

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF HOUGHTON REGIS PARTNERSHIP
COMMITTEE
HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, PEEL STREET
ON 26th January 2021**

Present: Town Cllrs: D Jones (Vice-Chair), K Wattingham, Cllr Abbott
CBC Cllrs: A Ryan (Chair), P Hamill, Y Farrell, S Goodchild
CBC Officers: Sarah Hughes, Community Engagement Manager
Co-opted Member: David Gibbons
HRTC Officers: Clare Evans, Town Clerk
Louise Senior, Head of Democratic Services

Also in Attendance: R Morgan HRTC Councillor
T McMahon HRTC Councillor
Tony Keaveney Assistant Director Housing Services, Social Care,
Health & Housing Directorate
Gina Croxford Community Action Bedfordshire
Bex McBrearty Community Action Bedfordshire

Apologies: 0

Members of the public: 4

876 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

None.

877 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

A member of the public raised concerns regarding item 6, Housing Projects and Related Issues:

Windsor Drive Recreation area:

- Lack of parking limits the full recreational use of Windsor Drive Recreation Ground
- Ground is frequently used for football practice and valuable to the community
- Although not formalised, the Neighbourhood Plan lists this space as protected
- Suggested that this has been brought forward to gain permission before the Neighbourhood Plan is formalised.

It was advised that the challenges were prolific around affordable housing, and the provision of football pitches within Houghton Regis was being addressed.

878 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

None.

879 MINUTES

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 10th November 2020.

Resolved: To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 10th November 2020 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

880 IMPROVING HEALTH & WELLBEING IN HOUGHTON REGIS: TIME 2 CONNECT

Gina Croxford, Community Engagement Manager, and Bex McBrearty, Community Connections Adviser from Community Action Bedfordshire, were in attendance at the meeting to update members and respond to any queries or comments on this project.

Members were advised that it had been a challenging year for community development work as interactions had been limited to online. Members were advised that good connections had been made with several local organisations, a virtual weekly Café Connect online support group where residents can connect had been set up, it was hoped that user numbers would grow.

Members were advised that there had been a heightened need for help regarding poverty issues within the Houghton Regis area, highlighting the need for better and further reaching awareness of available services.

Members were advised that a new system of asset mapping was being looked into for ease of use and further reaching information of an in-depth directory for Houghton Regis specifically for residents to access.

Members were advised that there was a diverse age-range of residents contacting Community Action Bedfordshire for advice.

881 HOUSING PROJECTS AND RELATED ISSUES

Tony Keaveney, Assistant Director Housing Services, Social Care, Health & Housing Directorate, was in attendance at the meeting to update members and respond to any queries or comments.

Members were advised of a current budget consultation for proposed schemes in Houghton Regis. Windsor Drive recreation ground had significant investment proposed for this area for schemes including; community safety projects and an affordable housing development of 100 homes subject to the budget proposal and planning consent being secured. Members were advised that there would be a 'Planning for Real' event to engage with the community regarding the development of Windsor Drive.

882 TITHE FARM SPORTS PROVISION

Members received a verbal update on the Tithe Farm Recreation Ground Sports Project.

Members were advised of an issue of a sewage / drain which was located under the site, talks were ongoing with Anglian Water and the Football Foundation to resolve this. A full report would be presented to the Environment & Leisure Committee on 22nd February 2021, which would include details of the bearing this would have on the project.

Clarification was sought on the implications for HRTC on the s106 funding already secured should this development not go ahead. It was advised that this would be given consideration and would be included in the report to the HRTC Environment & Leisure Committee.

883 REPORTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE TOWN PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE

Members of the Town Partnership Committee were invited to provide a verbal report on matters of relevance to Houghton Regis arising in particular from the Committee/s on which they serve.

Councillor Hamill updated members on the proposed new leisure centre for Houghton Regis. Houghton Regis was considered a priority under the Leisure Strategy to receive a new leisure centre ahead of Leighton Linlade and suggested that the leisure centre currently based in Houghton Regis was not fit for purpose.

