

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Peel Street, Houghton Regis, Bedfordshire, LU5 5EY

Town Mayor: Clir J W Carroll Tel: 01582 708540

Town Clerk: Clare Evans e-mail: info@houghtonregis.org.uk

22nd January 2024

To: Members of the Planning Committee

Cllrs: C Slough (Chair), E Billington, J Carroll, E Cooper, M Herber, D Jones

(Copies to other 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 29th January 2024** at **7.00pm**.

Members of the public who wish to attend the meeting may do so in person or remotely through the meeting link below.

To attend remotely through Teams please follow this link: *MEETING LINK*

Please follow this guidance if attending the meeting remotely: *LINK*

Clare Evans Town Clerk THIS MEETING MAY BE RECORDED¹

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.

4. **MINUTES**

Pages 7 - 11

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on the 8th January 2024.

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 8th January 2024 and for **Recommendation:**

these to be signed by the Chairman.

5. PLANNING MATTERS

(a) To consider the following applications:

CB/23/04122/FULL (click for more details)

Demolition of commercial building and erection of 4 dwellings with associated landscaping and boundary works

Land at Manor Farm, Sewell Lane, Sewell, Dunstable, LU6 1RP

Sewell Eco Ltd

CB/23/04109/LB (click for more details)

Listed Building: Conversion of threshing barn to form three office units, conversion of stable to provide a single dwelling, demolition of existing commercial unit and erection of 6 dwelling houses including associated parking, landscaping and boundary treatments Manor Farm, Sewell Lane, Sewell, Dunstable, LU6 1RP

Sewell Eco Ltd

CB/23/04105/FULL (click for more details)

Change of use stables to form 1 dwelling with associated landscaping, site access and boundary works Stables, Manor Farm, Sewell Lane, Sewell, Dunstable, LU6 1RP Mr S McNamara

CB/23/04108/FULL (click for more details)

Redevelopment of site including the demolition of existing commercial unit (former cattle shed), conversion of stable to provide a single dwelling, conversion of threshing barn to form three office units and erection of 6 dwelling houses including associated parking, landscaping and boundary treatments

Manor Farm, Sewell Lane, Sewell, Dunstable, LU6 1RP Sewell (Eco) Ltd.

CB/24/00059/FULL (click for more details)

Proposed demolition of existing buildings and redevelopment to provide new employment floorspace for a flexible range of uses (within Classes E(g)(iii), B2 and/or B8) with ancillary offices, together with the rationalisation of accesses and provision of yard area, parking, landscaping, and all other associated works.

Unit 1, Humphrys Road, Dunstable, LU5 4TP

Legal and General Assurance (Pensions Management) Limited

CB/23/04115/FULL (click for more details)

Part first floor rear extension 197 Tithe Farm Road, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5JF Ms Kamilah Mefooz

<u>CB/24/00033/FULL (click</u> for more details)

Single storey extension. Part two storey, part single storey side and rear extension

8 East Hill Road, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5EQ Mr Sean Trainor

For noting:

CB/24/00097/NMA (click for more details)

Non-material amendment to planning permission CB/23/01477/VOC (Variation of condition number 29 of planning permission CB/16/03378/FULL(Phased Construction of a new Independent Living Scheme for Older Persons comprising 168 apartments with support facilities, a Restaurant & Bar, Retail Units, Cafe, 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: Proposed alteration to design to remove link between the Park Lounge and the Red House. Creation of new external elevation facing the Red House, new hard landscaping with gated access between All Saints View and the Red House. Retain the Red House as a stand alone building.) Amendment sought: Alteration of infill glazing to park Lounge and Multi Purpose Room from 3 no panels of glazing to 1 no panel of glazing, omitting the external access door to the Park Lounge glazing.

Houghton Regis Centre, Former Co Op Supermarket, High Street, Houghton Regis

<u>CB/24/00068/DOC (click</u> for more details)

Discharge of Condition 3, 23 & 24 against planning permission CB/21/05575/REG3 (Development of a new leisure centre, incorporating landscaping and parking provisions. Demolition of the existing building and the construction of a new facility to include an eight-lane 25 metre community swimming pool, dedicated learner pool, confidence pool, fitness suite, exercise studio and two squash courts. Building to include a café, community space, creche, children's outdoor play zone and an outdoor fitness trail and public area.)

