

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Peel Street, Houghton Regis, Bedfordshire, LU5 5EY

Town Mayor: **T K McMahon**

Tel: 01582 708540

Town Clerk: **Clare Evans**

E-mail: info@houghtonregis.org.uk

4th December 2020

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

To: All Town Councillors

Notice of Meeting

You are hereby summoned to the Meeting of the Houghton Regis Town Council to be held virtually on Monday 14th November 2020 at 7.00pm.

This meeting is being held virtually via Microsoft Teams. If members of the public would like to attend, please click on the meeting link below and follow the online instructions:

[MEETING LINK¹](#)

[MEETING GUIDANCE](#)

To assist in the smooth running of the meeting please refer and adhere to the Council's Virtual Meeting Guidance. To view the Virtual Meeting Guidance please click on the link above.

Clare Evans
Town Clerk

THIS MEETING MAY BE RECORDED²

AGENDA

- 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
- 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.

¹ If you require a meeting link emailed to you, please contact the Head of Democratic Services at louise.senior@houghtonregis.org.uk

² 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.

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.

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 6 - 10

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 5th October 2020.

Recommendation: To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 5th October 2020.

5. COMMITTEE AND WORKING GROUP MINUTES

Pages 11 - 56

To receive the minutes of the following committees and consider any recommendations contained therein

Corporate Services Committee	14 th September 2020
	Members are specifically referred to the following;
	11332 Councillor's Expenses Policy
	11333 Flexible Working Policy & Flexi-time Policy
	11334 Drug, Alcohol & Substance Misuse Policy
	11335 Banking Arrangement, Investment Strategy & Investment Arrangement Policy
	11336 Complaints Procedure
	11337 Code of Conduct
	11338 Risk Management Strategy and Schedule

Please contact the Head of Democratic Services if you would like a copy of any of these policies re-sent to you.

Community Services Committee	1 st September 2020
Environment & Leisure Committee	21 st June 2020
Planning Committee	28 th September, 19 th October and 9 th November 2020.
Town Partnership Committee	21 st July 2020

Pages 57 - 65

To receive the minutes of the following sub-committee and consider any recommendations contained therein

New Office Provisions Sub-Committee None to present.
New Cemetery Sub-Committee 14th July 2020

Members will also find attached the draft minutes of Corporate Services Committee held on 23rd November. At this meeting the following policies were considered and it was requested that these be brought forward to town council:

- 11429 Whistleblowing Policy
- 11430 Bullying and Harassment at work Policy

Recommendations: **To receive the Minutes detailed above and to approve the recommendations contained therein as follows;**

- **11332 Councillor’s Expenses Policy**
- **11333 Flexible Working Policy & Flexi-time Policy**
- **11334 Drug, Alcohol & Substance Misuse Policy**
- **11335 Banking Arrangement, Investment Strategy & Investment Arrangement Policy**
- **11336 Complaints Procedure**
- **11337 Code of Conduct**
- **11338 Risk Management Strategy and Schedule**

To approve the following policies as considered at Corporate Services Committee on 23rd November:

- **11429 Whistleblowing Policy**
- **11430 Bullying and Harassment at work Policy**

6. TOWN MAYOR’S ANNOUNCEMENTS

A verbal report will be provided.

7. REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS & ON TRAINING SESSIONS ATTENDED

Councillors are requested to provide verbal reports from meetings they have attended of outside organisations or from training courses they have attended on behalf of the Council.

8. SUPPORTING TOWN CENTRES AND THE WIDER ECONOMY

Pages 66 - 125

HRTC has received communication from Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC), looking for ideas / suggestions to support town centres and the wider economy. This is attached, pages 66 - 67.

The town council would like to prepare a response to this letter. A considerable amount of work has already been completed on aspirations for Houghton Regis including the town centre, namely:

1. HRTC responded to the CBC consultation on the Future High Streets fund. The submission is attached, pages 68 – 74.

2. In 2018 HRTC put together a list of services and facilities that the council would like to see in Houghton Regis. This list is attached, page 75.
3. HRTC has also developed a corporate plan for 2020/24. This is attached, pages 76 - 79
4. Draft Houghton Regis Neighbourhood Plan, pages 80 - 125

To facilitate input a report was also presented to the Houghton Regis Partnership Committee, providing the above documentation. Members of this committee supported the work HRTC had already completed.

Members are asked to review the attached and to discuss any other issues which they would like to see.

Recommendations: To welcome the opportunity from CBC for HRTC to put forward ideas and suggestions to support town centres and the wider economy;

To put forward the following documentation to CBC and to welcome subsequent discussions:

1. HRTC response to the CBC consultation on the Future High Streets fund.
2. Minute 9722 (Town Council 10th December 2018) incorporating a list of services and facilities that HRTC would like to see in Houghton Regis.
3. HRTC corporate plan: Our Vision: Our Town 2020/24.
4. Draft Houghton Regis Neighbourhood Plan

9. UPDATE ON NEW CEMETERY

Pages 126 - 136

To provide members an update on land for a new cemetery.

10. PUBLIC REALM PROJECT

Pages 137 - 143

To update members on the emerging CBC Public Realm Project.

Recommendation: To support the Houghton Regis Public Realm Project Proposal.

11. TOWN RANGER

Pages 144 - 151

Assuming support for the CBC Public Realm Project, members are invited to consider this report which provides members with details on the proposed post of Town Ranger to support the emerging CBC Public Realm Project.

Recommendations: 1. To approve the Job Description and Person Specification for Town Ranger;

- 2. **For the position to subject to job evaluation and for the salary scale to be approved by Personal Committee;**
- 3. **To seek to fill the position from 1st April 2021 subject to the CBC providing the supporting capital funding.**

12. PAYROLL SERVICES

Pages 152 - 155

To enable members to appoint a new payroll services provider.

Recommendation: To accept Company 3 as the Councils payroll provider from 1st April 2021.

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Town Council
5th October 2020 at 7.00pm

Present: Councillors: T McMahon Chairman
D Abbott
J Carroll
C Copleston
Y Farrell
S Goodchild
D Jones
M S Kennedy
R Morgan
A Slough
S Thorne
K Wattingham

Officers: Clare Evans Town Clerk
Louise Senior Head of Democratic Services

Public: 2

Absent: Councillors: D Dixon-Wilkinson

11359 APOLOGIES

None.

11360 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

11361 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

None.

11362 MINUTES

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 24th August 2020.

Resolved: To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 24th August 2020 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

11363 COMMITTEE MINUTES

To receive the minutes of the following committees and consider any recommendations contained therein

Corporate Services Committee 2nd March and 8th June 2020
 Members are specifically referred to the following;

11186 Local Govt Pension Scheme: Statement of Local Discretion
 11187 Bad Debts and Late payment policy
 11189 Disciplinary Policy
 11190 Grievance Policy
 11233 Sickness Policy
 11234 Health & Safety at Work Policy

Cllr Jones highlighted that the Sickness Policy had already been approved at Town Council on 20th July 2020.

Community Services Committee 22nd June 2020
 Environment & Leisure Committee 1st June 2020
 Planning Committee 6th July, 27th July, 17th August and 7th September 2020
 Town Partnership Committee 28th January 2020.

To receive the minutes of the following sub committee and consider any recommendations contained therein

Office Provisions Sub Committee None to present.

To receive the minutes of the following working group and consider any recommendations contained therein

Proposed New Cemetery Working Group 2nd September 2019.

Resolved: To receive the Minutes detailed above and to approve the recommendations contained therein as follows;

- *11186 Local Govt Pension Scheme: Statement of Local Discretion*
- *11187 Bad Debts and Late payment policy*
- *11189 Disciplinary Policy*
- *11190 Grievance Policy*
- *11233 Sickness Policy*
- *11234 Health & Safety at Work Policy*

11364 TOWN MAYOR ANNOUNCEMENTS

Members received a verbal report on events that had been attended by the Town Mayor.

Members were advised that a church coffee morning at All Saints had been attended and the renovations to the pathway had improved accessibility. The Aylesbury Town Mayors quiz had been attended, and Cllr McMahon came in at second place, members were advised that it had been enjoyable to speak to other councillors throughout the evening.

11365 REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS & ON TRAINING SESSIONS ATTENDED

Members provided verbal reports from meetings they had attended of outside organisations or from training courses they had attended on behalf of the Council.

Cllr Kennedy attended a virtual meeting of the Houghton Hall Park Steering Group. Members were advised that the café had not been open as the current provider was no longer managing the café. CBC were working on securing a local provider. Police patrols under Operation Hana had positively impacted problem areas. Increased signage had been placed around the park targeting joggers, dog walkers and cyclists encouraging cohesive use of the green space.

Cllr Thorne attended the Dial-a-Ride AGM, members were advised that with the continuation of government restrictions, consideration may need to be given to staffing levels.

Cllr Farrell attended a meeting of the Memorial Hall; the car park resurfacing was nearing completion. The AGM was to be held Thursday 8th October 2020 and members were advised that both a new secretary and a new treasurer would be appointed and work had been completed to update the information on the website.

Cllr Jones attended BATPC meeting on 16th September 2020, which considered a report on Code of Conduct with discussion around sanctions and the need for respect. Members were advised that income had been affected due to the lack of training being offered. The BATPC AGM was to be held on 21st October 2020.

Cllr McMahon had completed two online training courses, Building Back Communities and Sustainability, details of which would be shared with members. Members were advised that many of the items discussed had been included in the Houghton Regis Town Council 4-year vision, however, it was acknowledged that work had been delayed by Covid-19. Also attended was the Beds Police Priority Setting meeting.

11366 INTERNAL AUDIT, PLANNING AND REVIEW

A system of internal control was designed to manage risk to a reasonable level rather than eliminate all risk or failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives. It thus provided a reasonable, not absolute, assurance of effectiveness. A system of prioritisation therefore pertained.

It was the responsibility of Council to determine the scope of audit, without undue influence from the internal auditor, to ensure his/her independence and that planning, and reporting access was effective and direct

Members received the current policy, only slightly adjusted to reflect a change in numbering in the council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations. The policy had been reviewed and it was considered that it remained suitable and fit for purpose.

Members also considered competitive quotes for internal audit services for 2020/21. Members were advised that the quotes were all from suitable qualified companies who were independent of the council, thus all potential providers met the internal auditor eligibility criteria.

One quote was from the internal auditor for 2019/20 (and the previous 4 years or so). Members considered whether they would like to change internal auditor in line with the general good practice measure of changing internal auditor on a reasonably regular basis.

Given the significant changes in the working environment members felt that it would be more prudent to remain with the previous internal auditor for 2020/21. Members requested an earlier report on internal audit providers for the financial year 2021/22.

Resolved:

- 1. To approve the Internal Audit Planning, Reporting & Review Policy.**
- 2. To appoint Company A, Greenbiro, as the councils internal auditor for 2020/21.**

11367 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

The Equality Act 2010 came into force in October 2010. The legislation covered a prescribed set of protected characteristics including age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

It also covered prohibited conduct including discrimination, adjustments for disabled persons, victimisation and harassment; services and public functions; premises; employment; contracts; and, advancement of equality. The latter provision specified a public sector equality duty, which applied equally to town and parish councils.

Members received the current policy. The policy had been reviewed and it was considered that it remained suitable and fit for purpose.

Resolved: **To approve the Equality and Diversity Policy.**

11368 CHRISTMAS OPENING HOURS

At this meeting of Town Council members usually receive a report on office opening hours over the Christmas period. Due to Covid-19 the office reception was open for reduced hours, it was hoped to increase reception hours over the next few weeks but this was reliant on national guidance and instruction.

Assuming it was possible to have an office reception, the following Christmas opening hours were suggested:

Thursday 24th December – Open 9am to 1pm
Friday 25th December – Bank Holiday
Monday 28th December – Bank Holiday
Tuesday 29th December – Closed
Wednesday 30th December – Closed
Thursday 31st December – Closed
Friday 1st January – Bank Holiday
Monday 4th January – Normal office hours resume

Telephone services would remain, the grounds staff would check the play areas and pavilions on 29th December and 31st December and staff would be on call should an emergency situation arise. Members were reminded that the town council does not provide any core front line services such as social services, housing and highways. These were provided by the principal authority.

Resolved: To approve the office opening hours between Christmas and New Year as follows:

Thursday 24th December – Open 9am to 1pm

Friday 25th December – Bank Holiday

Monday 28th December – Bank Holiday

Tuesday 29th December – Closed

Wednesday 30th December – Closed

Thursday 31st December – Closed

Friday 1st January – Bank Holiday

Monday 4th January – Normal office hours resume

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 7.42pm

Dated this 14th day of December 2020

Chairman

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL
Corporate Services Committee
14th September 2020 at 7.00pm.

Present: Councillors: D Jones Chairman
D Abbott
C Copleston
M S Kennedy
S Thorne
K Wattingham

Officers: Debbie Marsh Corporate Services Manager
Louise Senior Head of Democratic Services

Public: 0

Apologies: 0

11324 APOLOGIES & SUBSTITUTIONS

None.

11325 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

11326 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

None.

11327 MINUTES

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 8th June 2020.

Resolved: To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 8th June 2020 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

11328 INCOME AND EXPENDITURE REPORT

Members received the Income & Expenditure report to date for the Corporate Services Committee.

Members noted the report.

11329 BANK AND CASH RECONCILIATION STATEMENTS

Members received the monthly bank and cash reconciliation statement for April, May, June and July 2020.

Members sought clarification on the reconciliation for May and June, which would be queried with the Town Clerk.

Members agreed the recommendations, subject to clarification with the Town Clerk, an update of which would be provided at the next meeting.

Resolved:

- 1. To approve the monthly Bank and Cash Reconciliation statements for April, May, June and July 2020;**
- 2. For these along with the original bank statements to be signed by the Chair of Corporate Services Committee and the Council's RFO.**

11330 LIST OF CHEQUE PAYMENTS

Members received a list of payments for the period May 2020 to July 2020.

Members noted a late payment fee charge. Members requested clarification be sought from the Town Clerk as to what caused this late payment to occur and to find out what measures were in place to avoid this happening again in the future.

Resolved: To note the information.

11331 INVESTMENT REPORT

In accordance with Committee Functions, Financial Regulation 8 and Banking Arrangements, Investment Strategy & Investment Arrangements.

The Corporate Services Committee were to oversee and manage the financial obligations of the Council, including:

To receive quarterly reports on investments containing a forecast of capital expenditure, investment opportunities and a recommendation for further investment including where, length and amount.

Members raised concerns regarding the property fund account, which had been temporarily suspended by SLCC. This was due to be reviewed by SLCC in October.

Resolved: To note the information.

11332 COUNCILLOR'S EXPENSES POLICY

At the Corporate Services meeting held on the 2nd March 2020 members considered the revised Councillor's Expenses Policy however, following discussions members resolved to defer this item to allow further research to be undertaken to allow for the inclusion of alternative arrangements, including taxis and car hiring.

Members received the report and discussed the updated policy. It was agreed that this be recommended to Town Council.

Resolved: To consider and recommend to Town Council a Councillor's Expenses Policy.

11333 FLEXIBLE WORKING POLICY & FLEXI-TIME POLICY

At the Personnel Sub-Committee meeting held on the 13th July 2020 members were advised that all staff appraisals had been completed. However, what was reported that during these appraisals feedback from staff was that they felt that working from home, brought about by the COVID-19 restrictions, allowed them to be more productive in some aspects of their role. Members discussed the idea of staff continuing to work from home once restrictions were lifted and recommended (PE142) that a report be presented to Corporate Services committee for consideration.

The Corporate Services Committee last reviewed its Flexible Working & Flexi-time Policy at its meeting held on the 20th March 2017.

Members were advised that there were always staff in place, on site, to ensure that the day to day operational functionality of the office and reception was unaffected. Members were advised that the hours worked by staff under the flexi-time scheme was monitored closely to ensure that staff were not regularly working under or over their contracted hours.

Members acknowledged feedback from staff, and countrywide research, which had indicated that working from home had increased staff productivity.

Members were advised that with staff working from home, the office reception would remain manned and available to members of the public.

Members suggested that this could possibly present a cost and space saving opportunity when seeking new premises for the Town Council.

Resolved:

- 1) To recommend to Town Council that the Flexible Working Policy be approved.**
- 2) To recommend to Town Council that the Flexi-time Policy be approved.**
- 3) To approve, until 7th May 2021, an informal agreement to enable staff to continue to work from home taking into account that the Office Reception will be opened in accordance with government guidelines and for this to be staffed on a rota basis**

11334 DRUG, ALCOHOL & SUBSTANCE MISUSE POLICY

The Town Council last reviewed this policy on the 14th March 2016.

Following a review of the current policy, the Town Councils Human Resources consultant recommended an up to date policy to reflect the current issues surrounding drug, alcohol and substance misuse. One current issue is the use of legal highs.

Members received a report accompanied by an updated policy.

Resolved: To consider and recommend to Town Council a Drugs, Alcohol and Substance Misuse Policy.

11335 BANKING ARRANGEMENT, INVESTMENT STRATEGY & INVESTMENT ARRANGEMENT POLICY

In accordance with the Committee Functions & Terms of Reference and Financial Regulations 8.4, this Committee was required to annually review the Banking Arrangements, Investment Strategy & Investment Arrangement Policy.

Members were advised that the investment strategy complied with the guidance issued by the Secretary of State under Section 15(1)(a) of the Local Government Act 2003 and being effective from 1st April 2018, no further guidance had been issued. Therefore, this policy remained fit for purpose.

Banking Arrangements

Members were advised that even though staff access to the offices had been limited due to the Covid-19 restrictions, any payments received had continued to be banked weekly, or more frequently.

Members advised that the Banking Arrangements, Investment Strategy & Investment Arrangements policy remained fit for purpose.

Resolved: To recommend to Town Council that the Banking Arrangements, Investment Strategy & Investment Arrangements be approved.

11336 COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

The Corporate Service committee reviewed this document at its meeting held on the 20th June 2019. At that time amendments were made to reflect guidance that had been issued from NALC in December 2018. Therefore, the Complaints Procedure remained fit for purpose.

Members were being requested to consider placing the review of the Complaints Procedure onto a 4 yearly review cycle and not annually as currently stated.

- Resolved:**
- 1) **To recommend to Town Council that the Complaints Procedure be approved.**
 - 2) **To agree to the Complaints Procedure being reviewed every 4 years unless required be considered sooner.**

11337 CODE OF CONDUCT

Members received a track change document for consideration.

Members were reminded that a consultation had recently be undertaken by NALC, therefore, the Town Councils Code of Conduct may need to be revisited sooner than the next review date.

- Resolved: To recommend to Town Council that the Code of Conduct be approved.**

11338 RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY AND SCHEDULE

In accordance with Financial Regulation 17.1, the council was responsible for putting in place arrangements for the management of risk. The Clerk prepared, for approval by the council, risk management policy statements in respect of all activates of the council. Risk policy statements and consequential risk management arrangements shall be reviewed by the council at least annually.

Members received a copy of the Risk Management Strategy and Schedule.

Members were advised of the following:

- Income generation (page 15), that general reserves were around the minimum level;
- Non-compliance with legislation (page 18), it was highlighted that there would be a reduced risk to the council with enhanced member training through take up of opportunities and through making training mandatory (at the local level) for Cllrs
- Senior Staff and Member leadership, this was an additional risk which had been added. It covered a situation where senior members of the council were unavailable for whatever reason (this could include absence due to a pandemic)

Members advised that they could foresee various issues with the enforcement of mandatory training.

Members highlighted that the councillors were a mix from different backgrounds, each bringing different skills to the council, which would make it difficult to ascertain where training was needed. Members advised that it had been previously suggested that joint training could be arranged with other councils.

Members were advised that although training was being constantly offered to councillors, uptake had been poor.

Resolved: To recommend to Town Council that the HRTC Risk Management Strategy & Schedule be approved.

11339 VISION

Members received an extract from the approved Vision 2020/2024 as it related to the work of this committee. The format of the Vision was still being worked on, but it was hoped that as presented the Vision was in a suitable manner at this stage. Members were requested to note that Covid-19 had a significant impact on the progression of the Vision.

Members suggested that training analysis be added to the vision to identify areas of training required. Members requested that the Corporate Services Manager raise this with the Town Clerk.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.17pm

Dated this 23rd day of November 2020.

Chairman

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL
Community Services Committee
1st September 2020 at 7.00pm

Present: Councillors: K Wattingham Chairman
C Copleston
Y Farrell
S Goodchild
T McMahon

Officers: Clare Evans Town Clerk
Tara Earnshaw Community Development Officer
Louise Senior Head of Democratic Services

Public: 1

Apologies: Councillors: J Carroll
A Slough

11306 APOLOGIES & SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Cllrs Slough and Carroll.

11307 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

11308 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

None.

11309 MINUTES

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 22nd June 2020.

Resolved: To confirm the minutes of the Community Services Committee meetings held on 22nd June 2020 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

11310 TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING WORKING GROUPS AND CONSIDER ANY RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED THEREIN

Events Working Group 4th June and 9th July 2020

Members noted the following resolutions:

EWG570 CARNIVAL

To recommend to Community Services the unspent budget / funds during 2020 be ring-fenced and used in 2021/22.

EWG571 SKATE PARK COMPETITION

To recommend to Community Services the unspent Budget / funds during 2020 be ring-fenced and used in 2021/22.

EWG572 HOUGHTON ROCKS

To recommend to Community Services the unspent Budget/ funds during 2020 be ring-fenced and used in 2021/22

Consideration was given to a revised budget for 2020/21 at the town council meeting on 20th July. The report which accompanied this did highlight the aspiration of the Events Working Group to ring fence unspent events budget for 2021/22.

Unfortunately, for the council to be able to meet increases in expenditure and adjust to losses in income arising from Covid-19, this was not possible. The Events Working Group, through Community Services Committee, would need to provide the justification for an enhanced events budget for 2021/22 as part of the budget setting process.

Combating Crime Working Group

17th June and 15th July 2020

Resolved: To receive the Minutes detailed above.

11311 REPORT FROM GROUNDWORK

Diana Hedley, a representative from Groundwork, was in attendance to update members on the work completed on behalf of Central Bedfordshire Council.

Members were advised that due to Covid, Groundwork's Youth Club sessions had been delivered virtually, however, acting on feedback from the young people, two hour sessions were too long therefore the sessions had been broken up into smaller sessions, with sessions running each day throughout the week. Some sessions had been arranged to be held outside for some young people who found the virtual sessions difficult.

Members were advised that, newly launched, was an open-door service which was open to any young person in the Central Bedfordshire area. This was a self-referral service which allowed young people to take ownership of their own support.

Members were advised that guidance from Central Bedfordshire Council was pending regarding permitted numbers and distancing guidelines to allow the re-opening of buildings for the Youth Club to be operational.

11312 INCOME AND EXPENDITURE REPORT

Members received the Income & Expenditure report to date for the Community Services Committee.

Members were advised that an early release of funding had been offered to key partners which was reflected in the report.

11313 UPDATE REPORT

Members received a report from the Community Development Officer providing an update on work undertaken between June to August 2020.

Members were advised that the Youth Council had been meeting virtually due to Covid 19. The Youth Council had been active in planning a Halloween event to be held in line with government guidance.

Members were advised that activity packs had been produced for members of the community to purchase at a generously subsidised cost. These were being handed out at the Town Council Offices, Jewels and Houghton Hall Park.

Members requested that special thanks go to the Community Development Officer, for her work in producing the activity bags, and Jewels and Jenny at Houghton Hall Park for their efforts in passing on the bags on behalf of Houghton Regis Town Council.

Resolved: To note the report.

11314 VISION

Members received an extract from the approved Vision 2020/2024 as it related to the work of this committee. Members were requested to note that Covid-19 had significantly impacted the progression of the Vision.

Members discussed that some areas of the Vision would work in conjunction and crossover with others:

1. Grown your own
2. Healthy eating

Members suggested utilising some neglected land to promote family activities such as community growing.

Possible areas discussed were:

- The triangular piece of land opposite the Chequers
- The area of land outside the Community Centre, which has a water source
- A section within the old cemetery.

Further unused spaces could be identified around the town.

Members suggested seeking a way to promote local shops which sold healthy options such as vegetables and meat, also suggested was the creation of a task and finish group to enable quicker implementation of new ideas.

Members noted the benefits of a project like this supporting the mental health and wellbeing of residents.

Members were advised that the brochure for the new vision was close to completion.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.05pm

Dated this 26th day of October 2020

Chairman

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL
Environment & Leisure Committee
21st September 2020 at 7.00pm

Present: Councillors: T McMahon Chairman
D Abbott
Y Farrell
S Goodchild
R Morgan

Officers: Clare Evans Town Clerk
Tony Luff Head of Grounds Operations
Louise Senior Head of Democratic Services

Public: 2

Apologies: Councillors: A Slough

Absent: D Dixon-
Wilkinson

11340 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllr Slough.

11341 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

11342 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

11343 MINUTES

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 1st June 2020.

Resolved: To confirm the minutes of the Environment & Leisure Committee meeting held on 1st June 2020 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

11344 INCOME AND EXPENDITURE REPORT

Members received the Income & Expenditure report to date for the Environment & Leisure Committee.

11345 HOUGHTON REGIS CEMTERY

Members were advised that at the time of preparing this agenda the last remaining burial plot had been booked for an interment. Funeral directors had been advised accordingly.

As members were aware a considerable amount of work had been undertaken to secure a new burial site. Discussions were being held with Central Bedfordshire Council on options and in due course a report would be presented to the New Cemetery Sub-Committee.

Members were advised that once land had been identified and costings for exploratory work had been received from Cemetery Development Services, a New Cemetery Sub-Committee meeting would be held. Members were advised that it was hoped that a meeting of the New Cemetery Sub-Committee could be held approximately within the next 6 weeks.

11346 PLAY AREA INSPECTION REPORT

Members were provided with an update of the outcomes of the annual play area inspection and were invited to consider surfacing options for the Village Green play area.

Members were advised of the ongoing cost of bark replacement each year at approximately £2,500 and were requested to consider replacing this with wetpore, which would not incur an annual replenishment cost, ad-hoc repairs would be completed as necessary.

Resolved:

- 1. To complete all maintenance in the timescale indicated within Appendix A and accept low risk items as identified;**
- 2. To replace the bark surface within the Village Green play area with wetpore using the services of Company A.**

11347 TITHE FARM RECREATION GROUND SPORTS PROJECT UPDATE

To update members on the Tithe Farm Recreation Ground Sports Project.

Members were advised that a bid consultant and design architect had been appointed. Some issues had been raised; the land was not registered with Land Registry, however, the lease would be registered which met the requirements of the Football Foundation; a foul sewage pipe had been discovered on the land. Discussions were being held with Anglian Water over this.

Members were advised that a resident consultation would be held when the process was further along.

7.26 pm - Councillor Morgan joined the meeting

11348 VISION

Members received an extract from the approved Vision 2020/2024 as it related to the work of this committee. Members were requested to note that Covid-19 had a

significant impact on the progression of the Vision.

In particular Members were invited to discuss:

1.5 – edible planting

1.6 – supporting biodiversity and wildlife

1.6 – recycling within open spaces

2.4 – outdoor fitness equipment in parks and open spaces

4.5 – provision of high quality green spaces

4.6 – range of play facilities

There may be significant budget implications for members aspirations under 4.5 and 4.6. As such members were invited to put forward any specific ideas so that investigations could take place and funding options considered.

Members queried whether the bins identified would be dual purpose, and if the extra cost of disposal been considered. Members were advised the correct disposal of recyclable litter was difficult but options would be investigated further.

Members suggested, that as only some of the bins in Houghton Regis were maintained and replaced by Houghton Regis Town Council, that Central Bedfordshire Council be approached to replace the Central Bedfordshire Council owned bins at the same time.

Members raised concerns that the due to Covid-19, sharing the Vision with residents may prove more of a challenge.

Members were keen for the edible planting project to be initiated. An area suggested for the edible planting project was Dog Kennel Down, although this was a County Wildlife site so options would need to be explored further.

An amendment to the officer recommendation 1. was proposed to read:

To approve a phased replacement of litter bins with dual purpose litter and recycling bins, subject to a suitable means of disposal being identified.

The officer recommendation read:

To approve a phased replacement of litter bins with dual purpose litter and recycling bins.

The amendment was proposed by: S Goodchild, seconded by: D Abbott.
All in favour

Accordingly, this became the substantive motion.

Proposed by: S Goodchild, seconded by: D Abbott.
All in favour

- Resolved:**
- 1. To approve a phased replacement of litter bins with dual purpose litter and recycling bins, subject to a suitable means of disposal being identified.**
 - 2. To approve investigations into dedicating Parkside recreation ground as a Field in Trust and subsequently to seek Field in Trust funding to support the installation of outdoor fitness equipment on this site.**

11349 USE OF THE VILLAGE GREEN

Members were advised that John Lawson Circus requested the following dates for 2021:

Pull On 14th October 2021 - Pull Off 22nd October 2021 with show dates 15th to 21st October 2021

- Resolved:** **To approve the visit by John Lawson Circus for 14th October to 22nd October 2021.**

11350 MOORE CRESCENT CAR PARK

Members were invited to consider the use of Moore Crescent car park to support Houghton Hall Park.

Members were advised that the car park was currently being used by Houghton Hall Park to support their events but could be used to support Houghton Hall Park on a more regular or daily basis. Members were advised that this was a request to authorise the investigation of the wider use of the car park, and options would be brought back to this Committee for further discussion once the investigation had been completed.

- Resolved:** **To agree in principal to the further consideration for the wider use of Moore Crescent car park to support the use of Houghton Hall Park.**

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.04pm

Dated this 16th day of November 2020

Chairman

**Houghton Regis Town Council
Planning Committee
28th September 2020 at 7.00pm**

Present: Councillors: D Jones Chairman
J Carroll
Y Farrell Substitute
M S Kennedy
S Thorne

Officers: Clare Evans Corporate Services Manager
Louise Senior Head of Democratic Services

Public: 0

Apologies: Councillors: D Dixon-Wilkinson
K Wattingham

Also present: Councillor: S Goodchild Central Bedfordshire Council

11351 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Councillor Dixon-Wilkinson and Councillor Wattingham (Councillor Farrell substituted)

11352 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

11353 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

11354 MINUTES

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on the 7th September 2020.

Resolved: To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 7th September 2020 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

11355 PLANNING MATTERS

(a) The following planning applications were considered:

Non - Delegated

CB/20/03079/FULL Erection of two-bedroom dwelling on the side plot adjoining
71 Churchfield Road
71 Churchfield Road, LU5 5HN
For: Mr S Pointing

Comments:**Objection:**

- 1. The proposed development represents overdevelopment in the area;**
- 2. There is no parking provision contrary to the CBC Parking Regulations;**
- 3. The design is not in keeping with the surrounding area.**

Members requested this application to be called in by Cllr Goodchild.

CB/20/02855/FULL Proposed Side and Rear wrap around extension
67 Grangeway, LU5 5PR
For: Mrs Belzunce

Comments: Houghton Regis Town Council had no objections to this application.

CB/20/02694/FULL Installation of a new fence and gates to the rear of property
7 Woodlands Avenue, LU5 5LJ
For: Mr & Mrs Ward

Comments: Houghton Regis Town Council had no objections to this application, provided that materials are in keeping with the Conservation Area.

CB/20/03131/VOC Variation of Condition 6 to Planning Permission
CB/18/04232/Full (Residential development of 2 No. 4 bedroom dwellings): The position of the bin collection point to change.
4 Bidwell Farm Barns, Bedford Road, LU5 6JS
For: Mr J Dearman

Comments: Houghton Regis Town Council had no objections to this application.

CB/20/03101/FULL Extended driveway with dropped kerb and keep clear hatching
153 Sundon Road, LU5 5NN
For: Mr P Sparkes

Comments: Houghton Regis Town Council had no objections to this application.

CB/20/02953/REG3 Remove existing window and section of brickwork and in its place install new door to match material and finish of window. Create new access ramp with 1:12 gradient and hand rail leading to new door.
For: Regis Education Centre, The Chiltern School

Comments: Houghton Regis Town Council had no objections to this application.

CB/20/03276/FULL Conversion and extension of double garage into a single storey two bedroom detached dwelling, with off street parking and rear private garden
4 Townsend Terrace, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5BB
For: Mr T Starkey

Comments: Houghton Regis Town Council had no objections to this application.**The following were noted:**

CB/20/03090/NMA Non-Material Amendment to planning permission
CB/19/04208/FULL (Extension to first floor, 2 storey side and rear extension, new double garage and porch)
51 Cemetery Road, LU5 5DA
For: Ms Shepherd

CB/20/03053/DOC Discharge of Condition 19 to Planning Permission
CB/15/00297/OUT (Outline 'hybrid' planning application with details of main access routes, primary road network and associated drainage in detail only and layout in outline with details of landscaping, appearance and scale reserved for later determination. Development to comprise: Up to 1,850 residential (C3) dwellings (including affordable housing), 2FE Primary School (D1), employment land (Use Classes B1 [a-c], B2 & B8), local centre comprising retail (A1, A2, A3, A4 & A5) and community/leisure uses (D1 & D2), layout of public open spaces including sports pitches and changing rooms, natural wildlife areas and all associated works and operations including engineering operations and earthworks)
Land West of Bidwell (Houghton Regis North Site 2)
Houghton Regis

CB/20/03061/DOC Discharge of Conditions 3, 6 and 7 from planning permission
CB/19/03323/VOC (Variation of condition 13 of planning permission CB/17/05378/FULL - Demolition of large mechanical storage unit and abutting dwelling and erection of 4no. semi-detached cottages.)
Manor Farm, Sewell Lane, Sewell, Dunstable, LU6 1RP
Although this was presented for noting, members confirmed their objection to this development.