Councillor Goodchild updated members on the Corporate Parenting Panel and Social Care, Health and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committees on which she served.

Members received an update on the Clinical Commissioning Group regarding the public engagement undertaken offering local people the opportunity to share their views on the creation of a single Clinical Commissioning group.

A report had been received from the East of England Ambulance Service which provided a performance update across Central Bedfordshire. Also received; a presentation from CAMS highlighting how the spike in children's mental health had been addressed and the higher demands met, a report on the services available to the Homeless and rough sleepers, a housing acquisitions report and an annual report on customer relations.

Updates had also been received on the Covid vaccination programme, modernisation of the health service and the deliverance of a new state of the art mental health facility.

A meeting of Looked After Children had also been attended.

Councillor Ryan updated members on Children's Services, there had been a written statement of action received regarding children with special needs. £1.1m had been invested into the special education needs sector. Concerns had been raised over the number of assessments that had been requested and subsequently denied due to lack of funding.

Children in poverty taskforce was undergoing changes due to the change in administration and it was hoped this would make the service more accessible.

Councillor Wattingham wished to thank the Houghton Regis Town Council Officers who had been helping out at the vaccination centre, and thanks went to Councillor Hamill for his work on the leisure centre.

884 CBC UPDATE REPORT

Members received The CBC update report information.

- Covid-19 Stewards were working across Central Bedfordshire
- Houghton Regis Chalkpit – ongoing talks with the Wildlife Trust
- Houghton Hall Park had employed a Ranger and were working on new volunteering opportunities within the park
- Business investments and skills, grant applications would include figures of funding in future reports
- Representatives from Advantage Schools Trust were due to attend the April Town Partnership meeting
- Garden waste collections resume on 1st March 2021
- Sustainability plan, tackling climate change and tree planting fund
- Champions, how have 218 community champions who are helping to spread messages
- Ward Councillor and Community Asset grant schemes update
- Cheering volunteering awards, all virtual, further information pending
- Budget consultation – closed on 27th January 2021.

885 PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE WORKPLAN

Members received the Partnership Committee workplan for information.

- Community Buildings in Houghton Regis (HRN 2 Community Building)

Members were advised that an expression of interest had been received. Moving forward to the next stage, a full business case would be prepared.

Members requested that the invitation to Stuart Lock, CEO Vantage Schools be added to the workplan.

Members asked whether there would be a charge implemented of the collection of garden waste. Members were advised that there was no knowledge of a possible charge, but this would be confirmed.

Concerns were raised over the number of residents using Houghton Hall Park, and social distancing, including while queueing for the onsite coffee van. Members were advised that Covid Stewards would address large numbers and groups of people.

886 INFORMAL INFORMATION SHARING

Members may be aware that over the last few months the Chairs and Vice Chairs of the CBC Partnership Committees have met to share good practice in relation to the operation and function of the committee.

For Houghton Regis another group had emerged comprising Houghton Regis Ward Councillors, 2 CBC Executive Councillors and the Chair and the Clerk Houghton Regis Town Council. This group had met a few times over the last 6 months or so. Some useful discussions have been had and ideas have been discussed for potential strategic projects in Houghton Regis. Members of the group were aware that this was an informal, non-decision making group with no authority or remit other than to bring ideas forward.

It was hoped that as these ideas became more tangible that they could be presented for formal consideration.

The Terms of Reference of this Committee state:

Meetings and Quorum

4. In addition to the Committee meetings, the Town Joint Committee can organise other forms of engagement to take place such as themed discussions / task and finish groups and community conferences, including joint meetings or events with other Town Joint Committees in Central Bedfordshire.

To support the work of the group, members were requested to endorse the membership of this group and its basic remit.

Some concerns were raised over the balance of membership and as such it was agreed to defer this item to a future meeting.

887 PARTNESHIP COMMITTEE CO-OPTION

It has 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.

It was suggested that a service user of the leisure centre be invited to attend the Town Partnership Committee meeting to provide feedback on current services.

Members were advised that there was an opportunity at the beginning of the agenda for anyone who wishes to speak.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.48pm

Dated

Chairman