

Houghton Regis

Partnership Committee

Town Mayor: To be confirmed
Town Clerk: Clare Evans

Tel: 01582 708540

20th January 2020

To: Town Mayor and all Members of the Partnership Committee

Town Councillors: **D Abbott (Vice Chair), D Jones, K Wattingham and Vacancy**

CBC Councillors **Y Farrell, S Goodchild, P Hamill, A Ryan (Chair)**

CBC Officers **Mrs Hughes, Community Engagement Manager**

(Copies to all Houghton Regis Town Councillors for information.)

NOTICE OF MEETING

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the **Partnership Committee** to be held on **28th January 2020** commencing at **7.00pm hours** at The Council Offices, Peel Street.



Clare Evans
Town Clerk

**THIS MEETING MAY BE
RECORDED ***

AGENDA

- 1. APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS**
- 2. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

In accordance with approved Standing Orders 1(e)-1(l) Members of the public may make representations, ask questions and give evidence at a meeting which they are entitled to attend in respect of the business on the agenda.

The total period of time designated for public participation at a meeting shall not exceed 15 minutes and an individual member of the public shall not speak for more than 3 minutes unless directed by the chairman of the meeting.

**Phones and other equipment may be used to film, audio record, tweet or blog from this meeting by an individual Council member or a member of the public. No part of the meeting room is exempt from public filming unless the meeting resolves to go into exempt session.*

The use of images or recordings arising from this is not under the Council's control.

3. SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

Under the Localism Act 2011 (sections 26-37 and Schedule 4) and in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, Members are required to declare any interests which are not currently entered in the member's register of interests or if he/she has not notified the Monitoring Officer of any such interest.

Members are invited to submit any requests for Dispensations for consideration.

4. MINUTES

Pages 5 - 12

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 29th October 2019.

Recommendation: To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 29th October 2019.

5. TOWN CENTRE BENCHMARKING REPORT

Pages 13 - 48

Members will find attached the Houghton Regis Town Centre Benchmarking report.

Mr S Caldbeck, Place Programme Manager, Central Bedfordshire Council will attend the meeting to facilitate a discussion on how to take the report forward. As part of this discussion members may like to consider establishing a task and finish group to consider the scope of findings and to develop a prioritised action plan to address identified issues or opportunities. Members are advised that it is intended that should a task and finish group be established that meetings would be held during normal working hours.

Recommendation: To establish a task and finish group with the following Committee Functions and Terms of Reference:

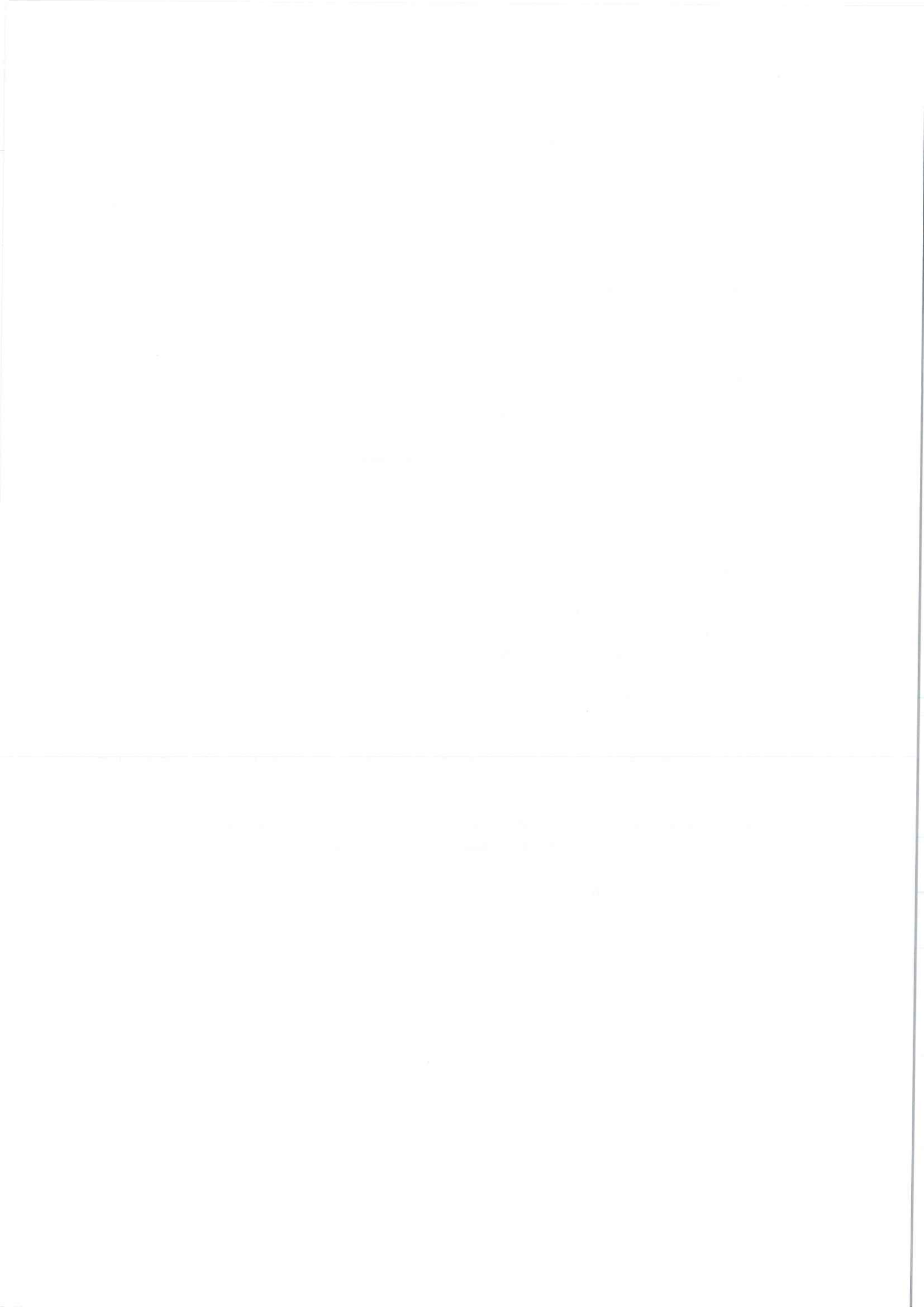
1. To consider the scope of findings of the Houghton Regis Benchmarking Report
2. To develop a prioritised action plan to address identified issues
 - To report back to the Partnership Committee
 - To comprise 4 members

6. PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE WORKPLAN

Pages 49 - 50

Members are invited to consider the Partnership Committee workplan for 2019/20.

Pages 51 - 52



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF HOUGHTON REGIS PARTNERSHIP
COMMITTEE
HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, PEEL STREET
ON 29TH OCTOBER 2019**

Present: Town Cllrs: J Carroll (Substitution), D Jones, K Wattingham and T Welch.
CBC Cllrs: Y Farrell, S Goodchild, A Ryan (Chair)
CBC Officers: Sarah Hughes, Community Engagement Manager
HRTC Officers: Clare Evans, Town Clerk
Louise Senior, Head of Democratic Services

In Attendance: Cllr Tracey McMahon, HRTC Councillor
Lisa White Policy Manager, Leisure, Libraries and Countryside, CBC
Martin Westerby, Head of Public Health Programmes, CBC
Jill Dickinson, Assistant Director Leisure, Libraries and Countryside, CBC
Sarah Morgan, School Organisation Officer, CBC
Simon Cotton, Head of School Improvement, CBC
Kate Philpott, Principle Assistant, School Places, CBC

Apologies: Cllr Abbott, HRTC Councillor
Cllr P Hamill, CBC Councillor
Cllr T Stock, CBC Councillor

Members of the public: 2

828 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Cllr Hammill, Cllr Stock and Cllr Abbott (Cllr Carroll Substituted)

829 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

None.

830 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

831 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 23rd July 2019.

Resolved: To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 23rd July 2019.

832 PROPOSAL FOR SPORTS FACILITY ENHANCEMENT AT TITHE FARM RECREATION GROUND

Ms L White, Policy Manager, Leisure, Libraries and Countryside, Central Bedfordshire Council attended the meeting to discuss this project with members.

Members were advised that a report was presented to the HRTC Environment & Leisure Committee on 17th September 2019 and to HRTC Town Council on 7th October. The project had been supported by HRTC. This report was shared for information with the Partnership Committee.

Members acknowledged the need for football pitches in Houghton Regis and welcomed the prospect of improved facilities.

Members considered external funding and s106. There are s106 funds held by HRTC and CBC which could provide the 'partner funding' contribution for the Football Foundation grant bid. Detailed appraisal work is required for the grant bid, but subject to results of the scheme feasibility work currently underway, an application could be submitted to the Football Foundation in April 2020. Officers will be reporting back to HRTC Environment and Leisure Committee and Town Council on the results of the feasibility study, providing project costings and requesting authority to proceed if the scheme is viable.

Resolved: To note the report.

833 IMPROVING HEALTH AND WELLBEING IN HOUGHTON REGIS

Martin Westerby, Head of Public Health Programmes, CBC attended the meeting to give members an update on a new approach to improving health and wellbeing in Houghton Regis.

Members received a presentation of how this would be achieved using a commissioned organisation to facilitate community engagement and identify needs in Houghton Regis and the costs involved.

Members acknowledged the December deadline and requested that the service specifications be circulated, along with a case study, to members of the Partnership Committee. Members suggested that a wide range of communication strategies be used in order to communicate with all sectors of the community.

834 HOUGHTON REGIS ACADEMY

Simon Cotton, Central Bedfordshire Council School Improvement Advisor and Late Philpott, attended the meeting to discuss with members the future of Houghton Regis Academy. As background members received a letter from Greenwood Academies Trust.

Members were advised that the closure of Houghton Regis Academy was being considered by the Department for Education and the impact on Houghton Regis would be assessed, it was advised that the closure would not take place before 2020.

Members were advised that a meeting had been arranged with young people of the school and the South Bedfordshire MP, Andrew Selous, where they expressed their disappointment.

Members were advised that interim support had been offered to Houghton Regis Academy by Redbourne Teaching School.

Members raised concerns over the location of the Trust which would take on the new school and suggested that members preferences would be a local trust, as Greenwood Trust was based in Nottingham, and as such, was detached from the needs of the school and the community.

Members were advised for the longer term, a new secondary school would be established, planning permission would need to be granted for the new school and the decision would ultimately fall with the DfE.

835 KINGSLAND FEASIBILITY STUDY

Ms Jill Dickinson, Assistant Director Leisure, Libraries and Countryside, Central Bedfordshire Council attended the meeting to provide a briefing on a feasibility study to look at options for new community assets on the Kingsland campus which would include a secondary school, primary school and leisure centre to accommodate predicted service needs.

Due to the complex and varied service offer currently operating from Kingsland, the feasibility study would consider how these community assets could be accommodated on the available part of the site, along with any legal and site constraints such as access and ecology. It would also consider what role the campus could have beyond education and leisure for the current and new community. An assessment of affordability for the leisure centre will also be undertaken.

Members queried how this would affect the facilities currently on-site. In response members were advised that it was too soon to be able to say but that the priority was to look at accommodating the new facilities on the available part of the site.

Members welcomed the prospect of regeneration work in the 'old' part of Houghton Regis.

836 PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE WORKPLAN

Members were invited to consider the Partnership Committee workplan.

At the last meeting there was some discussion over the following specific issues, updates were included below:

1. Ownership and management of Tithe Farm Road car park and the possibility of introducing parking controls i.e. free for 3 hours (CBC member request)

Members agreed a written report to be submitted but not to include on the work plan.

Update – CBC are considering the query from the Partnership meeting. A report will be provided in due course.

2. Policing levels in Houghton Regis, specifically consideration of call charges to the 101 number and the 01582 471212 number which may be free under some phone tariffs, police call answering times (CBC member request)
3. Off road bikes and the possibility of a dedicated reporting phone number (CBC member request)

Members agreed an invitation be extended on behalf of the Town Partnership Committee to the PCC or a representative to discuss items 2 & 3.

Update: the PCC is unable to attend a meeting of the Partnership Committee; however, members were advised that the PCC was attending the town council offices in January and HRTC members and CBC ward members were invited to attend.

4. Management and maintenance of the Chalk Pit (resident request via HRTC)
Members agreed to add this item to the work plan.
5. CCTV within recreational areas to act as a deterrent to anti-social behaviour (CBC member request)
Members agreed a written report to be submitted but not to include on the work plan.

