

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF HOUGHTON REGIS PARTNERSHIP  
COMMITTEE  
HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, PEEL STREET  
ON 28<sup>th</sup> April 2026**

Present:	Town Cllrs:	D Jones, M Herber
	CBC Cllrs	S Goodchild, P Hamill, T McMahon
	CBC	Mrs Hughes, Community Engagement Manager
	Officers:	Howard Hughes, Active Lifestyles Manager
	HRTC	C Evans, Town Clerk
	Officers:	A Samuels, Administration Officer
	Co-opted members:	D Gibbons, T Haines (virtual), R Turner
Also in attendance:		Cllr R Goodchild and Cllr J Carroll
Apologies:		Cllr D Taylor
Absent:		Cllr C Slough
Members of the public:		1 (virtual)

**1129 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

Apologies were received from Cllr Alderman (Cllr Farrell substituted), Cllr Taylor (Cllr Cooper substituted) and C Regan.

**1130 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

None.

**1131 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR  
DISPENSATIONS**

None.

**1132 MINUTES**

To approve the Minutes of the meetings held on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2026.

**Resolved: To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2026 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.**

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**1133 BEAT THE STREET**

By invitation, Howard Hughes, Active Lifestyles Manager at Central Bedfordshire Council, provided an update on the Beat the Street initiative.

The initiative would run in Houghton Regis between 10 June – 8 July and aimed to encourage residents to engage in active travel and explore their environment. It was hoped this would be an opportunity to change behaviours and increase social engagement.

Participants would use cards or apps to tap onto beat boxes placed around the town and earn points on a leaderboard. Those using the app would be able to access a ‘hidden gem’ which provided additional information on being tapped. Prizes would be awarded at the end of the period.

Primary school pupils would be provided with two cards (one for adult use), and a map free of charge. There would be additional card distribution sites around the town, including the library and the leisure centre and Esquires at Thorn.

This initiative was an opportunity to collect data to measure a number of areas including activity, travel, and barriers and motivations. A survey would also take place after the event.

The marketing and promotion was being finalised and the final arrangements were being made for the event. The Beat the Street website for Houghton Regis was due to launch on 13<sup>th</sup> May.

In answer to questions from the Committee, it was confirmed that:

- Grant funding from Sport England was decided on a number of factors based on activity, inequality and health indicators. Houghton Regis was chosen as it was a good fit: it had seen the provision of a new leisure centre; activities introduced at Houghton Hall Park; and substantial local growth.
- A report would be produced after the event had taken place that provided anonymised data on areas such as demographic, age and gender. Changes pre and post play would be tracked, and the data would help inform future initiatives.
- Participation in the initiative was not obligatory. It was confirmed that GDPR regulations would be followed; however further information would be gathered on how the data would be handled, stored and used, and whether the cards would be specific to individuals.
- Permissions were being sought for those roads not yet adopted.
- There would be boxes on school routes and would form a key part of the exercise.

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- It would be possible to insert links into the ‘hidden gem’ feature on the app. It would be checked if messages could be received in an alternative format for those using cards.

Members advised that Carnival and the Arts & Culture event would be held very soon after Beat the Street and might provide a good opportunity to celebrate the initiative.

### **1134 CRISIS AND RESILIENCE FUND**

A verbal update was provided by the CBC Community Engagement Manager on the Crisis and Resilience Fund.

Members were reminded that this fund would be replacing the Household Support Fund.

It was brought to Members’ attention that the crisis element of the fund was up and running; this provided financial assistance to those experiencing financial shock. The resilience aspect was currently being mapped and a further report on the C &RF would be presented at the next Executive meeting.

Members raised concerns regarding those residents who faced digital exclusion and the Community Engagement Manager responded that this had been taken into consideration. The Citizens Advice had contributed to the production of a form and would be able to offer assistance. A phone number was also provided as an alternative option.

### **1135 HRTC UPDATE REPORT**

Members were provided with a copy of the HRTC update report. The Town Clerk invited questions.

The value of Operation Hana was questioned, and Members expressed disappointment that priority for policing was being given to other areas. There was also disappointment at the disbandment of the Police and Crime Panel at CBC as it was felt that Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee would be unable to dedicate the necessary time to policing matters.

### **1136 COMMUNITY BUILDINGS IN HOUGHTON REGIS**

The Committee’s workplan referenced the following community buildings:

Project H / Unit 1 All Saints View (HRTC)

Lease negotiations remained underway.

HRTC was working with a wider project team to develop a tender pack for the fitting out of the property. It was anticipated that the tender period would run during May.

HRN 2 Community Building - a verbal update was provided by the CBC Community Engagement Manager on the planned community centre in Bidwell.

The Community Engagement Manager confirmed that they had been working collaboratively with the charity to bring the project forward; work continued on the

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lease and the transfer of the land. The planning process was underway and a result was anticipated in the near future.

Members questioned if there were any barriers slowing delivery. The Community Engagement Manager stated that funding was always a challenge, but a lot of progress had been seen in recent months.

Cllr R Goodchild expressed enthusiasm for Project H and congratulated the team on its work.

### **1137 CBC CONSULTATION ON PROPOSED CHANGES TO FEES AND CHARGES**

Central Bedfordshire Council had launched a six-week consultation on proposed changes to some of its fees and charges.

The Community Engagement Manager confirmed that this item was included on the agenda to make Members aware of the live consultation.

### **1138 PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE WORKPLAN**

Members were invited to consider the Partnership Committee workplan for 2025/26.

A co-optee requested that CBC provided a report on the future of the Red House. The Chair confirmed that this could be considered for 2026/27.

Members expressed concern regarding health and wellbeing in Houghton Regis and the insufficient level of primary care. Members also voiced frustration at the disjointed nature of services. It was thought that the Integrated Care Board (ICB), doctors and members of the Patient Participation Group should be brought together to discuss their needs and expectations. It was questioned whether it would be possible to access data in order to establish the areas of greatest need.

It was agreed that this item should be taken forward as part of the workplan in 2026/27.

### **1139 PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE CO-OPTION**

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

#### **Co-option**

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.

Co-optees were reminded that they would need to reapply for the new council year.

**The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.38pm**

**Dated this 28<sup>th</sup> day of July 2026**

**Chairman**