CB/20/01108/GPDE Prior notification of householder extension: Single storey rear extension
18 Dalling Drive, LU5 5EF.

- CB/20/03120/DOC Discharge of Condition 12 against Planning Permission CB/15/00297/OUT (Outline 'hybrid' planning application with details of main access routes, primary road network and associated drainage in detail only and layout in outline with details of landscaping, appearance and scale reserved for later determination. Development to comprise: Up to 1,850 residential (C3) dwellings (including affordable housing), 2FE Primary School (D1), employment land (Use Classes B1 [a-c], B2 & B8), local centre comprising retail (A1, A2, A3, A4 & A5) and community/leisure uses (D1 & D2), layout of public open spaces including sports pitches and changing rooms, natural wildlife areas and all associated works and operations including engineering operations and earthworks)
Land West of Bidwell (Houghton Regis North Site 2)
Houghton Regis
- CB/20/03201/DOC Discharge of Condition 13 to Planning Permission CB/15/00297/OUT (Outline 'hybrid' planning application with details of main access routes, primary road network and associated drainage in detail only and layout in outline with details of landscaping, appearance and scale reserved for later determination. Development to comprise: Up to 1,850 residential (C3) dwellings (including affordable housing), 2FE Primary School (D1), employment land (Use Classes B1 , B2 & B8), local centre comprising retail (A1, A2, A3, A4 & A5) and community/leisure uses (D1 & D2), layout of public open spaces including sports pitches and changing rooms, natural wildlife areas and all associated works and operations including engineering operations and earthworks)
Land West of Bidwell (Houghton Regis North Site 2)
Houghton Regis
- CB/20/03203/DOC Discharge of Condition 7 to Planning Permission CB/15/00297/OUT (Outline 'hybrid' planning application with details of main access routes, primary road network and associated drainage in detail only and layout in outline with details of landscaping, appearance and scale reserved for later determination. Development to comprise: Up to 1,850 residential (C3) dwellings (including affordable housing), 2FE Primary School (D1), employment land (Use Classes B1 , B2 & B8), local centre comprising retail (A1, A2, A3, A4 & A5) and community/leisure uses (D1 & D2), layout of public open spaces including sports pitches and changing rooms, natural wildlife areas and all associated works and operations including engineering operations and earthworks)
Land West of Bidwell (Houghton Regis North Site 2)
Houghton Regis

(b) Decision Notices

Permissions/Approvals/Consents:

None at time of going to print.

Refusals:

None at time of going to print.

Withdrawals:

None at time of going to print.

11356 INCOME AND EXPENDITURE REPORT

Members received an income and expenditure report on the Planning Committees budget.

Resolved: **To note the report**

11357 MINISTRY OF HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT (PLANNING CONSULTATIONS)

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government had issued three consultations on reform of the planning system:

1. Changes to the current planning system (NALC deadline for responses 17.9.20 (MHCLG deadline 1.10.20)
2. Planning for the future - the planning white paper (NALC deadline for responses 15.10.20) (MHCLG deadline 29.10.20)
3. Transparency and competition: a call for evidence on data on land control (NALC deadline for responses 16th October) (MHCLG deadline 29.10.20)

Members had previously been provided with briefings corresponding to each consultation and the corresponding deadlines for each consultation. The NALC deadlines were earlier than MHCLG's, so that the Town Councils views could inform NALC's responses to MHCLG on behalf of the sector.

Members considered these briefings at the previous meeting and requested that the Town Council's planning consultant provide members with a report that would help inform the Town Councils response.

It was agreed that the Town Council would respond directly to MHCLG and copy NALC into their response to the changes to the current planning system consultation, as the NALC deadline had passed. NALC had been advised and have confirmed that they will expect to read the Town Councils response in due course. For the other two consultations, the Town Council will respond to NALC only.

Members were reminded that this item was deferred from the last meeting.

Resolved: **To confirm the Town Councils response to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government Planning Consultations in accordance with the briefing report prepared by the town council's planning consultant.**

11358 STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT SITES/LOCAL PLAN– UPDATE/PROGRESS

Woodside Link – No substantive update to report.

A5 M1 Link – No substantive update to report.

All Saints View – No substantive update to report.

Linnere – No substantive update to report.

Bidwell West – No substantive update to report.

Kingsland – No substantive update to report.

Windsor Drive – No substantive update to report.

Section 106 Monies – No substantive update to report.

Local Plan Consultation – Central Bedfordshire Council had been advised that the recent Local Plan consultation, had closed. The consultation ran for eight weeks from 18th June to 12th August and related to additional evidence published by the Council to address questions raised by the Planning Inspectors in their letter of 30th September (EXAM 69).

In total 466 responses were received.

The responses had been submitted to the Planning Inspectors. Inspectors will consider the responses before advising on what the next steps will be. It was anticipated they would wish to hold further hearing sessions later in 2020.

Resolved: To note the information

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.29pm

Dated this 19th day of October 2020

Chairman

Houghton Regis Town Council
Planning Committee
19th October 2020 at 7.00pm

Present: Councillors: D Dixon-Wilkinson Chairman
J Carroll
Y Farrell Substitute
D Jones
S Thorne

Officers: Debbie Marsh Corporate Services Manager
Louise Senior Head of Democratic Services

Public: 8

Apologies: Councillors: M S Kennedy
K Wattingham

Also present: Councillors: T McMahon
S Goodchild Central Bedfordshire Council

11369 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Cllr Kennedy and Cllr Wattingham (Cllr Farrell substituted)

11370 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Members of the public raised concerns in regard to planning application CB/20/03300/REG3 Kingsland Secondary School Parkside Drive.

Issues raised included the layout of the sports pitches and the area on which they were proposed. Members were informed that the area was heavily used by deer and badgers for foraging and grazing. Local observations had shown that foraging had increased, particularly over the last 4 years, probably due to the development of Linmere and other sites around the Town. Due to their nature, badgers were known to travel a number of miles whilst foraging and therefore any fencing should be permeable, or gaps provided at various intervals, to continue to allow wildlife access and egress to the site. It was suggested that the flood lighting as proposed, would further increase the risk of safety to those animals who currently seek refuge in this area. It was proposed that Central Bedfordshire Council look, holistically, during their consideration of planning applications to allow wildlife corridors to be suitably connected.

The proposed cycle path would concrete over the brook. Currently water from the brook backs up to the pond and overflows onto the Kingsland site. The brook needs some overdue maintenance in order to alleviate this serious issue.

Members were informed that the plans showed an ecological buffer, residents felt this was incorrectly described as what was there was not a buffer but a strip of land with a number of dead trees on it and therefore would not provide adequate screening for those residents adjacent to the proposed building.

Proposed location and height of the proposed development would appear overbearing to those residents living adjacent to the site. Residents recommend Central Bedfordshire Council consider siting the new school on the current footprint or on the northern side of the site.

Members of the public raised concerns in regard to planning application CB/20/03539/FULL Sewell Manor, Manor Farm, Sewell Lane, Sewell

Issues raised included discrepancies with the submitted drawings and those of the ones submitted in 2017. Although the planning application in 2017 was subsequently withdrawn, members were requested to compare the two sets of drawings, paying particular attention to the 'existing' plans. Members were advised that, in the resident's opinion, there had been a breach of planning regulations. Proposed development could be viewed from a public footpath which was contrary to that which had been declared by the applicant.

Members of the public raised concerns in regard to planning application CB/20/03557/VOC Stable Cottage, Manor Farm, Sewell Lane, Sewell

Issues raised included the development not being developed in accordance with approved planning permission.

Members of the committee thanked those present for their input and for attending the meeting.

11371 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

11372 MINUTES

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on the 28th September 2020.

Resolved To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 28th September 2020 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

11373 PLANNING MATTERS

(a) The following planning applications were considered:

CB/20/03331/FULL Form a new dormer to rear of property and conversion of existing garage including the raising of the roof level to form new flat roof
11 Cemetery Road, LU5 5BZ
For: Miss M Tavaglione

Comments: Houghton Regis Town Council had no objections to this application.

CB/20/03087/RM Reserved Matters: following Outline Application CB/15/04918/REG3 (Erection of up to 61,336m² employment development floor space with associated infrastructure and ancillary works. All matters reserved except means of access from Thorn Road) Appearance, Landscaping, Layout and Scale to Plot B.
Land at Thorn Turn, Thorn Road, Houghton Regis LU6 1RT

Comments: The Town Council accepts that this site has outline permission for storage and distribution activity however, the proposed activity on the site causes concern. Houghton Regis Town Council objects to this application for the following reasons:

- **Design - The approved outline application was of a more traditional storage and distribution unit based around HGV's coming in and out with appropriate car parking for employees. The proposed development is a smaller building but is based on packages coming in then being distributed by vans.**
- **Parking provision - Although there is provision for parking for 800 vans on the site, there are concerns that the provision of parking for employees, to cover the operational hours/days, is not acceptable. This could lead to inconsiderate parking on Thorn Road or surrounding roads.**
- **Highways - HRN2 is not a strategic urban extension, it is a residential lead urban extension. Concerns are raised that vehicles will not use the bypass but instead travel along Thorn Road which would impact on the resident's amenity and increase the risk to other road users and pedestrians.**
- **Environmental Impact - Lack of up to date Environmental Impact Assessment, which would assess the impact of the vehicle movements proposed.**

CB/20/03286/RM Reserved Matters: following Outline Application CB/12/03613/OUT (5,150 dwellings) for access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale for provision of class E Foodstore.
Land at Sundon Road, Houghton Regis

Comments: Houghton Regis Town Council had no objections to this application.

CB/20/03300/REG3 Erection of a three storey secondary school and sports hall providing 6 forms of entry (900) pupils, together with a 220 pupil sixth form, sports pitches including an all-weather pitch, vehicular access, car-parking, coach parking, pedestrian and cycle access from the north and east, landscaping and associated infrastructure.
Kingsland Secondary School Parkside Drive, LU5 5TH

Comments: Houghton Regis Town Council supports this application in principle, however, would like Central Bedfordshire Council to consider the following comments:

- **Flooding - That maintenance of the brook be undertaken prior to commencement of any building works. This is to mitigate the risk of flooding from the pond which will increase due to additional concreting over of the site and the brook;**
- **Setting - Consideration be given to the siting of the new buildings. Proposed development will be in closer proximity to neighbouring properties and due to the increase in height, will appear overbearing to those residents affected. As an alternative, could consideration be given to siting the new building on the north side of the site access road, where it will not directly impact on nearby housing on Parkside Drive and Sundon Road. In siting it here this would also not impinge on wildlife. The Town Council reiterates that it cannot judge the best location for this school without sight of the feasibility study for the whole of the Kingsland site, promised by Central Bedfordshire Council in the Spring, but still to be available;**
- **Highway – Request to remove the proposal for an additional entrance from Grange Way. Local residents are concerned that having an entrance here would cause traffic issues in this area;**
- **Ecology - The ecological buffer will not screen the proposed 3 storey building, as the vegetation that is there is very sparse and comprises mainly of bushes or dead trees. Central Bedfordshire Council are requested to review this buffer and provide a more suitable alternative i.e. planting of mature trees;**

- **Wildlife - The Town Council supports residents in their concerns in regard to the layout of the sports pitches and the area on which they are proposed. This area is heavily used by deer and badgers for foraging and grazing. Local observations had shown that foraging has increased, particularly over the last 4 years, probably due to the development of Linnere and other sites around the Town. Due to their nature, badgers are known to travel a number of miles whilst foraging and therefore any fencing should be permeable, or gaps provided at various intervals, to continue to allow wildlife access and egress to the site. It is suggested that the flood lighting as proposed, would further increase the risk of safety to those animals who currently seek refuge in this area. It is proposed that Central Bedfordshire Council look, holistically, during their consideration of planning applications to allow wildlife corridors to be suitably connected.**

Finally, the Town Council continues to register its disappointment with Central Bedfordshire Council in the lack of public and Town Council engagement in regard to this site.

CB/20/03391/FULL Construction of 9 residential dwellings and all ancillary works
Land at The Orchard, Bedford Road, LU5 6JJ
For: Bilsby Properties Ltd

Comments: Houghton Regis Town Council objects to this application for the following reasons:

- **Overdevelopment**
- **No footpath or cycle access to the site, thereby making an enclosed standalone development and out of keeping.**
- **Layout appears cramped**

CB/20/03406/RM Reserved Matters: following Outline Application
CB/12/03613/OUT (Development to comprise: up to 5,150 dwellings and various other classes (retail) (public house) (take away) (offices, industrial and storage and distribution) (hotel) (care home) (community and leisure)): RM sought for appearance, landscaping, layout, and scale of furniture and play equipment.
Houghton Regis North 1, Sundon Road, Houghton Regis

Comments: Houghton Regis Town Council had no objections to this application.

CB/20/03539/FULL Conversion of the former surgery building to a residential dwelling with outdoor garden space and vehicle parking area Sewell Manor, Manor Farm, Sewell Lane, Sewell, LU6 1RP Mr A Buckland

Comments: The Town Council objects to this application for the following reasons:

- **The provision of parking is not included within the footprint of the current building and therefore would constitute overdevelopment of the site.**
- **The proposed development appears cramped.**
- **The existing building is within the curtilage of a Listed Building there should be no fencing around the building, on order to protect the openness of the site and the Conservation Area.**
- **This structure can be viewed from an adjacent public footpath (FP24), contrary to the declaration on the application form.**
- **Most worryingly is the previous application (CB/17/03582/FULL) which was withdrawn 13th October 2017, shows the building as it was then. What is being presented with this application as being existing is not the same and in fact poses as an unauthorised development of the building that has taken place in the meantime. The Town Council strongly requests planning enforcement investigates this matter to ascertain whether there has been a breach of planning regulations.**

Members requested the ward councillor be asked to call in this application

CB/20/03557/VOC Variation to Condition 12 of Planning Permission CB/19/0323/VOC Variation of Design to keep the ridge level as approved but lower the pitch of the roof to raise the eaves level of the dwellings to alleviate the need for dormers and create small gable on the two storey front projection. Stable Cottage, Manor Farm, Sewell Lane, Sewell, LU6 1RP For: JAW Construction

Comments:

The Town Council objects to this application for the following reasons:

- **This site has already been subject to a previous VOC application (CB/19/03323/VOC) which, in the Town Councils opinion, included so many variations that it constituted a revised application and did not fall under the criteria for VOC. For example, the variation also increased the size of the footprint of the proposed developments, albeit by not much but by a figure in total of around 3**

metres, removal of bay windows to be replaced with bi fold doors and two additional windows in plots 2 and 4 on the gable end.

- **The proposed design does not compliment or harmonise with the local surroundings, in particular to the adjacent listed building. Nor does the design pay regard to its setting in a conservation area.**
- **Insufficient parking provision.**
- **The original application (CB/17/05378/FULL) provided very little in design elements. The previous VOC application and this application, should it be approved, will leave a set of semi-detached dwellings of ‘box’ like design with absolutely no design elements and contrary to Central Bedfordshire Councils Design Guide and thereby incongruous in the hamlet of Sewell.**

Members requested the ward councillor be asked to call in this application

The following applications were noted:

- CB/20/03374/NMA Non-Material Amendment to planning permission CB/19/00883/RM (Reserved matters of appearance, scale and landscaping for residential development of 255 dwellings Following Outline CB/15/0297/OUT): Substitution of house types on plots 167, 168, 169 & 170 from Irwell to Weaver. Parcels 4a and 4b Bidwell West Houghton Regis Bedfordshire LU5 6JQ
- CB/20/03178/DOC Discharge of Condition 1 from planning permission CB/20/00449/RM (Reserved Matters: following Outline Application CB/12/03613/OUT planning permission with the details of access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale reserved for later determination. Development to comprise: up to 5,150 dwellings (Use Class C3); up to 202,500 sqm gross of additional development in Use Classes: A1, A2, A3 (retail), A4 (public house), A5 (take away); B1, B2, B8 (offices, industrial and storage and distribution); C1 (hotel), C2 (care home), D1 and D2 (community and leisure); car showroom; data centre; petrol filling station; car parking; primary substation; energy centre; and for the laying out of the buildings; routes and open spaces within the development; and all associated works and operations including but not limited to: demolition; earthworks; engineering operations. All development, works and operations to be in accordance with the Development Parameters Schedule and Plans. Reserved matters planning application for 309 new homes, public open space, landscape and associated infrastructure pursuant to Conditions 3 and 4) Houghton Regis North 1 (HRN1) Land on the northern edge of Houghton Regis, Houghton Regis

- CB/20/03495/DOC Discharge of Conditions 12 & 14 against Planning Permission CB/19/03232/RM (Reserved matters: Appearance, scale and landscaping for residential development of 336 dwellings on Development Parcels 5a & 5b Bidwell West, Houghton Regis. Outline application (CB/15/0297/OUT) was supported by a full Environmental Statement (ES))
Parcels 5a & 5b, Bidwell West, Houghton Regis, Bedfordshire, LU5 6JQ
- CB/20/03399/DOC Discharge of Condition 5 to planning permission CB/15/00297/OUT (Outline 'hybrid' planning application with details of main access routes, primary road network and associated drainage in detail only and layout in outline with details of landscaping, appearance and scale reserved for later determination. Development to comprise: Up to 1,850 residential (C3) dwellings (including affordable housing), 2FE Primary School (D1), employment land (Use Classes B1 [a-c], B2 & B8), local centre comprising retail (A1, A2, A3, A4 & A5) and community/leisure uses (D1 & D2), layout of public open spaces including sports pitches and changing rooms, natural wildlife areas and all associated works and operations including engineering operations and earthworks)
Land West of Bidwell (Houghton Regis North Site 2)
Houghton Regis
- CB/20/03400/DOC Discharge of Condition 20 against planning permission CB/15/00297/OUT (Outline 'hybrid' planning application with details of main access routes, primary road network and associated drainage in detail only and layout in outline with details of landscaping, appearance and scale reserved for later determination. Development to comprise: Up to 1,850 residential (C3) dwellings (including affordable housing), 2FE Primary School (D1), employment land (Use Classes B1 [a-c], B2 & B8), local centre comprising retail (A1, A2, A3, A4 & A5) and community/leisure uses (D1 & D2), layout of public open spaces including sports pitches and changing rooms, natural wildlife areas and all associated works and operations including engineering operations and earthworks)
Land West of Bidwell (Houghton Regis North Site 2),
Houghton Regis
- CB/20/03574/DOC Discharge of Condition 19 against planning permission CB/20/00388/RM (Reserved Matters; following outline Application CB/12/03613/OUT Outline planning permission with the details of access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale reserved for later determination. 5,150 dwellings (use class C3) 202,500 sqm of additional development in Use Classes A1,A2,A3,A4,A5,B1,B2,B8,C1,C2,D1,D2 All development, works and operations to be in accordance with the Development Parameters Schedule and Plans. Reserves

matter for 153 dwellings with access, parking, landscaping and associated works)
Land To The North And East Of Houghton Regis, Sundon Road, Houghton Regis

- CB/20/03576/DOC Discharge of Condition 12 to Planning Permission CB/20/00388/RM (Reserved Matters; following Outline Application CB/12/03613/OUT Outline Planning Permission with the details of access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale reserved for later determination. 5,150 dwellings(use class C3) 202,500 sqm of additional development in Use Classes A1,A2,A3,A4,A5,B1,B2,B8,C1,C2,D1,D2 All development, works and operations to be in accordance with the Development Parameters Schedule and Plans. Reserves matter for 153 dwellings with access, parking, landscaping and associated works)
Phase 1 Parcel 3 Houghton Regis, North Site 1, Houghton Regis
- CB/20/03553/DOC Discharge of Conditions 3, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 & 15 to Planning Permission CB/20/00449/RM (Reserved Matters: following Outline Application CB/12/03613/OUT planning permission with the details of access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale reserved for later determination. Development to comprise: up to 5,150 dwellings (Use Class C3); up to 202,500 sqm gross of additional development in Use Classes: A1, A2, A3 (retail), A4 (public house), A5 (take away); B1, B2, B8 (offices, industrial and storage and distribution); C1 (hotel), C2 (care home), D1 and D2 (community and leisure); car showroom; data centre; petrol filling station; car parking; primary substation; energy centre; and for the laying out of the buildings; routes and open spaces within the development; and all associated works and operations including but not limited to: demolition; earthworks; engineering operations. All development, works and operations to be in accordance with the Development Parameters Schedule and Plans. Reserved matters planning application for 309 new homes, public open space, landscape and associated infrastructure pursuant to Conditions 3 and 4)
Houghton Regis North 1 (HRN1) Land on the northern edge of Houghton Regis, Houghton Regis
- CB/TRE/20/00538 Works to Trees Protected by Tree Preservation Order SB/80/00004/T4:
Remove decayed large limb of Aesculus Hippocastenum (Horse Chestnut) with weight bias towards Park Road North Land Adjacent to 80 Tennyson Avenue, LU5 5UG

(b) The following decision notices were noted:

Permissions / Approvals / Consents

Refusals:

None received.

Withdrawals:

None received.

**11374 MINISTRY OF HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT
(PLANNING CONSULTATIONS)**

Members received a response from NALC to MHCLG on the Changes to the current planning system consultation, which was based on all the responses NALC received from Town and Parish Councils.

11375 LOCAL PLAN

No substantive update to report.

Resolved: To note the information.

**11376 STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT SITES/LOCAL PLAN–
UPDATE/PROGRESS**

Woodside Link – No substantive update to report.

A5 M1 Link – Members were advised that Highways England were now in receipt of the Road Traffic Safety Audit. Members were informed that there was an intention to amend the current road markings before the end of the financial year.

For information this major road project opened on the 11th May 2017.

All Saints View – No substantive update to report.

Linnere – No substantive update to report.

Bidwell West – No substantive update to report.

Kingsland – Members were referred to planning application CB/20/03300/REG3 as above.

Windsor Drive – No substantive update to report.

Section 106 Monies – No substantive update to report.

Resolved: To note the information

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.48pm

Dated this 9th day of November 2020

Chairman

Houghton Regis Town Council
Planning Committee
9th November 2020 at 7.00pm

Present: Councillors: D Dixon-Wilkinson Chairman
J Carroll
Y Farrell Substitute
D Jones
M S Kennedy
S Thorne

Officers: Debbie Marsh Corporate Services Manager
Louise Senior Head of Democratic Services

Public: 6

Apologies: Councillors: K Wattingham

Also present: N Thompson Smith Jenkins Ltd
Nikki Barnes Grand Union Housing
Bob Harrington Grand Union Housing
Councillors S Goodchild Central Bedfordshire Council
T McMahan

11394 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Cllr Wattingham (Cllr Farrell substituted)

11395 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

A member of the public raised concerns regarding the public consultation on updated plans and development brief on land East of Houghton Park Road, outline application CB/19/02053/OUT

Members were advised that despite the revised masterplan including two potential vehicular links from the site through to the Linmere site, what remained was the only vehicular entrance into this site via Conquest Road. This would do nothing to mitigate the issues already experienced in Conquest Road, it would exacerbate it. Within the correspondence received from Rapleys, it stated that multiple additional residents parking spaces would be added on and around Conquest Road. This was concerning to residents, there was no indication of what his meant.

A member of the public addressed the committee in regard to CB/TCA/20/00598 Works to Trees in a Conservation Area - Land to rear of Woodlands Avenue, Houghton Regis. Members were requested to consider the description of the application and to ascertain whether there was to be a complete felling of trees in this site or whether it was just those trees as identified.

11396 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

11397 MINUTES

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on the 19th October 2020.

Resolved To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 19th October 2020 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

11398 PLANNING MATTERS

(a) The following planning applications were considered:

Non - Delegated

CB/20/03515/FULL Change of use from a warehouse (use class B8) to health provision (use class D1) including alterations to one of the roller shutters.
Unit 6, Nimbus Park Houghton Hall Park, Porz Avenue,
Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5WZ
For: East and North Hertfordshire NHS Trust

Comments: Houghton Regis Town Council had no objections and supported this application.

CB/20/03095/FULL New dwelling with car parking and new dropped kerb
1 Leaf Road, LU5 5JG
For: Mr D Grigore

Comments: Houghton Regis Town Council objects to this application due to overdevelopment of the site.

CB/20/03741/RM Reserved Matters: following Outline application
CB/12/03613/OUT up to 5,150 dwellings and open spaces within the development; in accordance with the Development Parameters Schedule and Plans. Provision of adventure playground equipment along with seating, and hard and soft landscaping, on land adjacent to The Farmstead, within AMP2.
Houghton Regis North Site 1 Land on the northern edge of Houghton Regis

Comments: Houghton Regis Town Council had no objections to this application, however, would like further information on the consideration of the play equipment being accessible to all.

CB/20/03768/FULL Proposed rear conservatory
39 Clarkes Way, LU5 5EN.
Mr M Ecyefu

Comments: Houghton Regis Town Council had no objections to this application if falls within permitted development.

CB/20/03704/FULL Loft conversion with front dormer window to create one studio flat
Site of Former 74 to 76, High Street, Houghton Regis
For: Mrs R Malhotra

Comments: Houghton Regis Town Council objects to this application on the grounds of overdevelopment of the site, lack of parking, planning permission has only been granted for five flats, therefore there is an expectation of a full application coming forward for the site in order for it to be looked at as a whole, new, development. Members requested that this application be called in.

CB/20/03855/GPDE Prior notification of householder extension for a single storey flat roofed extension with lantern light.
173 Tithe Farm Road, LU5 5JF
Mr I Chester

Comments: Houghton Regis Town Council had no objections to this application.

CB/20/03686/LDCP Lawful Development Certificate Proposed: Use of existing outbuilding as a cattery
The Orchard, Bedford Road, LU5 6JJ
Mr A Kavanagh

Comments: Whilst Houghton Regis Town Council acknowledges that this application is purely to obtain a decision on whether the operation, as described, would be lawful. The Town Council objects to this application on the grounds that this is a business and the activity, as proposed, is not in keeping with the adjoining residence.

For noting:

- CB/20/03655/DOC Discharge of Conditions 9, 16 and 18 from planning permission CB/12/03613/OUT (Outline planning permission with the details of access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale reserved for later determination. Development to comprise: up to 5,150 dwellings (Use Class C3); up to 202,500 sqm gross of additional development in Use Classes: A1, A2, A3 (retail), A4 (public house), A5 (take away); B1, B2, B8 (offices, industrial and storage and distribution); C1 (hotel), C2 (care home), D1 and D2 (community and leisure); car showroom; data centre; petrol filling station; car parking; primary substation; energy centre; and for the laying out of the buildings; routes and open spaces within the development; and all associated works and operations including but not limited to: demolition; earthworks; engineering operations. All development, works and operations to be in accordance with the Development Parameters Schedule and Plans.)
Houghton Regis North Site 1, Land on the northern edge of Houghton Regis
- CB/20/03660/DOC Discharge of Condition 26, 28 and 33 from planning permission CB/12/03613/OUT (Outline planning permission with the details of access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale reserved for later determination. Development to comprise: up to 5,150 dwellings (Use Class C3); up to 202,500 sqm gross of additional development in Use Classes: A1, A2, A3 (retail), A4 (public house), A5 (take away); B1, B2, B8 (offices, industrial and storage and distribution); C1 (hotel), C2 (care home), D1 and D2 (community and leisure); car showroom; data centre; petrol filling station; car parking; primary substation; energy centre; and for the laying out of the buildings; routes and open spaces within the development; and all associated works and operations including but not limited to: demolition; earthworks; engineering operations. All development, works and operations to be in accordance with the Development Parameters Schedule and Plans)
Houghton Regis North Site 1 Land on the northern edge of Houghton Regis
- CB/20/03777/DOC Discharge of Conditions 7 & 9 against planning permission CB/16/03379/LB (Phased Construction of a new Independent Living Scheme for Older Persons comprising 168 apartments with support facilities, a Restaurant & Bar, Retail Units, Cafe, 2no Reablement Suites, the conversion and Change of Use of a Grade 2 listed building and the demolition of an existing Sheltered Housing scheme with associated parking and landscaping.)
All Saints View, Sapphire Place, LU5 5LQ

-
- CB/20/03347/DOC Discharge of Condition 4 from planning permission CB/16/03378/REG3 (Phased Construction of a new Independent Living Scheme for Older Persons comprising 168 apartments with support facilities, a Restaurant & Bar, Retail Units, Cafe, 2no. Reablement Suites, the conversion and Change of Use of a Grade 2 Listed Building and the demolition of an existing Sheltered Housing scheme with associated parking and landscaping)
All Saints View, Sapphire Place, LU5 5LQ
- CB/20/03867/DOC Discharge of Conditions 20, 24 and 25 from planning permission CB/12/03613/OUT (Outline planning permission with the details of access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale reserved for later determination. Development to comprise: up to 5,150 dwellings (Use Class C3); up to 202,500 sqm gross of additional development in Use Classes: A1, A2, A3 (retail), A4 (public house), A5 (take away); B1, B2, B8 (offices, industrial and storage and distribution); C1 (hotel), C2 (care home), D1 and D2 (community and leisure); car showroom; data centre; petrol filling station; car parking; primary substation; energy centre; and for the laying out of the buildings; routes and open spaces within the development; and all associated works and operations including but not limited to: demolition; earthworks; engineering operations. All development, works and operations to be in accordance with the Development Parameters Schedule and Plans.)
Houghton Regis North 1 Land on the northern edge of Houghton Regis
- CB/20/03903/DOC Discharge of Condition 9 against planning permission CB/12/03613/OUT (Outline planning permission with the details of access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale reserved for later determination. Development to comprise: up to 5,150 dwellings (Use Class C3); up to 202,500 sqm gross of additional development in Use Classes: A1, A2, A3 (retail), A4 (public house), A5 (take away); B1, B2, B8 (offices, industrial and storage and distribution); C1 (hotel), C2 (care home), D1 and D2 (community and leisure); car showroom; data centre; petrol filling station; car parking; primary substation; energy centre; and for the laying out of the buildings; routes and open spaces within the development; and all associated works and operations including but not limited to: demolition; earthworks; engineering operations. All development, works and operations to be in accordance with the Development Parameters Schedule and Plans)
Houghton Regis North Site 1, Land on the northern edge of Houghton Regis

CB/TCA/20/00598 Works to Trees in a Conservation Area:
Fell all Trees and open up the canopy for (T1) Ulmus Minor, (T2) Acer Pseudoplatanus, (T3) Ulmus Minor, (T4) Ulmus Minor, (T5) Ulmus Minor, (T6) Ulmus Minor, (T7) Ulmus Minor, (T8) Acer Pseudoplatanus, (T9) Ulmus Minor and (T10) Acer Pseudoplatanus
Land to rear of Woodlands Avenue, Houghton Regis
Members of the Committee were informed that following confirmation from Central Bedfordshire Landscape Officer, the works to fell trees were only on those as identified. Members requested the Corporate Services Manager provide the application plans to the member of public who had addressed the committee.

(b) The following decision notices were noted:

Permissions / Approvals / Consents

Refusals:

None received.

Withdrawals:

None received.

11399 APPEAL NOTICE - REFERENCE APP/P0240/W/20/3259218 - 24 DUNSTABLE ROAD, LU5 5DB

Members were advised that an appeal had been submitted to the Planning Inspectorate against Central Bedfordshire Councils decision to refuse planning permission for erection of a one-bedroom single-storey dwelling at 24 Dunstable Road, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5DB application number CB/20/01271/FULL.

For information the Town Council submitted the following objections/comments:

- Overdevelopment of the site.
- Inappropriate development style creating a "terrace" from the current semi-detached bungalows.
- Inability to provide adequate vision splays for vehicles leaving the property, creating traffic danger.
- Development right up to boundary fence will have an overbearing impact on the side-on properties, 1 (especially), 2 and 3 Orchard Close.

The Town Council further commented:

With regard to the last point, why does the proposed design have to be so high at just under 5m? The Town Council requests that should Central Bedfordshire Council be minded approving this application then approval be granted, with permitted development rights removed. This was in order to mitigate any automatic additional development of the site i.e. a second storey.

