

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF HOUGHTON REGIS PARTNERSHIP  
COMMITTEE  
HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, PEEL STREET  
ON 24<sup>th</sup> January 2023**

Present: Town Cllrs: **D Jones (Chair), C Slough, K Wattingham,**  
CBC Cllrs: **Cllr Hamill (Vice-Chair), A Ryan, Y Farrell, S Goodchild**  
CBC Sarah Hughes, Community Engagement Manager  
Officers:  
HRTC Clare Evans, Town Clerk  
Officers: Louise Senior, Head of Democratic Services  
  
Co-opted members: J Anderson  
D Gibbons  
C Regan

Also in attendance: P Burgess HRTC Councillor  
James Yeomans, Head of Housing Property, Housing Services CBC  
Jemma McClean, Community Engagement Manager, Beds RCC

Apologies: CBC Councillor Tracey Stock, Executive Member for Health, Wellbeing,  
Communities and Leisure

Absent: HRTC Councillor T McMahon

Members of the public: 5

**976 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

Apologies were received from Cllr T Stock.

**977 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

Members of the public asked:

- What was the latest position regarding the 'Zone of Influence' and had Central Bedfordshire Council recommenced approving planning applications?
- Feedback was requested on Central Bedfordshire Council's housing targets for the next 5 years, broken down into the different elements of new build e.g. social housing, private etc.
- Had funding been allocated to progress proposals for Windsor Drive within 2023/2024 budget?
- What steps were Central Bedfordshire Council taking to alleviate the lack of GP provision?

It was advised that this committee was unable to comment on the Zone of Influence, it was suggested that Central Bedfordshire Council be contacted directly via email for feedback.

It was advised that there had been no provision made for works at Windsor Drive in the 23/24 budget.

It was advised that the Integrated Care Board (ICB) had been contacted regarding GP provision, however, a response had yet to be received, members were assured that once received the response would be shared.

It was advised that written feedback would be given on Central Bedfordshire Council's housing targets.

#### **978 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS**

None.

#### **979 MINUTES**

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> October 2022.

**Resolved: To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> October 2022 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.**

#### **980 PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE WORKPLAN**

Members were invited to consider the Partnership Committee workplan.

As requested at the last meeting, an additional item had been added to the Partnership Workplan enabling updates to be provided on future cemetery provision in Houghton Regis. Members were advised that HRTC reports on this matter would be provided in due course in a similar way to the reports on Tithe Farm Sports Provision.

Members advised of feedback received regarding residents in Bidwell West feeling isolated. Feedback was requested on the consideration for the installation of a temporary community building to provide space for outreach work until a permanent structure was in place. It was advised that a more detailed report would be provided at the next meeting.

#### **981 CBC UPDATE REPORT**

Members received a copy of the CBC update report and verbal highlights from report were shared.

- CCTV Reports – concerns in Bedford Square
- Safer Neighbourhood Team
  - 240 patrol hours in Houghton Regis
  - Joint weapons sweep initiative with police
  - Engagement with residents
  - Pop-up session in Bedford Square
- Houghton Hall Park had been impacted by road closure
- Houghton Regis Leisure Centre had good numbers in attendance
  - SEND swim sessions had been introduced



- Houghton Hall Park –
  - Hosted a range of Christmas events
  - Gas works on Park Road North had impacted footfall
  - Warm space was offered on Tuesdays 9am – 4pm
- Fix my Street – 6 line markings and 11 signs had been addressed
- Parking enforcement – 1463 visits had been made to Houghton Regis, 135 tickets issued
- Tree planting project
- Energy Scheme – Launched Warmth Fund
- Two Bike repair stations had been set up at Houghton Hall Park and the Leisure Centre
- Ocado were locating to Houghton Regis creating 2,300 jobs
- Introduction of Multiply initiative – to improve numeracy skills across the country

It was highlighted that the number of tickets issued was concerning as had seemed low in relation to the visible number of parking infractions seen, and reported, by councillors across Houghton Regis.

It was suggested that a member of the policing team be invited to attend Town Partnership Committee meetings to provide feedback and answer any questions members may have.

Clarification was requested on the number of hours spent in Houghton Regis by the Safer Neighbourhood Team and whether the 240 hours stated in the report was team hours or individual officer hours, this would be looked into and fed back to members at the next meeting.

Concerns were raised regarding the number of non-working street-lights and it was felt the reporting system of 'Fix my Street' could benefit from improvements, as repairs had proved difficult to monitor.

Members were advised of the Central Bedfordshire Council tree planting project, open to Town and Parish Councils, community groups and schools to apply for a Tree Planting grant, the scheme was open until the end of March 2023.

Concerns were raised regarding the length of time between reporting abandoned vehicles and removal. Fly tipping had become an issue in Grendall Lane, it was suggested that the use of CCTV cameras be used to determine the culprit/s. Members were advised that Central Bedfordshire Council would look at footage and feed back their findings to the committee.

Members asked whether there had been any feedback regarding the Market Charter which had been discussed at the last meeting, it was confirmed to members that a definitive response had not been received from the Monitoring Officer.

## 982 IMPROVING HEALTH & WELLBEING IN HOUGHTON REGIS: TIME 2 CONNECT

Jemma McClean, Community Engagement Manager, Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity (BRCC) was in attendance at the meeting to update members and respond to any queries or comments on this project.



