



Houghton Regis Neighbourhood Plan – December 2018

It has been quite a while since our last update, but with the New Year things are moving forward to the next phase, so here is what has been happening:

The Steering Group, through the various working groups, has spent several months considering all of the information we received through the survey, the public meetings, and many smaller meetings that were held. It took a lot of work to come up with concrete proposals and aspirations that reflected the desires of as many residents as possible (obviously, no plan can include everything that everyone wanted) and then to weave these together into a coherent strategy.

Our consultant, Martin Small, did some exemplary work taking our, sometimes sketchy, ideas and weaving them into a single document. I think we are currently on the 12th draft as he has continued to listen and refine the document based on the comments and concerns of the Steering Group members.

On Monday, January 7th, this draft will be presented to the Planning Committee at their meeting. If they accept it then that will be the end of the Steering Group (except for supplying some background data).

The next steps, should Planning accept the draft will be to start the consultation process. Initially, we foresee some informal meetings with Central Bedfordshire Council, then there will be a much wider consultation with various bodies and organisations, as required by law, and also a public consultation. Finally, it will go out for a vote.

I do hope that when you get the chance you will read through the plan or at least the synopsis that is being produced. This plan will give us as a town much greater say in our own future. A significant section deals with not only protecting our open spaces but also enhancing them, including the Chalk Pit, and the establishment of a new boundary trail around the parish. There are also significant policies on the town centre, employment, education, heritage, and housing.

It has been a real pleasure to work with this group of people, councillors and residents, who have given so much time and energy for free to get us to this point. My sincere thanks to all who have been involved.