11400 CB/20/00687/FULL – LAND TO THE SOUTH OF THE BUNGALOW, BEDFORD ROAD

Members received a notification from Central Bedfordshire Council. The above application was scheduled to be considered at the next Development Management Committee on 11th November 2020. Members were requested to consider whether they wish for a representative of the Town Council to participate at this meeting.

Members agreed that Cllr Carroll would attend the meeting.

Resolved: To appoint Councillor Carroll from the Town Council to participate at the Development Management Committee meeting to be held on the 11th November 2020.

11401 PRESENTATION RE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AT HAND POST FARM, THORN ROAD, HOUGHTON REGIS

Nicola Thompson from Smith Jenkins, Nicky Barnes from Grand Union Housing and Bob Harrington, Architect were in attendance at the meeting to update members on the proposed plans for the site and to receive Town Council comments and feedback.

Members were reminded that the proposal for this site would be for approx. 61 dwellings. These would be a mix of detached, attached and apartment blocks, all with on plot parking and garden space. The dwellings would be 100% affordable housing.

Members were advised that green areas for this development utilises the green space within Taylor Wimpey's neighbouring development.

Members raised concerns that as an additional, infill development, dedicated green space should be allocated within this development site and not be reliant on the green space of neighbouring developments.

Members raised concerns regarding the proposed road access utilising an existing roundabout by adding a fourth arm. Members were advised that highways had advised that this access was possible, however, further inspection by highways was to be undertaken before final designs were submitted.

Members raised further concerns that this development was not included in the master plan, with these new houses adding to the growing community, the two proposed primary schools would not be adequate for the additional unaccounted-for homes.

**11402 LAND EAST OF HOUGHTON PARK ROAD, HOUGHTON REGIS –
OUTLINE PLANNING APPLICATION REF CB/19/02053/OUT – PUBLIC
CONSULTATION ON UPDATED PLANS AND DEVELOPMENT BRIEF**

Members received a correspondence update in relation to an outline application for proposed development on land east of Houghton Park Road, Houghton Regis.

Members were advised that the deadline for comments in relation to the revised development proposals and the draft Development Brief was Wednesday 11th November 2020.

Members received correspondence received from local residents.

Members were concerned that traffic was already heavy in this area and as such any additional vehicles would cause further congestion as the current infrastructure was not designed for an additional 350 houses.

Members advised that this was also a flood risk area.

Members requested that their opposition to this development be recorded.

Members requested a letter to be written as part of the consultation and development brief stating that the council is unhappy with the progress of the application since the initial rejection.

Resolved: To consider the Town Councils response in relation to the public consultation on updated plans and Draft Development Brief for Land east of Houghton Park Road, Houghton Regis

11403 CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL LOCAL PLAN - UPDATE

Members were advised that following the close of the consultation on additional Local Plan evidence in August, Central Bedfordshire Council sent the responses to the Inspectors for their consideration. The Inspectors have now confirmed dates for further hearing sessions, to be held on weeks commencing 7th and 14th December.

As part of this process, the Inspectors prepared a series of Matters, Issues and Questions (MIQ's) ahead of those hearings. The MIQ's set out the detail of what the Inspectors would like considered during the sessions. They related to topic matters that had been the subject of the recent consultation, or where the Inspectors would like further clarification on any other matters. It was not intended that the hearings would revisit issues where there had not been any change in circumstance since the previous hearings.

The next steps would be for those participating in the process, including Central Bedfordshire Council, to prepare Hearing Statements that respond to the Inspectors MIQ's. The deadline for these being completed was 18th November 2020. The Hearing Statements for all participants would then be published on Central Bedfordshire Council's website ahead of the hearings taking place in December.

If the Inspectors were satisfied following the hearings in December, it was anticipated they would invite Central Bedfordshire Council to draft proposed Modifications to address any issues identified throughout the process. Any Modifications that were required, once agreed by the Inspectors, would be subject to their own six-week consultation

**11404 STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT SITES/LOCAL PLAN–
UPDATE/PROGRESS**

Woodside Link – No substantive update to report.

A5 M1 Link – No substantive update to report.

All Saints View – No substantive update to report.

Linnere – No substantive update to report.

Bidwell West – No substantive update to report.

Kingsland – No substantive update to report.

Windsor Drive – No substantive update to report.

Section 106 Monies – No substantive update to report.

Resolved: To note the information

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9.18pm

Dated this 30th day of November 2020

Chairman

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF HOUGHTON REGIS PARTNERSHIP
COMMITTEE**

HELD

Tuesday 21st July 2020

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

Also in Attendance: Tracey McMahon – HRTC Councillor
Awais Younis - CBC Safer Neighbourhood Team Leader
Rev. David Skinner – The Churches Group
John Gelder - Community Action Bedfordshire
David Gibbons – Co-opted member (joined 7.14pm)

Apologies: CBC Cllr: Cllr Hamill
Members of the public: 2

848 ELECTION OF CHAIR

In accordance with the approved committee terms of reference members are invited to elect a chair for the Houghton Regis Partnership Committee for 2020/21.

Nominee: Cllr Ryan Nominated by: Cllr S Goodchild
Seconded by: Cllr Jones

On being put to the vote Cllr Ryan was elected as Chair of Town Partnership Committee for the municipal year.

849 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR

In accordance with the approved committee terms of reference members are invited to elect a vice chair for the Houghton Regis Partnership Committee for 2020/21.

Nominee: Cllr Jones Nominated by: Cllr Goodchild
Seconded by: Cllr Ryan

On being put to the vote Cllr Jones was elected as Vice-Chair of Town Partnership Committee for the municipal year.

850 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Cllr Hamill.

Members agreed to move item 11 forward, to be discussed after questions from the public.

851 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

A member of the public queried a parish report showing s106 allocations and queried why none of the £7.7m funds received for Bidwell West had been allocated to the chalk pit.

It was advised that prior to this meeting the same question had been raised with Cllr Goodchild and Cllr Ryan. The Principle Planning Officer had been contacted and had confirmed that arrangements for s106 funding for the maintenance of the Quarry had been secured.

852 PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE CO-OPTION (*Moved from item 11*)

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

Co-option

1. To support engagement with local stakeholders the Town Joint Committee can co-opt members from local representative groups, as appropriate up to a maximum of 15. Each co-opted Member will be able to engage fully in all discussions but will not have any voting rights. Co-opted members can be removed from the Town Joint Committee. Decision making around removals can either be taken by the whole Town Joint committee or by joint agreement of the Chair and Vice Chair, depending on each Town Joint Committee's preference.
2. The list of Co-opted Members should be reviewed annually, by the Town Joint Committee

Members were advised that an application to co-opt had been received.

Members discussed the value of Co-opting members from local representative groups and agreed to Co-opt David Gibbons onto the Town Partnership Committee.

Members welcomed Mr Gibbons to the Town Partnership Committee.

853 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

Cllr Goodchild declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 8, HRN1 Community Building, accordingly, did not participate in any discussion relating to this item.

854 MINUTES

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 28th January 2020.

Resolved: To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 28th January 2020 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

855 HOUGHTON CHALK PIT

Awais Yunis, Safer Neighbourhood Team Leader, Central Bedfordshire Council, was in attendance to update members on issues relating to Houghton Regis Chalk Pit.

Members were advised that the footpath was closed for maintenance and would reopen once works were completed.

Legal advice had been sought regarding Health & Safety concerns. A Problem-Solving Group had been formed and a meeting held, Central Bedfordshire Council, Police, representatives from Central Bedfordshire Council partners and a Highways Officer were in attendance and discussed the wide range of issues surrounding the quarry.

Members were advised that letters had been sent to local residents urging the reporting of issues and anti-social behavior and to report vehicle registration details in order vehicle owners to be contacted.

Members were advised that the Managing Agent had been contacted and had subsequently passed on concerns to the landowners.

A site visit was being arranged with the Directors, date to be confirmed, whereby representatives from Central Bedfordshire Council, Bedfordshire Police and Houghton Regis Town Council would be in attendance.

Members were advised that Bedfordshire Police were arranging a resident information sharing group to enable residents to join and discuss their concerns.

Members were advised that members of the public were unable to join the Problem-Solving Group, however, a follow up resident engagement session would be held to enable residents to share their concerns.

856 HRN2 COMMUNITY BUILDING

Members received a verbal update from Mrs Hughes, Community Engagement Manager, Central Bedfordshire Council.

Rev Skinner was in attendance at the meeting to respond to any queries members may have.

Members were advised that Rev. Skinner had met with Town Council representatives and ward councillors to share the draft document. It was intended to develop a healthy, vibrant, inclusive and thriving community building.

An invitation was extended to councillors to visit Bromley by Bow, Finchampstead and Youthscape, Luton to glean a vision of similar community buildings.

Members were advised that the document had now been finalised and submitted to Central Bedfordshire Council.

Members were advised that the health situation may impact the timeline of development of the community building.

857 IMPROVING HEALTH & WELLBEING IN HOUGHTON REGIS

In October 2019 the Committee received a report from CBC on a new approach by CBC to improve health and wellbeing in Houghton Regis.

Since then Central Bedfordshire Council Public Health has commissioned Community Action Bedfordshire to deliver a community development project, called Time 2 Connect Houghton Regis. The project would use community mobilisation and asset-based approaches to engage and work with existing and new residents, communities and other stakeholders, in the growing town of Houghton Regis. The project commenced in May 2020 and would be delivered over the next three to five years. Members received a Stakeholder Briefing note which outlined the project.

John Gelder, Director, Community Action Bedfordshire was in attendance to outline the project to members and respond to any queries or comments.

Members were advised that this initiative was to reduce social isolation.

Members praised the local community for their support of each other during the Covid 19 pandemic. Concerns were raised regarding health inequalities across Houghton Regis. Members were advised the health inequalities would be a focus during the first year of CAB's work.

Members were advised that CAB was Linked in with volunteer groups and acknowledged their contributions in response to the Covid 19 crisis and was keen to use examples of good practice within the community.

Members requested that the Partnership Committee receive regular feedback from Community Action Bedfordshire, the frequency was to be confirmed.

858 PARTNERSHIP ADMINISTRATION

In accordance with the approved committee terms of reference members were invited to determine which council would provide the administration for the Houghton Regis Partnership Committee for 2020/21.

Members agreed for the administration for the Town Partnership Committee to continue to be administered by Houghton Regis Town Council.

859 PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE CO-OPTION

This agenda item was moved and discussed at minute number: 852

860 PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE WORKPLAN

Members received the Partnership Committee workplan for information.

Members requested an update on the Kingsland feasibility study.

Members were advised that an update on the Kingsland feasibility study was unavailable for this meeting but it was hoped feedback would be available for the October meeting.

Members requested that this remain on the workplan.

861 REPORTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE TOWN PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE

Members of the Partnership Committee were invited to provide a verbal report on matters of relevance to Houghton Regis arising in particular from the Committee/s on which they served. It was suggested that reports be kept to 2 minutes to ensure committee time for other matters on the agenda.

Cllr Goodchild updated members on the committees she was a member of. Several meetings had been attended of Corporate Parenting Panel and Social Care and Health and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee. At the meeting of Corporate Parenting Panel and Social Care, members discussed providing language that cares, which was changing the way provisions talk about children in care. Available support for care leavers and care leavers views. Listening to children in care and how they have coped during Covid 19.

Health and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee had received reports / updates on:

- a performance update from the East of England Ambulance Trust
- the pressures on housing demands.
- the council's response to Covid 19 and how services were delivered during the crisis.

Cllr Ryan updated members on Children's Services Committee;

- A meeting had been attended where the topic of discussion was SEND.
- Members were advised that Ofsted had looked at Central Bedfordshire's SEND provision during November.
- HRA, in-school support, had assured Children's Services Committee that they would be prioritised to receive their annual reviews.
- Members were advised that 80% of Central Bedfordshire schools remained open during the Covid crisis to support communities and key workers.

- Tithe Farm Primary School and Nursery had provided food and services to the local community throughout the Covid 19 crisis.

Members requested that special thanks go to Deborah Pargeter, Head of Tithe Farm Primary School for her involvement and support of the community.

862 CBC UPDATE REPORT

Members received the CBC update report prior to the meeting which detailed the work of CBC during the pandemic in terms of maintaining service delivery and COVID-19 responses.

At the meeting in January 2020 reports on the following were requested, these were included in this report:

- The feasibility study for the Kingsland site
- The health hub
- Addressing health and wellbeing inequalities – see minute number 857.
- School places, as consideration may need to be given to bringing forward the building of an additional primary school

Members received a further overview of the Update Report.

- Covid 19 support had been offered by Central Bedfordshire Council to meet the needs of vulnerable residents in Houghton Regis, with the redirection of referrals from the Community Hub to local support groups such as Houghton Regis Helpers;
- Covid 19 local outbreak control plan and a Communications and engagement plan;
- Welfare provision and business grants had been administered;
- Discussion of the safe commencement of the reopening of Children's play areas;
- Extended Ward Councillor Grant Scheme with the additional funds of £1,000 to support Covid 19 restoration activities;
- Community asset grant scheme £25,00 match funded at 50%. The second bidding round closes 1st September;
- Cheering volunteering; acknowledgement of the support and volunteer efforts during Covid 19, but to also celebrate the day to day volunteering that goes on within the community.

Members requested special thanks go to Central Bedfordshire Council councillors for the community assets grants that had been awarded to Houghton Regis community groups.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.45pm

Dated this 16th day of October 2020.

Chairman

**Houghton Regis Town Council
New Cemetery Sub-Committee
14th July 2020 at 6.00pm**

Present:	HRTC	S Thorne	Chair
	Cllrs:	J Carroll Y Farrell R Morgan	
	CBC Cllr:	S Goodchild	
	Officers:	Clare Evans Louise Senior	Town Clerk Head of Democratic Services
Also present:	Cllr:	D Jones	
Absent:	Cllr:	M S Kennedy	

NC116 APOLOGIES & SUBSTITUTIONS

None.

NC117 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

None.

NC118 MINUTES

To approve the minutes of the New Cemetery Working Group meeting held on the 2nd September 2019.

Resolved: To confirm the Minutes of the New Cemetery Sub-Committee meeting held on the 2nd September 2019. and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

NC119 CURRENT BURIAL PROVISION

At the last mtg of the New Cemetery Sub Committee (2nd September 2019) it was requested that the next meeting be held when there were approximately 2 body burial spaces left and that CBC ward councillors be invited to attend.

At the time of preparing the agenda there were 3 body burial spaces left. On this basis this meeting had been called. It was confirmed that CBC ward councillors had been invited to this meeting.

The completion of body burial spaces would be advised through the council's website and social media and regular funeral directors would be directly contacted and advised.

Members raised concerns that residents of Houghton Regis would choose to be buried in their town, and not have to go to a neighbouring town, which would incur a higher cost.

Members discussed the areas and pieces of land that had been suggested and investigated and had proved to be unsuitable.

Members were advised no land provision had been made within HRN1 or HRN2 and were advised that Central Bedfordshire Council had advised Houghton Regis Town Council that there was no land available for cemetery use. The s106 agreements for HRN1 and HRN2 included, amongst other facilities, provision for funding for a new cemetery should there be an uplift in development values.

Members requested that Central Bedfordshire Council be approached again, formally by letter, in the hope that highlighting the number of available burial spaces remaining, and the possible ramifications of Covid 19, would demand a collective and more proactive approach.

Members requested that Councillor Hamill be contacted for his input, as was unable to attend this virtual meeting due to technical difficulties.

NC120 FUTURE MEETINGS

At the meeting on 2nd September 2019 the following was recorded:

*Members were requested to provide guidance / instruction on future agenda items.
Members agreed a more prudent use of council resource to only convene further meetings of this Sub Committee should a piece of land come forwards or a situation or circumstance change which would assist in this project.*

It was confirmed that officers would continue to bring forward any possibilities, as and when they occurred, for consideration and it was requested that members, especially those on the HRTC Planning Committee, highlight to officers any possibilities.

Members requested a meeting date be set for the end of September and Central Bedfordshire Council councillors be invited to co-opt onto the Sub-Committee.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 6.38pm

Dated this day of

Chairman

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL
Corporate Services Committee
23rd November 2020 at 7.00pm.

Present: Councillors: D Jones Chairman
D Abbott
S Thorne
K Wattingham

Officers: Debbie Marsh Corporate Services Manager
Louise Senior Head of Democratic Services

Public: 0

Absent: Councillor: C Copleston
M S Kennedy

11415 APOLOGIES & SUBSTITUTIONS

None.

11416 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

11417 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

None.

11418 MINUTES

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on the 14th September 2020.

Resolved: To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 14th September 2020 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

11419 TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING MEETINGS

Personnel Sub-Committee: 13th January 2020 and 13th July 2020.

Resolved: To receive the Minutes of the Personnel Sub-Committee meetings of the 13th January 2020 and 13th July 2020

11420 INCOME AND EXPENDITURE REPORT

Members received the income and expenditure report, highlighting significant variances, for Corporate Services Committee to date.

Members queried whether Central Bedfordshire Council could claim back the Town Councils election costs following the by-election being suspended due to Covid-19. Members were advised the by-election process would need to start afresh in April. Members were informed that the Town Clerk was making enquires with Central Bedfordshire Council.

11421 BANK AND CASH RECONCILIATION STATEMENTS

Members were requested to receive the monthly bank and cash reconciliation statements for August and September 2020. Members were advised that the month end process for August had been completed by a different consultant. A number of queries were raised which had been followed up on and resolved. The bank reconciliation for August listed these outstanding queries.

- Resolved:**
- 1. To approve the monthly bank and cash reconciliation statements for August and September 2020;**
 - 2. For these along with the original bank statements to be signed by the Chair of Corporate Services Committee and the Council's RFO.**

11422 LIST OF CHEQUE PAYMENTS

Members received list of payments for the period August 2020 to September 2020.

Members were advised that late payment fees from Castle Water were to be queried and a refund of these fees to be investigated.

11423 INVESTMENT REPORT

In accordance with Committee Functions, Financial Regulation 8 and Banking Arrangements, Investment Strategy & Investment Arrangements.

The Corporate Services Committee were to oversee and manage the financial obligations of the Council, including:

To receive quarterly reports on investments containing a forecast of capital expenditure, investment opportunities and a recommendation for further investment including where, length and amount.

Members noted that the bank rate had dropped substantially.

11424 PAYROLL SERVICES

For information, the Town Council had been advised that Bedford Borough Council would no longer be renewing their contract for the provision of payroll services. The current contract would cease on the 31st March 2021.

The Town Clerk was currently seeking an alternative payroll provider who would be able to support the Town Council with these services, effective from 1st April 2021.

Due to the scheduling of meetings it was not possible to provide a report to Corporate Services, at the meeting to be held on the 1st March 2021, at which a recommendation would ordinarily be provided to Council for ratification. Therefore, it was anticipated that a report and costings would be presented to full Council at the meeting to be held on the 14th December 2020.

11425 REVIEW OF TOWN COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP TO OTHER BODIES

In accordance with the approved Committee Functions and Terms of Reference the Corporate Services Committee was required to annually review the Council's and/or employees' memberships of other bodies.

Members were advised of the current memberships listed below:

<i>Membership</i>	<i>Period</i>	<i>Annual Subscription</i>
Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC)	Annual	£421 (2020/21)
Bedfordshire Association of Town & Parish Councils (NALC)	Annual	£2,101 (2020/21)
Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management	Annual April to March	£95 (2020/21)
Association of Accounting Technicians (AAT)	Annual	£99 (2020/21)
Information Commissioners Officer (ICO)	Annual	£35 Renewal due 3/12/20

11426 REVIEW EXISTING CONTRACTS

In accordance with the approved Committee Functions and Terms of Reference the Corporate Services Committee was required to annually review existing contracts.

Members were advised of the existing contracts listed below:

<i>Service</i>	<i>Minute No.</i>	<i>Details</i>	<i>Cost</i>	<i>Start date</i>
IT Support & Hosting		Support charge £1800 / annum Microsoft 365 Business Standard -	£4338	

		Annual Subscription Period Beginning 3rd November 2020 - £1,015.20		
		Microsoft Exchange On- Line Plan1 - Annual Subscription Period Beginning 10th November 2020- £576.00		
		SolarWinds Cloud Backup - per month Period Beginning 17th November 2020 - £600.00		
		McAfee Endpoint Protection Ess SMB 1:1 GL Period Beginning 18th October 2020 £347.40		
Website hosting		Annual fee.	£150	
DCK		Annual arrangement.	£1,250	
Accounting Operation	10125	Annual arrangement.	£34,990	1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021
Hana				
Internal Audit	11366	Annual arrangement	£875	
Human resources advisor	9942	Annual arrangement (rolling contract)	£2,451.60	24 th June 2019
External audit		5 years from 2017/18 until 2021/22	£2,000	Appointed via Regulation 3 of the Local Audit (Smaller Authorities) Regulations 2015.
Town centre toilets	6846	Ongoing	£18,360 plus consumables per annum	1st July 2019 – 30th June 2021

Insurance	9829	Long term agreement	£11,907 plus additional premiums relating to any changes in circumstance.	13 th May 2019 - 31st May 2022
Payroll		Ongoing Annual arrangement (see agenda item 10)	£750	Expires 31 st March 2021
Photocopier lease	9695	Long term agreement	£396	2018 to 2023
Mobile Phones		10 x phones 24months	£2400	Oct 2020-Sept 2022
Telephone software		12 months then rolling	Set up £270 £65 / month year 1 £88 / month year 2 £276 cost of maintenance, annual fee after year 1	November 2020
BT Broadband		24 months	£552	18/3/2019-17/3/2021
Franking Machine		Long term agreement	£300	1 st August 2019- 31 st July 2023
Accounting Software support		Annual arrangement	£1018	1/4/21-30/3/22
Cemetery Software support		Annual arrangement	£290	1/4/21-30/3/22
Christmas Lights	9782	Long term agreement	£10,500 fixed (excluding tree)	1 st April 2019 to 31st March 2024
Employee Assistance Programme	8835	Long term agreement	£425	1 st March 2017 to 28 th February 2022

11427 INSURANCE CLAIMS

Members were advised that the following insurance claims had been made since April 2020

<i>Claim number</i>	<i>Details</i>	<i>Repair cost</i>	<i>Date settled</i>
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27200000680	Cemetery Gate repair after vehicle had knocked them down	£1,362.00 Excess £100	September 2020
27200000816	Vandalism to Springer - October	£1,096.00	Awaited
27202126353	Damage to St Vincent's School building by ride on mower, whilst grass cutting, in September / October	Estimated £1,164.00	Awaited

11428 SAFEGUARDING POLICY UPDATE

The Corporate Services committee last reviewed the Town Councils Safeguarding policy on the 5th March 2018. Whilst this policy was reviewed every 4 years, it was apparent that the policy was not compatible with the standards set out by the NSPCC (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children).

Members received a report that identified the work needed to bring this policy up to standard.

Members noted that this would identify staff training needs and requested that this be looked at within the budget.

- Resolved:**
- 1. To support the completion of a mapping exercise in order to identify documents that are needed and policies that may need adapting;**
 - 2. To identify possible cost implications associated with meeting the 6 NSPCC standards for the voluntary and community sector in support of safeguarding and protecting Children and Young People aged 0-18;**
 - 3. To identify cost implications for staff training.**

11429 WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

Members received a report and draft policy for consideration.

The introduction of the proposed policy would allow the Town Council to effectively monitor whistleblowing complaints and provide annual reporting to the Corporate Services Committee.

- Resolved:**
- 1. To accept the need for and endorse the following new policy:**
 - Whistleblowing policy**
 - 2. To recommend to Council that the policy, along with any recommended changes, be formally adopted by full council at its meeting to be held on the 14th December 2020**

11430 BULLYING AND HARASSMENT

Whilst the current Bullying and Harassment policy was suitable, it was felt that it was somewhat brief. Therefore, members received a report and revised Bullying and Harassment Policy displaying track changes.

- Resolved:**
- 1. To accept the need for and endorse the updated Bullying and Harassment Policy.**
 - 2. To recommend to Council that the policy, along with any recommended changes, be formally adopted by full council at its meeting to be held on the 14th December 2020**

11431 DRAFT BUDGET 2021/22

Members received the officer draft budget for 2021/22 along with explanatory notes for the Corporate Services Committee.

The draft budget reflected on ongoing budgetary commitments along with anticipated budgetary commitments arising from the Council Vision 2020/24.

As members were aware the council revised its budget for 2020/21 in July 2020 to reflect on the implications of Covid-19. At the time of revising the budget members requested that the budget for 2021/22 be set on the original budget figures as these were reflective of a 'normal' council year. However, due to software limitations, the draft budget included the revised budget amounts for 2020/21. However, the budget explanatory notes provided members with the original budget figures for 2020/21 as requested. The draft budget for 2021/22 assumed normal delivery of services during the year, i.e. it assumed that Covid would not affect the services of the council during 2021/22.

11432 VISION

Members received an extract from the approved Vision 2020/2024 as it related to the work of this committee.

Members queried the introduction of an electronic payment system as depicted on the Vision, it was requested that an update be sought on this item and fed back at the next meeting.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 7.50pm
Dated this 1st day of March 2021

Chairman

Sent to: Clerk & Chairman to the town Councils of:

Ampthill, Biggleswade, Dunstable,
Flitwick, Houghton Regis, Leighton Linlade,
Potton, Sandy, Shefford

Date: 15/09/20

Dear Clerk to the Council,

Supporting Town Centres and the wider Economy

I am writing to you with regard to the Council's ongoing response to Covid-19 and its economic impact on our local residents, business community and town centres.

As lockdown has eased and our economy has gradually reopened, it is apparent that this crisis has precipitated significant changes to how our resident's shop and access services and, as a consequence how our towns function.

The enforced closure of physical shops has accelerated the long-term trend towards online retail, which for many is now the new norm or first port of call, when it comes to retail shopping. Our town centres have been, and will most likely continue to be, profoundly impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, a period of time that has exacerbated trends that were already emerging.

It is therefore important that we plan for this new reality and look for ways to adapt and improve our town centres, so that they can continue to be at the heart of our local communities.

As part of helping to develop our new approach I am inviting your Town Council to work with Central Bedfordshire Council to build on recent work focused on understanding our town centres and the scope to address a range of issues, some of which I have touched on above. Initially I am proposing we focus on the following areas:

- 1) Building on work from earlier this year, when we invited you to share your ideas concerning potential submissions to Government programmes such as the Future High Street programme, we would like to work with you to review what came out of this in light of Covid-19 and the future challenges and opportunities our town centres face. I have asked the Place Delivery team to contact you in order to give you the opportunity to put forward your suggestions and ideas as to what type of activities and projects you would like to see delivered in your area. This can include locally focused schemes or Central Bedfordshire wide initiatives that you feel would help to support our town centre network as a whole.

- 2) In 2019 the Council commissioned People & Places to conduct a round of town centre benchmarking. This gave us vital data on vacancy rates, footfall as well as important qualitative feedback from businesses, visitors, and regular users of our town centres. In order to attempt to better understand the impacts and implications of the Covid-19 pandemic we will also be looking to repeat this exercise. As before we will be looking to ensure that the outputs of this are as beneficial to you as possible, so will be seeking to work with you to determine any additional scope or questions. We envisage this work commencing in November with footfall and vacant unit counts and concluding in March next year, with business confidence and shopper surveys being undertaken. The additional time for the latter surveys to be carried out, will ensure that any emerging changes to shopping patterns due to the impact of Covid 19 are more fully apparent.
- 3) As a Council we are also rapidly progressing work to develop our Economic Strategy. To support this, we need to understand what is important to residents, businesses and key stakeholders – such as yourselves. With that in mind a brief online survey will be available on the Central Bedfordshire Council website at:

https://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/info/58/business/819/economic_strategy_survey

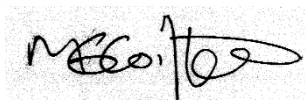
I would be grateful if you were able to take the time to respond; we will also be promoting this to residents and businesses. The survey closes on 30th September.

The results of this survey, in addition to your input concerning town centre specific activities as described above, will be collated and incorporated into the Emerging Economic Strategy currently being developed, as well as potential future bids for funding to Central Government.

If you have any questions on any aspects of this work please contact Stephen Mooring, Head of Place Delivery, Stephen.Mooring@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

We look forward to continuing to work with you.

Yours sincerely



Marcel Coiffait

Director for Place & Communities

Direct telephone 0300 300 5637

Email marcel.coiffait@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Project ideas submission form

Future High Street Fund

A great place to live and work.

Find us online  www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk  www.facebook.com/letstalkcentral  [@letstalkcentral](https://twitter.com/letstalkcentral)

Project background information

Information required	Response
<p>Title of project</p>	<p>Houghton Regis Town Centre Revitalisation</p>
<p>Description (200 words maximum)</p>	<p>Bid Objective:</p> <p>To deliver a revitalised town centre that reflects the heritage of the town whilst embracing the expansion through a comprehensive reshape of physical infrastructure and the development of a viable and high-quality mixed-use retail, commercial, community and housing scheme.</p> <p>The current town centre faces significant challenges, most notably a poor quality, piecemeal environment with businesses on the brink of viability and competition from other centres. Positively there are listed buildings, a modern supermarket, proximity to open spaces and the independent living scheme. However these are offset by deteriorating 1960’s developments – the shopping precinct, council offices and medical centre, residential units, a long term derelict site, and a disjointed public realm.</p> <p>The recent benchmarking report summaries the centre as largely offering convenience shopping, with low levels of footfall, low average spend and short length of stay and poor visitor feedback.</p>

As a strategic growth area the town centre is vital in integrating the existing with the new; a range of facilities and services in an attractive public realm is paramount to achieving this.

This project is transformational in its scope and opportunity. It offers a fundamental change to the town centre comprising an enhanced retail offer, commercial services and a vibrant civic centre formed of community facilities, health services and town council offices. Supported by high density, town centre living opportunities. It offers an opportunity to create a vibrant and viable town centre, cardinal to the lives of its residents.

The project spans the area between the Georgina Service Station and the Village Green and specifically includes the derelict former Netto site and the Red House, the Bedford Square shopping centre, town council offices, health centre, Bedford Court and Bedford Square Community Centre. The properties dispersed between these additionally have scope to be included. Please see plan attached. Linking these areas with public realm enhancements will create a sense of place and ownership along with stronger physical links to the Village Green and Houghton Hall Park to encourage health and wellbeing.

The town centre also has scope for improved accessibility both to the wider conurbation and to the town as a whole. There is scope for improved connections to bus services, rail and air and within the town through improved parking and cycling opportunities.

The draft Houghton Regis Neighbourhood Plan (HRNHP) is due to go to referendum 2020, this emerging plan supports these transformational proposals. More detail is in Chapter 7, Town Centre and Local Centres, of the HRNHP.

Although the proposal is presented as a whole it is possible for the proposal to be segregated. This is indicatively shown on the plan.

Funding required: (general indicative level):	<p>£25,000,000 (Future High Street Fund)</p> <p>£25,000,000 (Other including landowners, developers, CBC, HRTC)</p>
Local match funding potentially available: (approximate, can include land, revenue or capital):	<p>£400,000 from HRTC (subject to approval) comprising current offices and financial contribution</p>
Town Council proposed role in project delivery:	<p>HRTC would be pleased to work as a partner organisation to CBC on developing this proposal and would be supportive as far as possible including stakeholder engagement, consultation, co-ordination.</p>
<p>FHS bid criteria - please review FHS fund bidding guidance and confirm proposal meets basic requirements: (200 words maximum):</p> <p>Bidding guidance can be downloaded from the following website:</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/future-high-streets-fund-call-for-proposals</p>	<p><i>Population and links to wider economic area</i></p> <p>The current population uses the town centre for convenience shopping. There is a negative feel towards the centre as evidence by the Town Centre Benchmarking report.</p> <p>Residents support the town centre but there is scope to enhance usage to the benefit of residents and town centre businesses alike.</p> <p>Equally the town centre faces the challenge and opportunity to link the growth area with the existing town to support community cohesion and integration. This is imperative to avoid a disjointed commuter settlement.</p> <p>As the bid is for mixed use development there are social, economic and environmental benefits to be achieved.</p> <p>The town centre would emerge as a vibrant place, pulling residents in and attracting visits from the wider geographic area.</p> <p><i>Challenges</i></p> <p>The Town Centre Benchmarking Report highlights:</p> <p>The lack of a Key Attractor in the centre</p>

Although the vacancy rate is slightly lower than the national small towns average, the retail units in Bedford Square appear to be barely financially viable, it is suspected that should one or two of the more popular retailers leave that other businesses would fail and the vacancy level would rise dramatically. Given the poor-quality environment it is felt unlikely that the centre would recover and the town centre would fail as a collective.

It has been impossible to attract market retailers to establish a small market in the centre due to a lack of footfall.

Footfall is lower than average of busy days (20% lower) and on quiet days (40% lower)

Visitors have a poor perception of the centre

The proposal addresses all of these challenges and would see the centre flourish and grow.