Update: CBC advised that the recreational areas in Houghton Regis do not flag up as hot spot areas for crime and anti-social behavior. The CBC control room have advised that they cover very few recreation grounds as Police data does not support it. Reportedly the local policing sergeant advised that they did not consider this provision as a pressing need. When possible, residents should be encouraged to report ASB to 101 so that intelligence was gathered, and resources could be effectively targeted.

6. Leisure and sports facilities including future football provision (officer suggestion and request from resident)
Members agreed to add this item to the work plan.

837 HOUGHTON REGIS PARTNERSHIP – TERMS OF REFERENCE

Members were advised that CBC approved the Town Joint Committee Terms of Reference at Full Council on 26th September following a couple of minor modifications / clarifications requested at General Purposes Committee. Members received a report and the approved Terms of Reference.

The Terms of Reference will also be presented to Town Council in due course.

Resolved: To note the report.

838 HRN2 COMMUNITY BUILDING

Sarah Hughes, Community Engagement Manager, Central Bedfordshire Council, provided members with a verbal update.

Members were advised there was 0.5 ha available and £1m of funding through the S106 Agreement. There had been interest from a group of churches in HRN2 Community Building over some considerable time

It was confirmed that Central Bedfordshire Council would write to the group of churches and Houghton Regis Town Council to invite business proposals detailing how the building could move forward and proposed partnership arrangements.

Members advised that they had found a visit to Finchampstead valuable and had increased their understanding of the building, they advised that the HRN2 building would not be needed on the same scale as the Finchampstead building which had cost in excess of £5m to develop.

839 CBC UPDATE REPORT

Members received the CBC update report for information.

Members were advised that s106 funding had been approved for Houghton Regis Town Council for:

- Energy efficiency measures in recreation facilities
- Flag pole illumination
- Community defibrillators

Members raised concerns over contractors parking by Red House Court and Clarkes Way. Grass had been damaged by the Memorial Stone due to unauthorised parking, it was suggested that the company provide some knee high railings around the Memorial Stone to prevent contractor vehicles parking as concerns were raised that the vehicles were causing an obstruction to the residents of Red House Court, forcing them off the pathway and onto the road.

Members were advised that contractors had been spoken to in order to ensure the safety of residents.

Resolved: To note the report.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9.07pm.

Dated this 28th of January 2020.

Chairman

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PEOPLE & PLACES
Insight

Houghton Regis

Town Benchmarking Report

August 2019

Mike King
People and Places Insight Limited
mike.king@people-places.co.uk





Executive Summary

General

Shops and Businesses

- 38% of the occupied ground floor commercial units in Houghton Regis are A1 Shops, which is 13% lower than the National Small Towns average. 24% of the ground floor units are B1 Businesses which is 21% higher than the National average.
- 79% of the A1 Shops mainly sell Comparison Goods.
- 57% of the A1 Shops are unique to Houghton Regis whilst 36% have a nationwide presence.
- 58% of Town Centre Users generally visit Houghton Regis for Convenience Shopping, 14% higher than the National Small Towns average.

Footfall

- Footfall on the Busy Day was 83 persons per ten minutes, lower than the National Small Towns average of 110. On the Quiet Day footfall dropped to 64 persons per ten minutes, once again lower than the National average of 105.

Car Parking

- 95% of car parking spaces in Houghton Regis are off street. Overall on the Busy Day in 29% of all car parking provision was vacant, slightly higher than the National Small Towns figure of 29%. On the Quiet vacancy rate increased to 47%, 14% higher than the National average

Customer Spend

- 52% of Town Centre Users spend £10.01-£50.00 on a normal visit to Houghton Regis compared to the National Small Towns average of 58%.

Length of Stay

- 94% of Town Centre Users spent less than 2 hours in the town centre, 15% higher than the National Small Towns average.

Positive

Access to Services

- Access to Services (51%) was classed as a positive aspect of Houghton Regis by Town Centre Users.

Vacancy Rate

- 5% of the ground floor units were vacant at the time of the Audit compared to the National Small Towns average of 9%.



Room for Improvement

Visit Recommendation

- 67% of Town Centre Users would not recommend a visit to Houghton Regis, 39% higher than the National figure.

Safety

- 50% of Town Centre Users classed Safety as a negative aspect of Houghton Regis by Town Centre Users, 34% higher than the National Small Towns figure. 'Anti-Social Behaviour' and 'Increased Police Presence' were key themes to emerge from the Town Centre Users qualitative suggestions.

Retail Offer

- Retail Offer (47%) was classed as negative aspects of Houghton Regis by Town Centre Users. 'Lack of Retail Offer' was cited in as number of comments.

Car Parking

- 44% of Town Centre Users felt that Car Parking was a negative aspect. Improvements to 'Car Parking' was a key theme to emerge from the qualitative comments.





Introduction

The Approach

The People and Places Insight Limited Town Benchmarking System has been developed to address the real issues of how to understand measure, evaluate and ultimately improve town centres. The approach offers a simple way of capturing data on Key Performance Indicators selected by those involved in town centre management. By having the tools to measure performance, strategic decision making is both encouraged and improved. By considering performance, forward strategies and action planning can be more focused and effective.

The System

The Benchmarking system is divided into two sections:

- National Large Towns; consisting of those localities with more than 250 units
- National Small Towns; consisting of those localities with less than 250 units

Towns, depending on their size, contribute to either the Large or Small-Town analysis. The defined town centre area of **Houghton Regis** consists of **39** units and is thus classed as a **Small Town**.

The analysis provides data on each KPI for the Benchmarked town individually and in a National and Longitudinal. The National figure is the average for all the towns which participated in Benchmarking from July 2017 to January 2019.

The Reports

The People and Places Insight Limited Town Benchmarking report provides statistical analysis of each of the KPI's. The reports are used by a variety of key stakeholders such as Local Authorities, Town and Parish Councils, Business Improvement Districts, Local Partnerships, Retailers and Universities to;

- Measuring High Street regeneration projects
- Developing Town Centre regeneration projects
- Measuring the impact of events and festivals against normal trading conditions
- Providing an evidence base for funding applications
- Providing an evidence base for car parking initiatives
- Providing an evidence base for Neighbourhood Planning
- Supporting Business Improvement Districts
- Supporting community groups





Case Studies

Case Studies of good practice in the use of Benchmarking data include;

Ourburystedmunds; Bury St Edmunds BID initially used Benchmarking to create a deliverable project plan for which the organisation could use for the first 12 months of inception. Subsequently the Key Performance Indicators have been measured each year to ascertain the impact of a wide range of projects and initiatives. Most noticeably the Town Centre User Surveys identified that a large number of visitors were unhappy over an increase in car parking fees throughout the locality. As a result the BID were able to present the information to their Local Authority and oversaw the introduction of a 'Free Parking After 3pm' policy. Data from the Business Confidence, Footfall and Town Centre Users Surveys was also used to improve signage for first time visitors throughout the town centre.

Love Newmarket; The Business Improvement District used the data to measure the Town Centre in normal trading conditions and then replicate footfall, customer spend, length of stay and origin at the Christmas Events to understand impact.

Bradford on Avon Town Council; The Town Council used the data from a general Benchmarking Study to commission People and Places to conduct an Advanced Car Parking Study. Anecdotal information and the Benchmarking highlighted an issue with a severe shortage of parking provision in the Town Centre at pinch points during the day. The initial data was supported by the evidence gathered in the indepth study providing the Town Council with a detached report to address the issue.

Southam First; Stratford on Avon District Council (SDC) used Section 106 money to commission a Benchmarking review of Southam town centre. Key points from the analysis included improving the business economy, marketing the locality, the creation of a calendar of events and festivals and the development of a Farmers Market. SDC used the data as a detached, evidence-based tool to create a Town Centre Partnership consisting of a private and public mix to address the issues raised from the Benchmarking Report. A public event both highlighted the findings of the report and asked for nominations for Board and Working Group members. Within 2 months 'Southam First' was a fully functioning organisation delivering actions on a project plan which was based on the Benchmarking Review. The evidence led approach allowed for Southam First to apply successfully for funding from a wide range of bodies to ensure sustainability.





Methodology

Each KPI is collected in a standardized manner as highlighted in the Table below.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	METHODOLOGY
KPI: COMMERCIAL UNITS; USE CLASS	Visual Survey of ground floor units in defined town centre area.
KPI: COMMERCIAL UNITS; COMPARISON/CONVENIENCE	Visual Survey of A1 ground floor units in defined town centre area.
KPI: COMMERCIAL UNITS; TRADER TYPE	Visual Survey of A1 ground floor units in defined town centre area.
KPI: COMMERCIAL UNITS; VACANCY RATES	Visual Survey of A1 ground floor units in defined town centre area.
KPI: MARKETS	Visual Survey of total number of traders.
KPI: FOOTFALL	Footfall Survey on a Busy Day and Quiet Day.
KPI: CAR PARKING	Audit of total number of spaces and vacancy rate on a Busy Day and Quiet Day.
KPI: BUSINESS CONFIDENCE SURVEYS	Face to face and hand surveys with covering letter and freepost envelope.
KPI: TOWN CENTRE USER SURVEYS	Face to face and online surveys.
KPI: SHOPPERS ORIGIN SURVEYS	Distributed with Business Confidence Surveys and Businesses are asked to record the home locations of customers over a set time period.





Key Findings

KPI: COMMERCIAL UNITS; USE CLASS

It is important to understand the scale and variety of the “commercial offer” throughout the town. A variety of shops and a wide range of services in a town are important to its ability to remain competitive and continue to attract customers. Sustaining a balance between the different aspects of buying and selling goods and services ensures that the local population (and visitors from outside) can spend time and money there, keeping the generated wealth of the town within the local economy. Importantly, it forms the employment base for a substantial proportion of the community too, helping to retain the population rather than lose it to nearby towns and cities.

The following table provides a detailed breakdown of each of the Use Classes

Class	Type of Use	Class Includes
A1	Shops	Shops, retail warehouses, hairdressers, travel and ticket agencies, post offices (but not sorting offices), pet shops, sandwich bars, showrooms, domestic hire shops, dry cleaners, funeral directors and internet cafes
A2	Financial and Professional Services	Financial services such as banks and building societies, professional services (other than health and medical services) including estate and employment agencies and betting offices
A3	Restaurants and Cafes	Food and drink for consumption on the premises- restaurants, snack bars and cafes
A4	Drinking Establishments	Public houses, wine bars or other drinking establishments (but not nightclubs)
A5	Hot Food Takeaways	Sale of hot food for consumption off the premises
B1	Businesses	Offices (other than those that fall within A2) research and development of products and processes, light industry appropriate in a residential area
B2	General Industrial	General Industrial
B8	Storage and Distribution	Warehouses, includes open air storage
C1	Hotels	Hotels, boarding and guest houses where no significant element of care is provided (excludes hostels)
C2	Residential	Residential care homes, hospitals, nursing





	Institutions	homes, boarding schools, residential colleges and training centres.
C2A	Secure Residential Institution	Use for a provision of secure residential accommodation, including use as a prison, young offenders institution, detention centre, secure training centre, custody centre, short term holding centre, secure hospital, secure local authority accommodation or use as a military barracks.
D1	Non-Residential Institutions	Clinics, health centres, crèches, day centres, schools, art galleries (other than for sale or hire), museums, libraries, halls, places of worship, church halls, law court. Non-residential education and training centres.
D2	Assembly and Leisure	Cinemas, music and concert halls, bingo and dance halls (but not nightclubs), swimming baths, skating rinks, gymnasiums or area for indoor or outdoor sports and recreations (except for motor sports, or where firearms are used).
SG	Sui Generis ("unique" establishments)	Theatres, hostels providing no significant element of care, scrap yards. Petrol filling stations and shops selling and/ or displaying motor vehicles. Retail warehouse clubs, nightclubs, laundrettes, taxi business, amusement centres, casinos, haulage yards, transport depots, veterinary clinics, dog parlours, tanning and beauty salons and tattoo studios.





The following table provides a detailed analysis of the commercial offering in the town centre by Use Class. The figures are presented as a percentage of the **37** occupied units recorded.

	National Small Towns %	Houghton Regis 2019 %
A1	51	38
A2	13	8
A3	9	3
A4	4	5
A5	4	5
B1	3	24
B2	1	0
B8	0	0
C1	1	0
C2	0	5
C2A	0	0
D1	7	8
D2	1	0
SG	5	3
N/R	0	0

38% of the occupied ground floor commercial units in Houghton Regis are A1 Shops, which is 13% lower than the National Small Towns average. 24% of the ground floor units are B1 Businesses which is 21% higher than the National average.





