

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF HOUGHTON REGIS PARTNERSHIP
COMMITTEE
HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, PEEL STREET
ON 28th July 2027**

Present: Town Cllrs: D Jones, J Carroll, E Cooper (Substitute)
CBC Cllrs: C Alderman, S Goodchild, P Hamill
CBC: S Hughes, Community Engagement Manager
Officers: M Ahmed, Community Engagement Officer
HRTC: C Evans, Town Clerk
Officers: A Samuels, Administration Officer

Co-opted members: J Anderson, L Ellaway, D Gibbons, T Haines

Also in attendance: R Goodliffe, Director of Welfare Services, NOAH Enterprise

Apologies: Cllrs: T McMahon, C Slough, D Taylor

Members of the public: 3 (2 virtual)

1140 ELECTION OF CHAIR

Members were invited to elect a Chairman for Houghton Regis Partnership Committee for 2026/27.

In accordance with the Terms of Reference this could be a member from either authority.

Nominee: Cllr Jones

Proposed by: Cllr Cooper

Seconded by: Cllr Goodchild

There were no other nominations.

On being put to the vote, Cllr Jones became Chair of the Houghton Regis Partnership Committee for the municipal year of 2026/2027.

1141 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Cllr McMahon, Cllr Slough and Cllr Taylor (Cllr Cooper substituted).

1142 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR

Members were invited to elect a Vice Chairman for Houghton Regis Partnership Committee for the municipal year of 2026/2027.

In accordance with the Terms of Reference this should be a member from the other authority to the Chair.

Nominee: Cllr Alderman

Proposed by: Cllr Goodchild

Seconded by: Cllr Cooper

There were no other nominations.

On being put to the vote, Cllr Alderman became Vice-Chair of the Houghton Regis Partnership Committee for the municipal year of 2026/2027.

1143 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

1144 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

None.

1145 MINUTES

To approve the Minutes of the meetings held on 28th April 2026

Resolved: To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 28th April 2026 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

1146 PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE CO-OPTION

The Terms of Reference required the list of Co-opted Members to be reviewed annually by the Joint Committee.

Members unanimously approved the applications for co-option from:

- David Gibbons - a co-opted member during 2024/2025
- Jo Anderson – a co-opted member during 2024/2025
- Roger Turner – a co-opted member during 2024/2025,
- Tim Haines - a co-opted member during 2024/2025,
- Laura Ellaway as a representative from Parkside Action Group – new application for co-option for 2026/27

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.

Resolved: To approve the following as co-opted members of the Houghton Regis Partnership Committee for 2026/27:

- **David Gibbons**
- **Jo Anderson**
- **Roger Turner**
- **Tim Haines**
- **Laura Ellaway**

1147 COMMITTEE FUNCTIONS & TERMS OF REFERENCE

Members were provided with a copy of the Terms of Reference which related to this committee.

1148 CONFIRMATION OF THE SECRETARIAT

In accordance with the Terms of Reference, the Committee confirmed the secretariat for the Partnership Committee for 2026/27 as Houghton Regis Town Council.

1149 DRAFT SCHEDULE OF COMMITTEE REPORTS

Members were invited to consider the Partnership Committee Draft Schedule of Committee Reports for 2026/27.

Members were requested to note that reports might be provided by CBC, HRTC or a 3rd party organisation as applicable. Where reports were provided by 3rd party organisations, members of the committee were advised that they were provided for information purposes only as the Committee had no remit to scrutinise the work of 3rd party organisations.

Members expressed a wish for the following items, which did not appear on the schedule, to be discussed:

New Cemetery

Members felt that an update was required, even if this was to confirm that no further progress had been made regarding possible sites.

The Town Clerk suggested that this item could be included on the Town Council Update Report.

Primary Care

Cllr Goodchild requested that primary care provision was discussed in order that residents remained informed of local developments.

The Town Clerk informed the committee that issues for discussion would ideally focus on the issues that Partnership could influence. Primary care did not fall under the responsibility of either authority and was not within the public domain. It was agreed that the Town Clerk and the Community Engagement Manager would liaise on the best means of addressing this issue.

Community Spaces and 'Call for Sites'

Members noted that Parkside and other community spaces had been omitted. CBC was responsible for the 'Call for Sites' process which would be key in establishing community developments; therefore, Members were keen for this matter to be discussed. The Chair informed Members that HRTC's response to CBC's 'Call for Sites' would be discussed at the following week's Planning Committee meeting.