Rationale for selecting town centre area

This bid covers Houghton Regis Town Centre only. Two of the three wards in Houghton Regis are in the top 20% of deprived wards in the country and the town faces the challenges of significant growth. This bid is transformative and will create vitality and viability for today and the future.

Town centre vision and ambition for change

Vision: for a comprehensive mixed-use development bringing forward derelict sites, reshaping community and health facilities, strengthening and enhancing the retail and commercial offer and adding a vibrancy to the centre with densification of town centre housing provision.

Engagement and alignment of vision

HRTC is in the final stages of developing its Vision 2020-2024. This project is supported by this Vision (draft attached).

Support for town centre vision

HRTC are drawing towards the end of a public consultation (31/01/2020) on its Vision. Preliminary feedback is supportive and encouraging.

Form completed by:

Clare Evans, Town Clerk

Date:

27/01/2020

Return of forms:

Completed forms to be returned via email (using the contact information on the following page) no later than noon on Friday 31st January. If you wish to submit more than one project proposal, please complete an additional form. Any queries please contact Sam Caldbeck on 0300 300 4410.

Central Bedfordshire in contact

Find us online: www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Call: 0300 300 4410

73 / 155

Email: samuel.caldbeck@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk



1. Former Netto site – currently derelict

This is a key site at the entrance to the town centre. It has been derelict for a few years and gives a very poor impression. There are also 2 light industrial properties on the edge of the site, and adjacent to these is the local scout hut. This whole site has the scope to be developed to provide a flagship entrance to the town. This site is large enough to be able to provide a mixed use development including retail, commercial, community facilities, housing, supported by car parking. The scout hut is in poor condition. It would be logical to include the scout hut within the overall schemes community facilities.

2. Georgina Service Station – currently operating

This is a valued facility within the town, however it is understood that the Operator may consider the re-development of this site. This site is opposite the former Netto's site. There would need to be co-ordination between the 2 sites. The Georgina site has scope for mixed use development inc retail, commercial, community facilities, housing.

3. Bedford Court – currently CBC housing

This facility is dated. It is a large site closely linked to the town centre. It offers the scope for a higher density housing provision.

4. Thomas Whitehead Primary School – currently operating

The school is confined by its location. If the education provision could be achieved through other local schools this central site offers the scope for mixed use development inc retail, commercial, community facilities, housing, town centre Parking.

5. Bedford Square Centre – comprises NHS Health clinic, library, town centre toilets and community centre.

The Community centre is significantly under-used and requires a re-model to become fit for purpose. The centre could be come 2 storey throughout and as such offer enhanced community facilities (potentially including a home for the scouts) and town council offices. It is thought that the NHS Health clinic, library and town centre toilets are fit for purpose.

6. Tithe Farm Rd Medical Centre – currently operating

Poor quality building with size constraints. Site has scope of high density housing development. Replacement space required.

7. HR Town Council offices – currently operating

Poor quality building. Size constraints. Not forward facing as a local service deliverer. Site has scope of high density housing development. Replacement offices required, suggested as part of the Bedford Square Community Centre.

8. Tithe Farm Rd Car Park – currently operating

Poor quality car park. Operational issues due to no parking restrictions. Site complexities arising from shop leases. Disabled bays do not meet parking criteria. Scope for public realm improvements.

9. Bedford Square Shopping Centre – currently operating

Poor quality, built environment. Visually unattractive. Shops back onto highway. Low footfall. Convenience shopping. Flats above. Sub let by retail operators. Scope for mixed use development inc retail, commercial, community facilities, housing.

10. Red House – currently being refurbished.

Listed building. End use not known at present. Scope for building to play role in town centre – commercial / community use

11. All Saints View – currently being developed

CBC independent living scheme. 111 housing units. Will play an important role in the town centre. The design of the building is high quality, will highlight poor quality of other local buildings. Development also includes a retail offer. This may threaten the viability of the shopping precinct.

12. Village Green & Houghton Hall Park – currently operating

There is scope for improved links to these open space resources.

KEY

Project area

Key sites

Additional sites that could be included for retail, commercial and residential enhancements

9722 ASPIRATIONAL LIST OF TOWN FACILITIES

At a recent Members Briefing session with CBC members, the town council was asked to consider a list of facilities that they would like to see come forward within the town as it grows. It was understood that this list could be used as support as developments come forward.

Members were invited to discuss. It was not known what level of detail was needed. It should be noted that within the planning permissions for HRN1 and HRN2 some of the facilities outlined were provided, some may come forward as more detailed plans were presented, and some may come forward should uplift triggers be achieved.

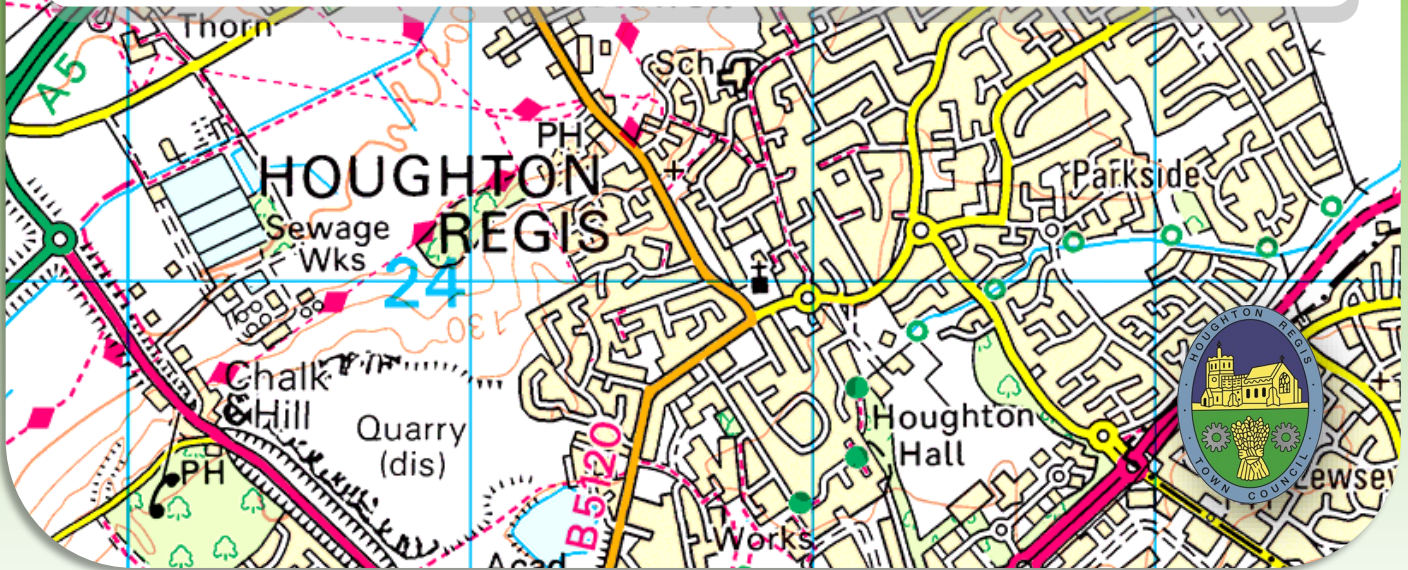
The following list of headings was provided as a prompt: members added specific ideas to the list (additions shown in italics)

- Education – preschool, primary, secondary, further education, *6th Form College, informal education, vocational education.*
- Health – GP, health hub, dentists, hospital, opticians, *children & family centre, chiropody, physiotherapy*
- Community safety – police
- Open space – formal, informal, sports hub / facilities, play sites, MUGA, all weather pitch, splash park, country park (within HRN2) (the quarry site may be another option), *crazy golf, zip wire, ski slope, nature park*
- Health & fitness - leisure centre, trim trails, outdoor exercise equipment, *large swimming pool, circular walk/cycle path around the boundary*

- Civic offices – town council offices, registry office, *multipurpose building encompassing services, maintained grounds for wedding photographs (if registry offices on site), crematorium for obese people as the nearest one was way away.*
- Community facilities - new cemetery, allotments, community centres / meeting rooms / neighbourhood centres, library, youth centre / hub, *speed reduction cameras, updated equipment for speedwatch, multipurpose building encompassing all services, green burial site, community workshops, covered outdoor spaces for youths, covered alfresco eating areas, seating benches, building for food bank storage, outdoor BBQ areas*
- Public realm / street furniture - noticeboards, bins, seats, *signage way markers, higher seats for the elderly*
- Retail – shops, food and drink, evening entertainment, *more variety of merchandise, multibank facility, cinema, bowling alley, go karts, adult ninja park*
- Employment – range of employment outlets from start up units upwards, business, industrial, service, *encourage local shops to use locally sourced produce, hot desk opportunities for small businesses.*

9723 ENVIRONMENT & LEISURE COMMITTEE 19TH NOVEMBER 2018 – RECOMMENDATION TO TOWN COUNCIL

Our Vision: Our Town (2020-2024)



Houghton Regis Town Council is committed to ensuring it is in the best position to support and enhance our community.

In 2016 the council developed its first Vision to cover the period until March 2020. During that time the council worked to deliver the Objectives of the plan. The outcomes achieved from this are listed on Page 6.

Through public consultation the new Council, elected in May 2019, have listened to you and developed a Vision to cover the work of the Council over the next 4 years.

Our Vision: Our Town (2020/2024)

The Vision has identified services and facilities to improve where you live, play and work. With the help and support of strategic partners, local organisations and our local community, together we can achieve this Vision.

These are our Aspirations and Objectives for the next 4 years.

ASPIRATIONS

To develop and enhance **partnerships** between HRTC, stakeholders, partners, community groups and residents

To effectively and proactively **represent** our community

To positively **promote** the town

To develop a new **cemetery**

To ensure the **council** is fit for purpose and efficient in its delivery of services

THE VISION HAS 4 OVERARCHING OBJECTIVES, UNDER WHICH ARE SPECIFIC ACTIONS:

Objective 1: Grow Your Own

Objective 2: A Greener Cleaner Houghton Regis

Objective 3: A Safe and Vibrant Town

Objective 4: Our Community



Objective 1 : GROW YOUR OWN



We want to encourage and support people to grow their own food, to eat a healthy and balanced diet and to enhance biodiversity and encourage wildlife in our town.

We will:

- To support Houghton Hall Park kitchen garden by offering staff services & finance support
- To support appropriate management of the Woodside Link Community Orchard
- Help establish allotments within new housing developments
- Encourage healthy eating and food awareness especially through partnership projects with Houghton Hall Park kitchen garden and the Council's Pop-up Youth Café
- To increase edible planting by providing fruit bushes and fruit trees
- Enhance biodiversity and support wildlife through open space management and wildflower planting



Objective 2 : A GREENER CLEANER HOUGHTON REGIS

We want to reduce our use of natural resources, help improve the environment and improve fitness and wellbeing.

We will:

- Reduce the use of paper by the council by switching to electronic communication methods
- Increase recycling within the council and by offering recycling points within our open spaces and at events
- Encourage sustainable transport including the use of public transport, walking and cycling by promotion, by the provision of ancillary facilities such as cycle racks and seating and the use of incentives to encourage people to use sustainable transport to access the town centre, community services and events
- Provide outdoor fitness equipment in parks and open spaces





Objective 3: A SAFE AND VIBRANT TOWN



We want to help everyone feel safe and confident about where they live by creating a safe and vibrant town.

We will:

- Reduce the fear of crime, anti-social behaviour and crime levels through our continued partnership with Bedfordshire Police (Operation Hana) and Central Bedfordshire Council Community Safety team (redeployable CCTV cameras), and through support and encouragement for local Neighbourhood Watch schemes
- Reduce enviro crime through direct action to remove incidences of fly tipping and graffiti
- Improve access to and reduce the cost of bulk waste removal services
- Seek to reduce speeding around schools
- Provide clean and accessible town centre toilets
- Provide Christmas lights
- Communicate well with residents and stakeholders through our website, social media pages, Town Crier, noticeboards
- Support local businesses and retailers through continuation of the Shop Local scheme and advertising / sponsorship opportunities

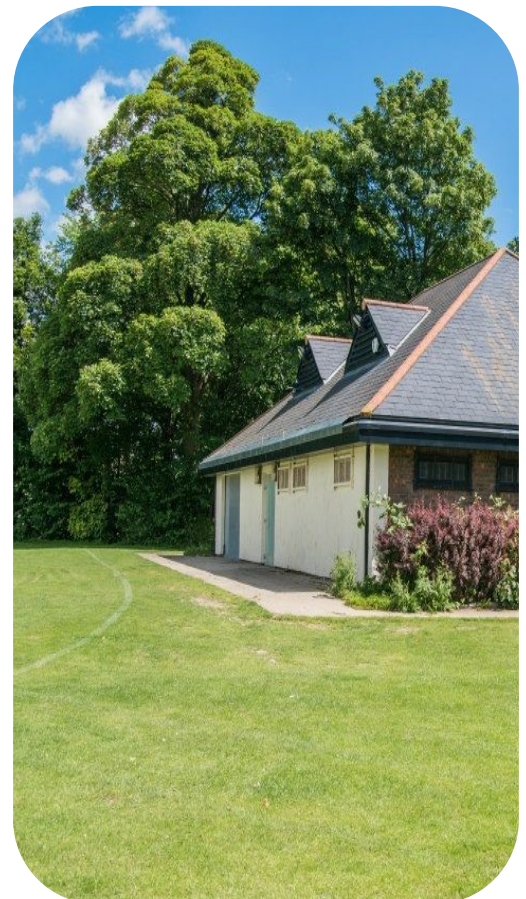


Objective 4: OUR COMMUNITY

We want to look after, support and develop facilities and services for our residents.

We will:

- Create or enhance community facilities which support community development and cohesion, such as the development of a sporting hub and all-weather pitch and will work with partners on the delivery of community facilities with the strategic growth area
- Enhance existing facilities to enable improved community use and accessibility such as a refurbishment of the village green pavilion and the creation of a dementia friendly town with supportive services, signs, assistance and aids
- Provide activities for young people, families and older people
- Help to protect and preserve historic gems such as All Saints Church, Houghton Hall Park and the Red House
- Provide high quality green spaces for leisure and recreation, healthier living, urban attractiveness, improved air quality
- Provide a range of play facilities for all to enjoy
- Support local organisations through a grants scheme, advice and support
- Support Houghton Hall Park to seek to develop the site to its full potential
- Complete the extension of the existing cemetery to provide a beautiful and tranquil place of rest for future generations



Objective 1: To develop a stronger local economy which promotes local businesses

The council has:

- Worked with a range of local stakeholders to develop a Neighbourhood Plan. This is in its final stages before a local referendum. This Plan will put the council and the town in a much stronger position in terms of shaping and securing funding from new developments;
- Promoted the local retail offer and encouraged town centre footfall through the Town Guide, through town centre community events and through a shop local scheme;
- Worked with Central Bedfordshire Council on highway safety and parking concerns in the town centre and in residential areas;
- Helped with the management and promotion of Bedford Square Community Centre;
- Have worked with partners to protect and enhance historic gems including All Saints, Houghton Hall Park and the Red House.

Objective 2: To face the challenges and maximise the opportunities of growth

The council has:

- Developed effective working relationships with CBC planning officers and developers so the council can help shape future development;
- Worked hard to find land for a new cemetery, looking at a number of sites but disappointingly none of the land was suitable;
- Provided information to residents on the strategic growth issues affecting the town through the website, Town Crier and Planning Committee agendas.

Objective 3: To develop a safer town with a reduced fear of crime

The council has:

- Developed and progressed a number of anti-crime and anti-social behaviour projects including enviro-crime reporting and street cleaning and school parking projects;
- Purchased 2 more redeployable CCTV cameras to help deter crime and ASB in residential areas;
- Worked with CBC to offer subsidised bulk waste removal for local residents, watch this space over the next couple of months or so;
- Installed a speed activation sign on Windsor Drive to help to reduce traffic speeds along this road.

Objective 4: To develop a more active, engaged and inclusive community

The council has:

- Designed and installed a family games area, including exercise equipment, table tennis, football / basketball wall and family type games on the Green;
- Installed exercise equipment on Orchard Close Recreation Ground funded through Fields in Trust;
- Enhanced the skate park by providing better seating and floodlighting;
- Begun working with the Beds Football Association and the Football Foundation and local clubs to deliver a sporting hub, including an all-weather football facility on Tithe Farm Recreation ground;
- Enhanced community events so they are bigger and better and have launched 2 new events, Houghton Rocks and the Fireworks display;
- Worked with CBC on longer term plans for Windsor Drive Recreation Ground including the provision of enhanced recreational facilities;
- Explored options for Community Transport provision and a Village Agent scheme but having looked at the current provision decided to offer support to other organisations who currently provides these types of services;
- Supported a variety of local organisations through the Community Development Officer and through the provision of community grants including SORTED, Keech, SBDAR, Houghton Regis Memorial Hall, Community Action and Citizens Advice;
- Provided youth services through a weekly youth pop-up café and a summer holiday club. We set up and now support the Houghton Regis Youth Council who help at local events, run their own initiatives and feed into the town and youth services in a positive way.

Objective 5: To build a strong, efficient and proactive Town Council

The council has:

- Reviewed the corporate and democratic structure of the town council and have made some changes to improve ways of working and to ensure the council was in a position to deliver on this Vision;
- Completed a variety of energy efficiency measures, including smart meters and automatic lighting sensors, using developer funding via CBC;
- Developed relationships with key partners through improved liaison and joint working on projects;
- Maintained our current premises whilst exploring options for future Town Council premises to ensure continued fitness for purpose;
- Raised the profile of the Mayor through the securing of Mayoral robes and through the Mayoral Inauguration



Houghton Regis Neighbourhood Plan

September 2018

AIMING HIGH IN HOUGHTON REGIS

Version Control

Version	Date	Author	Comments
1	16/09/2016	MDS	Compilation of existing / early material
2	31/01/2017	MDS	Early draft based on adopted Baseline info.
3	12/05/17	MDS	Following Committee consideration of draft contents
4	13-20/6/2017	MDS	With revisions
7	Sept 2018	MDS	With revisions from survey and Group amendments
8	Sept 2018	MDS	With Revisions from Group
9	Oct 2018	MDS	Ditto
10	Nov 2018	MDS	Ditto
11	Nov 2018	MDS	With additions and alterations from WLT
12	Dec 2018	MDS	Minor changes after mtg Group and Committee Chairs
13	Dec 2018	MDS	Further changes from Group members
14	Jan 2019	CE	Additional revision from Cllr Carroll re Cemetery provision

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1) Foreword

The picture of Houghton Regis in 2018 is a modern community centred around a historical core, with two new areas of proposed major development on its northern edge bringing tremendous opportunities and challenges. The residential estates added to the old village in the 1960s/70s are now well established, and over the past few years the infrastructure for a further 7,000 homes is being installed at Houghton Regis North 1 and 2 (Houghton Regis North 1 & 2). Once completed the community will number around 30,000 people. Only the hamlet of Sewell will remain detached in the parish surrounded by open fields to the west, an area which includes the oldest remnant of the parish's past, the Maiden Bower Neolithic camp.

Key themes of the Neighbourhood Plan include proposals for the future of the town centre, the integration of new developments with the existing community, new commercial and residential developments, protecting the environment and features which contribute to the charm and appearance of the area.

The Neighbourhood Plan identifies site allocations for:

- new developments within the town centre
- a new health hub, a new cemetery, physical and transport connections from Houghton Regis North 1 and 2 to the existing town,
- areas for specialist housing, for elderly (semi-independent living units) and for young people affordable homes.

The Draft Local Plan from Central Bedfordshire Council recognises the growth of Houghton Regis as well as the potential of development possibilities in adjoining areas. Houghton Regis has a central position in the wider area between Milton Keynes / Northampton / Bedford to the north and Dunstable / Luton / Hitchin to the south.

The Neighbourhood Plan sets out proposals to expand the potential of the open spaces in relation to sites like Houghton Park and the Chalk Pit where a proposed nature reserve and visitor centre would enhance the area.

The vitality and viability of Houghton Regis will only continue with suitable and adequate facilities within the town and sustainable transport to connect with the surroundings. The Plan covers the period up to 2035.

2) Introduction

2.1 Neighbourhood Plans were introduced by the Localism Act 2011 as a statutory planning document to allow local communities to identify the challenges facing their areas and to put forward potential solutions. Houghton Regis Neighbourhood Plan has been produced following consultation with local residents and organisations and will be submitted formally to the local planning authority for consideration. The plan has been undertaken within the framework of the National Planning Framework and relevant legislation, notably the Neighbourhood Planning (General Regulations) 2012, the Localism Act 2011, and the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 as amended.

2.2 The preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan draws on the findings, skills and knowledge within the community through a Steering Group of local councillors and residents under the auspices of Houghton Regis Town Council.

2.3 In June 2016, Houghton Regis Town Councillors identified a number of land-use related topics to be addressed within the neighbourhood plan. The neighbourhood plan will embrace the whole parish (see Map 1) with a potential time-span to 2033. The topics identified were:

Housing, Facilities, Leisure, Town Centre, Local Centres, Safety & Security, Employment, Transport, Open Space, Heritage, Development in Adjoining Areas, Sustainability.



Map 1: Parish Boundary

2.4 Summary information from the Baseline study 2016 includes:

- The Parish of Houghton Regis has almost 7,000 homes and a population of around 17,500, and the settlements of Bidwell, Sewell, and Thorn.
- The Parish has Dunstable and Luton along its southern edge, and adjoins Totternhoe, Tilsworth, Chalton, and Chalgrave parishes on the west, north and east. For much of its history the parish was much larger; part transferred to Dunstable in 1907 and part to Luton in 1939.
- All Saints Church is a 14th century, listed Grade 1, in the centre of Houghton Regis town centre.
- Expansion in the 1960's: Tithe Farm and Parkside estates built under the New and Expanded Towns Scheme.
- Major Development Proposals include
 - Houghton Regis North 1, outline consent, 262 ha (nb extending eastwards beyond the parish boundary) comprising up to 5,150 dwellings; up to 202,500 sq.m. gross commercial development, schools, community and leisure facilities,
 - Houghton Regis North 2 outline consent on land west of Bidwell towards the A5, up to 1,850 dwellings including affordable housing, 2 primary schools, employment land, a local centre comprising retail and community/leisure uses, plus public open spaces including sports pitches, natural wildlife areas and all associated access routes, primary road network, associated drainage, and landscaping.
 - These two schemes have brought contributions to a new junction 11a on the M1, and strategic road links to the A5 and Woodside employment estate.

2.5 A survey of major issues in late 2016 / early 2017 produced key themes for the Plan -

- integrating new and existing communities
- protecting the countryside and open spaces in the parish
- working with neighbours to shape developments in adjoining areas

- better facilities and parking for local residents
- shaping the town centre for its future roles.

3) Context & Local Plan

3.1 The modern parish of Houghton Regis has almost 7,000 homes and a population of nearly 17,500. It includes the nearby hamlets of Bidwell, Sewell, and Thorn. The High Street in central Houghton Regis runs past All Saints, a glorious example of medieval church architecture and a shopping complex, Bedford Square, built in the 1960s and extended with a new library, medical and community centres opened more recently. Just a few steps beyond, the town centre changes with The Green, an open space which has been at the heart of the community for centuries and Houghton Hall.

3.2 Since 1959, the population of Houghton has continued to grow from 3,750 with great changes in the 1960s with a substantial expansion to accommodate London overspill population under the New and Expanded Towns Scheme. In the early 1960s, Tithe Farm Estate was built. It took its name from the huge tithe barn standing on what has now become Tithe Farm Road. This new estate and Parkside estate re-housed Londoners who came to work in the car and truck factories in and around Dunstable and Luton. The built-up areas of Houghton, Dunstable and Luton have merged, with a population in 2010 of over 235,000 and a workforce in excess of 131,825 and remain one of the largest manufacturing centres in the south-east outside London. Houghton Regis' main employment areas are on the southern side of the parish.

3.3 The Statutory Framework: National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012, revised 2018) has been issued by the Government to simplify the planning process, make it more accessible and work more effectively, with a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The Framework is the backbone of the planning system with sustainable development: economic, environmental and social, at their core. This Plan has been prepared with regard to the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework.

3.4 A development strategy is currently being revised by Central Bedfordshire Council, submitted and due for Examination later in 2018. At present the South Bedfordshire Local Plan is the current adopted development plan for the south area of Central Bedfordshire (formerly the area covered by South Bedfordshire District Council) adopted January 2004.

3.5 Central Beds Development Strategy (CBDS): A draft development strategy was prepared by Central Bedfordshire but withdrawn by a Council decision 19th November 2015, in light of the Inspector's criticism of lack of cross border consultation. In its place, the preparation of the Central Bedfordshire Local Plan is in hand.

3.6 Central Bedfordshire Local Plan (CBLP)

The CBLP sets out the vision, strategic objectives and spatial strategy for the area up to 2035 and the policies for achieving the strategic vision. This will entail an assessment of general development needs together with the consideration of any necessary Green Belt reviews. It incorporates a review of the remaining saved policies from the Minerals and Waste Local Plan as they relate to the Central Bedfordshire area. The identification of development sites are included. Formal consultation under Regulation 18 was undertaken during 2017/18 and a revised Plan was submitted to the Secretary of State and Examination Hearings are scheduled for early 2019. This would be followed by the Inspector's Report and Adoption.

3.7 Pending the delivery of CBLP, the Technical Papers supporting the CBDS contains a substantial volume of evidence gathered over a number of years and will help support the new document. These technical papers are consistent with the spirit of the National Planning Policy Framework and therefore remains on the Central Beds website as material considerations which may inform further development management decisions.

3.8 South Bedfordshire Local Plan

The adopted policy document preceding the CBDS, the South Bedfordshire Local Plan is currently the adopted development plan for the south area of Central Bedfordshire (formerly the area covered by South Bedfordshire District Council) adopted January 2004. Saved Policies from the South Bedfordshire Local Plan are set out in Appendix 2 of the withdrawn Central Beds Development Strategy.

3.9 Further, a Central Bedfordshire Design Guide was adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance March 2014 and the (Mid Beds) Core Strategy and Development Management Policies was adopted 19th November 2009. The Houghton Regis Neighbourhood Plan will be prepared in relation to the relevant policies in the current adopted plans and in relation to the emerging CBLP.

3.10 Neighbourhood Plans are undertaken within the framework of the National Planning Framework and relevant legislation, notably the Neighbourhood Planning (General Regulations) 2012, the Neighbourhood Planning and Infrastructure Bill (Queens Speech 2016), the Localism Act 2011, and the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 as amended. Localism provides an increased potential role for the town council in its civic role. Not only the production of a neighbourhood plan, but the legislation also provides for development orders, transfer of community assets and the ability to influence spending plans and the use of community infrastructure levy. Houghton Regis Town Council has recently undertaken a range of work, the results of which can be fed into the Neighbourhood Plan process:

- establishment of vision and objectives
- community planning re. Houghton Regis town centre.

4) Vision and Aims

4.1 The Town Council adopted a vision, aims and objectives for the town in 2011

Vision for Houghton Regis:

To make Houghton Regis an attractive and vibrant place to live and work.

Aim :

To work with partners and residents to make Houghton Regis a better place for all.

including:

To enhance formal and informal leisure & recreational facilities within the town; major priorities are new cemetery provision and Town Council premises. The Council will continue to support and improve public spaces:

- Village Green and cricket square, play area and basket ball court
- Moore Crescent Sports Pavilion, Bowls Green and football pitches
- Parkside Drive two play areas and football pitches
- Orchard Close Pavilion, Play area and football pitches
- Tithe Farm Sports Pavilion, football pitches, play area and skate park
- Dog Kennel Down
- Windsor Drive

To seek improvements to highway infrastructure;

To seek to enhance the retail provision within town centre and local shopping areas;

To provide community development services within Houghton Regis;

To enhance community safety & reduce the fear of crime;

To enhance youth provision;

To be actively involved in the 'Growth Area'.

Specific objectives include

- To work with partners to enhance the open spaces at The Baulk, Plaiters Way & Blue Waters;

- To take on the management and upkeep of the former railway line on the edge of Dog Kennel Down;
- To seek to maintain leisure centre provision within Houghton Regis;
- To seek to work with partners to develop a country park near the Chalk Pit Nature Reserve;
- To develop an allotments scheme within the Town.

To enhance public places

- To take on the management and maintenance of planting beds around Bedford Square;
- To extend planting within the town;
- To facilitate community litter picks;
- To continue to enhance the Christmas lights display.

To seek improvements to highway infrastructure & provision

- To work with partners on implementing a town centre highways civilisation scheme;
- To liaise with the local community on areas to prioritise for speed reduction measures;
- To work with partners to ensure that school crossing patrols are maintained;
- To seek improvements to residential parking areas and garage facilities - prevent parking on grass verges.

To seek to enhance the retail provision within town centre and local shopping areas

- To work towards creating a small market (up to 4 stalls) in Bedford Square;
- To promote town centre shops and a Shop Local campaign;
- To work with partners to see the redevelopment of the CO-OP site including replacement of the social club and community hall;
- To work with partners to achieve visual enhancement to rear of town centre shops;
- To work with partners to create a town centre feature in Bedford Square.

To enhance community safety & reduce the fear of crime

- To continue to provide additional high visibility policing and to promote this to residents;
- To work with CBC to enhance CCTV coverage across the Town;
- To work with partners to provide crime advice residents to seek to reduce the opportunity for crime and the fear of crime;
- To work with partners to take action on empty homes and derelict garages.

To enhance youth provision

- To enhance facilities at Parkside recreation ground and within Houghton Hall ward;
- To promote existing facilities through organised play and sport sessions and holiday play schemes.

To be actively involved in the Growth Area

- To consult with residents over growth area issues including impact of development, suitability of development, specific development issues, provision of services and facilities;
- To seek provision / allocation for a new cemetery (with Chapel), allotment site, leisure centre, public open space for formal and informal recreation, play provision,
- enhancement of Tithe Farm Pavilion & recreation ground as a multi use sports site and for new Town Council offices.

4.2 The Town Council has built upon its 2020 vision for the town, applying the principles to the Neighbourhood Plan, with objectives to achieve:

- A stronger local economy that promotes local businesses
- Face the challenges and maximise opportunities for growth
- A safer town with reduced fear of crime
- A more active, engaged and inclusive community
- A strong, efficient and proactive Town Council.

5) Consultation Summary, Basic Conditions & Environmental Impact

5.1 To inform the development of the Neighbourhood Plan, local people were asked about the main issues in the parish (2017) and then specifics about local needs (2018).

5.2 A Consultation Report has been prepared separately, along with a Basic Conditions Statement showing how the Plan accords with local, national and broader policy positions, and an Environmental Impact Statement regarding the impact of the development proposals.

Neighbourhood Plan Policies including delivery proposals and related non-land use community aspirations) covering the period up to 2035

6. Business & Employment: Aiming for employment opportunities for all

6.1 Houghton Regis is part of an important economic growth area in the Oxford, Milton Keynes, Cambridge Arc where public resources will be invested to generate business and employment growth. Crossed by a mix of major transport and communications, Central Bedfordshire is adopting a supportive enabling approach to driving business investment, delivering jobs growth with ambitious plans for a further 24,000 – 30,000 new jobs by 2035. New transport links being implemented are the east-west rail connection and the east-west expressway running south of Bedford. Key growth sectors include high performance technologies research and development, visitor economy, transport and logistics, and agrifood. The transport infrastructure means that distribution is a major feature of the local economic picture. The CBC website provides further details:

<http://www.becentralbedfordshire.co.uk/documents/The%20Growth%20Corridor%20Central%20Area.pdf>

6.2 There are currently well over 200 businesses with a presence or premises in the Parish. Employment within the town presently is focused on seven areas:

- the High Street (retail, offices, services, care homes, car sales)and Bedford Square (retail, restaurant, takeaways, estate agent, funeral)
- the Woodside Estate / Porz Avenue (Industry / distribution / warehousing with offices) - part of a more extensive employment area extending south into Dunstable either side of Boscombe Road
- Houghton Hall Business Park (Mainly B1 offices)
- Townsend farm Road / Portland Close / Westbury Close / Blackburn Rd (B1 Light Industrial, storage, and services with some commercial recreation Soft Play Snakes & Ladders) the area of the former cement works off Houghton Road,
- local centre shops on Tithe farm and Parkside (Retail - convenience, sub-post office, newsagents) and public houses spread across the parish (Hospitality, food and drink, entertainment) The Crown, The Kings Arms, The Chequers, The Old Red Lion, Harvest Home, Go Houghton, and The White Lion at Bidwell

- the range of education, social and 'public service' employment in schools etc.
- farming and rural enterprises in the rural parts of the parish.

NB The Houghton Hall Business Park / Woodside - Porz Ave / Townsend Farm - Blackburn Rd employment areas form an almost continuous band of commercially-zoned land from Poynters Road in the East to Houghton Road A5120 in the west.

6.3 In addition there are small / self-employed enterprises which operate from domestic properties or have no premises, and Upper Floor - 'Brass Plate, businesses mainly B1 offices.