KPI: COMMERCIAL UNITS; COMPARISON VERSUS CONVENIENCE

A1 Retail units selling goods can be split into two different types Comparison and Convenience.

Convenience goods – low-cost, everyday items that consumers are unlikely to travel far to purchase. Defined as;

- Food and non-alcoholic drinks
- Tobacco
- Alcohol
- Newspapers and magazines
- Non-durable household goods

2. **Comparison goods** – all other retail goods.

- Books
- Clothing and Footwear
- Furniture, floor coverings and household textiles
- Audio-visual equipment and other durable goods
- Hardware and DIY supplies
- Chemists goods
- Jewellery, watches and clocks
- Bicycles
- Recreational and Miscellaneous goods
- Hairdressing

The presence of a variety of shops in a town centre is important to its ability to remain competitive and continue to attract customers. A balance of both comparison and convenience retail units is therefore ideal in terms of encouraging visitors / potential customers.





The following table provides a percentage of the A1 Shops which sell mainly Comparison Goods/ Convenience Goods.

	National Small Towns %	Houghton Regis 2019 %
Comparison	82	79
Convenience	18	21

79% of the A1 Shops mainly sell Comparison Goods.





KPI: COMMERCIAL UNITS; TRADER TYPES

The vitality of a town centre depends highly on the quality and variety of retailers represented. A sustainable balance of key attractors and multiple names alongside local independent shops is likely to have the greatest positive impact on the vitality and viability of a town.

The following shops are considered Key attractors by Experian Goad.

Department Stores	Clothing
BHS	Burton
Debenhams	Dorothy Perkins
House of Fraser	H & M
John Lewis	New Look
Marks and Spencer	Primark
	River Island
Mixed Goods Retailers	Topman
Argos	Topshop
Boots	
TK Maxx	Other Retailers
WH Smith	Carphone Warehouse
Wilkinson	Clarks
	Clintons
Supermarkets	O2
Sainsbury's	Superdrug
Tesco	Phones 4 U
Waitrose	Vodafone
	Waterstones

Multiple traders have a countrywide presence and are well known household names. Regional shops are identified as those with stores / units in several towns throughout one geographical region only and Independent shops are identified as those that are specific to a particular town.





The following table provides a percentage of the A1 Shops which are Key Attractors, Multiples, Regional and Independent to the locality.

	National Small Towns %	Houghton Regis 2019 %
Key Attractor	8	0
Multiple	21	36
Regional	10	7
Independent	61	57

57% of the A1 Shops are unique to Houghton Regis whilst 36% have a nationwide presence.





KPI: COMMERCIAL UNITS VACANCY RATES

Vacant units are an important indicator of the vitality and viability of a town centre. The presence of vacant units over a period of time can identify potential weaknesses in a town centre, whether due to locational criteria, high rent levels or strong competition from other centres.

The following table provides the percentage figure of vacant units from the total number of commercial units.

	National Small Towns %	Houghton Regis 2019 %
Vacancy	9	5

5% of the ground floor units were vacant at the time of the Audit compared to the National Small Towns average of 9%.





KPI; MARKETS

Good quality markets provide competition and choice for consumers. A busy and well-used street market can therefore be a good indicator of the vitality of a town centre. Conversely, if a market is in decline (e.g. empty pitches reducing numbers), it can be an indication of potential weaknesses in the town centre e.g. a lack of footfall customers due to an inappropriate retail mix or increased competitor activity. Street markets can also generate substantial benefits for the local economy. Markets can also provide a local mechanism for a diverse range of local enterprises to start, flourish and grow, adding to the sustainable mix of shops services on offer throughout the town.

The following table provides the average number of market traders at the main regular (at least once a fortnight) weekday market within the locality.

	National Small Towns	Houghton Regis 2019
Traders	15	n/a





KPI: FOOTFALL

The arrival and movement of people, whether as residents, workers, visitors or a shopper is vital to the success of the majority of businesses within the town centre. The more people that are attracted to the town, the better it trades and the more prosperous the businesses in it become, provided there is ample available disposable income in that population. Measuring passing people in a consistent manner in the same place, at the same time builds up a picture of the town, its traders and their relative success over the weeks and months.

Benchmarking footfall is conducted in specific locations for a set period, between 10.00am to 1.00pm, counting the people passing in both directions through a fixed point (e.g. an imaginary line across the road) for a precise ten minutes in every hour (e.g. 10.00–10.10am, 11.20am-11.30am, 12.40pm-12.50pm). Aside from the above basic rules are applied to the process;

- *An accurate stopwatch and a hand operated mechanical counter are used*
- *If a person walks passed more than once they are included in the count each time they pass through the 'line'*
- *Children under 12 are not included in the count*
- *Footfall counts are not conducted in the rain*

The following table provides the average number of people per 10 minutes between 10am and 1pm from the busiest footfall location in the locality on the relevant days recorded.

	National Small Towns	Houghton Regis 2019
Busy Day	110	83
Quiet Day	105	64

Footfall on the Busy Day was 83 persons per ten minutes, lower than the National Small Towns average of 110. On the Quiet Day footfall dropped to 64 persons per ten minutes, once again lower than the National average of 105.





The following tables provide the full detail of each footfall count.

Busy Day Footfall Count: Thursday 20th June 2019

	Ladbrokes to Poundstretcher, Bedford Square	Kings Arms to Dental Centre, High Street
10.30-10.40	66	42
11.30-11.40	87	38
12.30-12.40	96	58
TOTAL	249	138
AVERAGE	83	46

Quiet Day Footfall Count: Monday 22nd July 2019

	Ladbrokes to Poundstretcher, Bedford Square	Kings Arms to Dental Centre, High Street
10.30-10.40	42	38
11.30-11.40	61	46
12.30-12.40	88	68
TOTAL	191	152
AVERAGE	64	51





KPI: CAR PARKING

A large proportion of spending customers in a town centre come by car. In the rural setting, the car tends to be an essential tool, used by both those who come to spend and those who come to work. The provision of adequate and convenient car parking facilities is therefore a key element of town centre vitality. An acceptable number of available spaces with a regular, quick turn-over for shoppers are the ideal while adequate longer stay, less convenient spaces for local owners/ workers and visitors must be considered too.

Within the town on street and off parking within the core commercial offering were identified as being integral to the study. The following tables provide a summary of the Car Parking offering broken down into the;

- Percentage number of spaces in the designated car parks.
- Percentage number of short stay, long stay and disabled spaces in designated car parks
- Percentage of vacant spaces in designated car parks on a Busy Day and on a Quiet Day
- Percentage number of on street car parking spaces
- Percentage number of on street short stay, long stay and disabled spaces
- Percentage of vacant on street spaces on a Busy Day and on a Quiet Day
- Overall percentage of short stay, long stay and disabled spaces
- Overall percentage of vacant spaces on a Busy Day and on a Quiet Day





	National Small Towns %	Houghton Regis 2019 %
Car Park:		
Total Spaces:	83	95
Short Stay Spaces: (4 hours and under)	42	92
Long Stay Spaces: (Over 4 hours)	54	0
Disabled Spaces:	5	8
Not Registered	0	0
Vacant Spaces on a Busy Day:	30	30
Vacant Spaces on a Quiet Day:	36	50
On Street:		
Total Spaces:	17	5
Short Stay Spaces: (4 hours and under)	78	0
Long Stay Spaces: (Over 4 hours)	15	100
Disabled Spaces:	6	0
Not Registered	1	0
Vacant Spaces on a Busy Day:	14	0
Vacant Spaces on a Quiet Day:	17	0





Overall	National Small Towns %	Houghton Regis 2019 %
Total Spaces:	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>
Short Stay Spaces: (4 hours and under)	48	87
Long Stay Spaces: (Over 4 hours)	47	5
Disabled Spaces:	5	7
Not Registered	0	0
Vacant Spaces on a Busy Day:	27	29
Vacant Spaces on a Quiet Day:	33	47

95% of car parking spaces in Houghton Regis are off street. Overall on the Busy Day in 29% of all car parking provision was vacant, slightly higher than the National Small Towns figure of 29%. On the Quiet vacancy rate increased to 47%, 14% higher than the National average.





KPI: BUSINESS CONFIDENCE SURVEY

In regard to the 'business confidence' by establishing the trading conditions of town centre businesses, stakeholders can focus their regeneration efforts on building on existing strengths and addressing any specific issues. The following percentage figures are based on the 1 returned Business Confidence Surveys.

	National Small Towns %	Houghton Regis 2019 %
Nature of Business		
Retail	60	100
Financial/ Professional Services	11	0
Public Sector	2	0
Food and Drink	12	0
Accommodation	2	0
Other	14	0
Type of Business		
Multiple Trader	11	0
Regional	6	0
Independent	83	100
How long has your business been in the town		
Less than a year	8	0
One to Five Years	20	0
Six to Ten Years	13	0
More than Ten Years	59	100





	National Small Towns %	Houghton Regis 2019 %
Compared to last year has your turnover		
Increased	39	0
Stayed the Same	27	0
Decreased	34	100
Compared to last year has your profitability		
Increased	30	0
Stayed the Same	32	0
Decreased	39	100
Over the next 12 months do you think your turnover will...		
Increase	42	0
Stay the Same	39	100
Decrease	19	0





What are the positive aspects of the Town Centre?	National Small Towns %	Houghton Regis 2019 %
Physical appearance	50	0
Prosperity of the town	42	0
Labour Pool	15	0
Geographical location	47	0
Mix of Retail Offer	50	100
Potential tourist customers	36	0
Potential local customers	74	0
Affordable Housing	16	0
Transport Links	41	0
Footfall	31	0
Car Parking	27	0
Rental Value/ Property Costs	12	0
Market(s)	13	0
Events/ Activities	20	0
Marketing/Promotions	10	0
Local Partnerships/ Organisations	20	0
Other	4	0





What are the negative aspects of the Town Centre?	National Small Towns %	Houghton Regis 2019 %
Physical appearance	18	0
Prosperity of the town	22	100
Labour Pool	16	100
Geographical location	8	0
Mix of Retail Offer	25	0
Number of Vacant Units	47	0
Potential tourist customers	13	0
Potential local customers	5	0
Affordable Housing	14	0
Transport Links	15	0
Footfall	23	0
Car Parking	44	100
Rental Value/ Property costs	25	0
Market(s)	9	0
Local business competition	21	0
Competition from other localities	29	0
Competition from out of town shopping	39	100
Competition from the internet	44	0
Events/ Activities	6	0
Marketing/ Promotions	6	0
Local Partnerships/ Organisations	6	0
Other	10	0





	National Small Towns %	Houghton Regis 2019 %
Has your business suffered from any crime over the last 12 months		
Yes	27	100
No	73	0
Type of Crime		
Theft	66	0
Criminal Damage	2775	0
Abuse	12	100
Other	8	0

What TWO suggestions would you make to improve the economic performance of the town centre?

- Attract national retailers, improve existing shopping centre.





KPI: TOWN CENTRE USERS SURVEY

The aim of the Town Centre Users Survey is to establish how your town is seen by those people who use it. By asking visitors, of all types, a more detailed picture can be obtained as what matters to regular visitors can be very different to someone who has never been to the place before. In total **266** Town Centre User Surveys were completed. The following percentage figures are based upon the total number of respondents to each question.

	National Small Towns %	Houghton Regis 2019 %
Gender		
Male	32	33
Female	67	64
Prefer not to answer	1	3
Age		
16-25	6	4
26-35	15	9
36-45	24	16
46-55	23	20
56-65	17	22
Over 65	14	25
Prefer not to answer	1	4
What do you generally visit the Town Centre for?		
Work	11	8
Convenience Shopping	44	58
Comparison Shopping	6	0
Access Services	16	20
Leisure	16	4
Other	9	11

58% of Town Centre Users generally visit Houghton Regis for Convenience Shopping, 14% higher than the National Small Towns average.





	National Small Towns %	Houghton Regis 2019 %
How often do you visit the Town Centre		
Daily	23	8
More than once a week	37	34
Weekly	21	26
Fortnightly	7	9
More than once a Month	5	6
Once a Month or Less	8	16
		0
How do you normally travel into the Town Centre?		
On Foot	40	36
Bicycle	1	2
Motorbike	0	0
Car	55	56
Bus	2	4
Other	0	2
On average, on your normal visit to the Town Centre how much do you normally spend?		
Nothing	3	2
£0.01-£5.00	11	16
£5.01-£10.00	23	23
£10.01-£20.00	32	25
£20.01-£50.00	26	27
More than £50.00	6	7

68% of Town Centre Users visit Houghton Regis at least Once a Week. 56% of respondents travel to the town centre by Car.