Houghton Regis Leisure Centre, Parkside Drive, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5PX

CB/24/00143/DOC (click for more details)

Discharge of Condition 23 against planning permission CB/21/03860/FULL (Community sports facility Enhancements/improvements including upgrading of an existing grass pitch to a floodlit FTP, a new additional pavilion building and additional car parking)

<u>CB/23/03675/DOC (click for more details)</u>

Tithe Farm Recreation Ground, Tithe Farm Road, Houghton Regis Discharge of Conditions 6, 10, 13 against planning permission CB/22/03938/FULL - Demolition of existing barn and garage, provision of a garage to the existing Listed building, conversion of Listed barn into a dwelling and construction of eight new dwellings with associated garages and new access road. Cond 6 Landscaping, Cond 10 Site Contamination Investigation and Cond 13 Noise Insulation.

Red Cow Farm Cottage, Bedford Road, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 6JP

<u>CB/23/03942/DOC</u> (click for more details)

Discharge of Condition 2 against planning permission CB/22/03938/FULL (Demolition of existing barn and garage, provision of a garage to the existing Listed building, conversion of Listed barn into a dwelling and construction of eight new dwellings with associated garages and new access road.)

Red Cow Farm Cottage, Bedford Road, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 6JP

<u>CB/24/00108/DOC (click</u> for more details)

Discharge of Conditions 3,5,6,13 and 14 against planning permission CB/19/04182/FULL (Erection of a new dwelling) Land adjacent, 134 High Street, Houghton Regis, LU5 5DT

CB/24/00067/DOC (click for more details)

Discharge of Conditions 8, 20, 24, 25, 26, 29, 32, 33, 35 against planning permission 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 5,150 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.)

(b) Decision Notices

Permissions/Approvals/Consents:

None at time of going to print.

Refusals:

None at time of going to print.

Withdrawals:

None at time of going to print.

6. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN - UPDATE

Members are informed that Mr Derek Stebbing, the appointed Examiner started work on the independent examination of Houghton Regis Town Councils Neighbourhood Plan in October 2024.

During the examination process the Town Council and Central Bedfordshire Council have provided, upon request, answers to 5 questions raised. This response was provided on the 20th November 2023.

The examiner had now completed his examination but before he confirms this, he has provided a 'fact check' Report. The purpose of this pre issue stage 'fact check' Report is to identify any issues of fact that are incorrect, such as place names or figures that are referenced. Whilst there is no legal or policy provision for a 'fact check' report stage, it has nonetheless become commonplace for examiners to provide a pre-issue version of the report to the Council and qualifying body (Central Bedfordshire Council) (mirroring the legal requirement regarding the final report), so that purely factual errors can be picked up.

The examiner will not consider any comments that do not relate to factual errors. As such this is not an opportunity for representations to be made on the content of the Report.

HRTC and CBC will respond to the examiner, in regard to these errors raised, by the 23rd January 2024.

It is hoped that following consideration of these responses' confirmation will be received that the Plan can move to the referendum stage.

7. LOCAL PLAN WORKSHOPS

Pages 12 - 15

Central Bedfordshire Council are holding a workshop to help shape the new Local Plan for Central Bedfordshire.

The workshop will include an introductory presentation setting out the purpose of the Local Plan followed by two sessions on the following topics:

- Developing the vision and objectives of the Local Plan;
- Developing the approach to engagement and communication with communities, businesses and other key stakeholders.

Three sessions will be held to enable a choice of dates and times to suit availability. Each workshop is the same.

- An 'in person' workshop on Tuesday 13th February from 6:15pm-8:45pm at our main office (Priory House, Chicksands, Shefford, SG17 5TQ) or
- A 'virtual' workshop on Wednesday 28th February from 6:30pm-8:30pm, to be held on MS Teams or
- An 'in person' workshop on Thursday 7th March from 3pm-5.30pm at Priory House, Chicksands, Shefford, SG17 5TQ

Two representatives from each Town and Parish Council are invited to attend.

Members are advised that representatives can join different workshops or attend together at the same workshop.

Members are requested to confirm which event they would like to attend.

The room for the workshop at Priory House has a maximum capacity, attempts will be made to accommodate members preferences, subject to bookings and capacity.

The information being presented at each of the workshops will be the same, although the virtual workshop is slightly shorter in length. The agenda, presentation slides and supporting materials will be circulated in advance, so you they can be reviewed and prepared for the discussions at the workshops. An online survey will also be circulated following the events to collect any further feedback on the topics discussed.

If you are unable to attend either of the events, this will be the mechanism for sharing your views and aspirations at this early stage of the Local Plan process.

Recommendation: To nominate two representatives from Houghton Regis Town Council to attend the Local Plan Workshops.

8. STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT SITES/LOCAL PLAN– UPDATE/PROGRESS

Woodside Link – No substantive update to report.

A5 M1 Link – For information this major road project opened on the 11th May 2017.

All Saints View – No substantive update to report.

Linmere – 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.

Recommendation: To note the information

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Planning Committee Minutes of the meeting held on 8th January 2024 at 7.00pm

Present: Councillors: C Slough Chairman

N Batchelor E Billington J Carroll E Cooper M Herber D Jones

Officers: Louise Senior Head of Democratic Services

Amanda Samuels Administration Officer

Apologies: 0

Also present: Public: 8

Councillors: S Goodchild (virtual) Central Bedfordshire Council

12657 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

None.

12658 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Residents questioned the necessity of extending the opening hours at the Esso Houghton Green Service Station, application CB/23/04016/VOC.

Concerns were raised by the owners of neighbouring properties regarding application CB/23/04042/FULL seeking permission for a garage conversion (part retrospective.) It was queried why work had been carried out prior to the application being made.

Members agreed to consider these applications first under Planning Matters (Minute 12661).

12659 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

12660 MINUTES

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on the 18th December 2023

Resolved To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 18th December 2023 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

12661 PLANNING MATTERS

(a) The following planning applications were considered:

It was agreed to amend the order of applications and first address those highlighted under Questions from the Public.

CB/23/04016/VOC (click for more details) Variation of condition number 2 of planning permission CB/11/00777/VOC (Variation of condition 11 of application (SB/TP/90/00395) to extend opening hours from 7.00am to 6.00am.) Variation sought to allow the petrol station to be used 24 hours daily.

Esso Houghton Green Service Station, 7 The Green, Houghton Regis, LU5 5LB Motor Fuel Group

Comments: A noise assessment had been carried out; however, it was felt that the timing of the assessment did not accurately reflect the potential disruption to neighbouring residents. The service station had previously opened for 24 hours over a two-week period and this had occasioned multiple complaints at that time. It was also highlighted that the service station was within a conservation area.

Members were advised that Cllr Hamill, Central Bedfordshire Council Councillor had called this application in, therefore this application would be heard at the Development Management Committee meeting, at which members of the public would have an opportunity to voice concerns. The residents were advised of the deadline of public consultation in which to contribute their feedback.

Houghton Regis Town Council raised objections to this application on the grounds of potential noise nuisance to surrounding properties, the risk of anti-social behaviour and security concerns.

CB/23/04042/FULL (click for more details) Garage conversion (part retrospective)
49 Millers Way, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5FH
Ms Shafreen Khan

Comments: It was highlighted that this application was connected to CB/23/03042/FULL, which was a 'change of use' application presented at the planning meeting held on 16th October 2023. Objections to the change of use had been raised at the meeting both by members of the public (Minute 12576) and Councillors (Minute 12579).

It was noted that the change of use was for the conversion of a residential dwelling into a children's care home. This went against a covenant stipulating that businesses should not be run from residential properties. Other issues relating to traffic, parking, local landscaping and refuse were also reiterated. The plans that had been presented for consideration were also inconsistent.

Members were advised that a previous application had been unsuccessful due to insufficient information and objections had been raised by the Highways Officer.

Houghton Regis Town Council raised an objection to this application on the grounds of traffic issues and the two sets of plans relating to this property (CB/23/03042/FULL) (CB/23/04042/FULL) were inconsistent. It was also requested that CBC should be alerted to the need to consider both the 'change of use' application and that for the garage conversion together, rather than in isolation.

CB/23/03975/FULL (click for more details) Subdivision of existing Post Office (Class E) into a Post Office & Barber Shop (Class E) with new shop frontage. Tithe Farm Post Office, 8 Hillborough Crescent, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5NS Mr C Cicek

Comments: Houghton Regis Town Council raised concerns regarding works completed in relation to the downgrading of disability access, and request assurances from Central Bedfordshire Council that these changes in access are not in breach of the Disability Discrimination Act.

- The previously automatic door is replaced with a standard opening door
- The access ramp to be removed
- The corridor width would not accommodate wheelchairs / mobility scooters passing

Concerns were raised over partial completion of works before the application had been decided.

CB/23/03987/RM (click for more details) 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 5,150 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 approval sought for layout, scale, appearance, landscaping and access relating to Local Centre Parcel, Phase 1.