Cllr Alderman offered to share further information on the 'Call for Sites' outside of the meeting.

The item 'Homelessness in Houghton Regis' was brought forward

1150 HOMELESSNESS IN HOUGHTON REGIS

Jo Anderson and Rob Goodliffe from the NOAH Enterprise charity gave a presentation on the services it provided for homeless people in Luton and Central Bedfordshire.

NOAH ran a welfare centre that provided support throughout the year for homeless individuals and ran an outreach team working on behalf of CBC. Case studies were presented to Members to demonstrate the type of work carried out by the charity.

There were three outreach workers who checked in on individuals who were known to be sleeping rough and who worked towards establishing a relationship and building trust. The charity assisted with finding accommodation as well as providing other means of support, e.g. sleeping bags, mobile phones, food parcels clothing, health support and shower facilities.

A significant sector of the community was homeless for a variety of reasons and included those who were in employment. Regular barriers to finding accommodation included the reluctance to move away from known communities, pet ownership and the cost of living. In addition, there were not enough services available to those with complex needs, while access to affordable travel also prevented access to services.

NOAH's primary requirements were: accessible, safe and neutral spaces to meet; volunteers to help run the hubs; and reporting incidents of homelessness to NOAH. Potential sites for local hubs had been offered and would be investigated further.

The representatives from NOAH confirmed they would provide contact details following the meeting so that they could be contacted about any incidents of rough sleeping.

1151 CBC UPDATE REPORT

For information, the Community Engagement Manager provide Members with the CBC update report.

Beat the Streets, which had been discussed at the previous meeting of the Town Partnership, had been a resounding success. It was hoped an extended update would be provided by the Active Lifestyles Manager at a future meeting. Key points to note were:

- 2,829 participating by day 3 of the final week, which exceeded the target
- 902 children and over 1000 adults recorded
- 39,000 swipes
- 9,600 miles covered by participants

It was hoped this initiative would provide a potential referral route on to other activity schemes.

Members were reminded that the Crisis and Resilience Fund was available to those requiring a crisis payment and that there was a facility on the CBC website where people could apply. Residents could also phone the Contact Centre. The plan for the resilience side was taking shape and would focus on the provision of support facilities.

Members of the committee raised the following issues:

Policing

- Contact with the police and police presence appeared to have dropped significantly. Members believed Houghton Regis received an inadequate level of policing.

Health

- There appeared to be very little progress regarding the health hub in Houghton Regis and needed to be pursued. Healthcare was a priority issue as levels were inadequate and CBC had acknowledged that there was a lack of capacity to carry out health checks etc. Houghton Regis was growing but the infrastructure was not in place.

Education

- Members agreed that insufficient school places were available in Houghton Regis. The co-optee from Bidwell West thanked councillors for their help in achieving the agreed delivery of a school in 2029. It was noted, however, that an update on delivery had not been received since June. It was felt that more communication from CBC would be helpful on this issue, and on plans for the coming years.
- Facilities had been promised at the leisure centre for Send and ECHP cases but had not yet materialised. No further details had been provided on how those who had previously attended the Townsend Centre would be accommodated. This provided a further example of inadequate infrastructure.

Members enquired if future reports could contain data on the following items:

- Safer Communities: what number of open cases in the report had been carried over from the previous period and how many were closed in the previous period?
- Figures on the frequency of grass cutting, weeding, general maintenance of hedges etc carried out by CBC in Bidwell West.

1152 PROJECT H / HR HIVE

A verbal update was provided by the Town Clerk highlighting the following:

- Following consultation, it had been decided that the new space would be called HR Hive.
- The lease was close to a final agreement.
- Following the tender process, the submissions were reviewed by the project team. Subsequently, it had been decided that further liaison was required to ensure the best outcome and optimise value for money.
- It was hoped that a contractor would be recommended to Town Council in mid-September.

1153 SUGGESTED CHANGE OF DATE

The Committee had received a request from CBC Highways to attend a meeting later in the year to discuss the Highways Capital Plan.

To accommodate the availability of the Highways Team it had been suggested that the agreed meeting date of 27th October be put back to 1st December. It had been established earlier in the meeting that an Executive meeting had also been scheduled for 1st December; it was therefore suggested that the presentation should instead be held on Monday 23rd November. Members agreed to the amended date.

Resolved: To rearrange the scheduled meeting date of 27th October to 23rd November 2026.

1154 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.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.45pm

Dated this 23rd day of November 2026

Chairman