52% of Town Centre Users spend £10.01-£50.00 on a normal visit to Houghton Regis compared to the National Small Towns average of 58%.





What are the positive general aspects of the Town Centre?	National Small Towns %	Houghton Regis 2019 %
Physical appearance	45	5
Cleanliness	40	18
Retail Offer	22	13
Customer Service	24	12
Cafes/ Restaurants	56	16
Access to Services	57	51
Leisure Facilities	14	n/a
Events	20	9
Pubs/ Bars	29	6
Public Toilets	20	22
Transport Links	14	16
Ease of walking around the town centre	59	33
Convenience e.g. near where you live	69	61
Safety	23	7
Car Parking	27	26
Markets	25	n/a
Other	6	11

Convenience e.g. near where you live (61%) and Access to Services (51%) were classed as positive aspects of Houghton Regis by Town Centre Users.





What are the negative general aspects of the Town Centre?	National Small Towns %	Houghton Regis 2019 %
Physical appearance	25	70
Cleanliness	19	41
Retail Offer	47	47
Customer Service	7	10
Cafes/ Restaurants	12	24
Access to Services	12	1
Leisure Facilities	27	26
Events	20	14
Pubs/ Bars	14	18
Public Toilets	25	26
Transport Links	19	5
Ease of walking around the town centre	10	7
Convenience e.g. near where you live	3	3
Safety	16	50
Car Parking	43	44
Markets	15	n/a
Other	17	13

50% of Town Centre Users classed Safety as a negative aspect of Houghton Regis by Town Centre Users, 34% higher than the National Small Towns figure. Retail Offer (47%) and Car Parking (44%) were also classed as negative aspects of Houghton Regis by Town Centre Users.





	National Small Towns %	Houghton Regis 2019 %
How long do you stay in the Town Centre?		
Less than an hour	35	66
1-2 Hours	44	28
2-4 Hours	13	3
4-6 Hours	3	1
All Day	4	0
Other	1	2
Would you recommend a visit to the Town Centre?		
Yes	72	33
No	28	67

94% of Town Centre Users spent less than 2 hours in the town centre, 15% higher than the National Small Towns average.

67% of Town Centre Users would not recommend a visit to Houghton Regis, 39% higher than the National figure.

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

Do you visit the Town Centre to attend any of the listed events?	%
Easter Egg Hunt	34
Red Nose Day	19
Santa's Grotto	22
Other	64

28% of Town Centre Users indicated that they attended Events in Houghton Regis, 64% of whom stated that these were 'Other' with the key theme the 'Carnival'.





What are the two greatest challenges to town centre performance/ What two suggestions would you make to improve town centre performance?

*Please note all comments have been copied directly from respondents submissions so may contain grammatical errors.

'Lack of Retail Offer' was cited:

- *more retail opportunities*
- *A wider variety of shops.*
- *Clothing retail*
- *Incentivize shops to come to Square*
- *Increase the choice of shops. Create a proper High Street with shops on the High Street.*

'Car Parking' was considered to be a challenge to the town centre:

- *Better parking*
- *More parking of all aspect*
- *Improved parking*
- *Bigger car park*
- *Pay and display*
- *parking like RingGo*

'Anti-Social Behaviour/ Police Presence' was another theme to emerge:

- *full time security patrol (Every single day Poundstretchers has thieves/kids stealing and chucking their stock about)*
- *make sure there is no one sitting drinking beer that is bad for the town and to see police officers doing there job*
- *Community Policing Zero tolerance to petty crime*
- *Stop Teenagers hanging around the streets.*
- *Get rid of drunkards and groups of teenagers*
- *Added security*

What two suggestions would you make to improve the town centre?

*Please note all comments have been copied directly from respondents submissions so may contain grammatical errors.





KPI: SHOPPERS ORIGIN SURVEY

The Shoppers Origin Survey tracks the general area that your town centre visitors originate from. The data can be used to target local marketing or promotional literature. It can also be used as evidence of the success of such campaigns by gauging the penetration into the population.

The postcodes gathered from businesses are split into 3 categories to be able to compare with other towns. The categories are:

- Locals; those who live within a Post Code covering the town
- Visitors; those who live within a Post Code less than a 30-minute drive away
- Tourists; those who live within a Post Code further than a 30-minute drive away

	National Small Towns %	Houghton Regis 2019 %
Locals	55	n/a
Visitors	29	n/a
Tourists	15	n/a





Appendix

Business Unit Database

Street Name	Business Name	Use Class	Type	Type	Notes
High Street	Morrisons	A1	Conv	Mult	
High Street	Gulf Garage/ Georgina SS	B1	n/a	n/a	
High Street	Lady Spencer Residential Care	C2	n/a	n/a	
High Street	GRS	B1	n/a	n/a	
High Street	GRS	B1	n/a	n/a	
High Street	Trident House Offices	B1	n/a	n/a	
High Street	Houghton Insurance	A2	n/a	n/a	
High Street	Brighter Software	B1	n/a	n/a	
High Street	Sandys and Kirstys	A1	Comp	Ind	
High Street	Wilson Car Sales	SG	n/a	n/a	
High Street	Houghtons	B1	n/a	n/a	
High Street	The Kings Arms	A4	n/a	n/a	
High Street	All Saints Church	D1	n/a	n/a	
Bedford Road	East Ocean	A5	n/a	n/a	
Bedford Square	Hair.Comb	A1	Comp	Ind	
Bedford Square	Poundstretcher	A1	Comp	Mult	
Bedford Square	Bedford Square Centre	B1	n/a	n/a	
Bedford Square	Benedicts	A1	Comp	Ind	
Bedford Square	Lloyds Pharmacy	A1	Comp	Mult	
Bedford Square	TWP Flooring	A1	Comp	Reg	
Bedford Square	Age UK	A1	Comp	Mult	
Bedford Square	D and S	A1	Comp	Ind	
Bedford Square	Razor	A1	Comp	Ind	
Bedford Square	Cinamon Lounge	A4	n/a	n/a	
Bedford Square	China House	A5	n/a	n/a	
Bedford Square	Ladbrokes	A2	n/a	n/a	
Bedford Square	JS Homestyle	A1	Comp	Ind	
Bedford Square	Nevil Food and Wine	A1	Conv	Ind	
Bedford Square	Café and Smoothie Bar	n/a	n/a	n/a	Vacant
Bedford Square	Istanbul Takeaway	n/a	n/a	n/a	Vacant
Bedford Square	Greggs	A3	n/a	n/a	
Bedford Square	D and I Family Butcher	A1	Conv	Ind	
Bedford Square	Brown and White	A1	Comp	Mult	
Bedford Square	Zebra	A2	n/a	n/a	
Peel Street	Houghton Regis Medical Centre	D1	n/a	n/a	





Peel Street	Town Council	B1	n/a	n/a	
High Street	Rosalyn House	C2	n/a	n/a	
High Street	Houghton Regis Dental Care	D1	n/a	n/a	
King Street	Autolusso	B1	n/a	n/a	





Car Parking Database

Name:	Morrisons
On Street/ Car Park:	Car Park
Total Spaces:	168
Short Stay Spaces: (4 hours and under)	152
Long Stay Spaces: (Over 4 hours)	0
Disabled Spaces:	16
Vacant Spaces on Busy Day:	121
Vacant Spaces on Quiet Day:	69

Name:	Bedford Square
On Street/ Car Park:	Car Park
Total Spaces:	34
Short Stay Spaces: (4 hours and under)	32
Long Stay Spaces: (Over 4 hours)	0
Disabled Spaces:	2
Vacant Spaces on Busy Day:	5
Vacant Spaces on Quiet Day:	9

Name:	Medical Centre
On Street/ Car Park:	Car Park
Total Spaces:	54
Short Stay Spaces: (4 hours and under)	52
Long Stay Spaces: (Over 4 hours)	0
Disabled Spaces:	2
Vacant Spaces on Busy Day:	2
Vacant Spaces on Quiet Day:	0

Name:	King Street
On Street/ Car Park:	On Street
Total Spaces:	14
Short Stay Spaces: (4 hours and under)	0
Long Stay Spaces: (Over 4 hours)	14
Disabled Spaces:	0
Vacant Spaces on Busy Day:	0
Vacant Spaces on Quiet Day:	0



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**HOUGHTON REGIS PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE –
WORK PLAN 2019-2020**

WORK PLAN 2019-2020

Meeting Date	Regular Updates	Work Plan 2018-2019
23 July 2019	CBC Update report Joint Committee review HRN 2 Community Building Estate Regeneration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work Plan • Estate Regeneration plan • CBC and HRTC budgets – impact on HR • Houghton Central – update • Integrated Health hub - update • Houghton Regis Academy • Kingsland • Leisure and Sports provision • S106 Projects
29 October 2019	CBC Update report Joint Committee review HRN 2 Community Building Estate Regeneration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Houghton Hall Park update • Parking Strategy and Tithe Farm car park • Chalk Pit – Management and Maintenance
28 April 2020	CBC Update report Joint Committee review HRN 2 Community Building Estate Regeneration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Safety

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**HOUGHTON REGIS PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE –
WORK PLAN 2020-2021**

WORK PLAN 2020-2021 - Draft

Work Plan 2020-2021	
Meeting Date	Regular Updates
July 2020	CBC Update report Work Plan Town Centre Benchmarking Task & Finish Group
October 2020	CBC Update report Work Plan Town Centre Benchmarking Task & Finish Group
January 2021	CBC Update report Work Plan Town Centre Benchmarking Task & Finish Group
April 2021	CBC Update report Work Plan Town Centre Benchmarking Task & Finish Group

The following suggestions are put forward, the timings of these reports / presentations will be confirmed once the content of the work plan has been agreed:

DRAFT

- Community Buildings in Houghton Regis (inc. HRN 2 Community Building, Bedford Square Community Centre)
- Estate Regeneration
- Chalk pit
- Kingsland / HR Leisure Centre
- Windsor Drive Recreation Ground / future development
- Tithe Farm sports provision
- Improving Health & Wellbeing In Houghton Regis

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CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL UPDATE

Purpose of report: For information

CONTENTS

1. COMMUNITY SAFETY
2. LEISURE, LIBRARIES & COUNTRYSIDE
3. HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORT
4. BUSINESS, INVESTMENT & SKILLS
5. YOUTH SUPPORT SERVICES
6. SCHOOLS
7. PLANNING
8. PARTNERSHIPS & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
9. SOCIAL CARE, HEALTH & HOUSING
10. PUBLIC HEALTH
11. PUBLIC PROTECTION
12. ENVIROMENTAL SERVICES
13. CONSULTATIONS

1. COMMUNITY SAFETY

CCTV REPORTS

NOVEMBER

Date	Time	Location	Type of Crime	Arrests
05/11/2019	21:03	Bedford Square	Intelligence	0
10/11/2019	20:12	Tithe Farm Road	Intelligence	0
15/11/2019	17:10	Bedford Square	ASB	0
16/11/2019	14:48	Bedford Square	ASB	0
26/11/2019	18:53	Bedford Square	Intelligence	0
27/11/2019	17:21	Bedford Square	Intelligence	0
28/11/2019	18:05	Bedford Square	Intelligence	0

COMMUNITY SAFETY OPERATIONS TEAM

Type	Amount
Fly-tipping	3
Nuisance Neighbours	5
Pollution/Noise	6
Pollution/Odour	2
Rowdy/Inconsiderate Behaviour	3
Vehicle Nuisance	1

2. LEISURE, LIBRARIES & COUNTRYSIDE

HOUGHTON REGIS LEISURE CENTRE

Centre Usage has grown, by an average of 3% growth over last 3 month compared to Sept-November 18 and overall 11% increase for the first 11 months of the 2019 compared to the same time in 2018.

Jan-18	Feb-18	Mar-18	Apr-18	May-18	Jun-18	Jul-18	Aug-18	Sep-18	Oct-18	Nov-18	Total Usage
18380	17265	18024	18098	17508	17414	16555	15156	16749	18630	18814	192593
Jan-19	Feb-19	Mar-19	Apr-19	May-19	Jun-19	Jul-19	Aug-19	Sep-19	Oct-19	Nov-19	Dec-19

21763	19004	20982	19631	20157	19685	19236	17828	18161	19038	18176	213661
18%	10%	16%	8%	15%	13%	16%	18%	8%	2%	0%	

MAKE A MOVE CHALLENGE

Houghton Regis Leisure Centre entered a national gym challenge 'Make A Move Challenge'. This is a Technogym challenge with everyone who signs up to this challenge has a chance for the Leisure Centre of winning prizes. As a centre they collected 434,028 Moves and came 30 out 135 health clubs in the nation.

