: The Town Council has no objection to this application but requests that a condition be placed on the approval which restricts the use of the double gates to pedestrian access only. This proposal is to protect the adjoining amenity land and footpath users from vehicles exiting and entering the site.**

CB/20/00261/FULL

Single storey side extension  
14 Therfield Walk, LU5 5QB  
For: Mr & Mrs Macedo

**Comments: Houghton Regis Town Council objects to this application for the following reasons:**

**The red line drawing shows the footpath in the ownership of the applicant, the Town Council believes this to be incorrect.**

**The land that adjoins this proposed development was provided as an amenity area as part of the overall original development. Whilst the Town Council feels that this proposed application would conflict with the openness of this amenity site, they did feel that should there have been an explanation as to why the proposed ground floor bedroom was required, they may have been able to support the application.**

CB/20/00425/FULL

Single & two storey side extensions  
144 Cemetery Road, LU5 5DE  
For: Mrs Barford-Drew

**Comments: No objections, however the Town Council request that Central Bedfordshire Council ascertain ownership of the land.**

CB/20/00341/PADO

Prior notification change of use from Office Class B1 to 5 Dwelling houses Class C3  
Bearings House, 22 Queen Street, LU5 5BT  
For: Mr M Saluja

**Comments: Houghton Regis Town Council strongly objects to this application for the following reason:**

**Inappropriate development within the existing residential area. Out of keeping with the surrounding area.**

CB/19/03578/FULL Rear and side extension, conversion of garage, raising of roof and dormer extension  
8 Stubbs Close, LU5 5SN

**Comments: No objections**

CB/19/02130/FULL The Gates, Land East of Bedford Road, Bidwell  
Demolition of existing residential dwelling and erection of 121 dwellings including the creation of a new vehicular access, recreational open space, parking infrastructure and associated landscaping and ancillary works.

***Members were advised that the Town Councils planning consultant had provided members with a report in regard to these amendments.***

Members requested that Central Bedfordshire Council be contacted to request the reinstatement of the provision of specific amendment details relating to amended applications.

**Comments: The Town Council raises no objection to the proposal as amended by the two sets of proposed changes but comments as before that a s.106 contribution should be negotiated towards the provision of community facilities and a bus service to connect the site with the facilities in the town centre.**

**(b) The following decision notices were noted:**

CB/20/00232/LDCP Loft conversion with dormer extension to rear roof slope and roof lights to front roof slope  
36 Woodlands Avenue, LU5 5LJ  
For: Mr & Mrs Hewitt

CB/20/00179/DOC Discharge of Condition 1 (Details of a refuse collection point located outside of the public highway shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority prior to the occupation of any dwelling. The scheme shall be fully implemented prior to occupation of any dwelling and shall be retained thereafter. Reason - In the interest of amenity and in order to minimise danger, obstruction and inconvenience to users of the highway and the premises).

Bearings House, 22 Queen Street, LU5 5BT

Members requested that Central Bedfordshire Council provide evidence that the condition had been fulfilled as none could be found on the website. The Town Council strongly objects to this change of use and therefore seeks assurance that this condition has been met.

CB/00340/GPDE Prior Notification of Householder Extension: Single storey rear extension 6m beyond the rear wall of the original dwelling, maximum height of 4m and 4m to eaves  
The Chestnuts, 37 Sundon Road, LU5 5LL  
For: Mr M Qasim



***Permissions / Approvals / Consents***

CB/19/03232/RM      Appearance, scale and landscaping for residential development of 336 dwellings on Development Parcels 5a and 5b Bidwell West.  
Parcels 5a and 5b Bidwell West

***Refusals:***

CB/19/00571/FULL      Convert existing dwelling to 4-bedroom property and creation of independent studio flat  
82 Churchfield Road, LU5 5HW

***Withdrawals:***

CB/19/03890/FULL      Conversion of garage to single bedroom bungalow  
Land R/O 58 Hillborough Crescent, LU5 5NX

CB/19/03886/OUT      Erection of building for office use and creation of access  
Land off Townsend Farm Road, LU5 5BL

**11158 LINMERE**

Members were advised that representatives from the Linnere development would be attending the next meeting to provide members with an update in relation to an impending Reserved Matters planning application for the Visitor Centre element of the site.

**11159 LOCAL PLAN**

No substantive update to report.

**11160 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

Members were advised that at the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group meeting to be held on the 19<sup>th</sup> February, members of the group will consider and approve a revision to Policy 19 of the draft plan.

This revision followed the groups decision to remove development sites previously identified in the draft plan. All reference to these development sites would also be removed from the entire document.