6.4 Houghton Regis town centre has a considerable commercial footprint – described in more detail in section 7 below.

6.5 More major retail food and comparison shopping outlets are located outside the parish in Dunstable and Luton (nb part of the commercial area proposed as part of Houghton Regis North 1 lies outside the Parish).

6.6 The commercial footprint of the High Street extends into Townsend Farm Road and Portland Close where there are light industrial / employment units with their offices fronting the A5120 Houghton Road. Nimbus Park, and Houghton Hall Business Park are positioned on the northern side of Porz Avenue located on the southern edge of the parish. Together with businesses on Humphreys Road on the Woodside Estate, these areas as a whole represent the main commercial / employment area in terms of floor-space within the parish.

6.7 The parish includes farming in the countryside to the north and west.

6.8 In total, less than a fifth of Houghton Regis residents worked (2011) within the town: 570 residents (7%) worked from home, and 900 residents (11%) travelled to work within Houghton Regis. 1,900 residents (23%) worked elsewhere in Central Bedfordshire, with 1,160 (14%) travelling to Dunstable. Outside of Central Bedfordshire, the main destinations were Luton: 1,730 people (21%), and London: 540 people (7%).

(Sources: Office for National Statistics, 2011 Census, Location of usual residence and place of work (OA level), Table WF01BE W)

6.9 The permissions for Houghton Regis North 1 and 2 include up to 202,500 sqm gross of additional development in Use Classes: A1, A2, A3, A4, A5 (retail); B1, B2, B8 (offices, industrial and storage and distribution); C1 (hotel), C2 (care home), schools (Houghton Regis North 1) plus 2 primary schools (D1), and employment land (Use Classes B1 [a-c], B2 & B8) on Houghton Regis North 2. The precise scale and layout of these employment areas are yet to be determined. Also the developments include a key infrastructure improvement; the Woodside link road connects that area directly to the new M1 motorway junction. The new East-West transport infrastructure linking M40 / Aylesbury / A5 / M1 / Luton North / A1 will create an axis of movement between Oxford and Cambridge likely to have a strong national focus in future supporting the growth of new, high-tech commercial developments.

Issues Survey

From the survey responses the most suitable jobs were viewed as manufacturing, technology, warehousing and office work.

6.10 In anticipation that the proposed commercial developments within Houghton Regis North will provide sufficient scope for employment, this Plan does not allocate further land for employment / commercial purposes.

Policy 1: The sites designated for employment purposes (use classes B1, B2 and B8) (see map 2) are

- a) Townsend Farm Road / Portland Close / Westbury Close / Blackburn Rd
- b) those parts of Porz Ave / Woodside Estate / Houghton Hall within the Houghton Regis parish boundary,
- c) the area of Houghton Regis North 1 / Woodside link within the Houghton parish boundary,

d) Houghton Regis North 2 West

Within these areas there is a strong presumption against changes of use away from employment uses which would result in land or buildings being used for non-employment purposes in order to support the economic and employment potential of the area and retain local employment opportunities.

NB An area on Houghton Road / Portland Close / Townsend Farm Rd is included in the revised area of town centre uses (see policies 4 and 6) The town centre is also an area of major employment, with separate policies in section 7 below.

Policy 2: A Science and Technology hub (use classes B1 and B2) is proposed as part of the expansion of the Skills Centre at the Kingsland site providing start-up facilities and incubator support for new businesses and associated training facilities (links to further education, lifelong learning and higher educational/ institutions/establishments) in order to equip local people with the skills and opportunities to engage fully in the future working economy.

(Map 2 shows the location of the Kingsland site)

Policy 3 - Commercial Areas - Houghton Regis North 1 & 2

Development of the commercial and employment areas within Houghton Regis North 1 and Houghton Regis North 2 will be undertaken in accordance with the 2012 Framework and outline permissions. Proposals within these areas will seek to complement the Houghton Regis town centre Masterplan and policies 4 to 7.

6.11 **Delivery:** These policies would be achieved by applying them in the consideration of planning applications.

6.12 Community Aspirations / Supporting Proposals

- A new Employment Strategy for Houghton Regis that links locations for business and skills / vocational training which builds on existing strengths with linked training / apprenticeships - planned logistics, local building firms – to create skilled labour pool and greater job diversity – range of skills and higher income jobs, high value IT work for all age groups,
- Work with Education and other professional bodies in the Parish to build aspirations among local schools towards good quality jobs and remuneration reflecting local opportunities.

7. TOWN CENTRE and LOCAL CENTRES

Houghton Regis Central: A Hub and a Heart:

Aiming for a town centre which attracts people from across the parish and beyond

7.1 The town centre is arranged along the High Street with a notable retail presence in Bedford Square and the Morrisons supermarket on the southern side of the High Street. On the northern side the houses and shops have mostly been converted or redeveloped to a mix of employment / office - B1 uses , with a petrol station and a car sales forecourt. The Kings Arms public house and a food takeaway shop stands on the corner of High Street and Bedford Road.

7.2 Bedford Square includes, on the ground floor, a range of stores including many 'High Street' premises with a range of outlets - Poundstretchers, Post Office, a family butchers, opticians, pharmacy, newsagents, estate agency, a hardware shop, a funeral directors, a carpet shop, a charity shop, a community shop, a convenience grocery and drinks store, an opticians, 4 restaurants or takeaways, a ladies hairdresser, , a gentleman's hairdressers, a bookmakers, a cashpoint.

7.3 Additional business premises are located on the 1st floor of Bedford Square accessed only by steps. These include a taxi office, a ladies beauty specialist, a party specialist. Off Bedford Square is the library, health centre and community centre, with a GP medical centre and the Town Council offices adjoining on the opposite side of Tithe Farm Road. The retail offer at this end of the High Street will be expanded with development of the former Co-Op site and Red House Court, a scheme of retail units on the ground floor fronting the High Street and 168 independent-living apartments for older persons with support facilities, and associated parking and landscaping.

7.4 The High Street also has a dental practice, two (Roslyn House and Lady Spencer House) residential care homes, car sales / servicing units and a petrol filling station. Physically, the High Street / Town Centre is hemmed in by residential developments on both northern and southern sides. The Green and Memorial Hall form a natural eastern termination of the town centre, at the western end the High Street turns to another area of employment uses on the site of the former Townsend Farm and cement works. All Saints church occupies a central and prominent position at the junction of the High Street and Bedford Road, opposite the Kings Arms public house.

7.5 A major study of the town centre reported in 2008 and has been the basis for shaping the area, notably with the development of Morrisons and the former Co-op site. The study also triggered improvements in the public realm, transport and movement. The High Street has lost its 'market town' feel, people from outlying villages probably travelling to Dunstable / Luton or Leighton - Linslade for shopping or comparison purchases.

7.6 The majority of smaller shops and services, restaurants and takeaways are concentrated in Bedford Square. Currently the overall town centre frontage percentage of A1 retail is comparable (Market Towns Study 2010) to regional / national averages for small towns by virtue of the presence of the 51,000sq.ft. Morrisons supermarket. Noticeable variations are the lower than average representations for A2 Financial and Professional, A3 Restaurants/ Cafes, and A4 Drinking Establishments. Along the High Street is a higher than average presence of B1 business offices, car sales and C2 care homes.

7.7 There is no regular street market in the High Street whereas other small towns have between 14 and 44 traders in a street market. The town centre is on the main bus routes through the town and from locations around it.

7.8 The outline approvals for Houghton Regis North 1 and 2 include up to 202,500 sqm. gross of developments in Use Classes: A1, A2, A3, A4, A5 (retail); B1, B2, B8 (office, industrial and storage and distribution); and C1 (hotel), plus a local centre comprising retail (A1, A2, A3, A4 & A5) and community/leisure uses (D1 & D2).

7.9 **Issues Survey:** Three non-retail uses - banks, health facilities and entertainment / leisure topped people's responses of what's missing:

	Responses
banks / building societies *	25
health facilities	23
entertainment / leisure - e.g. cinema,	23
small shops- e.g. bakers,	17
household goods / furniture / electrics	16
assembly rooms	10
cafes / restaurants	8

* NB There a number of cashpoint machines in the town centre - the petrol stations, Morrisons, and convenience store in Bedford Square.

7.10 The lower responses (less than 8) for food shopping, hairdressers, hotels, residential, public houses and takeaways suggest that these are already well provided already.

7.11 Prior to the Houghton Regis North approvals, a technical report on Retail issues commissioned by Central Beds (2012) identified current policy and broader retail / leisure needs. In the South Beds Local Plan, Dunstable, Leighton Buzzard and Houghton Regis were identified as town centres. An adopted Joint core strategy encompassing Luton and South Beds identified Dunstable and Leighton-Linslade as major town centres and Houghton Regis as a minor town centre. Policy CS 20 is concerned with Houghton Regis town centre and states that the town centre will be rejuvenated in accordance with the Master Plan through up to 333 sqm2 of additional comparison retail floorspace and redevelopment of Bedford Square and the Co-op site for mixed use to deliver an improved retail and commercial offer and heart to the town centre, plus access and public realm improvements. However the prospect of considerable new retail and other commercial units (A1, A2, A3, A4 & A5) and community/leisure uses (D1 & D2) being developed as part of the Houghton Regis North scheme requires a reappraisal of the existing town centre's future role, with options

- i) retain the existing town centre as was proposed in the Luton / South Beds Joint Strategy,
- ii) to compete with the proposed new developments on Houghton Regis North, or
- iii) to accommodate new functions which complement the approved scheme on Houghton Regis North.

7.12 The proposal in this Plan is to pursue the following as the main aims of a revised Masterplan (policy 4):

Houghton Regis Town Centre: Preferred Option

- a ' market town' and local services offer - designed with smaller / specialist retail in mind as well as small/medium food shopping, plus a space for a regular market linked to events and attractions - focusing on Bedford Square for retail, post office, restaurants, takeaways concentrated with the car park in front of All Saints having a dual 'events / market' function, as well as The Green for larger markets, carnivals and other occasional community activities and events (subject to other town centre parking being available),
- a new administrative, health and service centre on land north of All Saints, in conjunction with the current library and community centre, including police with Houghton Regis Town Council, plus car parking and with the potential for new residential aimed at older / care sector,
- On the northerly side of- the High Street between Georgina Service Station and the Kings Arms - a destination for personal services - health, legal, financial, beauty, fitness, restaurants and small office businesses / services and residential accommodation serving the older (55+) sector of the local population, sheltered / semi-sheltered purpose-designed residential uses,
- retaining a large supermarket and car parking offer on the High Street
- a new area for commercial leisure, hospitality and entertainment plus car parking e.g. restaurants, cinema, bowling, and similar between Cemetery Road and Houghton Road.

7.13 The current physical layout of the High Street places constraints. To encompass the preferred option, two areas would be added to enlarge the footprint of the town centre - Thomas Whitehead CE Academy & Bedford Court, and the area currently used for employment at Houghton Road / Portland Close / Townsend Farm Rd.

Policy 4: A new masterplan for Houghton Regis Town Centre will be prepared (replacing the 2009 version) to reflect the new range of activities, defining the three distinct areas of the town centre with their uses. The boundary revisions to include

- a) land north of All Saints Church
- b) Townsend Farm Rd / Portland Close.

The new masterplan would reflect the new development at Houghton Regis Central, the future roles and functions of each part of the town centre (east, west, High Street), traffic management, parking, and public realm improvements.

The masterplan will set out the main activities within the town centre comprising three areas:

- **Town Centre East, a new town heart** focusing on community, health and town council activities, retail and residential - from Tithe Farm Rd / Bedford Square to Bedford Rd, High St & Houghton Regis Central, to include site of Thomas Whitehead CE Academy and Bedford Ct, (see policy 5)
- **Town Centre West: new leisure and hospitality area** creating a new entertainment area including a theatre-style community space for drama, concerts, movies, community events, and commercial leisure activities such as bowling and dance studios, play / relaxation space 'arcade', indoor climbing, trampoline park, etc. with hospitality uses - diners, cafes, restaurants, plus car parking; to create new evening destination, with entertainment as an 'anchor', in Houghton Road / Portland Close / Townsend Farm Rd area (see policy 6)
- **Town Centre High Street:** focusing on retail retaining a major supermarket and its car park plus a mix of service and café uses and residential flats and supported living, including Serviced Office space – for small businesses, pop-up enterprises, etc, for growing new businesses, and a greater offering of smaller, independent shops from Kings Arms public house to petrol station, and Whitehouse Close to Cemetery Rd (see Policy 7).

The primary High Street frontages will be the ground floor units in Bedford Square, the new ground floor units at Houghton Regis Central, and south side of the High Street from Redhouse Court to Cemetery Road where at least 70% of the ground floor frontages will be maintained in retail A1 use. These areas will be afforded the highest level of protection for A1 retail uses between King Street and Cemetery Road.

The secondary town centre frontage will extend on the northerly side of the High Street between Georgina Service Station and the Kings Arms for small, independent retail, cafes, (A1, A3, A4, A5) and as a destination for personal services - health, legal, financial, beauty, fitness, with small office businesses / services (A2 / B1) where at least 20% of the ground floor frontage will be maintained in A1 use. This area will include residential accommodation serving the older (55+) sector of the local population, plus sheltered / semi-sheltered purpose-designed residential uses (C2). Within the Secondary Town Centre frontage a wider range of town centre uses would be permitted.

Changes of use from commercial to residential uses at ground floor level will not normally be permitted within the town centre.

Development and change of use proposals which respond to the preferred option for the town centre and demonstrate acceptable design, layout and appearance will be supported.

NB The area east of Tithe Farm Road currently occupied by Houghton Regis Town Council offices and health facilities is designated for residential development (see policy 19).

Policy 5: Town Centre East, a new town heart focusing on community, health and town council activities, retail and residential - from Tithe Farm Rd / Bedford Sq / Bedford Rd, High St & Houghton Regis Central, to include site of Thomas Whitehead CE Academy and Bedford Ct,

- Retain community centre / library (use class D1)
- Replace Thomas Whitehead school buildings with new Town Council offices (with space for more community activities and other services e.g. Police,) and new car park
- Identify site for new Food Centre (e.g. baker, real food / buy British),
- Examine options to regenerate Bedford Square including the opportunity to open it up more to the High Street, or cover the pedestrian area to create all-weather shopping and market style emporium for local artisans and small retail businesses and a space for "pop-ups", with options to convert flats to offices (including serviced office space),

- retain and improve car park (improving provision for disabled and electric charging spaces) adjoining All Saints and use it for occasional markets and events
- Set up a feasibility study group to look into the possibility of creating an inner ring road utilising a new route High Street / Tithe Farm Rd / Angels Lane / Bedford Rd/ High Street. Purpose would be to access a new 2-storey car park (on TW fields), new residential development (small flats / single people - aimed at the older / semi-sheltered care sector (C2), a new administrative and community activity area, and shops.
- Review street furniture in High Street to include facilities for temporary pedestrianisation of town centre for events.
- (redevelop Peel Street / GP surgery and car park for residential)
- Enable / encourage the growth of town centre public houses – The Kings Arms, The Chequers, The Crown (use class A4 – drinking establishment with expanded food provision)
- Perhaps explore relocation of some grave stones within parts of All Saints churchyard so that some of it might be used for gala days/ fund-raising initiatives.

The extent of the area will be altered (see Map 3) and will focus on a range of commercial activities including 'market town shops and services' aimed at providing a range of retail opportunities including major High Street food retail (A1), local services and smaller / specialist retail units (A1, A2, A3, A4, A5). The Green will continue as a major area of open space with occasional events, community activities and attractions.

A new administrative and service centre (B1) will be developed with facilities for police, health and Houghton Regis Town Council on land north of All Saints, adjoining and integrated with the current library and community centre.

Policy 6 : Town Centre West: new leisure and hospitality area

Designation of the area on Houghton Road / Portland Close / Townsend Farm Rd as a new area for commercial leisure (D2), hospitality and entertainment (A3 & A4) plus car parking. The entertainment and leisure uses could include restaurants, cinema, bowling, a theatre-style community space for drama, concerts, movies, community events, and commercial leisure activities such as dance studios, play / relaxation space 'arcade', indoor climbing, trampoline park, etc. with hospitality uses - diners, cafes, restaurants, plus car parking; to create new evening destination, with entertainment as an 'anchor'.

(nb a key emerging theme is shared use, with education and training at the core making use of facilities e.g. dance studios used by schools and adult education)

The design and scale of the development shall

- have regard to the High Street / Houghton Road frontage,
- include a direct pedestrian link with the High Street / town centre to bring the commercial strands of the town centre together and support the pedestrian access and permeability of the site,
- include on-site parking,
- include provision of entertainment / leisure uses complementing the current High Street 'offer',
- be limited mainly to a height of 3 storeys to respect the setting and adjoining properties, and be consistent with the existing character of the town, and
- be supported by the improved provision of public realm features, street furniture, seating and signage.

Any future proposal should be contingent on including an appropriate provision of street furniture and signage which is consistent with both the recently upgraded provision around the town and the vision of the town centre of the future.

Policy 7: Town Centre High Street: the area between The Kings Arms to Georgina Service Station, and Whitehouse Close to Cemetery Rd will focus on retail (A1, A2, A3, A4, A5) retaining the current

Morrisons supermarket and its car park plus development to create a mix of service and café uses and residential flats and supported living, including Serviced Office space – for small businesses, pop-up enterprises, etc, for growing new businesses, and a greater offering of smaller, independent shops



KEY

- Retail ■
- Entertainment ■
- HR Central ■
- School ■ 1
- Church ■ 2
- The Green ■
- Possible Parking ■
- New Road ■

Map 3.

Local Centres

7.14 In addition to the proposals for community hubs / local centres on Houghton Regis North 1 and 2, the town has two local centres plus individual local shops serving residents on Tithe Farm and Parkside with convenience shopping, pubs, takeaways. The Kingsland development could also include facilities which might be considered 'local centre'. Opportunities to improve parking at Tithe Farm and Parkside local centres will be sought. The current local centres / shops are:

Neptune Square (Parkside)	Nisa shop	Go Houghton public house / restaurant
Hillborough Crescent (Tithe farm)	Nisa shop, sub-post office, plus other shops	Harvest Home PH
Individual shops on Tithe Farm Road		

Policy 8: Local Centres: There is a strong presumption against changes of use in the local centres on Tithe Farm, Parkside and those proposed as part of Houghton Regis North from retail and service uses, which would significantly erode the 'offer' in each local centre

7.15 Central to this approach for the town centre are adequate accessibility and car parking for employees and visitors, and the ability of residents from Houghton Regis North to have good access to the town centre activities and 'offer' aimed at serving the new enlarged parish population. The proposals for the town centre include new 'health' –related elements, discussions with the Area Health Authority would establish if this

could be developed as a primary care 'hub' delivering a range of services in the community, including GPs, dentists, optometrists, pharmacists, district nurses, therapists, mental health nurses, health care assistants, palliative care nurses and health visitors.

7.16 This Plan includes community aspirations to enhance the vibrancy and vitality of the town's retail areas:

- a site for markets and events on the car park adjoining All Saints church, and temporary arts / culture uses in empty shops,
- improvements to public realm - pavements, street furniture, lighting, extend main themes to new developments, rationalise signs and improve signage / directions for visitors
- Improve the road safety, particularly for pedestrians, and parking.
- If Thomas Whitehead CE Academy is relocated, add a new road with additional car parking behind the Community Centre to Bedford Road to be able to close the High Street from the Tithe Farm Road roundabout to the Bedford Road roundabout during the day and make it a pedestrian-only zone.
- Include new public car parking in western end entertainment area.
- Review town centre and proposals to minimise crime and ASB
- Install secure bike-parking and electric car charging points in the car park adj All Saints churchyard
- Improve pedestrian links from the High Street to The Green,
- Improve accessibility to town centre for the enlarged Houghton Regis community with regard to traffic, parking, cycling and pedestrian needs.

7.17 **Delivery:** The development of a new masterplan for the Town Centre will be negotiated with CBC. The policies for the town centre would be major elements in considering planning applications and negotiations with landowner stakeholders. The Town Council will take a lead in one element of the town centre proposals namely a) negotiations with CBC current owner of the land north of All Saints, b) negotiations with other health, police and other agencies with an interest in a town centre location, c) sale of its current site (for residential development) on Peel Street and the investment of capital assets in the proposed development.

7.18 Development of the commercial / employment areas within Houghton Regis North 1&2 will be the subject of planning applications on which the Town Council will be consulted.

8. Training & Education: The Foundation for Our All Age Skills Strategy: Aiming High, for outstanding educational facilities and standards

8.1 **Currently in Houghton Regis there are 6 lower Schools.** On the Kingsland campus off Parkside Drive are Houghton Regis Academy (secondary, but no sixth form), Chiltern School (special education needs, secondary site), , Central Bedfordshire College, Houghton Regis Leisure Centre , Bedfordshire Education and Skills service and the Academy of Central Bedfordshire. Other provision in Houghton Regis includes The Sandringham Hub and , The Disability Resource Centre, Poynters Road. All Saints Academy, a secondary school with sixth form in Dunstable but which abuts Houghton Regis, includes part of the parish in its catchment area.

8.2 Three new schools and 2 school enlargements are included in the Houghton Regis North schemes. There are no details of training or higher education facilities proposed at this stage for the new developments.

Skills Training for future employment

8.3 One approach to help address the issues of deprivation (see Baseline study) locally, is to develop facilities which deliver enhanced and varied employment skills. With the volume of construction work planned for the town (and potentially in adjoining areas), space for a training/skills centre, perhaps run by an adult training/education body would serve the employer needs of developers and provide local people with new life-skills opportunities. Other areas of training could include the creative and leisure industries, tourism, IT skills, interview skills, warehousing, and social care.

Policy 9 : First Class Education Facilities The sites designated for education purposes over the lifetime of this Plan (see map 2) are

- a) Tithe Farm School (to be expanded within Houghton Regis North development)
- b) Thornhill Primary School (plus a new school within Houghton Regis North development)
- c) Houghton Regis Primary School
- d) St Vincents Primary School
- e) Hawthorn Park Primary
- f) Houghton Regis Academy
- g) New secondary school adj Woodside Link (in place of / after closure of Houghton Regis Academy)
- h) Central Bedfordshire College,
- i) Academy of Central Bedfordshire
- j) The Chiltern School
- k) Thomas Whitehead CofE Academy Primary (possibly relocated)
- l) Allocated sites within Houghton Regis North developments

Within these areas there is a strong presumption against changes of use away from education uses (use classes) which would result in land or buildings being used for non-education purposes.

Policy 10: Additional facilities for 21st century teaching and learning to support the education and development of young children and families will be provided as follows:

- Children’s Centres at Hawthorn Park and Tithe Farm Primary Schools
- Children centres to be part of primary school provision on Houghton Regis North 1 and 2
- New shared Design Technology and science lab facilities will be provided to ensure all Primary and Secondary Schools have access to outstanding teaching facilities to meet to needs of the curriculum, including the creative and STEM subjects, and to provide parity of learning.
- Adult learning / training – new centre at Kingsland or ‘hub and spokes’ model with learning facilities in library, leisure centre, schools, etc.,
- Additional early-years provision at Tithe Farm School to enable co-location of children / parent training classes / welfare / adult education.

Policy 11: The Kingsland Campus offers a major opportunity to deliver a range of education, training and leisure facilities (see policies 2, 9 and 10 above). Because of the involved nature of the site and the various stakeholders, a new working group will be formed to investigate the options and recommend a way forward to maximise the benefits of this site.

8.4 Supporting Proposals

- The new schools within Houghton Regis North will aim to co-locate schools and major sports facilities (see facilities section below) to enable efficient management and co-ordinated use between schools, community and private clubs.
- Ensure new schools are provided ahead of new residential development / link phasing of homes to facilities,
- Review facilities at existing schools to identify needs and options to bring higher standards to all schools in Houghton Regis
- Redevelop Thomas Whitehead CofE Academy site as part of town centre expansion
- Provide key worker housing for teachers, NHS, to help address recruitment and retention challenges
- Up-skill employees by providing vocational and apprentice training. Create centre of excellence for logistics, construction, travel, care, hospitality and IT

- Use educational buildings and playing fields out-of-hours to cater for wide range of needs.

8.5 Delivery of these policies will require the engagement of local people, school governors and schools' senior management teams, and Central Bedfordshire Council.

9. Open Space, Recreation & Facilities:

Aiming for Green Space and First-Class Recreational Facilities in Houghton Regis

9.1 The approach within this Plan is to protect the main areas of existing and new areas of open space within the parish plus the introduction of connecting paths and leisure equipment to increase usage, and to protect the particular qualities of the Chalk Pit Nature Reserve.

9.2 At the Houghton Regis Chalk Pit Nature Reserve and in conjunction with new open space provision arising from Houghton Regis North 2, the proposal is to introduce shared access and car parking serving a new visitor centre / cafe as part of the nature reserve.

9.3 There is a range of existing and proposed major open spaces throughout the parish:

The Village Green (protected by Charter)
 Houghton Hall Park (managed by the Greenand trust and central Bedfordshire Council)
 Moore Crescent Recreation Ground
 Dog Kennel Down
 Orchard Close Recreation Ground (Field in Trust application submitted)
 Windsor Drive Recreation Ground (owned by Central Bedfordshire Council leased to Houghton Regis Town Council)
 Tithe Farm Recreation Ground
 Parkside Recreation Ground
 the former chalk quarry now known as Houghton Regis Chalk Pit Nature Reserve (in private ownership)
 Maiden Bower iron age hillfort (scheduled ancient monument) with surrounding fields,
 The disused quarry at Sewell (in private ownership)
 Sewell Cutting Nature Reserve (managed by Wildlife Trust for Beds, Cambs and Northants – owned by CBC)
 Barley Brow County Wildlife Site
 Suncote Pits County Wildlife Site (managed by Wildlife Trust for Beds, Cambs and Northants)
 Grove Spinney at Grove Farm (in private ownership)
 The Baulk
 Blue waters Woodland (managed by Central Bedfordshire Council)
 Plaiters Way green space off Bedford Road

9.4 Proposed areas of open space within the Houghton Regis North 1 and 2 masterplans for recreation and parks are:

Bidwell Park, Beech Hangar, Woodside Park, Chalton Gateway park, the A5 Wildlife Corridor, the area north of Chalk Pit Nature Reserve in Houghton Regis North 2.

*unless otherwise stated, the sites listed above are managed by Houghton Regis Town Council.

9.5 Farmland in the west of the parish is open countryside with public footpaths which allow magnificent views from Sewell Lane and Sewell Greenway.

Map 4: existing and proposed green areas to be maintained and protected, plus footpath links between them.

9.7 New open spaces off Woodside Link, the 'buffer' areas between development and the A5 / M1 link road, and new open spaces adjoining the Houghton Regis Chalk Pit Nature Reserve are notable among the Houghton Regis North 1 and 2 proposals. A plan for the open spaces covering The Green and Houghton Hall is in place to improve access including the new visitor centre. In many cases these green open spaces combine with or adjoin sports and recreation facilities, and within Houghton Regis North the open space, recreation areas and sports pitches are co-located with schools which has the potential for careful management to deliver combined public and schools use.

9.8 More green space occurs as road-side landscaping, formal parks and informal open space, the cemeteries, play areas, school fields, and incidental and private open spaces.

9.9 Rights of Way There is a network of rights of way (footpaths, cycle paths, shared-use paths, bridleways and National Cycle Network Route 6) running through the parish connecting with areas around; Dog Kennel Path links southwards into the heart of Dunstable, Rabbit Lane links the Village Green with Woodside Industrial Estate, paths from Lewsey Farm on the edge of Luton lead through the Houghton Regis North 1 site towards Chalton, a path follows Ouzel Brook to the west through Houghton Regis North 1 and Houghton Regis North 2 towards the A5. The Icknield Way Trail / Chiltern Way path skirts the northern rim of the Chalk Pit and crosses the A5 to Sewell and Maiden Bower. From Bidwell the Icknield Trail runs north-west through Houghton Regis North 2 to cross the A5 by a footbridge and continue on to Wingfield, while the Chiltern Way continues towards Chalton. The NCN6 traverses the parish from Luton in the east to Sewell in the west and beyond to Stanbridge and Leighton Buzzard. In several cases these footpaths connect areas of open space across both rural and built-up areas. Notable links in this green network are the Dog Kennel Path, the Sewell Greenway (NCN6) and the paths connecting The Green and Houghton Hall Park. Houghton Regis Parish boundary with Chalton runs briefly along the By-way Open to All Traffic (BOAT 29) running along the ridge between Chalton and Chalgrave, which is a heritage trail also known as Theedway.

9.10 There are a number of bridleways through the north of the parish as follows (from the west)

- BW 35 runs past Sewell and Maiden Bower
- BW49 starts at Chalk Hill farm on Watling Street and continues through Houghton Regis North 2 with a new Pegasus crossing on Thorne Road. Sewell lane links BW49 with Sewell BW35.
- BW15 is a short section of the proposed Boundary Trail running north-east towards a Pegasus crossing on Lord's Hill (with access to BW44 outside the parish to Wingfield). A connection then links it with:
- BW46 to Grove Farm (also part of the proposed Boundary Trail)
- BW22 runs from Grove Farm in both directions, north to meet BOAT29 and south across the A5 by a bridge and through Houghton Regis North 1 to the Tithe farm Recreation Ground.
- BW60 runs east along Ouzel Brook to Sundon Road.

9.11 On the western boundary of the parish the Green Lanes - part of an old drovers' route from Wales and the west towards London, passes Sewell and Maiden Bower, much-used by walkers.

9.12 As well as trees protected by TPOs, generally within the conservation area there are requirements to seek and obtain approval from the Planning Authority for works to prune or fell trees prior to operations commencing.

9.13 The Houghton Regis Chalk Pit Nature Reserve is the area of former chalk extraction south of Houghton Regis North 2 which for many years served the cement works before closure in the 1980s. The nature reserve, approx. 50ha in area, comprises a SSSI and County Wildlife Site with three main areas:

- Houghton Regis Chalk Pit,
- Houghton Regis Marl Lakes (x2) Site of Special Scientific Interest
- Houghton Regis Cutting Roadside Nature Reserve

9.14 In 1988 the Marl Lakes Site of Special Scientific Interest was notified. In 1990 the whole reserve was surveyed and recognized as a County Wildlife Site which is protected to a degree under the NPPF. The Chalk Pit is a large area of colonising calcareous grassland in the northern part supporting typical chalk flora including one of

the best Chiltern Gentian populations in the area, and a significant population of chalk hill blue butterflies (a NERC Act 2006 Section 41 priority species). (Natural Environment and Rural Communities)

9.15 The Marl Lakes are an example of a habitat type which is the rarest form of standing water in Britain, confined to chalk and limestone areas with very few examples in southern England. Along with the marshy grassland and reed beds surrounding them, these lakes support a range of species associated with wetland habitats, including an outstanding assemblage of dragonfly, as well as being an important site for birds.

9.16 The Reserve has a footpath crossing eastwards from Watling Street and a range of informal paths which have emerged around and through the site. Now the A5 / M1 link is complete, the reserve is within a short drive time for a considerable number of people in the wider area / region.

9.17 Natural Features: Houghton Regis Parish sits astride the Chilterns lower chalk bench and the underlying gault clay producing an undulating landscape with springs flowing north and south. The 'spring-line' where the chalk water-table meets the clay is revealed in the local place names – Bidwell, Sewell, and Puddlehill. The springs that rise on the chalk dip slope can be impermanent features by nature of the chalk's porosity and varying water-table level. There are a significant number of springs from land within the parish: the source of Houghton Brook on the Green which flows into the River Lea in Luton (improvements already planned and awaiting implementation); four or five springs in or near Sewell Hamlet flow into Ouzel Brook; Thorn Spring Moated Site on private land at Oakwell Park which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument and CWS surrounded by marshy grassland and semi-natural broad-leaved woodland a marsh and spring on the Kingsland site which flows south-east into Houghton Brook; and the source of Ouzel Brook itself, near Sundon Road, which is hard to find because it depends on the water table where it starts flowing. Sundry other ditches linked to these streams, which only flow intermittently, are important channels for wildlife to safely traverse the landscape hidden from predators, as well as being vital for land drainage.

9.18 The Houghton Regis North Framework Plan mentioned the water environment under section 2.0 'Vision' - page 7, from which the following quote is taken:

'PROTECT AND ENHANCE THE WATER ENVIRONMENT...

by encouraging the use of sustainable methods to protect and improve the groundwater and surface water quality and quantity and enhancing surface water hydro morphology.'

9.19 This Plan seeks to ensure that in future springs are not built over or channelled underground but left as natural features of chalk landscape to be celebrated, notably

- on Houghton Regis North 1 building around the source of the Ouzel Brook which is possibly a winterbourne, (ie. it only runs in winter when the water-table is high, so the position of the spring will vary),
- the proposals at Chalton Gateway Park. and
- Kingsland spring.