WOW AWARDS

Jay-Lewis one of the fitness instructors winning this award consistently provided excellent customer care not only in the gym, but also covering a range of classes from Spinning to Boxing and Circuits.

Kim – the Zumba instructor, her nomination from her Zumba class member for providing fun fitness classes with her latin-infused Zumba® flair.

Rachel the Swim Manager was been awarded a Wow Award for excellent customer service.

Rachel was nominated by one of her AquaEd student parents for showing patience and encouragement when he was struggling to learn. She has worked in motivating him to pass through the stages within the group classes and allowed him to excel.

Julie one of the swim instructor Julie was nominated by one of her AquaEd students due to the support and encouragement Julie showed during our Distance night awards. Through Julie's encouragement her student managed to swim twice the distance they expected to swim and improved their swimming technique so much they passed through onto the next stage.

THE LEISURE CENTRE UNDERTOOK A COUNTDOWN TO CHRISTMAS

With prizes and offering throughout December ranging from gym goers taking part of a 12 days of fitness Christmas challenge- visit the centre 12 times in December and get your fitness card signed to enter a prize draw. To the leisure centre promoting mental health and wellbeing.

HOUGHTON REGIS LIBRARY

INCONSIDERATE BEHAVIOUR

We've had a small group of young people who were being a regular nuisance with one incident of damage to property. The police have been involved and a Community Protection Order is in place with the young people involved. Since this we've had no further issues.

STAFF RECRUITMENT

We are now fully staffed, have begun planning and running more events in the library.

NEW EVENTS/GROUPS

To date our new events include a Board Games Afternoon, Tea and Cake Morning and a children's Reading Group. We are looking to add an additional Reading Group for children, an adults craft group and trialling a new Playdoh group for toddlers over the next quarter.

HRTC'S GROTTTO

Santa's Grotto with HRTC was a great success, in the library we had over 1,000 visitors.

VOLUNTEERS

One of our long standing volunteers has withdrawn from duties for home commitments, we have recruited a young volunteer who'd like to gain experience to enhance future job opportunities.

SCHOOL VISITS

We have a school visit planned in February.

HOUGHTON HALL PARK

WE ACHIEVED

- A varied and popular autumn calendar of events with pre-booked activities often being sold out in advance.
- Highest engagement levels from volunteer numbers in the project to date with a very dedicated base of volunteers based in the kitchen garden.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- Creation of Houghton Hall Park totem pole by chainsaw artist, with the design inspired from children in the community following an invitation to submit entries.
- Festive garland making workshops incredibly well attended with all sessions fully sold out.
- Introduction of indoor welfare unit and undercover gardening areas for volunteers to facilitate engagement opportunities.

KEY ISSUES

- Challenges with event administration due to absence of online booking system
- Ongoing vandalism and litter in the key areas of issues, although lesser than in summer months due to darker evenings acting as a deterrent

LOOKING FORWARD

We are planning:

- Big Garden Bird Watch Day event 26th January

COUNTRYSIDE SITES

- The HLF bid for the Luton, Dunstable and Houghton Regis area (now called 'Chalkscapes') was submitted on the 18th November 2019. The bid is for approximately £2m and, if successful, will involve a partnership of conservation and community groups coming together to work to raise awareness of, and improve, the wildlife, landscape and heritage of the south Bedfordshire chalk landscapes. If successful, there will be a 2-year period to build partnerships and engagement before the project launches. Project partners include; Chilterns Conservation Board (lead), Central Bedfordshire Council, The Wildlife Trusts, National Trust, Luton Borough Council etc. The results will be announced at the end of March 2020.
- The Totternhoe Area Group met on the 25th November 2019 and discussed issues such as Maiden Bower, Green Lane access, inappropriate usage of the Green Lanes and management of nature reserves and rights of way.

ACTIVE LIFESTYLES

LOOKING BACK

- **Xplorer**
Houghton Hall Park – October half term 2 hr session – 219 Participants
- **Active Lifestyle Referrals**
75 people referred via their GP into Active Lifestyles Referral Scheme
- **Seated Exercise & Boccia sessions running in the following settings:**
Red House Court: 6-8 participants attending weekly
- **Zumba Gold**
Houghton Regis 6-8 participants attending weekly Sandringham Hub Houghton Regis.

LOOKING FORWARD

Falls prevention

Leisure services – Physical Activity Team have been working in partnership with Beds Clinical Commissioning Team to pilot the provision of community-based falls prevention strength and balance programme for residents at risk of or having suffered a fall. Sessions will be community based within a leisure centre setting, offering a fixed number of group sessions with falls prevention education and strength and balance exercise.

How to refer?

Each surgery in Chiltern Vale have been sent hard copies of the referral form and an information pack however if you have access to System One/Ardens then the form can be found online and should self-populate with the customers details. If you are not linked to a surgery then please email activityforhealth@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk and we can send you a link, Once complete the referral form needs to be emailed to activityforhealth@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Where: Houghton Regis Leisure Centre, Parkside Drive, Houghton Regis, LU5 5PY

Estimated start date: week commencing 3rd February 2020 and there will be 2 sessions per week.

COMING SOON

Health & Wellbeing Kiosks

Leisure services at Central Bedfordshire Council are investing in a secure, cloud hosted digital health solution built around a highly accurate, clinically validated body composition device. A device that we can customise by adding a range of additional features, integrations with our own systems and other devices to provide a wraparound package to record, track and report on our customers health and fitness journey. Boditrax have created the world's only clinical grade (MDD Medical Device Directive) cloud hosted full segmental, self-service Body composition Analyser. Boditrax is used across the medical, fitness and corporate workplace sectors. Providing individuals with access to a kiosk in a public setting will enable them to self-monitor and continue to improve their healthy lifestyle choices.

If a customer has taken part in a time limited programme this tool will enable them to continue to monitor their own health and provide information on additional services if needed and signpost to additional support where required.

3. HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORT

WORKS COMPLETED

LOCATION	WORKS
Peel Street, Houghton Regis	SYL sign needed and post 7AM-7PM opposite bus stop on the Tithe Farm Road o/s doctor's surgery on the junction with Tithe Farm Road
Peel Street, Houghton Regis	SYL sign needed and post 7AM-7PM next to the side of house 2 Tithe Farm Road near to the Town Council Offices
Peel Street, Houghton Regis	SYL sign needed and post 7AM-7PM o/s doctor's surgery
91 Elm Court, Houghton Regis	Behind 91 Elm Court, disabled sign needed

From 1st October – 19th December

86 CN's have been issued in Houghton Regis and 231 visits have been made.

4. BUSINESS, INVESTMENT & SKILLS

For the period October – December we received a total of 30 commercial property search enquiries, a 15% increase on the previous 2 quarters. Of these enquiries 9 focus solely on Dunstable/Houghton Regis. Enquiries were spread equally across a variety of property types including Industrial, Office and Retail. There has been an increase in the number of inward investment enquiries resulting in an almost equal split of enquiries from new inward investors to existing Central Bedfordshire companies looking to expand and/or relocate within the area and start-up.

We continue to work with businesses in the Houghton Regis area through our business engagement programme, offering business & relocation support and working with them to support initiatives including Find Your Future careers event which will be held on the 18 March 2020, Give an Hour schools campaign, Supported internships and the newly established local Careers Hub for schools covering Dunstable, Houghton Regis and Luton.

With regards to commercial developments in the area, the developers First Panattoni who are currently developing two warehouses by M1, J11A, next door to Vauxhall, their first unit is near completion with DETA Electrical expecting to move from their Luton premises in March 2020.

DETA Electrical – The team has been working with Deta Electrical who are relocating from their Luton base to a new distribution centre near Junction 11A of the M1. They are a market leading manufacturer and distributor of high-quality wiring and electrical accessories. Deta is well established as a leading supplier to the UK electrical wholesale market and has a strong presence in the Middle East, Africa and the Caribbean. The new site will allow them to increase a current warehouse holding of 4,000 pallets to nearly treble the amount at 11,000. This is mainly due to extra height in the new building and the square footage

will increase from 55,000 to 69,000 Sq. ft. They expect to bring their existing staff from Luton and are likely to increase their numbers from 73 to 86 employees once they move in March 2020.

BEDFORDSHIRE EMPLOYMENT & SKILLS SERVICE (BESS)

Since the beginning of the current academic year (01 August 2019), 30 Houghton Regis residents have enrolled onto one or more BESS courses across Central Bedfordshire (only 12 of these undertook courses being held in Houghton Regis, others travelled into Dunstable and Bedford). Of these learners, 16 were employed, 9 were unemployed seeking work and 5 were unemployed but not yet ready to start looking for employment. Sometimes the latter have such significant barriers to employment they are not yet ready to start working but are taking the first steps towards doing so.

This year, courses being held in Houghton Regis include Maths, English, ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages), Basic ICT and Preparation for Work and are running at the Kingsland Skills and Enterprise Centre (next to the former UTC building) and in the Bedford Square Community Centre.

HIGH STREET VACANCY LEVELS

According to Springboard, in collaboration with the BRC, the national town centre vacancy rate in October 2019 was 10%. This is a small decrease on the previous quarter rate of 10.3 which was the highest rate since January 2015, (retail Gazette & BRC- Springboard footfall and vacancies monitor, October 2019).

Central Bedfordshire Council monitors the level of town centre retail unit vacancies across 11 towns. Much recent work has been done to produce a comprehensive audit of town centre units and this has meant there have been some changes to the overall number of units. Pottton has also been added to the Council's monitoring. For these reasons it is difficult to compare November's vacancy levels with those of the previous year.

The overall vacancy rate across Central Bedfordshire's town centres in November 2019 was 5.99%. There were a total of 952 retail units counted in our town centres and of these, 57 were vacant. On average, towns in Central Bedfordshire have a vacancy rate of 5.26%. The closure of banks, online shopping and the popularity of out-of-centre retail parks continues to have an impact on footfall in our town centres.

Town Centre vacancies, November 2019

Town	Total town centre retail units	Vacant town centre retail units	Town Centre vacancy rate
Amphill	91	3	3.30
Arlesey	16	3	18.75
Biggleswade	157	14	8.92
Dunstable	240	23	9.58
Flitwick	47	1	2.13
Houghton Regis	26	0	0.00
Leighton Buzzard	226	6	2.65
Pottton	25	0	0.00

Sandy	64	5	7.81
Shefford	42	2	4.76
Stotfold	18	0	0.00
Total	951	57	5.99

Source: Central Bedfordshire Council November 2019

Town Centre vacancy rates in Central Bedfordshire, August 2018 – November 2019

Town	Aug 18	Nov 18	Feb 19	May 19	Aug 19	Nov 19
Amptill	5.6	6.67	5.56	4.44	5.49	3.30
Arlesey	0.0	0.00	0.00	6.67	12.50	18.75
Biggleswade	4.8	3.45	2.68	10.39	8.44	8.92
Dunstable	13.4	12.6	10.66	11.89	10.83	9.58
Flitwick	5.1	2.56	2.22	4.44	4.44	2.13
Houghton Regis	6.9	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Leighton Buzzard	4.4	2.96	3.52	4.85	3.98	2.65
Potton	-	-	-	-	4.00	0.00
Sandy	4.5	5.97	6.56	6.67	7.94	7.81
Shefford	2.6	2.56	2.63	4.88	7.32	4.76
Stotfold	0.0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Average rate	4.7%	3.7%	3.4%	5.42%	5.9%	5.26

Source: Central Bedfordshire Council November 2019

5. YOUTH SUPPORT SERVICES

The figures presented below are based on the data stored within the Youth Support Service's CCIS database for young people who are currently not in education, employment or training (NEET) recorded on the 20th December 2019. Home visits will be conducted by the Youth Support Service during December and January. This will mean that values will fluctuate throughout this period as information is received and recorded.

