

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF HOUGHTON REGIS PARTNERSHIP
COMMITTEE
HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, PEEL STREET
ON 23rd November 2021.**

- Present: Town Cllrs: T McMahon, K Wattingham, M Kennedy and
Ray Morgan (substitute)
CBC Cllrs: Cllr Hamill (Vice-Chair), A Ryan, Y Farrell, S Goodchild
CBC Officers: Sarah Hughes, Community Engagement Manager
HRTC Clare Evans, Town Clerk
Officers: Louise Senior, Head of Democratic Services
- Co-opted member: D Gibbons
- Also in attendance: Cllrs J Carroll, HRTC Councillor
T Stock, Executive Member for Health, Wellbeing, Communities and
Leisure, CBC
- Officers A Arden Barnatt, Programme Enabling Manager, CBC
J Yeomans, Head of Housing Property, Housing Services, CBC
J Dickinson, Assistant Director, Communities, CBC
K Hopcroft, Housing Operations Manager, CBC
I Berry, Assistant Director – Assets, CBC
- Apologies: HRTC Cllr: D Jones
- Members of the public: 4

920 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Cllr Jones (Cllr Morgan substituted)

921 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

**922 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR
DISPENSATIONS**

None.

923 MINUTES

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 20th July 2021.

Resolved: To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 20th July 2021 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

**924 IMPROVING HEALTH & WELLBEING IN HOUGHTON REGIS:
TIME 2 CONNECT**

Gina Croxford, Community Engagement Manager, and Bex McBrearty, Community Connections Advisor of Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity (BRCC) were not in attendance at the meeting.

925 PLACE DELIVERY UPDATE

Alice Arden Barnatt, Programme Enabling Manager, Place Delivery, was in attendance and provided members with an update on the Kingsland Levelling Up Fund bid.

Members were advised that Central Bedfordshire Council had been successful in gaining grant funding for a new Community and Leisure Centre, the funding criteria preordained it to be spent by March 2024. The new building would be on the existing Houghton Academy site. Members were advised on how the project would be managed and a proposed timescale. Members were advised that there was a commitment to engage with local stakeholder and residents throughout the process via online consultation, drop in events, engagement panel, HR Together Group and key stakeholder groups and leisure centre user groups.

Members welcomed the investment into the town.

926 HOUSING AND ENGAGEMENT

Kim Hopcroft, Housing Operations Manager, Housing Operations and James Yeomans, Head of Housing Property, Housing Services was in attendance to provide an update including All Saints View (ASV), The Brook, and Windsor Drive engagement.

Members were advised it was hoped that phase 1 of ASV would be completed by Christmas, however, there was still much to do. Red house Court residents would be the first to move into ASV in the new year. The demolition of Red House Court would then take place, once demolished work would start on 57 apartments due for completion May 2023. Members were advised there would be function suites available for hire within ASV.

Members were advised of signage that would be on display for ASV.

It was advised that a new website had been launched on 10th November, accompanied with a brochure and PDF. A show apartment would be available to view and leaflets had been distributed and displayed.

Members were advised on services and amenities and travel options available to residents of ASV.

Members were advised that work on the Brook had been moving on, it was hoped the building would be operational late April 2022.

Members raised concerns of the risk factor of the clientele of the Brook and were assured that the users of the facility were of low risk to the community and staff were available on site. It was requested that further community engagement take place, possibly an open day prior to the facility opening, to advise members of the community of how the facility would be run and address any questions they have.

Members were advised that the facility would be managed by Central Bedfordshire Council officers.

Members were advised that Windsor Drive was still in the early stages of the process, it was advised that feedback was still being collated, it was highlighted to members that there remained a high need for affordable housing. The recent listening event held on site had received good interest and was well attended. It was advised that there was a facility to sign up to Windsor Drive updates on the Central Bedfordshire Council website. Members were advised that a definitive decision had not been made at this stage, this was exploration of opportunity. Members were advised that consideration was being given to what facilities can be offered to, and put into, the local community.

Members were advised that other sites in Houghton Regis had been looked at. Members queried the volume of focus on Houghton Regis for housing rather than other local towns given the degree of development already within the town. Members were assured that all areas across Central Bedfordshire were being looked at for potential affordable housing development sites.

Members requested that data be supplied from Central Bedfordshire Council showing statistics of whether residents of the new affordable housing were from Houghton Regis or outside the area.

927 BEDFORD SQUARE COMMUNITY CENTRE

CBC had advised that it was the intention to launch a consultation into the future use of the Community Centre week commencing 11th October. Details of the consultation would be circulated to members of the Partnership Committee as soon as they were available. Members were invited to consider the consultation.

Members were advised that 93 responses had been received, of which 63% were from Houghton Regis residents, feedback was due to go to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 27th January 2022 and the forwarded to the Councils Executive on 8th February 2022.

Members queried that the centre had been considered low usage, members were advised that statistics had been looked at for 12 months prior to lockdown, at which time 32% of bookable hours had been booked which left the centre unused for 68%. Members suggested that the lack of use could have been due to the lack of promotion of the facility by Central Bedfordshire Council, additionally the cost of security made the out of hours hiring cost prohibitive for many groups.

Members were advised that the Community Safety Team could be contacted to aid the resolution of any anti-social behaviour in Houghton Regis.

928 TITHE FARM ALL WEATHER UPDATE

Members received the agenda report as presented to the HRTC Environment & Leisure Committee on 20th September 2021.

A verbal update was provided on work completed following on from this meeting.

929 CBC UPDATE REPORT

Members received the CBC update report.

Members received verbal updates on:

- Car park
- Library
- Physical activity (referrals)
- Health and Wellbeing kiosks
- Houghton Hall Park – events
- Friends of Houghton Hall Park (looking to set up)
- Employment and Skills service
- Town Centre vacancy rate
- School admissions
- Vaccination grant scheme

Members raised concerns regarding the changes in the parking availability and the newly imposed restrictions in Tithe Farm Rd car park. It was suggested that complaints be forwarded to Highways. It was highlighted that the restrictions were a temporary measure.

930 PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE WORKPLAN

Members discussed items that members would like included on future workplans.

- Town sustainability
- Windsor Drive
- Putting Green at Houghton Hall Park

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9.07pm

Dated this 25th day of January 2022

Chairman