9.20 Hilltops and viewpoints A feature of the Houghton Regis landscape are the hilltops on the chalk escarpment with magnificent views of the surrounding countryside: Maiden Bower at 155m is the highest spot in the Parish, Chalkhill on the west side of the Watling Street cutting (spot height 152m.), Dog Kennel Down spot height is 148m, the northern rim of the Chalk Pit is 130m, the northern boundary of the Parish is on the BOAT (133m.) . (Land to the east of the parish includes the watershed with the River Flit flowing eastwards towards the Wash.)

9.21 Looking from the north, Dunstable almost disappears in the folds of the land, and the most prominent features are Chalkhill on eastern edge of the Chalk Pit, and Blows Down behind. The warehouses built in Houghton Regis North 2 are masking the view of Chalkhill from the A5 and the start of Thorne Road. A number of

these views merit preserving by protecting natural features on skylines from developments that change it and limiting building heights in significant views of those features;

- a viewpoint at Maiden Bower
- rim of Chalk Pit

(see policy 18)

Issues Survey

Open Space People regarded it as very important to protect the open spaces within the parish. Regarding the Chalk Pit, people suggested

- better access and greater public use (including disabled access) and improve it as a nature reserve (7),
- 5 people asked that it should be left as it is
- suggested uses were for boating / sailing, swimming, fishing, and cafe / bar with a roof garden, toilets and increased seating.

Some suggestions covered outdoor gym / adult play / all age fitness equipment, and one suggestion was for off-road motorcycling.

At Dog Kennel Down comments covered

- more seating, better lighting, cafe, picnic and BBQ areas
- one comment suggested the area was dangerous.

At Windsor Drive, 3 comments were for more play areas and one for leaving it as it is.

General comments covered more multi-use games areas and toddler play areas, bigger and better parks, more tree and flower planting in open areas, tennis courts, and improvements to the standard of walks and safety.

The feedback from residents showed the greatest need was for facilities relating to teenagers, plus new health, child-care / play groups and sporting facilities.

Community Facilities

9.22 The provision of good quality community facilities – meeting places, space for services like play groups, and indoor sports facilities - have a direct bearing on people's sense of well-being. People in Houghton Regis (2011) who said their health was 'Very good' or 'Good' was similar to the Central Bedfordshire and England averages however pockets of significant deprivation remain within the parish. There are a range of facilities existing within Houghton Regis with new schools and local centres proposed in Houghton Regis North 1 and 2 - approved as part of the outline but not at present shown in detail. These facilities represent the essential supports for the lives of residents now and in the future in terms of health, safety, community and quality of life.

9.23 Of the current provision the community centre, library and toilets attached to Bedford Square is the most central. The Houghton Regis Leisure centre and fitness centre adjoining the College off Parkside Drive, plus the Bowling Green and Sports Club at Houghton Park are notable community facilities within the Parish.

9.24 The needs for outdoor facilities for active recreation – sports pitches, tennis courts, athletics facilities – is calculated on the basis of current levels of provision and participation, analysis of the quality and quantity of pitches across age and ability ranges, and projected future needs based on broad averages (pitches per 1,000 population etc.) recognising that some provision can occur in nearby areas, e.g. golf courses.

Cemetery Provision

9.25 The issue of cemetery provision has a high local priority as the current Cemetery and All Saints church yard do not have the capacity for either the current or future size of community, and local people have a clear wish to be buried locally.

9.26 In many cases these green open spaces combine with or adjoin sports and recreation facilities, and within Houghton Regis North 1 and 2 the open space, recreation areas and sports pitches are co-located with schools which has the potential for careful management to deliver combined public and schools use. Policies 12 to 18 seek to protect important areas of open space, ensure there are connections between the existing and proposed open and green spaces in the Parish and identifies recreation and other community facilities to be retained or provided. Achieving a co-ordinated layout of these spaces and facilities with good community access will provide their sustainable longer-term management and maintenance within an integrated and accessible framework.

Policy 12: Protect the Green Belt Open Spaces

Map 1 shows the Green Belt boundary, in the open countryside north of Dunstable and beyond the A5 link road where will be a presumption against development (with the exceptions as set out in the NPPF).

Map 4 shows the key existing green spaces in the parish and those proposed as part of Houghton Regis North, plus the connecting footpaths, routes and cycle-routes, and the principal green / wildlife corridors, including hedgerows, copses, springs and streams (the Ouzel and Houghton Brooks to be managed and maintained for nature).

- The Village Green (protected by Charter)
- Houghton Hall Park (managed by the Greensand Trust and Central Bedfordshire Council)
- Moore Crescent Recreation Ground
- Dog Kennel Down
- Orchard Close Recreation Ground (Field in Trust application submitted)
- Windsor Drive Recreation Ground (owned by CBC, leased to HRTC)
- Tithe Farm Recreation Ground
- Parkside Recreation Ground
- the former chalk quarry now known as Houghton Regis Chalk Pit Nature Reserve.
- Maiden Bower iron age hillfort (scheduled ancient monument) with surrounding fields, the disused quarry at Sewell (in private ownership)
- Sewell Cutting Nature Reserve (managed by the Wildlife Trust for Beds, Cambs and Northants)
- Barley Brow County Wildlife Site
- Suncote Pits County Wildlife Site (managed by the Wildlife Trust for Beds, Cambs and Northants)
- Grove Spinney at Grove Farm (in private ownership)
- The Baulk and Plaiters Way off Bedford Road
- Blue Waters Woodland with disabled access (managed by CBC)

Plus the areas proposed within the Houghton Regis North 1 and 2 masterplans for recreation and parks:

- Bidwell Park;
- Beech Hangar;
- Woodside Park;
- Chalton Gateway Park;
- the A5 wildlife corridor in Houghton Regis North 1;
- the area north of Chalk Pit nature reserve in Houghton Regis North 2).

Unless otherwise stated, the sites listed above are managed by HRTC.

Within these green spaces no development or changes of use will be permitted which diminish the quality or extent of that space for natural, wildlife or recreational purposes. Many of the green

spaces listed above are bordered by trees and hedges, copses, spinneys and areas of scrubland which are important wildlife habitats and corridors, requiring maintenance and protection from development, or damage caused by nearby development.

This Plan designates the following as Local Green Space / key landscaped areas: The areas shaded green on Map X (show existing green spaces and Houghton Regis North Framework proposals together) are designated as Local Green Space where no change will be permitted other than in very special circumstances. These green areas meet the criteria for Local Designated Green Space as set out in the NPPF paragraphs 76, 77 and 78: for both recreational and natural environments, and open space qualities.

- Moore Crescent Recreation Ground
- Dog Kennel Down
- Orchard Close Recreation Ground (Field in Trust application submitted)
- Windsor Drive Recreation Ground (owned by CBC, leased to HRTC)
- Tithe Farm Recreation Ground
- Parkside Recreation Ground
- Grove Spinney at Grove Farm (in private ownership)
- The Baulk and Plaiters Way off Bedford Road
- Blue Waters (managed by CBC)
- The areas proposed within the Houghton Regis North 1 and 2 masterplans for recreation and parks: (Bidwell Park; Beech Hangar; Woodside Park; Chalton Gateway Park; the A5 wildlife corridor in Houghton Regis North 1; in Houghton Regis North 2).

Policy 13: Aiming for a Boundary Trail around the parish The route shown on Map 5 will be created from existing and new paths to form a ring around the parish for walkers, joggers and cyclists. As far as possible, the route chosen will be separate from roads and housing. The proposed route may lay close to the boundary with Dunstable and Luton and will link with major open spaces - the Chalk Pit Nature Reserve, Maiden Bower, and other parts of the parish including Woodside Link and through Houghton Regis North 1 and 2. The cycle route and footpath may diverge in places due to safety considerations.

Major improvements to achieve the Boundary Trail include:

- i) better steps to cross the Watling Street embankment,
- ii) BW49 to access Sewell Lane and thence to Sewell Greenway, *
- iii) part needs to enter Dunstable to avoid the precipitous slopes and cliffs along the boundary and the closeness of housebuilding to the edge of the Chalk Pit.

Other footpaths will connect the Boundary Trail to Sewell Hamlet, Sewell Cutting and Maiden Bower, Dog Kennel Down, Houghton Hall Park, and the town centre plus Heritage locations in the parish with plaques, plinths and information panels giving directions and details of each major location. Possible routes to fill in the missing sections will be explored.

The Boundary Trail will be the basis for a **shared-use paths system enabling** walkers, joggers, disability scooter users and cyclists to connect between different parts of the parish and adjoining areas.

There are a number of bridleways through the north of the parish as follows (from the west):

- BW35 runs past Sewell and Maiden Bower

- BW49 starts at Chalk Hill Farm on Watling Street and continues through Houghton Regis North 2 with a new Pegasus crossing on Thorne Road. Sewell Lane links BW49 with Sewell and BW35.
- BW15 is a short section of the proposed Boundary Trail running north-east towards a Pegasus crossing on Lord's Hill (with access to BW44 outside the parish to Wingfield). A connection then links it with:
- BW46 to Grove Farm (also part of the proposed Boundary Trail)
- BW22 runs from Grove Farm in both directions, north to meet BOAT 29, and south across the A5 by a bridge and through Houghton Regis North 1 to Tithe Farm Recreation Ground.
- BW60 runs east along Ouzel Brook to Sundon Road.

Connections will be explored between these bridleways to create a continuous route from west to east of the parish.

The shared-use paths in the parish will have a coherent system of signposts, route markers, information panels, seats, and barriers to prevent misuse by motorised vehicles.

(insert map Boundary Trail)

Policy 14 Play & Recreation: In addition to the major areas of open space in Policy 12, the following play and recreation spaces will be protected from development and enhanced with appropriate play and informal sporting equipment:

- The Green in Houghton Regis is mainly used for recreation and public events such as circuses and village fetes. There is an adult exercise area as well as normal play areas for children. This grass area is currently under-utilised and more use needs to be made of the pavilions.
- Parkside Recreation Ground is the location for all three youth football pitches in Houghton Regis. The field also contains one adult pitch which is shared with youth teams. The area has a MUGA (Multi-use Games Area), a children's play area and is used for local events such as Houghton Rocks.
- Tithe Farm Recreation Ground contains three adult pitches, a playground and a skate park. The area is also used for public events such as fireworks displays.
- Moore Crescent is home to the local bowls club as well as two football pitches. Parking is limited at this facility which does impact on use of the open space. Moore Crescent, Parkside Drive and Tithe Farm are all in need of additional bins for rubbish and dog excrement to encourage a cleaner environment for sports and recreational use. All three areas could also benefit from additional seats for spectators.
- Windsor Drive is currently the only open recreation space (except for the Green) in central Houghton Regis that does not contain sports pitches or play parks. The recreational space also has no parking facilities. As such, the area is under-utilised compared to other recreation grounds, but is used by joggers, dog walkers and football teams for training. Windsor Drive is urgently in need of parking facilities, a pavilion (with toilets) and either a play area with children's and adult exercise equipment, or sports facilities to make the area more usable to the public. The HRTC terms of service agreement with football clubs now states that football clubs are not allowed to train on football pitches. This means that Windsor Drive is the only large enough open space for off-season training in Houghton Regis.
- The Dunstablians RUFC field on Bidwell Park (Bedford Road) is the only space dedicated for Rugby use. The club currently has its own clubhouse but is in need of more pitches and

parking space to grow. This additional space should be sought within the new HOUGHTON REGIS NORTH1 and HOUGHTON REGIS NORTH2 developments.

- Orchard Close Recreation Ground is home to the only remaining cricket club in Houghton Regis. The cricket club currently has an agreement that runs for several years for exclusive use of the area though the field is also used by the public for recreational purposes.
- Chelsea Gardens play area requires improvements.

Houghton Regis currently benefits from a multitude of cycle paths that allow families and children to cycle for recreational and social purposes (e.g. visiting friends). It is essential that such paths are built into and across the new Houghton Regis North 1 and Houghton Regis North 2 areas of the town. Such paths would allow easy access for new and old schools as well as adding to the social integration of the new and old parts of the town.

Most of the play parks in Houghton Regis are aimed at young children or contain adult fitness equipment. Other areas e.g. Windsor Drive should benefit from play areas that would engage teenagers. For example, a BMX track or cargo net/zip line type adventure playground that are suitable for older as well as disabled children.

Houghton Regis Town Council should take over the management/running of all recreational spaces and facilities in Houghton Regis.

Policy 15 Major New Recreational Facilities are proposed (shown on Map 2) as follows:

The Kingsland Site in Houghton Regis should be re-opened as a new secondary school to cater for the additional children from Houghton Regis North 1 and Houghton Regis North 2. The site is expected to be a sporting excellence facility that, combined with new leisure centre facilities, will provide opportunities across all sports for children and adults to enjoy. Such a facility would provide competition level swimming pools with running tracks, tennis courts and sports pitches which could be shared with local clubs.

- The areas within the Houghton Regis North 1 and 2 masterplans for recreation and parks: (Bidwell Park; Beech Hangar; Woodside Park; Chalton Gateway Park) will be laid out with sports pitches and play / recreation equipment,
- The existing redgra facility needs to be reinstated as an 3G Astro Turf facility that can be used for different activities. During the weekdays, this could be used by the school for PE and sports activities as well as local sports clubs for training during winter months. Other organisations, such as boot camps could also hire out the area for fitness sessions and the area could be fitted out with adventure playground style equipment to make it dual use.
- Houghton Regis currently has no provision for allotments. It is envisaged that such space will be found in the new Houghton Regis North 1 & Houghton Regis North 2 areas.
- Houghton Regis is currently one of the few towns in Central Bedfordshire without a dedicated football facility. It is envisaged that a new facility will be created in Houghton Regis North 2 that will have clubhouse facilities (serving refreshments) as well as a cluster of dedicated sports pitches that are secured by fences/hedges. This security will allow for the use of permanently erected goals and protect the pitches from vandalism, dog fouling and off-road motorcyclists.

Such a community facility would encourage players and coaches to the area and help engage more children into a healthy sporting lifestyle as well as add to the community spirit. The facility should have at least one FA Cup standard pitch to allow teams to play FA Cup games locally. In addition, two further adult pitches for senior youth teams (U14-U21s), two youth (11v11 or 9v9) pitches (U11s-U13s), two 7v7 (U8s-U10s) and two 5v5(U5s –U7s) pitches should be incorporated.

In the event that the Red Gra cannot be reinstated as an AGP as part of the Kingsland site, an AGP should be sited at this facility instead of one of the adult pitches (this could be used for games and training and shared with the school on Houghton Regis North 2). The facility should have adequate

parking for home and away teams as well as dedicated public toilets that are separate to those used for referees and players (this is currently a major safeguarding issue with existing facilities).

Consideration must be given for additional cricket teams starting up as a result of growth in the area. As such, there is a need in the new Houghton Regis North 1 and Houghton Regis North 2 developments for at least one or two additional cricket tables.

In the event that additional space cannot be found for pitches and parking next to the current rugby club facilities, the club may need to relocate to new grounds. Such an area would only be found in either Kingsland or as part of Houghton Regis North 1 or Houghton Regis North 2 developments.

Plus retention of existing key facilities:

- All current sports grounds would need to be retained as well as new facilities being built. It is expected that the current pitches in Parkside Drive, Tithe Farm and Moore Crescent will be needed for the growth in adult football as a result of Houghton Regis North 1 and Houghton Regis North 2 increase in adult (age 20-40) population. It is expected that around ten to twelve adult pitches would be needed in total (including those built as part of a new dedicated football facility).
- All existing open spaces should benefit from additional protection from off-road motorcycles.
- Incorporate Sewell Greenway into walking / running circuit and protect from motorcycling

Policy 16: Community Indoor Facilities are proposed (shown on Map 2) as follows:

- Sport excellence facility with competition level swimming pool as part of the Kingsland scheme, with football training centre, replacing existing Kingsland leisure centre, management of LC to include letting of school field / pitches, redgra to become a multi-purpose shared space for use by sports clubs, netball, adventure playground and Boot-camp courses
- New community centre adjoining Bidwell park (including provision to manage sports pitches for use by local clubs)
- the provision of an integrated town council / police and health-hub in Houghton Regis town centre situated immediately north of All Saints Church (see policy 4 and map 3 for revised town centre boundary and development proposal for the Town Council's current office site),
- retention of Bedford Square Library and Community Centre,
- the provision of a multipurpose venue for community groups / arts performances / sports classes - Use Class D2 as part of the town centre redevelopment,
- Children's Day Nursery / pre-school for under-fives, and after-school facilities as part of Houghton Regis North 1 and 2 developments (included on school sites),
- an adult skills training / education centre as part of the Kingsland development scheme
- a locality health hub as part of the Kingsland site.

Unless viable alternatives are proposed, there is a general presumption against the loss through development or change of use of land or premises providing arts, cultural, sporting, social, and play facilities within the Parish. Where there is a proposal for the loss of sporting, social, cultural, play and community facilities, this will only be acceptable where a replacement facility of equivalent size, quality and convenience is provided within the Parish in line with the Central Bedfordshire policies. The development of Houghton Regis North 1 and 2 will include social, sporting, play, open space, cultural and community facilities in accordance with the outline consents and Central Bedfordshire adopted policies and complement current provision within the parish.

9.27 Community Aspirations / Supporting Proposals

In addition to the land-use policy above, aspirations to enhance facilities in the parish include:

- provision of healthy leisure facilities within the parks and recreation areas including exercise and equipment to charge mobile phones,
- an adventure playground on the Windsor Drive recreation ground
- provision of better lighting for parks, MUGAs and playgroups to extend times of use
- the provision of art installations and fitness equipment on the walking routes connecting the open spaces created as part of Houghton Regis North 1 and 2 - particularly along the eastern, northern and western margins of the new developments - and which create connections into existing open spaces / pathways in the parish. Provide photo-spot opportunities for social media sharing.
- Identify body / bodies responsible to manage and maintain a) open space and green areas, b) heritage sites, c) sports facilities – and how they going to be maintained sustainably.
- include major leisure facilities in town centre e.g. drama, dance studios, fitness centre, available to all schools,

Policy 17: Protecting and Enhancing the Chalk Pit Nature Reserve

The Chalkpit lies between Watling Street in the west, All Saints Academy in the south, and Fieldstone / Farriers Way in the east. A Masterplan for the Chalk Pit (see map 6) will be prepared by the Wildlife Trust BCN which anticipates resuming management in the next four years. The 50 hectare nature reserve comprises three main areas:

- Houghton Regis Chalk Pit,
- Houghton Regis Marl Lakes (x2) Site of Special Scientific Interest
- Houghton Regis Cutting Roadside Nature Reserve

Due to its designation as an important site for wildlife, and being very vulnerable to disturbances, access to the Chalk Pit via existing footpaths is only for general walking and enjoyment of the site, its flora and fauna. Due to the expected increase in local population, the Nature Reserve with its fragile ecology and rare habitats will be put under increased pressure. Consequently, no other activities will be permitted in the Nature Reserve.

Existing paths will be signed as nature trails and a visitor centre is proposed to help to communicate the site's importance to visitors. This could be built during phase 2 of the development of Houghton Regis North2 on or near the northern rim of the Chalk Pit (precise details of location to be determined as part of the masterplan). This building (with latest 'green' technologies and design features) would house an office for up to 4 reserve and community engagement staff, volunteer work parties, a space for educational use where up to 30 visitors of all ages can learn about the reserve, a café, toilets, and a storage and machinery area to keep equipment needed to manage the reserve. A car park including spaces for two minibuses, disabled parking spaces and bicycle stands will be located next to the visitor centre to avoid the need for parking in Fieldstone Avenue. Access on foot at the southern end will remain as at present.

Vehicular access will be achieved from the Houghton Regis North 2 road network to the carpark at the visitor centre.

9.28 Community Aspirations: In relation to the Chalk Pit Nature Reserve

- the Chalk Pit will be accessible via the existing footpath and cycleway connections, including existing paths FP1 and FP31 Icknield Way.
- Funding will be sought to enhance the Chalk Pit Nature reserve (including the visitor facilities / visitor centre / cafe) and car park plus associated educational facilities (cf College Lake reserve nr Tring)
- The Nature Reserve to be managed by the Wildlife Trust for Beds, Cambs & Northants

Policy 18: Protecting Natural Features:

The important natural features of the chalk landscape which is a prominent part of the parish's character will be protected and preserved, notably:

- The springs at Kingsland, The Green, Bidwell, Sewell and Thorn, and the source of the Ouzel Brook.
- The hilltops and viewpoints at Maiden Bower, the rim of the Nature Reserve.

9.29 **Delivery:** These proposals will require engagement and discussions with landowners to bring forward proposals through planning applications. Facilities will be achieved through planning application negotiations. In some instances where provision of a facility would be more appropriately sited within Houghton Regis town centre this will be the subject of negotiation and agreement between the developer, Central Beds Council and the Town Council. The provision of new cemetery space will include transfer to Houghton Regis Town Council. Maintenance and management of open / green spaces is likely to involve partnership arrangements in future to ensure co-ordination and cost effectiveness.

10. Housing & Development: At Home in Houghton

10.1 The completion of new housing on Houghton Regis North 1 and 2 developments is forecast to be spread over a considerable part of the lifetime of this Plan, providing a stream of new housing available to local people and others wishing to move to the parish. The policies in this section identify five additional sites for housing, will identify particular types of housing needs, and identifies areas where no further development will be permitted – key open spaces, parks, play areas, sports pitches, plus the open countryside to the north and west of the parish particularly around Sewell.

10.2 A housing-led sustainable urban extension on the northern flank of the town has been approved under two consents issued by Central Bedfordshire Council plus new roads linking A5 / M1 and the Woodside link from J.13 to the Porz Avenue industrial (nb the Houghton Regis North 1 development extends beyond the parish boundaries)

CB/12/03613/OUT (Houghton Regis North Site 1), land on the northern edge of Houghton Regis, with the details of access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale reserved for later determination. Development to comprise: up to 5,150 dwellings (Use Class C3); up to 202,500 sqm gross of additional development in Use Classes: A1, A2, A3 (retail), A4 (public house), A5 (take away); B1, B2, B8 (offices, industrial and storage and distribution); C1 (hotel), C2 (care home), D1 and D2 (community and leisure); car showroom; data centre; petrol filling station; car parking; primary substation; energy centre; and for the laying out of the buildings; routes and open spaces within the development; and all associated works and operations including but not limited to: demolition; earthworks; engineering operations. All development, works and operations to be in accordance with the Development Parameters Schedule and Plans.

CB/15/00297/OUT Land West of Bidwell (Houghton Regis North Site 2) outline 'hybrid' planning application with details of main access routes, primary road network and associated drainage in detail only and layout in outline with details of landscaping, appearance and scale reserved for later determination. Development to comprise: Up to 1,850 residential (C3) dwellings (including affordable housing), 2FE Primary School (D1), employment land (Use Classes B1 [a-c], B2 & B8), local centre comprising retail (A1, A2, A3, A4 & A5) and community/leisure uses (D1 & D2), layout of public open spaces including sports pitches and changing rooms, natural wildlife areas and all associated works and operations including engineering operations and earthworks
Houghton Regis North

see Map 1

10.3 Houghton Regis North 1 and 2 includes the road linking the A5 at Thorn to a new junction on the M1 (outside the Parish), part of new East-West transport infrastructure linking M40 / Aylesbury / A5 / M1 / Luton North / A1. This axis of movement - between Oxford and Cambridge is likely to have a strong national focus in future supporting the growth of new, high-tech commercial developments. The new road and motorway junction have

also been prominent in previous proposals for housing development to the north of Luton along the axis of the new road proposed from the M1 eastwards, and a rail-freight depot proposed within the Central Beds plans (withdrawn - see 3.5 above) for Sundon to the east of the new M1 junction.

10.4 One other notable scheme is the Former Co-op site in the Town centre opposite Bedford Square has consent for 170 new independent living apartments plus retail and community facilities.

10.5 Completion of the planned new developments at Houghton Regis North 1 and 2 and other planned developments will see the number of dwellings in the parish grow from 7,340 to over 14,000, more than covering local needs, part of the wider district housing total. The timescale and trajectory of this expansion will be determined by take-up of each new phase of building.

10.6 Within the existing residential areas of the parish, the housing stock is older, Tithe Farm and Parkside dating from the second half of the 20th century are now well-established communities, the St Michael's Ave / Millers Way area of homes is more recent. The parish includes the houses opposite the former quarry in Douglas Crescent and Northview Road. The oldest residential part of the town lies to the south of the High Street around Manor park and Cemetery Lane, and Park Ave / Drury Lane opposite The Green. Dwellings types across the parish are typically two-storey, detached / semi-detached, brick-built with pitched roofs, both the older homes around the town centre and the developments on Tithe Farm and Parkside. Retirement and semi-sheltered homes are provided in the Red House Court off The Green with 33 one-bed flats and Johnson Court, Parkside Drive. The last fifty years has been a period of considerable growth in the parish:

Year	1959	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011	2013	2016 (est. figs)	2031
Pop.	3,750	10,490	14,500		16,970	17,300	17,900*	17,950	?? 30,000??

* Sources: Office for National Statistics, Mid-2013 Population Estimates and Central Beds Profile

10.7 The hamlets of Bidwell and Thorn will be absorbed within Houghton Regis North 1 and 2, only Sewell with around twenty homes, farms and businesses located in the fields on the western side of the A5 will remain separated from the rest of the urban area. The new link road from the A5 to the new M1 junction will increase accessibility and is likely to attract development interest in the vicinity. One of the purposes of green belt designation is to shape development pressures and prevent communities merging. Even after the completion of the Houghton Regis North 1 and 2 developments there will remain open spaces within the existing and new built-up areas - parks, play areas, sports pitches, plus the open countryside to the north and west of the parish particularly around Sewell. The area around Sewell is particularly sensitive - for the hamlet's residents' amenities and quality of life, for the proximity to the heritage site at Maiden Bower.

Issues Survey 2017

When asked about the types of housing needed in future, bungalows for elderly people and family flats / houses each received 26% of comments. Flats or houses for couples received 20%, supported or care homes 16% and single persons flats 12%.

10.8 Although density dictates what types of homes are built, social housing is part of the pattern to meet local needs. Locally young people find it hard to have a place of their own often living with parents or grandparents and affordable housing should be realistic for local people, the elderly and disabled to avoid a build-up of unmet needs and people forced to move away from family and social support networks. The proportion of affordable housing within new developments with mechanisms that enable people to access them remains a top priority in light of the housing needs in the area. Housing needs (see 2018 Survey responses) include single person housing and scope to 'move on', bungalows – suitable for elderly and those with limited mobility, retirement housing complexes, and single-person flats or dwellings available to key workers.

10.9 The 'community aspirations' (below) includes support for more local authority house building to reflect local needs, a variety of options for managing housing – co-operative self-builds, housing associations, shared ownership, and innovative schemes – e.g. housing kits, self-build, housing trusts, leaseholds.

10.10 Integration of new homes into the physical and social fabric of the parish is a key element to build community spirit and avoid isolation.

Policy 19: New Housing: Five sites are shown in the Plan for new residential development

- Redevelopment of the current Town Council offices and GP surgery, Peel Street – see policies 4 and 5
- Part of the redevelopment of the Thomas Whitehead CE Academy site – see policy 5
- High Street – see policy 7 - a substantial proportion of residential flats and provision for semi-independent, supported or care homes.
- on part of the Tithe Farm Recreation Ground, – see policy 23 new road through Tithe Farm Rec with housing on bottom end including affordable / disabled housing – see Map 4.
- Rear of Brewers Hill School, Dunstable (see map 4) – see policy 22 - this part of the parish borders the built-up area of the adjoining town of Dunstable. In order to create a clear distinction between the open character and setting of both Maiden Bower and Sewell, a site off French's Avenue (in Dunstable) is shown for development identified as ALP 164 in the CBC 'call for sites', only on the basis that its design will incorporate a green buffer against further expansion.

Development of these sites will enable provision of the following:

- a substantial proportion of residential flats aimed at singles and couples, on the current Town Council offices Peel Street – 6* flats, GP surgery – 10* flats (Tithe Farm Rd opposite Bedford Sq.), part of Thomas Whitehead CE Academy site redevelopment – 25* flats, and High Street – 12* affordable homes to rent on part of the Tithe Farm Recreation Ground with a new road to connect with Houghton Regis North 2 development,
- Rear of Brewers Hill School, Dunstable – 35* affordable housing units aimed at singles and couples.

Residential development in the town centre (see map 3) and adjoining the route of the Busway will be required to provide facilities for cycle and motorcycle parking and car parking in accordance with NPPF guidance and CBC standards, in order to encourage high density developments of flats and apartments suitable for key worker groups (e.g. teachers, care-workers to aid recruitment & retention), one bed dwellings, and supported living.

*estimate of site potential.

10.11 There may be other sites within the built-up areas of Houghton Regis which could be developed without harm to the residential amenity of existing dwellings, unacceptable loss of open space or loss of car parking capacity and reflecting the provisions of the NPPF (2018). In some cases, these opportunities would aid the regeneration of areas, e.g. the redevelopment of dis-used garage sites on Tithe Farm and Parkside.

Policy 20: Dwelling Types: Consents for new housing development in the parish (including Houghton Regis North 1 and 2) will be required to provide a range of dwelling types and a proportion of affordable homes in accordance with Central Bedfordshire adopted standards demonstrating a response to the housing needs of the community over the lifetime of this Plan. Residential developments proposed in the town centre (see policy X) will be expected to include a substantial proportion of residential flats and provision for semi-independent, supported or care homes. Any redevelopment of existing built-up areas within Houghton Regis

will be required to provide homes and associated infrastructure matching the character and appearance of the locality.

Policy 21: Residential developments in the parish will provide a proportion of affordable homes in accordance with Central Bedfordshire Core Strategy affordable housing guidance note for **South Beds**.

10.12 Safety & Security: In 2016, the Town Council adopted 'Our 2020 Vision' which included an objective "A safer town with reduced fear of crime." Data from the Bedfordshire Police showed **209 crimes** reported in **February 2016, within 1 mile of central Houghton Regis**. The Locations of crimes were given as Sewell 3, Chalk Hill 9, Bedford Sq 27, Bidwell 1, Tithe Farm 39, Bedford Rd 10, Parkside 32, Central HR 55, east HR 17. Other data showed crimes occurred:

- On or near Pedestrian Subway 13
- On or near Crossways 6
- On or near Houghton Park Road 6
- On or near East End 6
- On or near Parkside Drive 5

Source: Crime Police Map - Feb 2016 <https://www.police.uk/bedfordshire/65/crime/2016-01/>

10.13 Traffic calming structures - humps, narrows, crossings etc have been installed in various locations across the parish in recent years and it is expected that the new highways serving Houghton Regis North 1 and 2 will include the latest traffic management measures. CCTV is used in various locations including Bedford Square, High Street, The Green and around the estates.

Issues Survey

The results produced some strong responses to the question about safety: increased police presence (29) and more cctv (25) were followed by better lighting (18) and alternative activities for young people (18).

10.14 This Plan contains no policies in relation to new land uses in relation to safety, however the proposed new police facility in the town centre responds to the local concerns and new developments will be served with better lighting and cctv. Policies aimed at providing sport and recreation include the possibility of activities aimed at providing a local diversion for those involved or likely to be involved in crime and anti-social behaviour. (nb para 12.11 includes proposals for speed restrictions in certain locations.)

10.15 Supporting Proposals / Making It Happen

- Develop a Place-Making programme (see NPPF section 12) – to support each new phase of Houghton Regis North to integrate with the town
- Housing association to develop housing – affordable, for key sectors e.g. teachers, and for single adults (old and young) and to reflect local needs, giving greater control on offering affordable and social housing to Houghton Regis residents.
- 30% of new homes should be affordable, a third of these should have facilities for elderly / disabled living,
- Getting the Houghton Regis North into Houghton Regis – integration – through inter-schools (and parents') activities, inter-church links, ensure good transport links (busway route), and umbrella for sports / recreation facilities and events

10.16 Delivery: achieving these policies will be through discussions with landowners to bring **forward** proposals and planning applications. The Town Council will monitor developments in areas adjoining the parish and liaise

with councils and communities affected regarding impacts on the residents, employment opportunities, transport movements around and through the parish, and the quality of life in Houghton Regis. In particular there will be an emphasis on establishing a green buffer between any such new development and the built-up areas of Houghton Regis.

10.17 Aiming for an integrated community: Place-Making is central to the design codes and masterplans for Houghton Regis North 1 and 2. Other measures to enhance integration will be:

- Good access to new multi-use community facilities
- Integration of Library, Health Centre and Town Council functions across the parish
- Inter-schools and youth activities.

11. Houghton Heritage

11.1 Houghton Regis has a long history of settlement and industry, with a pre-historic hillfort at Maiden Bower (one of two ancient monuments, the other being Thorn Spring Moated Site and Associated Woodbanks) and settlement at Puddlehill. The name 'Houghton' is Saxon combining 'hoe' meaning the spur of a hill in this case from the Chilterns, and 'tun' a village. The medieval manor was owned by the Crown and Thorn, Sewell and Bidwell all have origins dating from more than a thousand years ago (see Annex C for local history).