UPDATE ON NEETS WITHIN THE WIDER CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE AREA

Headline Figures for the whole Central Bedfordshire area			
Cohort	Total number of young people	Positive destinations (EET)	NEET destinations
16 year olds / Year 12	3034	2938 (96.8%)	67 (2.2%)
17 year olds / Year 13	2885	2710 (93.9%)	94 (3.2%)

Combined cohort	5919	5648 (95.4%)	161.7%
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OVERVIEW FOR THE HOUGHTON REGIS AREA COMPARED TO OTHER LOCAL AREAS

	Dunstable		Houghton Regis		Leighton Buzzard	
Total YPs in area	860		486		904	
EET	819	95.2%	461	94.9%	864	95.6%
NEET	34	4.0%	23	4.7%	11	3.6%
Unknown/Refused	7*	0.8%	2*	0.4%	4*	1.3%

* Includes 'Year 11 transition' destinations. These are destinations related to those year 11's who have just left compulsory education and no new destination have been recorded.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE NEET GROUP IN THE HOUGHTON REGIS AREA

a) Summary of the individual Houghton Regis wards

Ward	Total number of YPs in the Year 12-13 cohort	Total number of YPs recorded as NEET	% of NEET within ward
Tithe Farm	155	9	5.8%
Houghton Hall	199	10	5.0%
Parkside	132	4	3.0%
Total	486	23	4.7%

b) Summary of the Houghton Regis NEET cohort by age, time and gender

Actual Age (Year 12 & 13)		Length of Time NEET		Gender	
16 years old	3	Less than 3 months	8	Male	11
17 years old	13	3 - 6 months	10	Female	12
18 years old	7	6+ months	5	Other/Refused	0

c) Summary status of the Houghton Regis NEET cohort

Status		
Seeking Employment or Training	19	82.6%
Unable to work due to 'Personal Circumstances'	4	17.4%

6. SCHOOLS

SCHOOL ADMISSIONS

The transfer to Secondary and Upper school for 2020 admission closed on 31st October 2019.

A total of **989** Secondary and **1907** Upper on time applications were received. The closing date for late applications is **16 March 2020** and parents will be notified of the decision on 20 April 2020

Allocation and first preference information will be published on the Councils website on **2 March 2020**.

Starting school and Transfer to Middle school application deadline was the 15th January 2020.

Parents are encouraged to apply for a place online via our school admission web pages [here](#) which contain a wealth of information including the deadline dates for applications, school catchment areas, deferred entries, making an application on religious/faith grounds and how places are allocated.

SCHOOL ORGANISATION

Up to 43,000 new homes are expected in Central Bedfordshire by 2035. The Council's Schools for the Future Programme has been established to ensure that we plan for the new school places that will be needed in the longer term and ensure that we have them in the right places delivering the best education

In response to both the forecast demographic growth and the forecast deficit in secondary school places in Houghton Regis, the Council's Executive, at their meeting on 8 October, approved the proposal to build a new secondary school on the Kingsland Campus in Houghton Regis (subject to planning), through the 'Free Schools Presumption Process'. The Executive's decision was dully supported by Full Council (on 14 November 2019) and the new school will be built and operated as an academy and the Council will work to secure a sponsor for the new provision.

The Greenwood Academies Trust has applied to the Department for Education to close Houghton Regis Academy, due to the suitability of the academy's buildings and a deficit of over £1.1 million at the end of August 2019. In response to this, the Secretary of State has agreed in principle to the closure and we await the launch of a 'listening period' for all stakeholders regarding the proposed closure.

Plans are progressing to expand Thornhill Primary School, Grove Road, Houghton Regis by 60 places in each year group for September 2021, which is also in response to the current and future significant housing development on land north of Houghton Regis, known as HRN1.

7. PLANNING

The Houghton Regis North development is currently under construction. This site is split into two main development sites (Linnere, located to the east of Bedford Road, and Bidwell West, to the west of Bedford Road). The total proposed development will provide around 7,000 dwellings and 40ha of employment land. Both sites have outline planning permission.

Several detailed applications have been considered and approved for Bidwell West. At this moment in time, the Council have approved 1,577 dwellings associated with this development.

Two applications have been submitted for the Linnere site, which are currently under consideration by the Council. The applications are for a new 2FE primary school (to form an extension to Thornhill Primary School) and for a 32ha employment site, which will serve as a regional distribution centre for Lidl. These applications are expected to be determined in Spring 2020.

8. PARTNERSHIPS & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

CHEERING VOLUNTEERING 2020



Cheering Volunteering will take place on Thursday 4. June at the Grove Theatre, Dunstable. All Members are invited to attend and will be able to book seats directly with the Grove. The call for nominations to the six categories of Volunteer of the Year, Young Volunteer, Volunteer group, Lifetime Achievement, Outstanding Contribution , Sports and Wellbeing is open.

https://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/info/27/about_your_council/279/stronger_communities/7

BT PAYPHONE REMOVAL – CONSULTATION

Following the first phase of community consultation, we have received 209 representations regarding BT's proposals to remove 30 public payphones across Central Bedfordshire.

As part of the process, we are required to undertake public consultation and to inform BT of the results. The second phase of the consultation which ran from 17 December 2019 closed on Tuesday 21 January 2020 enabled town and parish councils and residents to comment on whether they agreed or objected to the first decision.

Based on community feedback and evidence provided, the first decision proposes objecting to 27 payphones being removed

During the first phase of consultation, which was published on our website, the number of responses for each phone box was relatively small, however there was general support for retaining the boxes in villages – either as payphones or adopting the phone boxes for community use. There were a handful of suggestions that the phone boxes could be used by the community as small lending libraries.

Some of objections were about the lack of mobile signal in the villages, and the need for payphones in the case of network outages. Some communities lodged objections arguing there are concerns that removing the payphones will have more of an impact on the elderly and disabled.

Executive, will be asked to consider and agree a Final decision on the proposed removals to BT at their meeting in February and which will be published on our website.

If BT disagrees with any of the objections, they will ask to formally review those objections with us and Ofcom will consider the decision on the proposed closure.

9. SOCIAL CARE & HOUSING

ALL SAINTS VIEW

Work is progressing well on All Saints View, the 168-apartment independent living scheme in the centre of Houghton Regis. Vistry Partnerships (formerly Galliford Try Partnerships) are on track with the build schedule and are working on the second floor of the building at the moment, as well as various sewerage and drainage pipes into the site.

The Project team has set up a dedicated Facebook page for news and updates, which has been well received (www.facebook.com/allsaintsview). The team has also organised periodic drone photography of the site to show the building in the context of Houghton Regis and give a clear sense of build progress. Applications for the scheme are not yet open.

The building will open in two phases. Phase one, which includes shop spaces, the restaurant and around 100 of the apartments on the High Street side, set to open in 2021. Phase two, which is the remainder of the apartments and facilities, will open approximately two years after. The reason the building is being constructed in two phases is that it will replace the current independent living scheme already on site – Red House Court. All residents of Red House Court will be able to move into phase one of the building.

10. PUBLIC HEALTH

STOP SMOKING

Stop Smoking Services continue to be delivered through GP Surgeries in the Chiltern Vale sub Cluster B locality with both Houghton Regis practices continuing to perform well according to the latest data, from December 2019.

Overall, performance by the Titan Primary Care Network of Practices in Chiltern Vale was at 166% against target for the period to date in 19/20 (68 actual quits compared to a target of 42).

Houghton Regis Medical Centre has exceeded targets for both the period and the whole year already, whilst performance at Wheatfield Surgery remains steady but under target:

LOCATION	2019/20 SMOKING QUITTERS
Houghton Regis Medical Centre	46 (target 21): 219% of target for year to date
Wheatfield Surgery	16 (target 20): 80% of target for year to date

The Stop Smoking Service introduced a re-modelled Service with effect from April 1 2019, to offer more flexible support options, including telephone support, plus a new app, which became available from July 2019.

Extended treatment programmes are available to some residents who would benefit most from them, for example those with a Mental Health diagnosis or COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disorder). The Smokefree Baby and Me programme is also available for pregnant smokers.

Call one of our advisors free on: 0800 013 0553
Email: stop.smoking@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk
Web: <http://www.smokefreebedfordshire.org/>

NHS HEALTH CHECKS

The NHS Health Check is a national risk assessment and management programme for those aged 40 to 74 living in England, who do not have an existing vascular disease, and who are not currently being treated for certain risk factors.

It is aimed at preventing heart disease, stroke, diabetes and kidney disease and raising awareness of dementia for those aged 65-74 and includes an alcohol risk assessment. Everyone receiving an NHS Health Check will have a risk assessment which will look at individual risk factors as well as their risk of having, or developing, vascular disease in the next ten years. An NHS Health Check should be offered every five years.

GP practices continue to be the sole provider of the NHS Health Check programme; however, performance varies. As patients are entitled to one Health Check every five years, Practices have a target to invite 20% of their eligible population each year.

The latest data, up to November 2019, shows that in all of the Chiltern Vale locality 1,149 NHS Health Checks were delivered against a target of 1,080 for the period (106.4% of annual target to date). They have invited 2,211 patients for a Health Check (target 2,916) so are performing at 75.8% for that indicator.

Both local Practices are performing as follows:

Houghton Regis Medical Centre is performing at 129.6% for Health Checks delivered (197 against a target of 152) and 83% offered (339 out of 408 target).

Wheatfield Road has improved slightly, at 34.7% for Health Checks delivered (61 against a target of 176) and worsened to 35.7% performance against offers (169 out of 474).

Data quality continues to be excellent for both Practices; Houghton Regis Medical Centre is delivering at 99.2% for overall quality and Wheatfield Road 97.5%.

Public Health will continue to provide support to Practices looking to deliver Stop Smoking and Health Check services to their patients.

11. PUBLIC PROTECTION

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH- FOOD

Have inspected 39 businesses within Houghton Regis with regards food safety resulting in 6 businesses receiving a written warning for non-compliance

There have also been 15 visited conducted at Food premises with regards Allergens and illicit or counterfeit alcohol. Fortunately there were no issues found.

TRADING STANDARDS

There have been vulnerable people identified following the seizure of a national 'scammers list'. This list was obtained from Scammers who have identified potentially vulnerable people with whom to target their deception.

All the residents on the list have been contacted, advice and guidance given and additional support including contact information.

Trading Standards has conducted 5 Test purchases in the Houghton Regis area within 2019 with disappointing figures that 4 failed and sold Alcohol to children. Licence review and criminal prosecution is being taken against 3 businesses.

POLLUTIONS UPDATE

The Pollution team have dealt with the following complaints in Houghton Regis since our last report:

Noise	3 Complaints all relating to out of hours Construction works- Meeting have been held with Bellway/ ECL site managers at Thorn Rd development to date no further reports have been received
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Light	One relating to a unit on Blackburn Industrial estate – resolved
Bonfire	redevelopment of land, green waste from ground clearance – site visited and resolved

12. ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

LOOKING BACK

The leaf fall crew have been active at various locations doing additional clearances.

The mud on the footpath in Sundon Road has been cleared and colleagues in Highways are now aware of the issues of residents driving on the verges and churning up mud.

There has been an increase in fly tipping post Christmas all of which has been cleared.

GARDEN WASTE COLLECTIONS

All kerbside garden waste collections will be suspended between Monday, 9 December 2019 and Friday, 28 February 2020 inclusive.

13. CONSULTATIONS

Details of current and upcoming consultation activity undertaken by the Council are provided by the Knowledge & Insight Team. For more information about this update please contact Clare Harding, tel: 0300 300 6109 (ext. 76109).

Current consultations

Subject	Description	Start	End	Lead officer
School Admissions Arrangements for 2021/22	Consultation on proposed changes to the admission arrangements for academic year 2021/22	17 Dec 2019	30 Jan 2020	Christine Edwards 0300 300 5862
Budget 2020	Consultation on the council's proposed budget for 2020	3 Jan 2020	30 Jan 2020	Charles Warboys 0300 300 6147

Adult social care charging policy	Consultation on revisions to the current charging policy, which includes how people are financially assessed and how much they are charged for social care.	Jan 2020	Mar 2020	Iain Melville 0300 300 6204
CCTV in Taxis	Consultation on proposals to install CCTV in Hackney carriages and private hire vehicles	15 Jan 2020	25 Feb. 2020	Jo Borthwick



TOWN COUNCIL**Agenda Item 13**

Date: 20th January 2020

Title: CBC COMMUNITY GRANT SCHEME

Purpose of the Report: To enable members to consider options for grant funding from the CBC Community Grants Scheme.

Contact Officer: Clare Evans, Town Clerk

1. RECOMMENDATION

To support a grant application being made to the CBC Community Grants Scheme for the refurbishment of Orchard Close pavilion subject to CBC ward councillor endorsement.