Local Centre Parcel, Linmere (HRN1), Phase 1, Waterslade Way & Lime Tree Drive, Houghton Regis, LU5 7AS Mr James Pargeter

Comments: Houghton Regis Town Council raised no objections to this application. However, concerns were raised that the space in some of the 2-4-bedroom properties seemed small and confirmation of adequate space was sought.

Noted:

<u>CB/23/04055/DOC</u> (click for more details) Discharge of Condition 6 against planning permission CB/21/05552/RM (Reserved Matters: following Outline Application CB/12/03613/OUT Mixed Development, supported by an Environmental Statement, which was submitted to the council during the application's determination process. Reserved Matters sought for Access, Appearance, Landscaping, Layout and Scale for 100 homes and retail units (Use Class E)). Cond 6 Hard Surface Materials

Parcels 1 and 2 of Phase 2 of Houghton Regis North Site 1, Land on the northern edge of Houghton Regis

CB/23/04015/NMA (click for more details) 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 (CB/15/0297/OUT) was supported by a full Environmental Statement (ES).) Amendment sought to remove chimneys from plots 225 and 262.

Parcels 5a and 5b of Bidwell West, Houghton Regis

CB/23/04037/DOC (click for more details) Discharge of Condition 5 against planning permission CB/21/05552/RM (Reserved Matters: following Outline Application CB/12/03613/OUT Mixed Development, supported by an Environmental Statement, which was submitted to the council during the application's determination process. Reserved Matters sought for Access, Appearance, Landscaping, Layout and Scale for 100 homes and retail units (Use Class E) Linmere near Phase 2A Fire Hydrant Plan).

Land To the North And East Of Houghton Regis, Sundon Road, Houghton Regis

CB/23/04035/DOC (click for more details) Discharge of Condition 3 against planning permission CB/21/05552/RM (Reserved Matters: following Outline Application CB/12/03613/OUT Mixed Development, supported by an Environmental Statement, which was submitted to the council during the application's determination process. Reserved Matters sought for Access, Appearance, Landscaping, Layout and Scale for 100 homes and retail units (Use Class E)) AFA-307-DOC-001-PL3 Landscape Maintenance Plan Land To the North And East Of Houghton Regis, Sundon Road, Houghton Regis

Permissions / Approvals / Consents

None received

Refusals:

None received.

Withdrawals:

None received.

12662 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.

Linmere – 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 8.08pm

Dated this 29th day of January 2024

Chairman



Local Plan Briefing Note

January 2024

What is a Local Plan?

The Local Plan is a key policy document prepared by a local authority that sets the vision and framework for the future growth of an area. It is supported by a substantial evidence base and informed through engagement with local communities, businesses and key stakeholders. It determines the future strategy for growth by addressing needs and opportunities in relation to homes, jobs, community facilities and infrastructure, as well as safeguarding the environment and enabling adaptation to climate change.

The Local Plan can include policies that:

- Set the strategy for future growth and deliver the Council's vision and strategies.
- Allocate land for development and set out infrastructure requirements to meet identified needs.
- Seek to manage new development by the setting the requirements for affordable housing, standards for design and designating ecological sites and green spaces, for example.
- Protect and enhance Central Bedfordshire's social, environmental and economic assets.

Once in place, the Local Plan becomes a key part of the statutory development plan for the area, alongside Neighbourhood Plans and the Minerals and Waste Local Plan and provides the policy framework for making decisions on individual planning applications.

Why do we need a new Local Plan?

National planning policy and legislation requires Local Plans to be reviewed at least every five years from the date of adoption, to assess what has changed since the plan was adopted and whether there are any policies that need updating. The Central Bedfordshire Local Plan was adopted in July 2021, but contains a policy (Policy SP1a) that required us to commence a partial review of the Plan within 6 months of its adoption.

The review process commenced in January 2022 and has now concluded that there have been significant changes at both a national and local level that necessitate the need to prepare a <u>new Local Plan</u>.

At a local level, a series of corporate strategies have been adopted by the Council since our current Local Plan, including:

- 2050 Vision
- Strategic Plan
- Sustainability Plan
- Economic Strategy and Implementation Plan.

At a national and regional level:

- National planning policy has been updated on four occasions to strengthen the role of design and places an increased emphasis on sustainable transport, the environment, sustainability, and biodiversity.
- The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act proposes significant changes to the planning system, including the introduction of new National Development Management Policies.
- The Environment Act has set a mandatory requirement for Biodiversity Net Gain.
- Further announcements have been made in relation to the route and delivery of East West Rail.

What are the advantages of preparing a new Local Plan?

