

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF HOUGHTON REGIS PARTNERSHIP
COMMITTEE
HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, PEEL STREET
ON 25th January 2022**

Present: Town Cllrs: **D Jones (Chair), T McMahan, 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 member: D Gibbons

Also in attendance: Lisa White, Head of Leisure CBC
Alice Arden Barnatt, Programme Enabling Manager CBC
James Yeomans, Head of Housing Property, Housing Services CBC
Gina Croxford, Community Engagement Manager
Bex McBrearty, Community Connections Advisor
Iain Berry, Assistant Director Assets
David Skinner, Houghton Regis Community Development Charity
Tim Haines, Houghton Regis Community Development Charity

Apologies: None
Absent: M Kennedy
Members of the public: 3

931 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

None.

932 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Members of the public raised several concerns and asked a number of questions:

- Shared feedback on the listening event and suggested that it had been ineffectual and suggested that CBC be more transparent about housing issues and requested that residents be fully informed about the assessments, processes and decisions pertaining to development on Windsor Drive.
- Feedback was requested on why a petition of 600, signed and delivered to CBC's Executive appeared to have been disregarded in relation to Windsor Drive
- It was requested that CBC provide evidence on both the supply and demand for affordable housing justifying the need to develop Windsor Drive
- It was requested that Central Bedfordshire Council provide a projection of the affordable homes based on extant planning permissions to be delivered in Houghton Regis over the next 5 years to the end of the Local Plan 2035 evidencing that

Houghton Regis was not bearing a disproportionate burden of affordable housing in comparison to other areas of Central Bedfordshire.

- What site assessments and surveys had been planned?
- Had there been any consultation with Central Bedfordshire Council Planning Officers about the proposed development?
- Had any formal pre-application advice been sought from or given by Planning Officers?
- Regarding the new leisure centre, a copy of the contract with the school was requested to determine how many hours residents would have access to the use of the sports hall
- Statistics had been used for justification of the decision not to include a sports hall e.g. 8% current usage, it was requested that Central Bedfordshire Council explain where these statistics have come from and over what period of time do they represent;
- If feedback from sports groups was received stating a sports hall was needed, which justified more time needed than would be on offer under the contract with the new school, would CBC listen and have the plans amended?

Members of the public were advised that responses would be provided to them in due course.

933 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

Cllr Goodchild declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 9 Bidwell West, as she was a member of the Baptist Church.

Co-opted member Mr Gibbons declared an interest in agenda item 9 Bidwell West, as he had been involved with the Neighbourhood Plan, although he had since retired from that group.

934 MINUTES

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 23rd November 2021.

Resolved: To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 23rd November 2021 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

935 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 in attendance at the meeting to update members and respond to any queries or comments on this project.

Members were advised that Time2Connect had developed well based in Houghton Hall Park which offered an informal space, opening 5 days per week offering support for a variety of residents issues, some local trips had been planned. A creative art session had been held, delivered by a local resident and links were being made in the wider community with a view to using other venues within the community.

936 KINGSLAND LEVELLING UP FUND UPDATE

Lisa White, Head of Leisure and Alice Arden Barnatt, Enabling Programme Manager, Place Delivery were in attendance at the meeting to provide an update on the Kingsland Levelling Up Fund bid, specifically the consultation and engagement plans.

Members were advised of the predicted timescales and the need for the funding to be spent by March 2024. The planning application had been submitted and consultation had begun. It was hoped the application would be considered around May, subject to approval, work could begin in autumn of 2022.

Members were advised of the facilities to be included in the new leisure centre which comprised of a larger pool than was currently available for use in Houghton Regis, with spectator area, learner pool benefitting from an adjustable floor, squash courts, gym area, multi-function space, dedicated space for spinning, creche, café and fully accessible changing facilities in accordance with Sports UK.

Concerns were raised regarding the loss of a sports hall facility within the main leisure centre, members were advised a standalone sports hall would be onsite within the new school complex.

Concerns were raised that the consultation allowed for limited input and members of the public requested there also be a consultation on the agreement with the school in relation to the sports hall.