2. BACKGROUND

Members are advised that Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) have launched the Community Asset Grant scheme. Details of the scheme and the grant form are enclosed at Appendix A and can also be found by following this link:

https://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/info/42/stronger_communities/678/community_grants/3

CBC have allocated £182,000 to help, town and parish councils, local voluntary and community organisations deliver their projects. Organisations can bid for matched-funding grants of up to £25,000 to invest in capital projects, such as a new roof for a village hall or to improve access for people with disabilities.

The grant scheme is open to a range of Central Bedfordshire organisations, including voluntary and community groups, not-for-profit organisations, Parish or Town Councils, and social enterprises.

The first bidding round is open until 12pm 28th February.

3. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

For full details on the grants scheme please see Appendix A. of note however is that applications must meet at least one of the following criteria:

External improvements such as a new roof

Extensions such as additional toilet facilities or storage
Internal refurbishment and improvements
Improvements to water/heating systems, lighting, access or security
Improvements to accessibility
installation of a hearing loop or other similar improvements.
Improvements to play areas/outdoor and indoor sports facilities/open space areas with public access
Feasibility studies associated with a planned improvement (provided that improvement is funded and takes place)

Additional criteria

Geographic allocation – in order to ensure that the Community Asset grant scheme benefits the whole area, no more than one project will be funded in any ward area.
Demonstrable financial support-in addition to the 50% match funding requirement, evidence of additional investment from other sources (leverage) will be taken into account.

In review of the emerging budget the following projects could be considered:

1. Structural improvements to the Churchyard wall (as identified in the condition survey) (2020/21 HRTC budget provision £2500, 272-4028)
2. Public realm improvement to the Garden of Remembrance including seating and ornamentation (2019/20 HRTC budget provision £30,000, 299-4862)
3. Street furniture replacement (2019/20 HRTC budget provision £7,500, 299-4856, 2020/21 HRTC budget provision £3,000, 299-4856)
4. Pavilion refurbishment (Orchard Close pavilion) (2020/21 HRTC budget provision £50,000, 299-4871)
5. Town Guide (2020/21 HRTC budget provision £2,000, 303-4225)
6. Christmas lights (2020/21 HRTC budget provision £6,000, 399-4804)

The project to refurbish Orchard Close pavilion is significant and relies on external funding. As such it is suggested that this project be put forward to this grants scheme.

4. COUNCIL VISION

The proposed action supports the Objectives of Council's Vision;

2. Face the challenges & maximise the opportunities of growth;
4. A more active, engaged and inclusive community;
5. A strong efficient and proactive Town Council.

5. IMPLICATIONS

Corporate Implications

- At this stage there are no corporate implications.

Legal Implications

- At this stage there are no legal implications.

Financial Implications

- At this stage there are no financial implications.

Risk Implications

- At this stage there are no risk implications.

Equalities Implications

Houghton Regis Town Council has a duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and foster good relations in respect of nine protected characteristics; age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

This project / issue does not discriminate.

Press Contact

At this stage there are no press implications.

6. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

The availability of the grant scheme is welcome. It has the potential to contribute to various projects identified by HRTC. The project of more significant cost and with the highest social value is the refurbishment of Orchard Close provision.

7. APPENDICES

Appendix A: CBC Community Grant Schemes

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Community Grant Schemes

Community Assets Grant Scheme
Guidance for Councillors

 www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/grants

A great place to live and work.

Central
Bedfordshire

great
communities

Community Grant Schemes

Introduction

The Council has agreed new and additional funding to support strong and resilient communities.:

- **Ward councillor grants** to enable communities deliver their ambitions (launched October 1 2019)
- **Community Assets** - Larger grants to improve community infrastructure (bidding from December 2019)

Table 1

October 2019	December 2019
Ward Councillor Grant scheme	Community Assets
£2,000 per Ward Councillor	Up to £25,000 per grant
Total £118,000	Total £282,000

Community Assets Grant Scheme

This Guidance Note explains

- What the grant scheme is for
- How much money is available
- Grant Criteria - What can / can't be funded
- Examples
- Capital Funding – definition
- Who can apply
- Promotion and Publicity
- Application form
- Other sources of funding and Match funding
- Sources of support to voluntary and community groups
- Assessment and Approval process
- Payment of grant
- Contract
- Monitoring
- Reporting decisions

What is the grant scheme for?

The Community Assets grant scheme is designed to:

- help local voluntary and community organisations to deliver their ambitions with access grant funding to support community infrastructure improvements in their communities.
- enable investment in community assets (such as community buildings / community facilities/community infrastructure) which support the social wellbeing of the local community.
 - improve community facilities; or
 - create new community facilities that will benefit local residents and encourage community cohesion.

How much is available?

£182, 000 capital funding is available to allocate as grants during the financial year 2019 /20. Any unallocated monies will be rolled forward into further bidding rounds 2020 / 21.

The maximum individual grant amount is £25,000 and a group cannot receive more than one grant from this scheme in a period of 2 years, subject to continuation of the grant scheme.

50% of the total costs of schemes must be raised from other sources (the application will not be progressed if not provided)

Grant Criteria

An application for a grant must meet at least one of the following criteria.

Table 2

Criteria
External improvements such as a new roof
Extensions such as additional toilet facilities or storage;
Internal refurbishment and improvements,
Improvements to water/heating systems, lighting, access or security.
Improvements to accessibility – e.g installation of a hearing loop or other similar improvements.

Improvements to play areas/ outdoor and indoor sports facilities/open space areas with public access.

Feasibility studies associated with a planned improvement (provided that improvement is funded and takes place).

Capital Funding

The Community Assets grant scheme comprises capital funding only. Capital funding means the grant can only be used to pay for infrastructure works or items with a lifespan of longer than one year. Grants cannot pay for revenue costs such as staffing or venue hire.

We would expect any revenue costs associated with the capital expenditure to be met by the applicant itself or through its match funding source(s).

What can be funded - Examples

This list is not exhaustive as to what projects can be funded and merely serve as examples. All applications must demonstrate benefit to residents in Central Bedfordshire:

- A new roof on a community facility such as a village hall or community centre or sports pavilion or scout / brownie hut
- New kitchen / toilet facilities in a community facility
- An extension to an existing community facility
- Refurbishments to improve access for people with disabilities / or people with needs that are not currently catered for.
- Improvements to enhance outdoor community facilities and assets e.g improvements to address climate change, creation of a wildlife area in a local park, new benches, new fencing etc

What cannot be funded

- Revenue costs associated with the project seeking capital costs.
- Capital funding for anything that isn't within Central Bedfordshire
- Generally, assets that are in private ownership or on private land with limited public access and without a demonstrable community benefit.
- Routine maintenance such as painting and decorating.
- Revenue or running costs such as salaries, etc.
- Items without a genuine need e.g. stockpiling for future use.
- Projects which are not in Central Bedfordshire.
- Grants will not be made to support explicitly religious or political activities.
- Expenditure that has already been incurred.

Promotion

The Community Assets Grant scheme will be widely promoted via Ward Councillors, social media, press releases, email alerts and directly to town and parish councils and voluntary and community sector organisations.

Who can apply ?

The grant scheme will be open to a range of local organisations, voluntary and community groups with a constitution:

- Not for profit organisations
- Parish or Town Councils
- Schools/Parent Associations (in relation to their wider community role)
- Formally Constituted Groups
- Community Groups/Associations
- Social Enterprises (where any surplus is reinvested for social / community purposes)
- Community Interest Companies with a social / community purpose
- Community Benefit Societies

Applicants will need to submit a copy of their governing documents e.g a Constitution or Terms of Reference together with their grant application.

Speak to your Ward Councillor

Before completing an application form, it is vital that you discuss your idea and secure initial support from your local Central Bedfordshire Ward Councillor.

[Find Your Ward Councillor](#)

You will need to be able to explain how your idea or project will make a difference and deliver positive benefits to their communities.

Bidding process

Applications must be made via the eform accessible via [Community Grants](#). Funds will be released through bidding rounds to ensure wide access to the scheme allowing time for groups to develop their project proposals and secure match funding. The Council has allocated £182,000 in 2019/20, the first bidding round will open in December 2019 and close at the end of February 2020. A further bidding round will open in April 2020 for applications for any remaining funds that were unallocated in the first bidding round. Further bidding rounds will be organised subject to budget decision making.

Table 3

Bidding Round	Opens	Closes
1. Winter	December 16 th 2019	12pm February 28 th 2020
2. Spring	April 1 st 2020	12pm June 26 th 2020

Match funding

It is a requirement that the group seeking a grant from the Community Asset grant scheme must provide 50% of the total project costs, from another source. Eligible

match funding can be private donations, contributions in cash or in kind from local companies, (as long as the £value can be evidenced) charitable trusts and of course the Lottery.

Sources of external funding can be found [here](#)

Sources of Advice

Community and Voluntary Services and Community Action Bedfordshire can provide advice and support to groups who need help to secure match funding and complete an application form

Table 4

Community and Voluntary Service 43 Bromham Road Bedford MK40 2 AA info@cvsbeds.org.uk	Community Action Bedfordshire Bossard House Leighton Buzzard LU7 1DA mail@cabeds.org.uk
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Application form

The application form must be completed on line via the Councils website at the following [link](#). A draft copy of the form is attached in Appendix A

Community Benefit

In line with the purpose of the Community Assets grant scheme, applicants must be able to demonstrate the community benefit that will be achieved by the project.

Grant Assessment process

a) Eligibility Checks

Once the online application has been received, officers will undertake an initial eligibility check to ensure all elements of the application have been completed and the application meets one or more of the criteria.

b) Scoring

Once the application has passed the eligibility check it will be scored by officers using the criteria and scoring system set out in table 5. At least 2 Officers will score an application one of whom will be selected from a service area related to the grant application.

Each eligible application will be scored against the following criteria:

Table 5

Scoring Criteria	Scoring
<p>Deliverability Applicants must have all project delivery elements in place, or it should be evident that, it can be delivered within the time frame outlined. There should be well-planned timetables for achieving short-term and medium-term deliverables. There should be sufficient delivery capability in place.</p>	10
<p>Evidence of meeting a local need Applicants should demonstrate how they are meeting a local need such as a deficit in community infrastructure.</p>	10
<p>Evidence of community benefit outcomes Applicants should demonstrate how the asset to be improved or enhanced provides a clear community benefit.</p>	10
<p>Governance arrangements Applicants must demonstrate a robust governance framework with all personal liabilities covered.</p>	8
<p>Leverage Evidence that more than the 50% match funding has been secured</p>	8
<p>Value for Money Projects should demonstrate they have achieved best price and value for money with no ongoing funding requirements for Central Bedfordshire Council</p>	8
<p>Risk Management Applicants must demonstrate a good understanding of risks to delivery and how these can be managed.</p>	8
<p>Collaboration Evidence of local partnership and community involvement</p>	8
<p>Contribution to CBC priorities Demonstrating that the project is supporting at least one of our strategic priorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enhancing Central Bedfordshire • great resident services • improving education and skills • protecting the vulnerable and improving wellbeing 	8

• creating stronger communities	
Ward Councillor endorsement	Yes / No
Total	78
Minimum threshold	39

c) Ward Councillor endorsement

Ward Councillor endorsement will be sought once the application has been eligibility checked and scored.

The Ward Councillor will be sent an Endorsement Form which he/she must complete and return to the Community Engagement Team. The Endorsement form includes an opportunity to Declare an Interest if appropriate.

Decision making

Once the application has been eligibility checked , scored by officers against the criteria , and endorsed by the ward councillor, the application will be passed to the Director of Resources for a decision on behalf of the Council who will also consider

- Geographic allocation– in order to ensure that the Community Asset Grant Scheme benefits the whole area,

An approved grant will be subject to completion of a legally enforceable grant agreement.

Feedback will be given to unsuccessful applicants. The Council's decision will be final and not subject to appeal, but the applicant may re-apply if the reasons for rejection can be resolved.

Grant Agreement

Once the Council has approved the grant request, officers will issue a legally enforceable Grant Agreement which must be signed and returned by the grant applicant.

The Grant Agreement will confirm any specific terms and conditions of grant and the obligations on the group to keep the Council informed of progress.

Payment of Grant

Approved projects must return a signed copy of the Grant Agreement confirming their acceptance of specific terms and conditions of grant payment.

Successful applicants will need to supply their account details on headed paper and must be signed by the Chair or Treasurer.

- Company/Organisation Name
- Address
- Telephone Number
- E-mail addresses – For Purchase Orders
- E-mail address for Remittance Advices
- VAT Registration Number (if applicable)

- Bank Details (bank name, sort code, account number, and account name (or building society roll/reference number where applicable))

Grants will be paid against an invoice together with evidence of spend such as receipts or supplier invoices. Grant monies will be paid by BACS.