Original wording of Policy 19 was:

• *Redevelopment of the current Town Council offices and GP surgery, Peel Street – see policies 4 and 5* • *Part of the redevelopment of the Thomas Whitehead CE Academy site – see policy 5* • *High Street – see policy 7 - a substantial proportion of residential flats and provision for semi-independent, supported or care homes.* • *on part of the Tithe Farm Recreation Ground, – see policy 23 new road through Tithe Farm Rec with housing on east end including affordable/disabled housing – see Map 1.* • *Rear of Brewers Hill School, Dunstable (see map 1) – see policy 22 - this part of the parish borders the built up area of the adjoining town of Dunstable. In order to create a clear distinction between the open character and setting of both Maiden Bower and Sewell, a site off French's Avenue (in Dunstable) is shown for development identified as ALP 164 in the CBC 'call for sites', only on the basis that its design will incorporate a green buffer against further expansion.*

*Development of these sites will enable provision of the following:* • *a substantial proportion of residential flats aimed at singles and couples, on the current Town Council offices Peel Street – 6\* flats, GP surgery – 10\* flats (Tithe Farm Rd opposite Bedford Sq.), part of Thomas Whitehead CE Academy site redevelopment – 25\* flats, and High Street – 12\* affordable homes to rent on part of the Tithe Farm Recreation Ground with a new road to connect with Houghton Regis North 2 development,* • *Rear of Brewers Hill School, Dunstable – 35\* affordable housing units aimed at singles and couples.*

*\*estimate of site potential*

*Residential development in the town centre (see map 3) and adjoining the route of the Busway will be required to provide facilities for cycle and motorcycle parking and car parking in accordance with NPPF guidance and CBC standards, in order to encourage high density developments of flats and apartments suitable for key worker groups (e.g. teachers, care-workers to aid recruitment & retention), one bed dwellings, and supported living.*

The proposed new wording for Policy 19:

*Any applications for new housing developments will be considered against the policies in this plan to provide particular types of housing needed locally and to preserve the open spaces, leisure facilities, employment land, and character of the parish. Any development for new housing will be expected to provide a % of affordable housing in accordance with the locally adopted policies. Smaller-scale developments (e.g. up to 30 homes), especially when they involve re-development of sites already built on or add housing to other provisions, will be encouraged, subject to the other policies in this plan.*

**Resolved: To note the information.**



Members were advised that Totternhoe Parish Council were undertaking their Regulation 14 consultation in regard to their Neighbourhood Plan.

The Town Council's planning consultant had provided members, at no cost, a report based on their plan and the impact it may have on Houghton Regis.

**Recommendations:**

The Totternhoe Neighbourhood Plan contains policies which recognise the green belt notation for the parish and seeks to protect the area from development other than infill in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, policies to protect and enhance the important open spaces within the parish and where development does take place to ensure it accords with the character of the area.

The Town Council is recommended to

- A) raise no objections to the neighbourhood plan, and
- encourage joint work towards the aims and methods for the protection and enhancement of important countryside and green space where the two parishes adjoin, notably the former railway and area around Maiden Bower,
  - promote use of footpaths where they pass between the two parishes,
  - recognise the importance of footpath connections for residents at Sewell,
  - welcome the provisions in the Plan towards smaller one, two and three bed dwellings,
  - welcome the provisions in the Plan towards a sustainable, energy efficient and low carbon future.
- B) Comment that if the policies regarding development in the village are intended to direct appropriate special circumstances development to suitable infill locations, the approach would be strengthened if the Plan identified such sites – with the accompanying environmental justifications,
- C) Comment that the approach towards the provision of smaller / affordable housing provision within the parish would be strengthened at both application and appeal stages with the evidence from a robust housing needs survey (over and above that provided in section 5 – where the paragraph numbering needs to be reviewed). This would minimise the risk of the developers' 'affordable housing and dwelling mix strategy' simply providing back-up for their preferred proposals.

**Resolved: To support the recommendation as contained within the report and to respond accordingly to Totternhoe Parish Council in regard to their Neighbourhood Plan**

## 11162 HRN STAKEHOLDER GROUP

Members received the minutes from the HRN Stakeholder Group meeting held on the 16<sup>th</sup> December 2019.

Members were requested to appoint a representative from the planning committee to attend the next HRN Stakeholder Group meeting. Date to be confirmed.



Members agreed to appoint Cllr Carroll to attend the HRN Stakeholder Group meeting.

**Resolved: To appoint Councillor J Carroll to attend the next HRN Stakeholder Group meeting.**

**11163 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** – Members were advised that an application to change the roofing material for part of this development would be discussed at the next meeting.

