

BACKGROUND

Neighbourhood Plans were introduced by the Localism Act 2011 as a statutory planning document to allow local communities to identify the challenges facing their areas and to put forward potential solutions.

The first step, to designate a neighbourhood area within which the Neighbourhood Plan will be prepared, was submitted by Houghton Regis Town Council to Central Bedfordshire Council as outlined in the above map. The area, covering the Parish of Houghton Regis, was considered appropriate as a Neighbourhood Area in accordance with section 61G(3)(a) of the Town and Planning Act 1990 and approved under the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 in April 2017.

The next step is to prepare a Draft Plan and this process should be a community led project, bringing together residents, local groups, stakeholders with businesses and interest in the town, landowners and developers. Work on the Draft Plan has started and a Steering Group, comprising of Town Councillors, representative from Central Beds Council, and representatives from the local community, together with a Neighbourhood Plan advisor has been set up.

At the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group meeting held on the 26th September 2017 the following topics were identified as being especially important discussion topics for the Town.

- Housing
- Town Centre
- Business & Employment
- Open Space
- Heritage
- Education

The Steering Group has the power to co-opt members as required and in addition nine 'Task and Finish' working groups (as per the list above) will also be set up - if you have a special area of interest you are urged to put your name down to be part of one, or more, of these groups. The working groups will report back and feed into the Draft Plan through a lead, who will be a Steering Group member. The Houghton Regis Neighbourhood Plan must reflect and contribute to the Central Bedfordshire Local Plan so we urge you to be part of this process for the future of YOUR TOWN.

This is a voluntary process but you – the community – decide the content, which needs to be flexible to address different needs and expectations. The Neighbourhood Plan will determine the development of Houghton Regis for the next 15 years, to 2033 – your contributions are both highly valued and extremely important.