Project Monitoring

The successful applicant must provide monitoring reports

- Progress against delivery milestones identified in the application.
- Evidence that the funding is devoted to the specific areas proposed in the application.
- Information on local community benefit.
- An end of project report demonstrating how the grant has been spent and the community benefit achieved.

Frequency of reporting progress will be agreed with the grant recipient and set out in the grant agreement.

Reporting

An annual report will be prepared which will go through the Councils Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Evaluation

The Community Assets Grant Scheme will undergo evaluation after at least a year of operation and will review:

- Take up/interest
- Grant expenditure
- Assessment of community benefits
- User experience – Members and applicants

Publicity

All projects in receipt of a Community Asset grant will be expected to acknowledge grant funding from Central Bedfordshire Council in all publicity associated with the project.

Community Assets Grant Scheme

Applicant Guidance notes and Application Form

Community Assets Grant Scheme - What it is ..

The Community Assets grant scheme is designed to:

- help local voluntary and community organisations to deliver their ambitions with access grant funding to support community infrastructure improvements in their communities.
- encourage and lever contributions from other sources to raise 50% of the total costs of schemes.
- enable investment in community assets (such as community buildings / community facilities/community infrastructure) which support the social wellbeing of the local community.
 - improve community facilities; or
 - create new community facilities that will benefit local residents and encourage community cohesion.

Speak to your Ward Councillor

Before completing an application form, it is vital that you discuss your idea and secure initial support from your local Central Bedfordshire Ward Councillor.

Find Your Ward Councillor

You will need to be able to explain how your idea or project will make a difference and deliver positive benefits to their communities.

Community Benefit

Applicants must explain the community benefit they aim to achieve with a Community Assets Grant

How much is available ?

£182, 000 capital funding is available to allocate as grants during the financial year 2019 /20. Any unallocated monies will be rolled forward into 2020 / 21.

A further allocation for 2020/21 is subject to the annual budget decision making process.

The maximum individual grant amount is £25,000 and a group cannot receive more than one grant from this scheme in a period of 2 years.

The grant criteria and what the grant scheme can support

External improvements such as a new roof

Extensions such as additional toilet facilities or storage;

Internal refurbishment and improvements,

Improvements to water/heating systems, lighting, access or security.

Improvements to accessibility - installation of a hearing loop or other similar improvements.

Improvements to play areas/ outdoor and indoor sports facilities/open space areas with public access.

Feasibility studies associated with a planned improvement (provided that improvement is funded and takes place).

Additional criteria

- Geographic allocation– in order to ensure that the Community Asset Grant Scheme benefits the whole area, no more than one project will be funded in any ward area.
- Demonstrable financial support- in addition to the 50% match funding requirement, evidence of additional investment from other sources (leverage) will be taken into account.

What the grant will NOT fund

Funding is not available to individuals for personal benefit or for the delivery of any statutory functions, or organisations with no local connection. Support will not be given to the same organisation on more than two occasions in the rolling period of four years without strong and justifiable reasons for doing so.

The funding is capital funding and cannot fund revenue costs such as venue hire, professional training, political activities, registered formal personal care. Funding cannot be used to settle debts or contributions to the operation of organisational offices or hinder the activities of the Ward Councillor or Central Bedfordshire Council.

Match Funding

For all applicants at least 50% of the total costs of the project must come from other sources. Other sources of eligible match funding might include Lottery, private donations, Charitable Trusts. A link to [sources of external funding is here](#).
Volunteer time in kind cannot be used as match funding.

Who can apply

A wide range of local groups voluntary and community organisations can apply they must have a Central Bedfordshire focus and connection:

- Voluntary and community groups with a constitution
- Not for profit organisations
- Parish or Town Councils

- Schools / Parent Associations (in relation to their wider community role)
- Formally Constituted Groups
- Community Groups/Associations
- Social Enterprises
- Community Interest Companies
- Community Benefit Societies.

Applicants must have a UK bank account. This can be an account for an organisation, community group, charity or specifically set up for the scheme being applied for. It cannot be a personal bank account used for personal finances. If you are requesting less than £500 you will need to provide details of the bank account at Question 8.

When can I apply ?

Funds will be released through a series of bidding rounds to ensure wide access to the scheme.

Bidding Round	Opens	Closes
1. Winter	December 16 th 2019	12pm February 28 th 2020
2. Spring	April 1 st 2020	12pm June 26 th 2020

How can I apply?

Once you have read these Guidance Notes use the link to the application eform at [Community Grants](#) on our website. Make sure you read through the form first before completing it to ensure you have all the information you need to complete the form.

Where can I get help?

You can contact the Partnerships and Community Engagement Team for help about the application process. For advice and information about aspects of your project and completing the application form, contact

Community and Voluntary Service
 43 Bromham Road
 Bedford
 MK40 2 AA
info@cvsbeds.org.uk

Community Action Bedfordshire
 Bossard House
 Leighton Buzzard
 LU7 1DA
mail@cabeds.org.uk

How will my application be assessed ?

Each eligible application will be scored against the following criteria

Item	Scoring
Deliverability Applicants must have all project delivery elements in place, or it should be evident that, it can be delivered within the time frame outlined. There should be well-planned timetables for achieving short-term and medium-term deliverables. There should be sufficient delivery capability in place.	10

<p>Evidence of meeting a local need Applicants should demonstrate how they are meeting a local need such as a deficit in community infrastructure.</p>	10
<p>Evidence of community benefit outcomes Applicants should demonstrate how the asset to be improved or enhanced provides a clear community benefit.</p>	10
<p>Governance arrangements Applicants must demonstrate a robust governance framework with all personal liabilities covered.</p>	8
<p>Leverage Evidence that more than the 50% match funding has been secured</p>	8
<p>Value for Money Projects should demonstrate they have achieved best price and value for money with no ongoing funding requirements for Central Bedfordshire Council</p>	8
<p>Risk Management Applicants must demonstrate a good understanding of risks to delivery and how these can be managed.</p>	8
<p>Collaboration Evidence of local partnership and community involvement</p>	8
<p>Contribution to CBC priorities Demonstrating that the project is supporting at least one of our strategic priorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enhancing Central Bedfordshire • great resident services • improving education and skills • protecting the vulnerable and improving wellbeing • creating stronger communities 	8
<p>Ward Councillor endorsement</p>	Yes / No
<p>Total</p>	78
<p>Minimum threshold</p>	50

Decision Making

Once the application has been assessed and scored by officers against the criteria, the application will be passed to the Director of Resources for a decision on behalf of the Council who will also consider

- Geographic allocation– in order to ensure that the Community Asset Grant Scheme benefits the whole area,

Feedback will be given to unsuccessful applicants. The Council's decision will be final and not subject to appeal, but the applicant may re-apply if the reasons for rejection can be resolved.

Grant Agreement

Approved projects will receive an Offer Letter confirming the grant award subject to signing a legally enforceable Grant Agreement

Monitoring and accountability

The applicant must provide monitoring reports

- Progress against delivery milestones identified in the application.
- Evidence that the funding is devoted to the specific areas proposed in the application.
- Information on local community benefit.
- An end of project report demonstrating how the grant has been spent and the community benefit achieved.

Frequency of reporting progress will be agreed with the grant recipient.

Additional information

Successful applicants will be required to sign up to terms and conditions to receive the grant funding. These will be set out in the legally enforceable Grant Agreement. The terms and conditions will be proportionate to the value of the grant and cover the following:

- Full bank account details will be required and must be submitted on the organisation's headed paper and signed by the Chair or Treasurer.
- The [Community Engagement Team](#) must be notified if the organisation in receipt of the grant ceases to trade or the project funded by the grant ceases.
- Central Bedfordshire Council reserve the right to recover grant funding where it is not being used for the purpose stated in the application.
- Any unspent grant funding must be returned at the end of the grant period.
- Grant recipients will be responsible for arranging appropriate insurance cover for their project. This might include public liability insurance, employee liability insurance and public indemnity insurance.
- Grant recipients will allow their project to be used for Central Bedfordshire Council promotional and publicity purposes where appropriate
- Grant recipients will agree to submit financial details for their scheme where this is requested.

- All projects in receipt of a Community Asset grant will be expected to acknowledge grant funding from Central Bedfordshire Council in all publicity associated with the project.

If you have any questions or require support regarding your application form and the process, contact the [Community Engagement Team](#)

Community Asset Grant Scheme Application Form

1. Applicant's details

Name of Applicant:	
Name of Organisation / Group	
Email address	
Address (including postcode):	
Preferred telephone number	
Name of project	

2. About your Community Asset project

a) Which criteria fits your project	Criteria	Tick
	<p>External improvements such as a new roof</p> <p>Extensions such as additional toilet facilities or storage;</p> <p>Internal refurbishment and improvements, Improvements to water/heating systems, lighting, access or security.</p> <p>Improvements to accessibility – installation of a hearing loop or other similar improvements.</p> <p>Improvements to play areas/ outdoor and indoor sports facilities/open space areas with public access.</p> <p>Feasibility studies associated with a planned improvement (provided that improvement is funded and takes place).</p>	

<p><i>working with you to deliver this project</i></p>	
<p>f) Project dependancies <i>Is planning permission required / sought / secured</i> <i>Do you have land / asset owners permission</i></p>	
<p>g) Risk Management <i>(please identify the risks associated with your project and how these will be mitigated / managed)</i></p>	
<p>h)Implementation <i>Please describe your arrangements for managing the delivery and implementation of your project</i></p>	
<p>i) Outcomes <i>What outcomes do you propose to achieve as a result of delivering your project</i></p>	

3. Funding

<p>a) Preferred bidding round</p>	<p>Bidding Round</p>	<p>Opens</p>	<p>Closes</p>	
	<p>1. Winter</p>	<p>December 16th 2019</p>	<p>12pm February 28th 2020</p>	
	<p>2. Spring</p>	<p>April 1st 2020</p>	<p>12pm June 26th 2020</p>	

<p>b) How much is required from the Community Asset grant scheme? <i>(Please provide the total cost of the project and a breakdown of how the money will be spent.)</i></p>	<p>Total cost of project (inc match funding) £</p>		<p>Total amount required from CAG £</p>	
	<p>Item</p>	<p>Amount</p>	<p>CAG</p>	<p>Match funding</p>

c). Match Funding <i>(Please include details of your match-funding secured from other sources)</i>	Source of match funding	How much ?	Confirmed ?
d) Please explain how the project provides value for money.			

Governance

a). Governance <i>(Please state the number of people who are currently on your governing body or committee and attach your constitution if appropriate or other governing document)</i>	
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8. Account <i>(Please confirm you have full bank account details and attach the last years accounts)</i>	
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Declaration

Please sign this form to confirm that:

The information supplied is full and correct to the best of our knowledge; we have read, understood and complied with the conditions of funding; we understand that Central Bedfordshire Council reserve the right to reclaim the grant in the event of it being used for purposes other than permitted by this scheme, or the organisation ceases to operate.

Note: by signing this form you acknowledge and agree to comply with the conditions of funding and agree to repay the grant if any of the conditions are not met.

Signed:

Name:

Position:

Date:

Submit your form

Online: www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/

Email: community.grants@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

The General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018 replaced the Data Protection Act 1998 on 25 May 2018.

The new regulations are very much focused on protecting you and how your data is handled and here at Central Bedfordshire Council we want to keep you in the picture as to how we do that.

The information you supply us with is used to validate and process your nomination form.

The information you have submitted to us will be stored securely on the Council's BOX Cloud System and is only accessible by the Partnerships & Community Engagement Team.

Your data will only be held for as long as is necessary or as governed by other statutory regulations and will be disposed of securely.

If you have any questions contact the [information governance team](#)

You can find out more about how data is managed at Central Bedfordshire Council by [clicking here](#)

Community Assets Grant Scheme
Ward Councillor Endorsement

Checklist items	Project Details	Ward Councillor completes (Initials)
Name of Project		
Applicant		
Grant amount requested		
Project / Asset		
Ward		
Ward Councillor(s)		
Community Benefit		
Has a grant been awarded to this organisation in the last four years		
Endorsement (taking into account the Community Grant Schemes Guidance for Members)		
Date completed by Ward Councillor		

**Date Received by
Community
Engagement Team**

**Declaration of
Interests**

**Conditions of grant
(if any)**

**Endorsed and Signed
by Ward Councillor**

**Central
Bedfordshire**

**Central
Bedfordshire
in contact**

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