**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 8.16pm**

**Dated this 9<sup>th</sup> day of March 2020**

**Chairman**

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## ***Dunstablians Rugby Union Football Club Limited***

Grounds: Bidwell Park, Houghton Regis,  
Dunstable, Beds, LU5 6JW

Tel: 01582 866555/864107

Web Site: [www.dunstablians-rufc.org.uk](http://www.dunstablians-rufc.org.uk)

Colours: Red/Black/Silver

(Affiliated to R.F.U. East Midlands R.F.U. and E.M.R.S)

Thomas Mead  
Central Bedfordshire Council

12<sup>th</sup> February 2020

Dear Thomas Mead

### **RE: CB/19/04242 Land at Sundon Road Lower Sundon LU3 3NZ – Objection**

This is an application for the development of a clubhouse and 7 pitches plus parking, for the relocation of Luton Rugby Football Club to a site in Sundon Road, Sundon.

I, as Chairman of Dunstablians Rugby Union Football Club (DRUFC), am writing to you on behalf of the club to express our vehement objections to this planning application. This objection, on behalf of DRUFC, by way of explanation, has attracted unanimous backing from our Executive Committee on behalf of our existing 500 club members.

Firstly, we believe that there are strong environmental grounds for refusing this application. Our contention is that the proposed development is totally inappropriate for this Green Belt land and we, therefore, fully support the views already expressed clearly by Sundon & Chalton Parish Councils, CPRE & Heritage England. The site sits entirely within the Green Belt of the Chiltern Hills, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, is adjacent to the Grade 1 listed Church of St Mary and close to residential homes. These would all be affected detrimentally by the proposal, which includes an imposing clubhouse, tiered pitches, floodlighting and a large number of parked cars, resulting in significant noise and light pollution.

The applicant claims that Luton RFC's failure to find suitable land within Luton Borough Council's own boundaries and the club's failing fortunes provide a sufficiently strong case to allow the release of Green Belt land outside of Luton within the borders of a neighbouring authority. We believe that it is not in the public's interest for Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) to hand over coveted Green Belt land so that Luton RFC are able to recover its fortunes.

DRUFC moved to Bidwell Park in 1986 and therefore has been in its present location for a similar length of time as Luton RFC has been at the Newlands Road site. Due to a succession of effective Management Committees, DRUFC has continued to provide a





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(Affiliated to R.F.U. East Midlands R.F.U. and E.M.R.S)

vibrant and financially secure sporting facility and social amenity for the local community of Houghton Regis and Dunstable. Over recent years, from our own funds and grants from Sport England, RFU and our local authorities we have invested over £350,000 in clubhouse improvements and energy efficiency measures. We have close ties with local schools and Dunstable College and many of our CBC and Houghton Regis Town Councillors appreciate the role the club plays within the area. We have invested a great deal of time and effort in growing our volunteer base which includes a large number of qualified rugby coaches and other essential volunteers needed to run a successful sports club and to safeguard our younger members. It takes many years to find, train and motivate such a group of committed volunteers.

We will shortly be submitting our own plans to CBC to further improve and expand our clubhouse, changing facilities and parking spaces to meet the anticipated increased membership from the surrounding development of 7,500 new homes. We also plan to increase the number of volunteers to meet the expected number of social and playing members.

With the proceeds from the sale of the existing site in Newlands Road, the Luton RFC Relocation Committee wish "to provide Luton Rugby Club with a brand-new facility, delivering a boost to the Club's fortunes and its success". They "hope that the facility will be one of the best within the Midlands".

Luton RFC is not relocating because, as the applicant purports, it has outgrown its existing facility. On the contrary, the Luton RFC management has allowed the clubhouse to fall into disrepair, its membership over recent years has dwindled and the demand for the facility for outside functions has also diminished. Factors all of which have resulted in the club's current financial difficulties.

Given the huge financial gain Luton RFC is expected to enjoy from the sale of the existing site at Newlands Road, we can fully appreciate how this will solve the club's financial difficulties. However, we object strongly to the relocation of Luton RFC on to Green Belt land. Not only is the land outside the LBC boundary, it is on our doorstep.

DRUFC is bound to be adversely affected by Luton RFC's relocation plans to move to a site just a 6-minute drive away and to have the funds to build an attractive, state-of-the-art facility in our back yard. However, throwing a large sum of money into the project does not guarantee success as Luton RFC have shown in the past when they



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moved to Newlands Road; which is no substitute for being able to attract and motivate a committed team of volunteers.

Furthermore, Houghton Regis (where we are located as a club) is recognised both locally and regionally in terms of deprivation. There is little or no existing infrastructure in support of the new emerging communities within the locality with which we can clearly assist. Consequently, we are fearful that the relocation of Luton RFC will not only lead to our own demise but to the loss of a much needed and attended facility within the local community.

We therefore ask respectfully that the application is refused and that Luton Borough Council are requested to find a more suitable site within their own boundaries for Luton RFC.

As a concerned party and objector to this application we would also like to be kept informed of further developments by CBC in respect of this application. Anticipating that this matter will go to a public hearing, I formally request to speak at such official proceedings on behalf of Dunstablians RUFC setting out our objections in this regard.

Yours Sincerely

Jon Gilbert  
Chairman  
Dunstablians RUFC

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