Commencing a new Local Plan will ensure we have a longer-term strategy and policies that are consistent with recent and emerging updates to national policy and legislation. It is an opportunity to work collaboratively with Councillors, Town and Parish Council's, residents, local businesses and other stakeholders to define how Central Bedfordshire will grow in a sustainable and thought-out way, whilst enabling greater sustainability and environmental considerations to shape and be embedded within the Local Plan from the outset.

In the meantime, the policies in our adopted Local Plan, supported by recent guidance such as the Design Guide (2023) and Parking Standards (2023), will continue to deliver the Council's ambitions relating to high quality design and sustainability, for example. There are also priorities that can be delivered without having a new Local Plan in place such as Biodiversity Net Gain, that now has a mandatory national target, and the requirement for Local Nature Recovery Strategies, that will map habitats and identify priorities for improving the natural environment.

What is the status of the adopted Local Plan if we're starting a new one?

The current Local Plan was adopted in July 2021 and is considered to be up to date for the purposes of decision making. It will remain the primary document for decision making for Central Bedfordshire until it is replaced by a new Local Plan.

All sites identified for development in the adopted Local Plan (2021) and previous plans (Mid Bedfordshire Site Allocations Development Plan Document (2011) and South Bedfordshire Local Plan (2004)) will remain allocated and will form part of the on-going supply of new homes and employment land. This should help ensure that we maintain a five year supply of housing sites against the annual housing target, and we will continue to monitor and report on the supply on a quarterly basis.

What is the timetable for preparing the Local Plan?

The high-level timetable for preparing the new Local Plan, known as the <u>Local Development Scheme</u> (LDS), was approved by Council on the 23 November 2023. The key milestones are:

- Commencement of the Local Plan: November 2023
- Initial engagement with CBC Councillors and Town and Parish Councils: February 2024
- Informal public engagement: March June 2024
- Consultation on policy options (Regulation 18): February 2026
- Consultation on the final draft Local Plan (Regulation 19): September 2027

• Examination: February 2028

What is the relationship between Neighbourhood Plans and the new Local Plan?

Neighbourhood Plans and the Local Plan are both part of the overall Development Plan for the area once adopted. The Local Plan sets out the overarching policies for the area, whereas Neighbourhood Plans are prepared by local communities and add local detail to the policies included within the Local Plan.

Neighbourhood Plans can be developed before, after, or in parallel with the Local Plan, although the legislation requires Neighbourhood Plans to be in general conformity with the strategic policies within the adopted Local Plan.

During its preparation, the new Local Plan will need to take Neighbourhood Plans that are already adopted or in the process of being prepared into consideration. However, these Neighbourhood Plans may also need to be updated to be in conformity with any new strategic policies in the new Local Plan.

Neighbourhood Plans are valuable documents, and groups that are currently preparing, reviewing or thinking of starting Neighbourhood Plans will be encouraged to continue their progress whilst we prepare our Local Plan. We will continue to work closely and collaboratively with Neighbourhood Planning groups to ensure the content of our respective plans is coordinated as far as possible.

How can Councillors, Town and Parish Council's, residents and other key stakeholders get involved in the Local Plan?

Councillors have expressed that the Local Plan needs to be underpinned by meaningful and widespread engagement that goes above and beyond the statutory consultation requirements set out in plan making legislation.

One of the first priorities will be the preparation of an Engagement and Communication Strategy, that will set out our approach to engaging the community and other stakeholders throughout the preparation of the Local Plan. It will look at innovative opportunities, new ideas and ways of engagement, as well as digital tools that may be used to further enable engagement, particularly with seldom heard groups. It will also consider options around branding, ensuring any material related to the Local Plan is clearly recognisable to all. We will be seeking input during the development of the Engagement and Communication Strategy to seek views on how they feel they and their communities can get involved.

Additional time for engagement has been built into the Local Plan timetable and there will be numerous opportunities and ways to get involved.

What are the next steps?

Work on the new Local Plan has commenced with baseline evidence studies and the Engagement and Communication Strategy.

All Local Plan decisions will need to be evidence based to ensure they fulfil the plan-making regulations. The Local Plan will be subject to independent examination, so the process must be comprehensive and robust.

Preparations are also being made towards initial engagement with Councillors, Town and Parish Councils and communities, starting in February, that will help inform the scope and vision for the Local Plan.

Contact the Strategic Growth Team...

by telephone: 0300 300 8307

by email: localplan@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

on the web: https://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/info/45/planning_policy