11.2 The centre of Houghton Regis was designated a conservation area in 1977, the principal features of which are The Green and the buildings around it, Houghton Hall, Lodge and Court, Houghton Hall Park, and the group of 17th-19th century buildings around The Chequers ph. The conservation area was reviewed in 1993, extended in 1995 with an appraisal carried in 2008. There are twenty-three buildings and structures which are listed buildings, ie on the list of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest, drawn up by the Historic England 'appraisal carried out in 2008 (see annex B) notable amongst them are the Church of All Saints, Grade I, and Houghton Hall, Grade II*, including the recent addition of Oakwell Park as a Grade 2 listed building in 2018. The Memorial Hall as an important central building in the current Town Centre, as a unique building of its type, typical of the architectural characteristics of its time. The Red House is the only remaining building of its type in Houghton Regis, dating from the early 17th century, possibly earlier - suggestion has been made that the brickworks could be as old as those, and of the same type as those used in the construction of Someries Castle in Luton.

11.3 The parish has a long farming heritage and a cottage industry, straw plaiting which served the Luton hat industry, and an industrial heritage, notably the large cement works by Townsend Farm on the edge of Houghton village and the Quarry dug to supply it with chalk. The recent pre-development excavations for Houghton Regis North 1 have revealed more archaeological evidence of the area's history.

Issues Survey

Heritage

The survey results showed that people felt it was very important to protect the parish's heritage however there was little understanding of the extent of the parish's heritage.

11.4 The parish's heritage has an importance in relation to the appearance of the area, the sense of history for local people, and providing unique 'landmarks' in the setting of the town centre.

Policy 22: Protecting Houghton Heritage In addition to the buildings and structures with statutory listings, Map X shows the major heritage sites (see Annex B) in the parish including locations within Houghton Regis North. Development proposals affecting these locations will be assessed to ensure they represent no harm to the historical or architectural interest of each site:
(Maiden Bower and its immediate surroundings, Houghton Hall, Thorn Spring and All Saints church and Houghton Regis North.)

There is a strong presumption against any development which would prejudice the site, integrity, setting or appearance of the heritage sites, ancient monuments, the conservation area and listed buildings within the parish.

Plaques and information boards will be erected at these heritage sites explaining the history and importance of each, including sites on Houghton Regis North where archaeological discoveries have occurred.

11.5 The Boundary Trail (see policy 13 above) will be routed to link the key heritage sites connecting old and new Houghton Regis as well as the network of green spaces. The woods, hedgerows, open spaces (with heritage interest) and natural features to be protected and preserved are shown on Map 4 – see Policy 12.

11.6 Community Aspirations / Supporting Proposals

- Re-survey buildings to protect old parts of the parish – High Street, top of Bedford Rd, Sewell, and the field to the east of Houghton Park - owned by Bellcross Homes, formerly Shanley, regarding local resident's finds in the field.
- Explore potential of a Museum to house items e.g. old Houghton Regis Gaol House door held by Luton Culture and the Houghton Regis Heritage Society's collection of oral history.
- Improve local knowledge about Houghton's heritage, including the heritage sites / finds on Houghton Regis North – and erect markers, info boards on those sites (schools design competition??)
- Use website to describe Houghton Heritage with all the sites and their information,
- Prepare exercise maps – walks to heritage places, combine with green / exercise paths
- Develop a history of local chalk quarrying and cement production – pics, records, oral history / Living Archive - display in Chalk Pit Nature Reserve Centre
- Develop a history of Houghton people – people who moved to HR in the 20th century, or whose families have lived locally for generations - pictures, records, oral history / Living Archive, then build into stories of people who are moving to HR now
- use information panels and signs (linked to a heritage website) which describe and explain the historical importance of key sites around the parish,
- deliver improvements to public realm to enhance setting of key heritage sites,
- ensure developments adhere to 2008 conservation area management plan,
- ensure that archaeological evidence and other heritage materials from Houghton Regis North 1 and 2 are recorded as part of the town's history

11.17 **Delivery:** Applying policy 20 in the consideration of planning applications will be part of the delivery of this section plus discussions with Central Bedfordshire Council, local heritage bodies, Historic England and landowners will help develop the community aspirations.

12. Access & Connectivity

12.1 Much of the parish's transport is integrated within the Houghton / Dunstable / Luton conurbation. There is a major train station and airport in Luton, connected by public transport, notably the Busway - a bus route which includes a guided busway partly along the former railway lines connecting the three towns providing a fast, regular transport link as part of the response to the areas' congestion problems. The parish is well served by road and footpaths connecting to the rural areas to the north and into Dunstable to the south, the . A5120 runs from Toddington, A505 Watling Street passes through the western part of the parish (although now de-trunked through Dunstable) , the A505 (A4146) runs along the northern edge of the parish at Sewell connecting the A5

westwards towards Leighton Buzzard and Aylesbury, and the M1 runs beyond the eastern boundary of the parish with a new junction and the Houghton Regis North scheme will provide direct links to the A5 and the Woodside estate.

12.2 The main road and footpaths connections area:

The A5120 runs from Toddington, through Bidwell to Houghton town centre. It acts as a main distributor connecting with the A5 at Dunstable High Street North and eastwards to Parkside (residential) and Woodside (employment) areas.
A5 Watling Street passes through the western part of the parish providing connections northwards to Hockliffe and Milton Keynes, and southwards into Dunstable.
The A505 (A4146) runs along the northern edge of the parish at Sewell connecting the A5 westwards towards Leighton Buzzard and Aylesbury.
The M1 runs beyond the eastern boundary of the parish, bridged by the Sundon Road which connects with the B579 between Chalton and Luton.
The Houghton Regis North development includes provision for a road linking the A5 at Thorn, crossing the A5120 to a new junction on the M1 at Sundon (beyond the parish boundary).

12.3 Cycle Routes: The main cycle route through the parish is the Sustrans (National Cycle Network) route 6 from Luton and Leagrave, through Parkside and past Houghton Hall Park, along Dog Kennel Path to Dunstable then along Sewell Greenway, towards Stanbridge and Leighton Buzzard (see also 'Open Spaces').

12.4 Car Parks: There are around 600 parking spaces spread across the Parish, a combination of public spaces supporting the High Street and local centres, private parking areas for commercial premises and schools, plus visitor parking. In addition, there is on-street parking in the residential areas of the parish. The trend over the past few years has been to provide differentiated parking for short and long term visitors during the day, which provides space for employees to park all day at the sites further from the town centre and shorter-term parking near the town centre. There are no resident-only parking schemes within the parish. Among these spaces approximately 50 spaces are allocated for disabled drivers. On street parking (on the public highway) is available throughout the parish although many areas exhibit inadequate car parking capacity.

12.5 There is extensive private car parking supporting the commercial areas of the parish, at Woodside / Porz Avenue, Houghton Hall Business Park, and Townsend Farm / Blackburn Road. In addition, facilities such as the public houses and schools have their own car parking areas, e.g.:

Old Red Lion, Bedford Rd	35 spaces
Go Houghton Bar & Restaurant, Parkside Drive	17 + 2 disabled spaces,

12.6 Central Bedfordshire's Local Transport Plan 2011-31 proposes the location of a Park & Ride site (site not specified) in the locality of Houghton Regis, perhaps around the new M1 junction. The schemes within Houghton Regis North 1 and 2 will also be required to have car parking in accordance with the Central Beds adopted car parking standards.

<p>Issues Survey</p> <p>After the Busway, Luton railway station and airport, and the new road A5 / M1 link road, this question asked about other transport priorities. The responses show strong support for better local roads / links between the new areas and existing parts of Houghton Regis / more parking and improved walking and footpaths. Improved cycling, reduced commuting and low carbon transport were the least important in the survey results.</p>

12.7 The system of access and connectivity within the parish and linking to adjoining areas has been established in relation to the Houghton Regis North Framework and the realignment of the A5 to link with the M1. A link

onwards from the M1 to the A6 is currently under consideration. These are radically altering traffic patterns around the parish.

12.8 In relation to movement patterns within the parish there is concern over the level of road and footpath / cycle connectivity between Houghton Regis North and the town centre. The focus on road-based connectivity may create isolation for those with no access to a vehicle. The Busway connections between Houghton, Dunstable and Luton will continue to be a major factor in access and connectivity for the lifetime of this Plan and beyond.

12.9 This Plan contains policies and community aspirations to ensure road, footway, cycle-routes, and bus connectivity between existing areas and new developments, extension of the Busway and parking to meet the needs of resident / visitor / business including a review of parking layouts (e.g. High Street) and bay marking in parking 'hotspots'.

Policy 23: Access & Connectivity

Good access and connectivity for people within Houghton Regis parish will continue to be an aim in relation to any development or change of use. Planning applications will need to demonstrate how people with or without access to a motor vehicle is able to access services and facilities.

The creation of the Houghton Trail around Houghton parish will be a major element providing access and connectivity. Public transport will be enhanced by the Busway being extended to travel along the principal Houghton Regis North roads and connecting with Houghton Town Centre.

The design codes, site masterplans and detailed layouts of sites within Houghton Regis North 1 and 2 will include road, cycle and footpath links to help the physical integration between Houghton Regis North and the rest of Houghton Regis with a particular focus on enabling access to employment, local centres services, recreation facilities and to Houghton Town Centre.

Particular access improvements within existing areas of the parish will include:

- extend the cycle/footpath east and parallel to Park Rd North to connect to Sandringham Drive, and to connect to the crossing on Park Rd North,
- make up the casual footpath to a cycle/footpath between Balmoral Rd and Kingsland Close by the Houghton Brook to the established footpath that runs Windsor Drv to the Houghton Brook.

12.10 For many, access to private vehicles will be a key part of getting to work, shops, services and entertainment. A review of parking arrangements in Tithe Farm and Parkside is a major community aspiration.

Policy 24 : New car parks will be created through change of use from open space to serve residential areas at Windsor Drive, Tithe Farm Road and Parkside Drive to support residents and enable greater use of the sport and leisure facilities. All new car parking and hard-standings within this policy will be constructed using 'grasscrete' or similar concrete grids which enable grass to grow through, to allow natural drainage and reduce risk of flooding.

12.11 **Community Aspirations:** In order to improve connectivity between the existing and proposed new parts of the Houghton Regis community:

- connections for busway to link Houghton Regis North 1 and 2 with Houghton Regis town centre as principal routes
- the new open spaces within Houghton Regis North 1 and 2 link with an integrated network of paths and leisure routes

- paths will be clearly marked with good directional and information signage e.g. about the location and walk / cycle time to specific locations,
- a review of parking layouts (e.g. High Street) and bay marking in residential parking 'hotspots' will be carried out to help meet the needs of resident / visitor / business,
- improved bike facilities will be created including safe routes and secure parking / storage in the town centre to encourage greater use of cycling
- speed restrictions, pedestrian crossings and greater use of CCTV will be introduced on Tithe Farm Road, Parkside Drive and Bidwell Hill to improve road safety.

12.12 **Delivery:** These highways related projects require stakeholder negotiations, and capital allocations by Central Beds Council as the highway authority. In addition, grants will be sought from Government for related infrastructure.

13. Sustainability

13.1 The urban parts of the parish can each play a part in moving towards a more sustainable level of resource-usage. The development of Houghton Regis North 1 and 2 will include many new buildings which could include new systems such as low/no carbon technologies including solar and wind energy systems, and 'Smart City' improvements.

Issues Survey

Sustainability

The responses to the survey were positive about the use of solar panels, other power sources such as waste processing, car sharing / bike hire schemes, wind turbines, bio fuels and electric car charging points, Wi-Fi and new technology / communications infrastructure.

13.2 Within this Plan there are **Community Aspirations:**

- for new development to adopt low-energy, more sustainable use of resources and building techniques,
- to support installation of solar panels on new buildings
- to support the use of low-carbon fuel in busway vehicles,
- to install electric car-charging points and car-hire space in the town centre
- drying areas for residents in apartments and maisonettes.

13.3 **Delivery:** The community aspirations will be brought forward through planning applications plus some capital allocations for highways works (car-charging points).

14) Making it Happen: Implementation and resourcing

14.1 Where development is proposed and approved, the provisions of this Neighbourhood Plan will seek the implementation of measures, facilities and improvements where appropriate, through the vehicle of the approved development.

14.2 The main schemes central to the delivery of the Plan's proposals are:

- a) completion of Houghton Regis North 1 and 2 with a variety of housing opportunities, open spaces, employment, with community facilities,
- b) remodelling the town centre, with

- the enlargement of the area north of All Saints and off High Street / Houghton Road, and the provision of an integrated town council / police and health-hub, in conjunction with the current library and community centre, with the potential for new residential aimed at older / care sector,
 - retention of Bedford Square Library and Community Centre,
 - the provision of a multipurpose venue for community groups / arts performances / sports classes - Use Class D2 as part of the town centre redevelopment,
 - dual 'events & market' / car park functions adjoining All Saints church,
 - retaining a large supermarket and car parking offer on the High Street
 - a new area for commercial leisure, hospitality and entertainment plus car parking e.g. restaurants, cinema, bowling, and similar between Cemetery Road and Houghton Road.
- c) Improved community facilities
- Children's Day Nursery / pre-school for under-fives as part of Houghton Regis North 1 and 2 developments,
 - a new cemetery / green burial and allotment / community garden complex,
 - an adult skills training / education centre as part of the Kingsland development scheme,
- d) Improved open space facilities including
- a visitor centre and cafe to serve the Chalk Pit nature reserve
 - an adventure play ground and skate park on the Windsor Drive recreation ground,
 - protection of open space at Dog Kennel Down, The Green, Houghton Hall park, Windsor Drive recreation ground, land around Maiden Bower ancient monument, The Chalk Pit Nature Reserve
- e) achieving physical connections - roads, footways / cycleways and footpaths between existing parts of Houghton Regis and the developments of Houghton Regis North 1 and 2 and connections for busway into Houghton Regis North 1 and 2,

14.3 Monitoring: once the Plan, policies, and proposals are largely complete and agreed, measures will be developed which show how the Action Plan (below) and the Plan proposals is to be monitored:

- some indicators established to show how the objectives are being achieved.
- statistics based on or related to the delivery of a particular project.

14.4 Various proposals within this Neighbourhood Plan relate to the urban environment and public realm such as signage, seating, lighting and speed limits. The Town Council will seek the inclusion of these proposals within the infrastructure investment and maintenance programmes of Central Beds Council and its agents or contractors.

14.5 A significant process for the delivery and provision of social and community facilities is through the S106 agreements and/or Community Infrastructure Levy. As a means to provide social and community infrastructure to support new developments, this Plan will seek the negotiation of Community Infrastructure Levy / s106 provisions to achieve the policies within this Neighbourhood Plan.

14.6 The Town Council has the ability to spend resources and seek grants within the parish in pursuit of the Neighbourhood Plan proposals and to lobby Central Beds Council to allocate capital provision as the highway authority, and to make grant provisions.

14.7 Action Plan: The following is an Action Plan incorporating proposals from the Neighbourhood Plan:

Item	Lead Agency / others	Funding	Timetable
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			Short / medium / long term
completion of HOUGHTON REGIS NORTH 1 and 2 with a variety of housing opportunities, open spaces, employment, with community facilities	Developers submitting planning applications to Central Beds	n/a	Ongoing
remodelling the town centre: the provision of an integrated town council / police and health-hub north of All Saints	HRTC to open discussions with CBC, Police and Health	Capital receipts from development of current site	Medium to long term
remodelling the town centre: retain Library and Community Centre	HRTC		
remodelling the town centre: the provision of a multipurpose venue for community groups / arts performances / sports classes - Use Class D2,	HRTC		
remodelling the town centre: Establish dual 'events & market' / car park adjoining All Saints	HRTC		Short
remodelling the town centre: retaining a large supermarket and car parking offer	HRTC	Discussions with current site owner	Short
Tb completed			

Annex A: Summary information from the Baseline study 2016 includes:

- Houghton Regis, almost 7,000 homes and nearly 17,500 population, includes nearby settlements of Bidwell, Sewell, and Thorn.
- The parish has Dunstable Town and Luton Borough Councils along its southern edge, and adjoins Totternhoe, Tilsworth, Chalton, and Chalgrave parishes on the west, north and east. For much of its history the parish was much larger, part transferred to Dunstable in 1907 and part to Luton in 1939.
- All Saints Church is a 14th century, listed Grade 1, in the centre of Houghton Regis town centre.
- Expansion in the 1960's: Tithe Farm and Parkside estates built under the New and Expanded Towns Scheme.
- Major Development Proposals include
 - Houghton Regis North 1, outline consent, 262 ha (nb extending eastwards beyond the parish boundary) comprising up to 5,150 dwellings; up to 202,500 sq.m. gross commercial development, schools, community and leisure facilities,
 - Houghton Regis North 2 outline consent on land west of Bidwell towards the A5, up to 1,850 dwellings including affordable housing, 2 primary schools, employment land, a local centre comprising retail and community/leisure uses, plus public open spaces including sports pitches, natural wildlife areas and all associated access routes, primary road network, associated drainage, and landscaping. These two

schemes have brought contributions to a new junction 11a on the M1, and strategic road links to the A5 and Woodside employment estate.

- Former Co-op site in the Town centre opposite Bedford Square including Red House Court in Clarke's Way, approval for 170 new independent living apartments plus retail and community facilities,
- Kingsland: regeneration proposals by Legacy for a 22-hectare site south of the Sundon Road for a world-class sports academy, education and community facilities to transform the lives of young people, replacing a range of educational facilities, open space and Houghton Regis Leisure Centre.
- Once Houghton Regis North 1 & 2 are completed the community will number 30,000+ and only the hamlet of Sewell will remain detached in the fringe of open fields to the west, an area which includes the oldest remnant of the parish's past, the ancient monument Neolithic camp of Maiden Bower.
- A draft development strategy was prepared by Central Bedfordshire but withdrawn in 2015, in its place the **Central Bedfordshire Local Plan (CBLP)** being prepared. A draft for consultation was issued in June 2017.
- Dwellings types across the parish are typically two-storey, terraced or detached / semi-detached, brick-built with pitched roofs, both the older homes around the town centre and the developments on Tithe Farm and Parkside. Retirement and semi-sheltered homes are provided in a number of locations including the Red House Court off The Green with 33 one-bed flats, Johnson Court, Parkside Drive, Lady Spencer House Parkside Road North.
- Population increased by 4% between 2011 and 2013, to 17,900 residents.
- Compared with the rest of Central Bedfordshire the parish has
 - a younger age profile and a greater proportion of people from ethnic minority communities.
 - households are more likely to be socially rented and a higher proportion of lone parent households, and fewer older households (aged 65 and over)
 - Deprivation issues notably high overall proportions of children and older people living in income deprived households
 - high unemployment and residents were more likely to be claiming out of work benefits
 - issues of serious acquisitive crime
 - no major differences either in overall health, or in the proportion of residents providing unpaid care
 - A higher proportion of households have dependent children compared to Central Bedfordshire. A lower proportion of children achieved good GCSEs.
 - a younger age profile (population by age group, all residents, 2013)
- less home-ownership (all households, 2011) than the national average and more socially rented. Since 2001, there has been an increase in private renting (from 6% to 13%).
- Less than one fifth of residents worked within the town, while other key destinations for work were other parts of Central Bedfordshire (notably Dunstable), and Luton.
- 77% of commuters travelled by car, similar to the Central Bedfordshire average.
- The town centre runs along the High Street with a 1970s development, Bedford Square comprising shops and the community centre / library anchoring the eastern end, to a more recent supermarket (Morrisons) at the western end and other facilities such as the dental practice opposite Bedford Road and the GP / medical centre on Tithe farm Road. The High Street / Town Centre is narrow, hemmed in by residential developments on both north and southern sides. The eastern end emerges into the major open space of The Green, at the western end the High Street turns to an area of employment uses on the site of the former cement works.
- Employment within the town presently is focused on seven areas: offices and retail-related employment in the town centre, the Woodside Estate / Porz Avenue, Houghton Hall Business Park, Townsend farm Road / Portland Close / Westbury Close / Blackburn Rd, local centre shops, education, social and 'public service', farming and rural enterprises in the rural parts of the parish.
- The Busway is a public transport bus route which includes a guided busway partly along the former railway from the former cement works linking Houghton Regis with Dunstable and Luton.
- The town centre is a conservation area and there are twenty-two buildings and structures which are listed buildings, including Church of All Saints, Grade I, and Houghton Hall, Grade II*.

Annex B:

There are 23 buildings and structures which are listed buildings, ie on the list of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest, drawn up by the Historic England:

- **Church of All Saints, Grade I,**
- **Houghton Hall, Grade II*,**
- **C17 Range of Outbuildings to North West of Houghton Hall, Grade II*,**
- **Houghton Court, Grade II,**
- **Lodge to Houghton Hall, Grade II,**
- **Wall and Gate Piers to Houghton Hall, Grade II,**
- **104 and 106, High Street, Grade II, High Street,**
- **Red Cow Farm Cottage, Grade II, Bedford Road,**
- **The Crown Public House, Grade II, The Green,**
- **The Red House, Grade II, The Green, Thorn,**
- **The Red Lion Public House, Grade II, Bedford Road,**
- **Vane Cottage, Grade II, 17A Park Road North, Houghton Regis**
- **21,22 and 23, East End, Grade II, Crossways,**
- **Barn to North East of Springwell Cottage, Grade II, Sewell Lane,**
- **Bodger's Barn and Barn to Rear, Grade II, Sewell Lane,**
- **Lane Farmhouse, Grade II, Sewell Lane,**
- **Manor Farmhouse, Grade II, Sewell Lane,**
- **Sewell Farmhouse, Grade II, Sewell Lane,**
- **Springwell Cottage, Grade II, Sewell Lane,**
- **Sundial Cottage, Grade II, Sewell Lane**
- **Dene Hollow, Grade II, Sundon Road,**
- **Easthill Farmhouse, Grade II, Sundon Road,**

(Townsend Farmhouse, delisted)

Oakwell Park, Grade II, Oakwell Park, Thorn,

- Thorn Spring moated site and associated woodbanks (Scheduled Monument)
- Maiden Bower hillfort (Scheduled Monument)

Annex C: Short History

Houghton Regis has a long history of settlement and industry. The parish's heritage has an importance in relation to the appearance of the area, the sense of history for local people, and providing unique 'landmarks' in the setting of the town centre.

The parish has its origins deep in pre-history evidenced by Maiden Bower and the excavations at Puddlehill. Much of the evidence of prehistoric settlement probably lies under the current town and villages but the community on Puddlehill has been excavated providing a glimpse into the lives of the farmers who lived there. The name may seem strange, but even today, in very wet periods a small lake forms in the field below the chalk slope. The name 'Houghton' is Saxon combining 'hoe' meaning the spur of a hill in this case from the Chilterns, and 'tun' a village. The manor was owned by the Crown by the time of Edward the Confessor (1042-1066), from which came the Regis part of the name. Thorn, Sewell and Bidwell all have origins dating from more than a thousand years ago. The Domesday survey listed Houghton as a royal property. With its own church, the size of the tax assessment indicates it was a prosperous village. Sewell is the only other settlement in the area listed in Domesday; smaller with just five farms or smallholders, its lord is named as Walraven of Sewell, under the overlordship of Queen Edith.

Ancient Monuments: there are two sites listed in the parish, **Maiden Bower Hillfort** and **Thorn Spring Moated Site and Associated Woodbanks**. The historian, G Worthington Smith, writing at the beginning of the twentieth century, describes many of the antiquities in the area including the earthworks and ditches of Maiden Bower Iron Age encampment, probably a retreat for the community in times of danger, its size providing a clue to how many people lived in the area. The 'camp' has five entrances suggestive of the paths and routes leading to and from it. The main path in the vicinity is Watling Street, probably already in use before the Roman period. The Icknield Way, running east-west, seems to have had several strands and modern Ordnance Survey maps still refer to Upper and Lower routes. One strand of the Icknield Way seems to have followed Brewers Hill Road (near Maiden Bower) and Houghton Road from Dunstable, through the parish and around the northern edge of modern Luton. There are other old routes across the parish: The Green Lanes passing Maiden Bower are part of a drovers' route (possibly pre-roman) from the west going towards London. Worthington Smith shows a path from Puddlehill to the windmill at Houghton, and Dog Kennel path is shown as an old route possibly linking with old paths beyond the parish, and Sock Way from the A5 (Watling Street) towards Dunstable Downs. Before the chalk cutting straightened the Watling Street, the Old Coach Road would its way up and down the gradient, the remains of which can still be followed. The pre-development excavations for HOUGHTON REGIS NORTH1 have revealed more archaeological evidence for people living in the area.

The centre of Houghton Regis was designated a conservation area in 1977, the principal features of which are The Green and the buildings around it, Houghton Hall, Lodge and Court, Houghton Hall Park, and the group of 17th-19th century buildings around The Chequers ph. The conservation area was reviewed in 1993, extended in 1995 with a more recent appraisal carried in 2008 (on Central Beds website http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/Images/houghton-regis_tcm3-12959.pdf). This contains a detailed analysis of the conservation area features and listed buildings, a general history of the parish plus a management plan to guide future works and proposals in the conservation area and along the High Street. There are twenty-two buildings and structures which are listed buildings, ie on the list of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest, drawn up by the Historic England (see annex B) notable amongst them are the Church of All Saints, Grade I, and Houghton Hall, Grade II*. All Saints' Parish Church situated next to Bedford Square was built in the 13th/14th century on the site of a Saxon church. Houghton Hall was built for Dame Alice Milard completed in 1700, currently used as offices. The Crown Inn, next to The Green on East End Road probably dates from the 1790s.

Under Henry I a market town was established on the edge of the old parish where the Icknield Way crossed Watling Street. Such a market was a good source of revenue and the settlement grew to become Dunstable, where local produce was sold and many trades became established. Travel, trade and pilgrimage continued for centuries to generate business for food, goods and accommodation.

The parish has an industrial heritage (in part of the parish transferred to Dunstable) and in 1891 JD Forder developed a lime works exploiting the local chalk at Sewell which was sold to Blue Circle Cement in 1912. Blue Circle also opened a large cement works by Townsend Farm on the edge of Houghton village and began to cut away the chalk from Puddlehill. The 'cutting' which carried the Watling Street through the parish had already dug

a deep groove through the chalk scarp. In later years, the quarry and cement works included two huge chimneys which dominated the skyline of Houghton Regis and coated nearby buildings in a fine white dust.

Burial Provision in Houghton Regis

The Town has lost many of its services over the past years.

The Upper School Campus.
The Quarry Wildlife Centre.
The Registry Office.

This has led to a perception that the services loss is steadily bringing the Town down.

The provision of a New Town Cemetery under the auspices of the Town would help bring a halt to the loss of services provision.

For many decades residents have been calling for a New Town Cemetery.

Historical.

The Parish of Houghton Regis has a considerable number of ancient burial sites around the Parish.

The sites are at:

1. Thorn
2. Sewell.
3. Maidenbower.
4. Cemetery Road.
5. All Saint's Churchyard.

These ancient sites range from the Roman period to more recent times. The major burial site was that of All Saint's Churchyard. Burials have taken place there for more than 1000 years. These burial areas were around the predominant areas of habitation and most were for the religious communities of the Parish.

Modern Period.

In the 1980's the Town Council acquired a former private cemetery which had lost its ownership and was in a terrible state of repair. This Cemetery is now near to capacity.

The Town has a problem ahead does it require a new cemetery large enough to accommodate the new expansion planned.

New Town Cemetery provision is of importance to the Town and it is a significant aspiration to be included in the Neighbourhood Plan.

Annex D: Summary of Survey Responses

Demographics

The age distribution was good, with between 14% and 22% of respondents in each age range over 25. However, there were over twice as many women as men taking the survey and the ethnic distribution was very predominately white British (87%). Just over 8% considered themselves disabled.

Housing

60% of respondents thought that there was enough housing either currently in the town or coming in the new developments that have already been approved.

The feelings were very much that there are 3 types of housing that are most needed: Single person, social, and larger homes (each just over 30%). Affordable housing was mentioned very often in the comments as well, especially for younger, local people, and bungalows for older people.

Town Centre

Almost 70% of respondents say they use Bedford Square or other amenities in the town v=centre at least once a week, although from the requests for new shops, etc. it does appear that many are not familiar with what is currently on offer! The reasons given for not using it (or not using it more) seemed to centre on issues of the lack of parking, safety/anti-social behaviour, limited offerings, and the unappealing architecture.

When asked about what is needed the top responses were: Bank (63%), Clothing/shoes (60%), Food (57%), Cinema (42%), Specialty (37%), restaurants/take-aways (37%), and Children's (36%).

Employment

87% think there needs to be greater job opportunities in and around Houghton Regis, most thinking that these should be within 5 miles of the town. There is also a great desire for more training and apprentice opportunities (60% in favour of more face-to-face training, for example).

14% are, or are considering being, self-employed. These people were evenly split over whether having more businesses/jobs in the area would help their business.

To attract more businesses to the town, the key issues seem to be: The high business rates and rents, the unattractive environment, parking, and the need for the town to better promote itself.

Sport and Leisure

The respondents showed interest in, or currently participate in, a wide range of physical activities. The top responses were: Walking (70%), Cycling (49%), Football (44%), and running/jogging (29%).

To improve the situation, respondents would like to see: More nature trails (67%), More cycle paths (56%), additional play parks for children (53%), and a splash park (52%).

Heritage

About 75% of respondents thought that preserving the town's heritage was important, however, an equal percentage know little, if anything, about what is currently protected. Most wanted buildings over 100 years old and/or that are historically important to be preserved.

Education

Half of the respondents thought that there need to be more opportunities for education in the town (a quarter were unsure, a quarter thought the offering adequate). The key areas needing attention were the need for an upper school and more in the way of life skills/employment skills training (all over 50%).

Sundry Key Issues

The major areas of concern were: Anti-social behaviour (94%), Crime (93%), Travellers (90%), Road safety (80%), Lack of amenities (73%), and Parking (60%).

Annex E: Summary of Use Classes Order

Part A

- **A1 Shops** - Shops, retail warehouses, hairdressers, undertakers, travel and ticket agencies, post 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) and including estate and employment agencies. It does not include betting offices or pay day loan shops - these are now classed as “sui generis” uses (see below).
- **A3 Restaurants and cafés** - For the sale of 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 night clubs).
- **A5 Hot food takeaways** - For the sale of hot food for consumption off the premises.

Part B

- **B1 Business** - 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** - Use for industrial process other than one falling within class B1 (excluding incineration purposes, chemical treatment or landfill or hazardous waste).
- **B8 Storage or distribution** - This class includes open air storage.

Part C

- **C1 Hotels** - Hotels, boarding and guest houses where no significant element of care is provided (excludes hostels).
- **C2 Residential institutions** - Residential care homes, hospitals, nursing 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.
- **C3 Dwellinghouses** - this class is formed of 3 parts:
 - C3(a) covers use by a single person or a family (a couple whether married or not, a person related to one another with members of the family of one of the couple to be treated as members of the family of the other), an employer and certain domestic employees (such as an au pair, nanny, nurse, governess, servant, chauffeur, gardener, secretary and personal assistant), a carer and the person receiving the care and a foster parent and foster child.
 - C3(b): up to six people living together as a single household and receiving care e.g. supported housing schemes such as those for people with learning disabilities or mental health problems.
 - C3(c) allows for groups of people (up to six) living together as a single household. This allows for those groupings that do not fall within the C4 HMO definition, but which fell within the previous C3 use class, to

be provided for i.e. a small religious community may fall into this section as could a homeowner who is living with a lodger.

- **C4 Houses in multiple occupation** - small shared houses occupied by between three and six unrelated individuals, as their only or main residence, who share basic amenities such as a kitchen or bathroom.

Part D

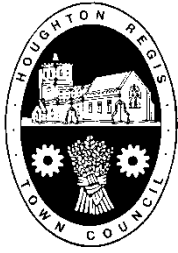
- **D1 Non-residential institutions** - Clinics, health centres, crèches, day nurseries, day centres, schools, art galleries (other than for sale or hire), museums, libraries, halls, places of worship, church halls, law court. Non residential education and training centres.
- **D2 Assembly and leisure** - Cinemas, music and concert halls, bingo and dance halls (but not night clubs), swimming baths, skating rinks, gymnasiums or area for indoor or outdoor sports and recreations (except for motor sports, or where firearms are used).

Sui Generis

- Certain uses do not fall within any use class and are considered 'sui generis'. Such uses include: betting offices/shops, pay day loan shops, theatres, larger houses in multiple occupation, hostels providing no significant element of care, scrap yards. Petrol filling stations and shops selling and/or displaying motor vehicles. Retail warehouse clubs, nightclubs, launderettes, taxi businesses, amusement centres and casinos.