Members queried whether consideration had been given to elderly residents and those with special needs. Members were advised that wellbeing partners would be included in the process.

Members were assured by CBC officers that the questions and comments raised by members of the public would be responded to in due course.

937 HOUSING AND ENGAGEMENT

James Yeomans, Head of Housing Property, Housing Services was in attendance at the meeting to provide an update including All Saints View and Windsor Drive engagement.

Members received feedback on the Windsor Drive Community Engagement Listening Event, CBC advised members that the event had been deemed a success.

Members raised concerns that Houghton Regis had been disproportionately focussed on for housing development resulting in the loss of much of the green space within the town and highlighted their disappointment, and suggested that many other areas within Central Bedfordshire, with available land, had not been considered for development.

It was requested that CBC provide information on what other land had been considered for development throughout Central Bedfordshire.

938 BEDFORD SQUARE COMMUNITY CENTRE

Iain Berry, Assistant Director Assets was in attendance at the meeting to provide an update on the consultation results on the future use of Bedford Square Community Centre.

Members raised concerns that a valuable facility in Houghton Regis was no longer available for use by the residents of Houghton Regis and had been in use by Central Bedfordshire College. Members were advised that the contract for the college was due to end in July, if the agreement was not renewed the college would find alternative premises.

Members highlighted their disappointment in Houghton Regis being solely focussed on to provide a facility for Central Bedfordshire College's use and felt that the needs of the college were being put before the needs of the Houghton Regis community.

Members queried whether the public consultations conducted were by an external company and were advised that public consultations were conducted by both Central Bedfordshire Council and external organisations. The listening event at Windsor Drive had been outsourced.

939 BIDWELL WEST

David Skinner / Tim Haines Houghton Regis Community Development Charity were in attendance at the meeting to provide an update on the progress to develop a community facility at Bidwell West.

Members were advised that events and projects had been held over Christmas with more planned for the summer, work had continued around a proposal for a community building and a business plan was being completed. A consultation was to be held at Houghton Hall Park to gauge community views and a new staff member had joined the team.

Gratitude and thanks were expressed to the Town Council for their input.

Members agreed to close the meeting as per Standing orders 1x 'A meeting shall not normally exceed a period of 2.5 hours unless by agreement of those Members present'

Members agreed to receive updates via e-mail on the below agenda items.

940 TITHE FARM ALL WEATHER UPDATE

Members received the agenda report as presented to the HRTC Environment & Leisure Committee on 15th November 2021.

As an update following on from this meeting the following was advised:

Planning Application

There is an outstanding issue with the planning application. This was currently being progressed by the project team and CBC officers.

Tenders for Pavilion

Due to a lack of interest in the open tender process, a closed tender process is due to commence imminently. It was hoped that this variation in the process will secure tender receipts.

Land Registry

The council's solicitors were currently working through a solution with the Land Registry so hopefully this would be resolved.

Grant application

It was hoped to formally apply to the Football Foundation in October 2021 but due to the outstanding issues around the registration of the site with the land registry and the difficulties of securing tender submissions for the pavilion, it was decided to postpone submission. The grant application would be submitted as soon as possible once the outstanding issues had been resolved.

Members agreed to receive circulated information regarding this agenda item.

941 PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE WORKPLAN

Members received the Partnership Committee workplan.

Members agreed to receive circulated information regarding this agenda item.

942 CBC UPDATE REPORT

Members received the CBC update report.

Members agreed to receive circulated information regarding this agenda item.

943 ITEMS REQUESTING ATTENTION BY CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

Members agreed to receive circulated information regarding this agenda item.

944 PROPOSED DATES FOR MEETINGS 2022/23

The following dates were suggested for Houghton Regis Partnership Committee meetings in 2022/23:

- Tuesday 19th July 2022
- Tuesday 18th October 2022
- Tuesday 24th January 2023
- Tuesday 25th April 2023

Members agreed to receive circulated information regarding this agenda item.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9.30pm

Dated this 26th day of April 2022

Chairman