Members were advised that drop in sessions had increased in popularity with 15 – 20 people attending, sessions had included arts and crafts, book swap and board games. Visits from external providers Tibbs Foundation had run music memory sessions and Central Bedfordshire Council Public Health and Equality had held a health question and answer session. Joint sessions had been run with Central Bedfordshire Council with a variety of activities, which had included Storytelling, singing and chair based exercises which had proved popular.

BRCC had planned Wellbeing Walks from Houghton Hall Park with a hot drink at the end of the walk.

A Christmas Party had been held and proved enjoyable. The uptake of 1:1 sessions had remained steadily attended, offering a variety of advice, with money issues high on the priority list of discussion topics.

Members were advised that the BRCC had assisted in the distribution of Care Packages prepared by Houghton Regis Town Council and financed by Ward Councillor Grant funding.

It was suggested that a comprehensive list of Houghton Regis warm spaces be compiled to ensure residents knew what locations were available each day, with posters advertising spaces in and around the Town, including in the Warm Spaces.

Members were advised it was hoped to have a temporary Community Building in place for use by Time2Connect to enable Bidwell West residents to access their services in lieu of a permanent Community building.

## **983 HOUSING AND ENGAGEMENT**

James Yeomans, Head of Housing Property, CBC was in attendance covering the progress of new facilities at All Saints View and The Brook.

Members were advised that all safety checks had been successfully carried out on The Brook.

All Saints View had 8 residents move in over the last week, with another hoped to move during the coming week. Members were assured that staff at All Saints View were providing activities for residents.

Members requested that a visit to the Brook be arranged for Councillors to enable an understanding of how it looks and how it would work. James assured members that he would take this suggestion back to his team for further discussion.

Members suggested that the lighting at The Brook be looked at, as it was extremely bright and could prove to be intrusive for neighbouring residents.

Members were advised that there had been no updates on the retail units. There were talks with prospective tenants but it was hoped there would be an update for the next meeting.



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Concerns were raised over pedestrian safety due to vehicles parking on the footpath at All Saints View, obstructing pedestrians.

#### **984 TITHE FARM SPORTS PROVISION UPDATE**

Members received the agenda report as presented to the HRTC Environment & Leisure Committee on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2022.

Members were advised that the increased prices of construction materials had impacted the cost of the project, however confidence was high that this project could still go ahead.

#### **985 COMMITTEE FUNCTIONS & TERMS OF REFERENCE**

At the last meeting Members may recall receiving a copy of the Committee Functions & Terms of Reference. During previous discussions Members requested consideration be given to dropping the quorate to two councillors from each council rather than three, as substitution allowances for Central Bedfordshire Council Ward members on this committee were limited. It was highlighted to members that this would need to be taken through General Purposes and Council Committee to allow for changes to be made to the constitution.

Members confirmed that they wished for this item to be included on the General Purpose and Council Committee agenda with a view to dropping the quorate to two councillors from each council.

#### **986 PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE CO-OPTION**

It had been requested that potential co-option onto this committee remain on the agenda as a Standing Agenda item.

Members were invited to consider whether they would like to explore the possibility of seeking to co-opt local stakeholders onto the Houghton Regis Partnership Committee. In this regard the Terms of Reference for the Committee state:

##### **Co-option**

1. To support engagement with local stakeholders the Town Joint Committee can co-opt members from local representative groups, as appropriate up to a maximum of 15. Each co-opted Member will be able to engage fully in all discussions but will not have any voting rights. Co-opted members can be removed from the Town Joint Committee. Decision making around removals can either be taken by the whole Town Joint committee or by joint agreement of the Chair and Vice Chair, depending on each Town Joint Committee's preference.

The list of Co-opted Members should be reviewed annually, by the Town Joint Committee

#### **987 ITEMS REQUESTING ATTENTION BY CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL**

Members had been advised of the CBC process to determine further consideration, at CBC committee level, of items and issues.



Members of this committee were able to use this process to forward items for CBC's attention via the CBC Joint Committee Chair or CBC Joint Committee Vice Chair.

As such members were requested to identify and confirm if there were any requested items for CBC's attention.

Members were advised Market Charters were devolved to local authorities during Central Bedfordshire Council's early life. Houghton Regis Town Council were advised that it was not for Central Bedfordshire Council to determine whether Houghton Regis had, or could apply for, a Market Charter. It was advised for the Town Council to prepare a report to take forward to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Members felt that with the proposed growth in Houghton Regis, consideration should be given to developing a Houghton Regis Market Charter.

Concerns were raised regarding GP medical provision, it was hoped that Houghton Regis Town Council could be updated on what plans were in place to address this issue. Concerns had been exacerbated since the announcement from ICB to revoke plans for proposed health hubs. Members were assured that advice would be sought and relevant officers would be addressed. It was hoped Councillor Stock would be in attendance at the next meeting to provide updated information, however, detailed updates at the next meeting may be limited as the meeting scheduled for April would fall within the pre-election period.

#### **988 PROPOSED DATES FOR MEETINGS FOR 2023/24**

- Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> July 2023
- Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> October 2023
- Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2024
- Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2024

**The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9.05pm**

**Dated this 18<sup>th</sup> day of July 2023.**

**Chairman**