Annex F: Glossary

Access and connectivity	The ability of people to travel within the parish and into adjoining areas whether on foot, bicycle, motor vehicles and rail or bus-based public transport
Baseline Study	A collation of current data describing the area
Community Aspirations	Important proposals which support the land-use policies
Facilities	Activities that support community and urban life, usually linked to health, recreation, and sport
National Planning Policy Framework	Government-approved national policies
Local Plan	The planning policies prepared by the District Council to guide future development
Local Centres	Small groups of shops and services within residential areas
Primary / Secondary Frontage	The areas usually in the town centre where the range and number of shops and other services will be encouraged and changes of use resisted
Sustainability	The measures which minimise the long-term environmental impact of building operations
Town Centre	The original High Street and old commercial area of the town
Use Classes	A nationally recognised set of land- uses covering most types of residential and commercial activities
Vision & Aims	The top-line priorities shaping the plan and policies



Date: 14th December 2020

Title: NEW CEMETERY PROVISION

Purpose of the Report: To provide members an update on land for a new cemetery.

Contact Officer: Clare Evans, Town Clerk

1. RECOMMENDATION

Report provided for information purposes.

2. BACKGROUND

A meeting of the New Cemetery Sub Committee took place on 16th November 2020. At this meeting members were updated on the work that the Clerk and CBC officers had completed to consider options and possibilities for new burial provision with Houghton Regis. Members also considered options for next steps.

3. UPDATE

CBC completed a desk top survey of the town and have identified 3 land possibilities:

1. Windsor Drive
2. Land off Woodside Link / Frogmore Rd
3. Land at end of Grendall Lane

CBC sought preliminary advice from Cemetery Development Services (CDS) on these sites and this is summarised in Appendix A. This table has been expanded to include comments on other localised conditions i.e. access, visual amenity, neighbouring properties / land uses etc

In accordance with the report, members agreed that the more favourable site was the Land at the end of Grendall Lane. Most significantly this site is less unsuitable in terms of geology. Equally it has good access and a cemetery use would not be detrimental to neighbouring land uses.

CBC officers have sought on behalf of HRTC advice on this option from colleagues in Highways, Archaeology, Ecology and Planning, their comments are as follows:

Planning

The site would form part of the Houghton Regis North allocation, so, once the Local Plan is adopted, the site would be removed from the Green Belt. As such, the principle would likely be acceptable in the future.

There is a water treatment facility neighbouring the site, so there may be odour concerns. If this is pursued, then discussions should be held with Anglian Water to establish their position. Would this present an appropriate character/feel for a cemetery site?

A recent application (20/00511) for a modular extension to an office block, directly adjoining the site to the north, didn't identify any significant issues from consultees.

Highways

An acceptable access could be achieved via the existing road connecting to Thorn Road. Any access from Watling Street would be heavily discouraged.

The feedback was caveated somewhat by officers advising that without a scheme to comment on there was limited advice that could be provided, and that the above was an informal view only.

Draft minutes of the New Cemetery Sub Committee are attached for information, Appendix B.

Following on from this meeting the Tier 2 site investigation has been arranged and is due to take place week commencing 7th December. The report on findings should be available before shortly afterwards. These will be shared with the council and with the Environment Agency (EA). The EA will advise whether they require a Tier 3 assessment to be made. The Tier 3 assessment involves a series of bore holes across the site which are left in situ for 12 months and data is collected from them monthly. Again the findings will be presented in a report and will be provided to the EA.

Ahead of the Tier 2 investigations an update has been provided on the Council's website and on social media. A letter has also been sent to neighbouring landowners and occupiers informing them of the works.

The Tier 3 works will only be commissioned if the Tier 2 findings are supportive and if the EA require further investigations to take place.

Members are advised of the following costings and scope of works:

Tier 2 (Total £4900.00) comprising

- a series of trial pits on site to assess the ground conditions
- the T2 report and flux model and submission of findings to the EA for pre app advice

Consideration by EA, based on £100 per hour – est £600-£1200

Tier 3 – if EA request further investigations (Total £13750- £16750) comprising

- Installation of groundwater monitoring wells - £7000 - £10000 (depending on final depth to groundwater and installation depths)
- Baseline groundwater sampling visit - £1350
- 12 months of groundwater monitoring - £350 per visit – 12*£350 = £4200
- Production of updated T3 report- £1200

The following resolution was passed at the New Cemetery Sub Committee:

- Resolved:*
1. *To commission T2 Groundwater Risk Assessment for Land at the end of Grendall Lane and, provided this is supportive, to proceed with the monitoring work and an updated T3 report;*
 2. *To fund the investigations from EMR 348, Cemetery provision*

4. COUNCIL VISION

Aspirations

- A1 To develop and enhance **partnerships** between HRTC, stakeholders, partners, community groups and residents
- A2 To effectively and proactively **represent** our community
- A4 To develop a new **cemetery**
- A5 To ensure the **council** is fit for purpose and efficient in its delivery of services

Objective 4: Our community

- 4.1 To create or enhance community facilities which support community development and cohesion

5. IMPLICATIONS

Corporate Implications

- There are no corporate implications arising from the recommendations.

Legal Implications

- There are no legal implications arising from the recommendations

Financial Implications

- Budget _ EMR 348 Cemetery provision, total available £78,908

Risk Implications

- There are no risk implications arising from the recommendations

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

There are no press implications arising from the recommendations.

6. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS


The support of CBC in this matter has been greatly appreciated and has enabled more detailed consideration of sites and ultimately for a preferred site to be considered further. Although the land is considered a high risk due to its geology, on balance the Sub Committee felt that it was a possibility.


7. APPENDICES

Appendix A: Summary of Key Issues from CDS Initial Site Assessment
Appendix B: Draft Minutes of New Cemetery Sub Committee, 16th November 2020

Summary of Key Issues from CDS Initial Site Assessment

NB see CDS report for all detailed findings

High Risk Findings	Detail and other Issues	Investigations	Costs
Land at Windsor Drive: High Risk			
		<p>T2 Groundwater Risk Assessment</p> <p>G/water Monitoring & Sampling</p> <p>Subsequent sampling</p> <p>T3 Report</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •T2 Groundwater Risk Assessment with flux model - £4900.00 •Installation of groundwater monitoring wells - £5000.00 - £10000.00 (depending on depth to groundwater) •Baseline groundwater sampling visit - £1350.00 •12 months of groundwater monitoring - £350.00 per visit – 12*350 = £4200.00 •Production of updated T3 report- £1200.00 exc VAT <p>Total Min. £16,650 Total Max. £21,650</p>
Geology	Chalk bedrock, lack of superficial deposits		
Groundwater	Poss shallow as 1.5m bgl		
River adj to site	30m non burial buffer required on northern edge		

bedrock aquafer	Underlying Principle aquafer		
Burial numbers	4.2ha site - 30-40/year Moderate Risk		
<p>Localised conditions i.e. access, visual amenity, neighbouring properties / land uses etc Sited in amongst a residential area Land locally used for informal recreation Good road network Vehicular access required A cemetery use would only form part of the site and would need to be well integrated into the site as a whole Anticipated local opposition due to residential nature of area and long-standing use for informal recreation.</p>			
Land at The Woodside Link Houghton Regis: High Risk			
		<p>T2 Groundwater Risk Assessment</p> <p>G/water Monitoring & Sampling</p> <p>Subsequent sampling</p> <p>T3 Report</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •T2 Groundwater Risk Assessment with flux model - £4900.00 •Installation of groundwater monitoring wells - £5000.00 - £10000.00 (depending on depth to groundwater) •Baseline groundwater sampling visit - £1350.00 •12 months of groundwater monitoring - £350.00 per visit – 12*350 = £4200.00 •Production of updated T3 report- £1200.00 exc VAT

Geology	Zig Zag chalk bedrock - no mapped superficial deposits on the site. This is considered a high risk as burial contaminants can freely migrate down into the underlying aquifer.		Total Min. £16,650 Total Max. £21,650
Groundwater	Historic borehole data suggests that groundwater could potentially be as shallow as 1.5m bgl.		
Stream	A stream runs through the site north of the Woodside Link to the east into the River Lea. A balancing pond and drain are located in the eastern portion of the site south of the Link.		
bedrock aquifer	Site mapped on principle aquifer bedrock		
Burial numbers	6ha site - 30-40/year Low Risk		
<p>Localised conditions i.e. access, visual amenity, neighbouring properties / land uses etc</p> <p>Split site - adjacent to residential areas and straddles a major road</p> <p>Land locally used for some informal recreation</p> <p>Good road network</p> <p>Vehicular access required</p> <p>Suggested that the site doesn't naturally lend it self in a visual way to use as a cemetery</p>			
Land at Grendall Lane: High Risk			



T2 Groundwater Risk Assessment	•T2 Groundwater Risk Assessment with flux model - £4900.00
G/water Monitoring & Sampling	•Installation of groundwater monitoring wells - £5000.00 - £10000.00 (depending on depth to groundwater)
Subsequent sampling	•Baseline groundwater sampling visit - £1350.00 •12 months of groundwater monitoring - £350.00 per visit – 12*350 = £4200.00
T3 Report	•Production of updated T3 report- £1200.00 exc VAT
<p>Total Min. £16,650 Total Max. £21,650</p>	

Geology	West Melbury Marly Chalk - no mapped superficial deposits on the site. This is considered a high risk as burial contaminants can freely migrate down into the underlying aquifer.
Groundwater	Historic borehole data suggests that groundwater could potentially be as shallow as 1.5m bgl.
Sewage works	Work discharge into stream mapped further to north of the site
Bedrock aquafer	Site mapped on principle aquafer bedrock
Burial numbers	2.7ha site - 30-40/year – Low risk
Topography – Low Risk	The site slopes down from the south to the north, with an elevation change of approximately 10. The

	hummocky and uneven nature of the site would make it difficult to be developed.		
<p>Localised conditions i.e. access, visual amenity, neighbouring properties / land uses etc</p> <p>Sited away from residential areas</p> <p>Surrounding land uses include CBC Highways Depot and Household Tidy Tip. It should be highlighting that should this site proceed there may be concerns over a funeral procession having to pass these facilities</p> <p>Land is not developed and has limited, if any, current use</p> <p>Good road network but is out of central town area</p> <p>Vehicular access readily available</p>			

**Houghton Regis Town Council
New Cemetery Sub-Committee
16th November 2020 at 6.00pm**

Present:	Cllrs:	S Thorne J Carroll Y Farrell R Morgan	Chair
	CBC Cllr:	S Goodchild	
	Officers:	Clare Evans Louise Senior	Town Clerk Head of Democratic Services
Also present:	Cllrs:	D Jones T McMahon	
Absent:	Cllr:	M S Kennedy	

NC121 APOLOGIES & SUBSTITUTIONS

None.

NC122 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

None.

NC123 MINUTES

To approve the minutes of the New Cemetery Sub-Committee meeting held on the 14th July 2020.

Resolved: To confirm the Minutes of the New Cemetery Sub-Committee meeting held on the 14th July 2020 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

NC124 NEW CEMETERY PROVISION

Members were provided with options for site investigations for land for a new cemetery.

Members acknowledged that the search for land for a new cemetery provision had continued over many years and that the options offered by Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) were viable and thanked the Town Clerk for her hard work and efforts resulting in the options offered.

Members were advised that CBC had not confirmed how the land would be passed to HRTC, although it was thought that there would not be a charge. It was thought that ownership would be passed over or that it would be passed over under a long-term lease agreement. It was requested that clarification be sought. It was highlighted that this was a considerable offer from CBC. Had HRTC needed to purchase land privately it may have

made the whole project cost prohibitive.

It was suggested that as Houghton Regis Town Council would be responsible for the cost of preparing the land and layout of the cemetery, it would be prudent to initiate budget provision for this project.

It was requested that Anglian Water be contacted for a preliminary view on this proposal as the operator of the adjacent water treatment works. Members were advised that Anglian water would be consulted as a statutory consultee once a planning application had been submitted.

- Resolved:**
- 1. To commission T2 Groundwater Risk Assessment for Land at the end of Grendall Lane and, provided this is supportive, to proceed with the monitoring work and an updated T3 report;**
 - 2. To fund the investigations from EMR 348, Cemetery provision**

NC125 FUTURE MEETINGS

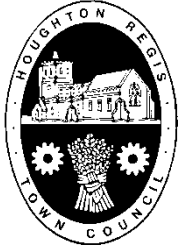
Members were invited to consider when this Sub Committee should meet again.

Members requested the Town Clerk contact Cemetery Development and discuss timescales.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 7.00pm

Dated this **day of**

Chairman



Date: 14th December 2020

Title: PUBLIC REALM PROJECT

Purpose of the Report: To update members on the emerging CBC public realm project.

Contact Officer: Clare Evans, Town Clerk

1. RECOMMENDATION

To support the Houghton Regis Public Realm Project Proposal.

2. BACKGROUND

As members are aware over the last year or so Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) have been developing ideas to establish a Public Realm project to help town and parish councils rectify smaller scale enviro crime issues.

The concept is that CBC would provide capital funding to town councils to enable them to purchase capital equipment to deliver this project such as a vehicle, pressure washer, staff training, reporting software etc. The town council would then offer their services to surrounding parishes. The surrounding parishes would pay for work to be completed.

Houghton Regis has been paired with Dunstable Town Council and jointly we would cover 14 or so local parishes.

Ongoing revenue costs would be met by town councils.

3. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Arising from various discussions and meetings the attached project proposal is suggested, Appendix A.

The capital funding being offered by CBC is £100,000. Under this project proposal it is envisaged that this funding would be split equally between Houghton Regis and Dunstable.

The ongoing revenue costs are anticipated to be around £50,000 per annum. This would cover staff costs (including on-costs), vehicle running and maintenance costs and materials.

4. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

Whilst there has been a long standing aspiration of the Town Council to employ a Ranger within the Council's Visions, under the previous council administration the project did come to fruition as there were concerns over the amount of work which would be available to the post holder.

To assist in assessing the need and demand for this role the council have established a scheme for member reporting of enviro crime issues and it has been agreed that this work will be undertaken by the existing grounds team. This has had some success, although more recently reports of issues from members have not been provided.

Whilst the current set up does not demonstrate the need for a Town Ranger, members are requested to note that the role is usually established to be a proactive role within the community and as such the postholder would be expected to actively look for issues to address. The council could also invite residents to submit requests for work direct to the Ranger.

This matter is being brought forward again due to the following changes in circumstance:

1. Availability of the CBC Public Realm Scheme and in particular the availability of capital funding
2. The current possibility to adjust the structure of the grounds team to replace the current groundsman vacancy with an altered role comprising town ranger / groundsman

Typical town ranger duties include

- Cleansing and maintenance within the public realm
- Collection of litter and dog faeces
- Sweeping and power washing
- Basic pruning
- Strimming
- Removal of graffiti and chewing gum
- Weed spraying / clearance
- Snow clearance
- Tidying untended graves
- Cleaning of play equipment
- Leaf clearance
- Removal of small scale and non-hazardous fly tipping
- Caring for town centre planting
- Working with volunteer groups / Friends of Groups to tackle a local issues

- Arranging for contractors to quote and deliver on projects which are too great for the Ranger alone
- other similar and related activities

Under the CBC scheme the council would be expected to offer the services of the HRTC ranger out to other local parish councils. Services could also be offered to CBC in relation to assets which they manage within the town (estate play areas, bus shelters etc). These (parishes and CBC) would be chargeable services.

5. COUNCIL VISION

Aspirations

- A1 To develop and enhance **partnerships** between HRTC, stakeholders, partners, community groups and residents
- A2 To effectively and proactively **represent** our community
- A3 To positively **promote** the town
- A5 To ensure the **council** is fit for purpose and efficient in its delivery of services

Objective 3: A safe and vibrant town

- 3.1 To reduce the fear of crime, anti-social behaviour and crime levels
- 3.2 To reduce enviro crime
- 3.7 To communicate well with residents and stakeholders
- 3.8 To support local businesses and retailers

Objective 4: Our community

- 4.5 To provide high quality green spaces for leisure and recreation, healthier living, urban attractiveness, improved air quality

6. IMPLICATIONS

Corporate Implications

- This project has been brought to Town Council to consider as it requires cross council support and does not fall under one committee only.
- Staff implications – delivery of this project requires an alteration to the current grounds team set up. This is set out in the Agenda Item 11.

Legal Implications

- Power available to carry out project
Charging for discretionary services – Local Govt Act 2003 s.93
Crime prevention – Local Govt and Rating Act 1997 s.31
Recreation – Public Health Act 1875 s.164
- Contract / SLA – it is envisaged that CBC will provide a agreement for signing

Financial Implications

- It is anticipated that the capital funding will be available this financial year.

Risk Implications

- The revenue funding will be an ongoing commitment from HRTC

- Reputation – the provision of this service will improve the reputation of HRTC as the project addresses local quality of life issues.

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

The decision relating to this agenda item should be communicated to the press, via the website and social media.

7. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

The project seeks to deliver a locally based solution to small scale enviro issues. The availability of CBC funding for capital costs and the opportunity to adjust the structure of the grounds team, make this a viable project for HRTC to consider.

8. APPENDICES

Appendix A: Draft project proposal

Public Realm Scheme

Proposal

Scheme Description	
What service(s) will be provided	<p>Tasks may include, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cleansing and maintenance within the public realm • Collection of litter and dog faeces • Sweeping and power washing • Basic pruning • Strimming • Removal of graffiti and chewing gum • Weed spraying / clearance • Snow clearance • Tidying untended graves • Cleaning of play equipment • Leaf clearance • Removal of small scale and non-hazardous fly tipping • Caring for town centre planting • Working with volunteer groups / Friends of Groups to tackle a local issues • Arranging for contractors to quote and deliver on projects which are too great for the Ranger alone • other similar and related activities
Marketing & Engagement with Parishes	
Who/what/where/how	Email contact to be made with parish clerk. Introductory mtg to be held. Reminders of services to be sent periodically.
Roll out	Can be rolled out as soon as equipment and staffing available
Pricing	
Pricing Schedule	<p>To be set to cover costs:</p> <p>First hour £35, then subsequent hours at £25 plus materials and waste disposal costs as applicable i.e. a 3 hour job would be charged at £85</p> <p>To be reviewed annually by HRTC</p>



Equipment

Needed/to be purchased	Vehicle with branding (£30,000) Ranger uniform & PPE (£1,000) Reporting software / app (£3,000) Staff training / upskilling (£6,000) Mower, strimmer, blower, hedge cutter, hand tools, sprayers, chemicals (£10,000)
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Staffing

What staffing is required	1 Ranger (additional support from existing HRTC grounds team if required)
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Added Value

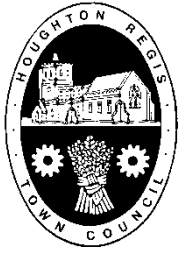
Added value to current arrangements	<p>HRTC use grounds staff to complete these tasks but work is reliant on cllrs reporting in issues. There is no requirement on the grounds team to identify issues in public realm areas which aren't owned / managed by HRTC. There is no mechanism for residents to report issues to the council, residents have to go through a cllr.</p> <p>HRTC have a grounds team of 7 members of staff. There is currently 1 vacancy. It is suggested that the vacancy can be altered from grounds man to groundsman / town ranger, probably split on a 2 / 3 day basis.</p>
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Outcomes & Improvements

Proposed outcomes & improvements planned	<p>This CBC scheme offers a kick start to HRTC launching a Town Ranger scheme by the capital costs being covered. The project offers HRTC the opportunity to provide a localised service to tackle small scale enviro issues. These issues often have a significant impact of residents' quality of life. For HRTC, in partnership with CBC, to be able to offer a local response to a local issue would be a significant advantage to the local community and to both authorities.</p> <p>Within HR this scheme offers the following benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enhanced care and cleaning of the town• Residents reporting mechanism <p>Within the Hub area this scheme offers a real benefit in being able to offer this service to surrounding villages. It helps them to know they are using a local and trusted provider, who's costs are realistic and who will tackle smaller tasks as well as larger ones, on a regular or one-off basis. It also helps to build improved working relationships between the authorities.</p>
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Date: 14th December 2020

Title: TOWN RANGER

Purpose of the Report: To provide members with details on the proposed post of Town Ranger to support the emerging CBC public realm project.

Contact Officer: Clare Evans, Town Clerk

1. RECOMMENDATION

1. To approve the Job Description and Person Specification for Town Ranger;
2. For the position to be subject to job evaluation and for the salary scale to approved by Personal Committee;
3. To seek to fill the position from 1st April 2021 subject to the CBC providing the supporting capital funding.

2. BACKGROUND

This post is required to support the Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) Public Realm project. Without this post it is not possible to deliver this project.

As members are aware CBC will provide capital funding for the project. The ongoing revenue costs, including salaries, materials and waste disposal costs would be met by the town council.

3. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

The grounds team comprises 7 members of staff (1 foreman, 6 grounds staff). Currently one grounds staff position is vacant. It is suggested that this position be adjusted to accommodate ranger duties. The post would be advertised as Town Ranger, the post holder however would have ranger duties plus groundsman duties. It is anticipated that these would be split, 2 days grounds care and 3 days ranger.

In accordance with the councils Recruitment & Selection Policy it is suggested that this post be advertised internally first to see if an existing employee could be trained

to do the job. Should this not result in the appointment of a Ranger the post would be advertised externally. If the recruitment is completed internally, the council will advertise for the position of grounds person to fill the vacancy.

The Recruitment & Selection Policy¹ states:

The Town Clerk along with members of the Personnel Sub-Committee will act as interview panel for the posts of Town Clerk and other senior members of staff

As this post is not for a senior member of staff the interview panel will comprise the Town Clerk, Head of Grounds and the Grounds Foreman.

The recruitment process will be timed to secure a start date of 1st April 2021 on the condition that the CBC capital funding is made available so that the post can be supported.

4. COUNCIL VISION

Aspirations

- A1 To develop and enhance **partnerships** between HRTC, stakeholders, partners, community groups and residents
- A2 To effectively and proactively **represent** our community
- A3 To positively **promote** the town
- A5 To ensure the **council** is fit for purpose and efficient in its delivery of services

Objective 3: A safe and vibrant town

- 3.1 To reduce the fear of crime, anti-social behaviour and crime levels
- 3.2 To reduce enviro crime
- 3.7 To communicate well with residents and stakeholders
- 3.8 To support local businesses and retailers

Objective 4: Our community

- 4.5 To provide high quality green spaces for leisure and recreation, healthier living, urban attractiveness, improved air quality

5. IMPLICATIONS

Corporate Implications

- Staff implications – adjustment to the make-up of the grounds team

Legal Implications

- Power available to carry out project
Employment – Local Govt Act 1972 s112

¹ Link to the HRTC Recruitment & Selection Policy
<https://www.houghtonregis.org.uk/useruploads/policies/171009%20Recruitment%20&%20S%20election%20Policy.pdf>

Financial Implications

- The council has budgeted for the post of grounds person. It is envisaged that this post would attract a higher spinal point range. Additional budget provision has been made in the draft budget to accommodate this post of £9366 (salaries, NI and pension)
- Should this post be agreed, it is important that this increase in budget provision remains
- The revenue funding will be an ongoing commitment from HRTC

Risk Implications

- Reputation – the provision of this service and associated post will improve the reputation of HRTC as the project addresses local quality of life issues.

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

There are no press implications arising from this report.

6. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

The post supports the HRTC / CBC project to deliver a locally based solution to small scale enviro issues.

7. APPENDICES

Appendix A: Draft Job Description for Town Ranger
Appendix B: Draft Person Specification for Town Ranger

**HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL
JOB DESCRIPTION**

- JOB TITLE: Town Ranger
- SPINAL POINTS: TBC – subject to job evaluation
- LOCATION: Main base – Council Workshop
Work throughout the town and surrounding parishes
- JOB SUMMARY:
1. To provide a high profile, enhanced, proactive and reactive cleansing and maintenance service for the public realm across the town
 2. To support the council's grounds team to achieve satisfactory standards and service provision of the Council's cemetery, parks, recreation areas and open spaces including all play equipment, sports facilities and buildings thereon and schools.
- RESPONSIBLE TO: Grounds Foreman
- RESPONSIBLE FOR: None

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

Main Duties

1. To provide a high profile enhanced proactive and reactive cleansing and maintenance service for the public realm across the town.
2. To proactively identify and deal with public realm environmental eyesores on a 'see it, sort it' basis by utilising a wide range of cleaning and grounds related equipment.
3. To act as a front line, public facing representative of the Council and engage with a wide cross section of the community in a friendly, approachable manor and with a 'can do' attitude.
4. To support the grounds team to achieve satisfactory standards and service provision of the Council's cemetery, parks, recreation areas and open spaces including all play equipment, sports facilities and buildings thereon and schools.

Specific Duties

1. To carry out a wide range of cleansing and grounds related tasks including the collection of litter and dog faeces, sweeping and power washing, basic pruning, strimming, removal of graffiti and gum, weed spraying, snow clearance and other similar and related activities.
2. To carry out routine repairs, maintenance and cleaning to street furniture, bus shelters and landscape features.

3. To clean all town notice boards and refresh all contents on a regular basis as directed.
4. To assist with ensuring that safe working practices are adhered to at all times, in accordance with prevailing health and safety legislation and Council safe working methods statements.
5. To liaise with the public, open space users and other agencies as directed by the Foreman and to act as a first point of public contact whilst on site.
6. To assist the Foreman in the ordering of equipment, stock and supplies, ensuring quality, cost effectiveness and always giving consideration to quantities to avoid over ordering.
7. To gather evidence and information relating to low level enviro-crime and to pass relevant information onto enforcement agencies as necessary.
8. To keep adequate written and photographic records.
9. To support the grounds team with:
 - Maintenance and cleanliness of buildings, vehicles and equipment
 - Maintenance of the cemetery and all parks, open spaces and recreation grounds including:
 - Grass mowing/strimming
 - Preparation and marking out of pitches and wickets
 - Planting out flower beds
 - Hedge cutting
 - Pathway clearance and edging
 - Litter collection
 - Emptying dog waste bins
 - Annual renovation programme
 - Maintenance of community assets, including:
 - Play equipment (also weekly safety checks)
 - Bus shelters and seats
 - Noticeboards
10. Personal – to ensure your own health and safety including proper use of safety clothing and equipment.

Such other duties within the range and scope of the job as may be required from time to time.

Other Provisions

Annual leave	22 days (pro rata) plus 2 days extra statutory days
Bank Holidays	
Working hours	1 st October – 31 st March

Monday to Thursday 8am to 3pm
Friday 8am to 2pm
1st April – 30th September
Monday to Thursday 7.30am to 5pm
Friday 7.30am to 2pm

Employees may be asked to work outside of these hours including some weekend work which may include helping at HRTC community events. HRTC will look to give as much notice as possible and any time worked would be given back as time of in lieu.

- Key holder You may be required to be a key holder in case of an emergency. This means you may have to occasionally take on tasks outside the normal scope of your job.
- First aider You may be required to be first aid trained and undertake a role of first aider (training will be provided).
- Car Allowance: Casual user.

This is a description of the job as it is at present constituted. It is the practice of this Council to periodically examine employees' job descriptions and to update them to ensure that they relate to the job as then being performed, or to incorporate whatever changes are being proposed. Management in consultation with the employee conducts this procedure. It is the Council's aim to reach agreement to reasonable changes, but if agreement is not possible the Council reserves the right to insist on changes to your job description after consultation with you.

Name of Postholder

Signature of Postholder

Signature of Town Clerk

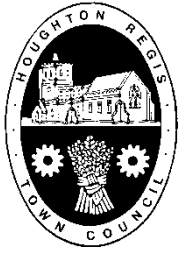
Date

Houghton Regis Town Council

Proposed Person Specification for Town Ranger

	Essential Attributes	Desirable Attributes
Qualifications	<p>5 GCSEs, Including Maths, English and Science, or Equivalent</p> <p>A relevant professional, technical or vocational qualification to NVQ Level 2, or above</p> <p>Willing to undertake professional development relevant to role</p> <p>and</p> <p>Full UK driving license</p>	<p>LANTRA – Use of ride-on mowers</p> <p>LANTRA Brush cutter use and Maintenance.</p> <p>PA1, PA5 Use of Pesticides</p> <p>CS30, CS31 NPTC – Chainsaw</p> <p>Full UK driving license incorporating towing licence</p> <p>Certificated First Aider</p> <p>Manual Handling</p>
Experience	<p>At least 4 years' experience in maintaining, repairing and cleaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • public realm features • buildings • vehicles • machinery and equipment <p>Good customer care practices</p> <p>Able to effectively use IT</p>	<p>Machinery maintenance</p> <p>Experience of environmental enforcement</p>
Knowledge	<p>Health and Safety legislation</p> <p>Completing risk assessments</p> <p>Developing safe working practices</p>	
Personal Attributes	<p>Hard working, trustworthy team player</p> <p>Well motivated and pro active</p> <p>Willingness to be responsible and accountable</p>	

	<p>Good communication skills</p> <p>Good organisational skills and record keeping</p> <p>Flexible attitude to work programming and a proactive 'can do' approach</p> <p>Ability to maintain high standards of work delivered in a timely fashion</p> <p>Ability to use initiative and prioritise workload and use time effectively</p>	
Circumstances and Health	<p>Happy to work outside in all weathers</p> <p>Physically Fit</p> <p>Suitable to work around children</p> <p>Ability to work some evenings and/or weekends, for which time off in lieu may be taken</p>	



Date: 14th December 2020

Title: PAYROLL SERVICE PROVIDER

Purpose of the Report: To enable members to appoint a new payroll services provider.

Contact Officer: Clare Evans, Town Clerk

1. RECOMMENDATION

To accept Company 3 as the Councils payroll provider from 1st April 2021.

2. BACKGROUND

As members are aware the current payroll service provider is no longer able to offer their services from April 2021.

3. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Alternative payroll service providers have been sought. A comparison of service levels and costs is attached at Appendix A.

Members are advised that Central Bedfordshire Council was approached to see if they would provide this service, unfortunately they are not able to.

4. COUNCIL VISION

Aspirations

A5 To ensure the **council** is fit for purpose and efficient in its delivery of services

5. IMPLICATIONS

Corporate Implications

- Staff implications – staff will be advised of the change. The pay date will remain as existing.

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Legal Implications

- Contract details are included in Appendix A

Financial Implications

- Financial Regulations – members are referred to Section 7 of Financial Regulations
- Budget available – additional provision has been made within the draft Budget for 2021/22 191-4059
- 3 Quotes have been sourced in accordance with Financial Regulations

Risk Implications

- Suitable arrangements must be put in place to ensure the payment of staff.

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

There are no press implications arising from the recommendations

6. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

Competitive quotes have been sought and are presented for consideration. It is not possible to source the exact service as previously received as under any of these providers there is the responsibility of an officer of the council making the payment to HMRC and Bedfordshire Pension Scheme. The supporting information will be provided by payroll, but the actual payment will become an internal responsibility.

7. APPENDICES

Appendix A: Comparison and Costs

Comparison and Costs – Payroll Services

	Cost / month	Contract terms	Other
Company 1	<p>One off setup fee - £125</p> <p>Monthly payroll - £75</p> <p>Pension administration - £30</p> <p>Online payslips (optional) - £11</p> <p>Total monthly charge £116 / month</p>	<p>Monthly rolling contract</p> <p>No termination period</p>	<p>Overtime, travel forms etc to be received 5 working before pay roll run</p> <p>Company 1 provide payment figures only for the price quoted</p> <p>Pension Payment Options HRTC to complete pensions contributions (payments and forms) Company 1 can complete at a cost of approx.. £30 / month (inc in cost column)</p> <p>Staff Payment Options HRTC make payments direct to staff Use an additional service to make BACS payments estimated at £20 / per month plus a set up fee of approx. £60</p> <p>Company operating 10 yrs 7 staff members</p> <p>Payroll billed annually in advance but non-refundable</p>
Company 2	<p>One off setup fee - £450</p> <p>Monthly payroll - £90.80</p> <p>Pension administration - £28.10</p> <p>Online payslips (optional) - £1.80</p> <p>Total monthly charge £148.80 / month</p>	<p>Initial 12 months, then 3 month notice period</p>	<p>Long established firm.</p> <p>Dedicated account manager</p>

<p>Company 3</p>	<p>£108.23</p>	<p>Initial 6 months, then 30 day notice period</p>	<p>Based on 18 members of staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No initial set-up fee • Every payroll processed by two of our clerks and crosschecked at multiple points before returning to you, achieving unrivalled accuracy • Employee payment via BACS • RTI submissions to HMRC • All statutory requirements including Tax, NICs, SSP, SMP, SPP, SAP & Student loans • Auto-enrolment administration support • A set of management reports • Payroll data in a csv file • Telephone and email support from our team in the UK. • Security payslips • P45s • Advice on Tax and National Insurance matters • Mid-period calculations for new starters or leavers <p>The cost per additional employee would be £4.21, this is on a sliding scale the more employees you have the less the cost per additional employee.</p>
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