



HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Peel Street, Houghton Regis, Bedfordshire, LU5 5EY

Town Mayor: **Cllr Y Farrell**

Tel: 01582 708540

Town Clerk: **Clare Evans**

e-mail: info@houghtonregis.org.uk

13th June 2022

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 at the Council Offices, Peel Street on Monday 20th June 2022 at 7.00pm.

Members of the public who wish to attend the meeting may do so in person or remotely through the meeting link below.

To attend remotely through Teams please follow this link: [MEETING LINK](#)

Please follow this guidance if attending the meeting remotely [LINK](#)

Clare Evans
Town Clerk

**THIS MEETING MAY BE
RECORDED¹**

The meeting will commence with a minutes silence in respect of the passing of former Town Mayor Andy Roberts.

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 *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 7 - 16

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 18th May 2022.

Recommendation: To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 18th May 2022.

5. COMMITTEE AND WORKING GROUP MINUTES

Pages 17 - 32

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

Corporate Services Committee	28 th February 2022
Community Services Committee	None to present
Environment & Leisure Committee	14 th February and 14 th March 2022
Planning Committee	16 th May 2022
Town Partnership Committee	None to present

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	None to present

Recommendation: To receive the Minutes detailed above.

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. YEAR END ACCOUNTS

Pages 33 - 35

Members will find attached a report providing brief outline of the year end accounting process. Members are invited to raise any queries relating to the process.

This report is provided for information purposes.

9. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN 2021/2022 ANNUAL INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT 2021/2022

Pages 36 - 53

In accordance with Financial Regulation 2.3, Members are presented with the completed Annual Internal Audit Report and supporting paperwork as part of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return, for the year ended 31st March 2022.

Members are advised that the internal auditor completed an interim internal audit on 10th May 2022 and the year end internal audit on 13th June 2022.

Recommendation: To receive the Annual Internal Audit Report 2021/2022 and to approve the actions detailed in the annotated Observations report as attached.

10. DATES FOR THE EXERCISE OF PUBLIC RIGHTS FOR 2021/2022

Members are requested to approve the dates for the Exercise of Public Rights in relation to the Annual Governance & Accountability Return, for the year ended 31st March 2022.

Members are advised of the following

1. Date of announcement: 24th June 2022
2. Date of commencement: 27th June 2022
3. End date: 5th August 2022

Recommendation: To approve the dates for the Exercise of Public Rights in relation to the Annual Governance & Accountability Return, for the year ended 31st March 2022 as follows:

1. Date of announcement: 24th June 2022
2. Date of commencement: 27th June 2022
3. End date: 5th August 2022

11. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN 2021/2022 SECTION 1 - ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

Page 54

In accordance with Financial Regulation 2.3, a draft completed version of Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return, for the year ended 31st March 2022 is attached for consideration, approval and signature.

Recommendation: To approve and sign Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return for the year ended 31st March 2022.

12. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN 2021/2022 SECTION 2 – ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS

Page 55

In accordance with Financial Regulation 2.3, Section 2 – Accounting Statements of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return and the supporting Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2022 is attached for consideration, approval and signature subject to external audit.

Recommendation: To approve and sign Section 2 – Accounting Statements of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return for the year ended 31st March 2022 subject to external audit.

13. REVIEW OF EARMARKED RESERVE MOVEMENTS 2022/23

Pages 56 - 60

Members will find attached a schedule of earmarked reserves for 2022/23 with predicted movements to and from reserves during the course of the financial year.

This report is provided for information only as ear marked reserve movements are confirmed at year end.

14. CLIMATE CHANGE

Pages 61 - 64

To enable members to consider steps to help to address climate change.

Recommendation:

- 1. To take suitable steps to ensure the current work of the council follows a sustainable ethos. This could cover facilities and services, purchases, and working practices;**
- 2. To engage with the community to seek to assess the level of community support to set up a Green Task Force whose remit would include investigating the funding sources available to assist in the development and delivery of a Green Action Plan;**
- 3. To report back on the level of community support and if sufficient to consider the staff resource necessary;**
- 4. Once community support and staff resource has been confirmed to consider declaring a climate emergency.**

15. DUNSTABLE MARKET CHARTER

Pages 65 - 71

To provide members will information in regard to Dunstable Town Councils Market Charter and associated implications for Houghton Regis Town Council when holding events.

Recommendation: **To note the report.**

16. BEDFORD SQUARE COMMUNITY CENTRE

Pages 72 - 76

To enable members to consider the current and future use of Bedford Square Community Centre.

Recommendation: **To contact the CBC Monitoring Officer for advice on how to take the following points forward:**

- 1. BSCC has long been an underused asset within HRTC. It has however always held the scope to be a central and integral part of the towns community. For it to achieve this potential it required the proactive administrative and community support. HRTC would urge CBC to engage with its local communities to support community health and development;**
- 2. The partial use of the centre by the college is a significant loss to a number of local groups who have struggled with the loss of an affordable and central facility. HRTC would urge CBC to take necessary steps to ensure that other local venues under its control are affordable and available for such groups;**
- 3. HRTC would urge CBC to take a more proactive role in managing, promoting and supporting previous users of this centre to encourage their growth and development;**
- 4. HRTC would urge CBC to review the booking process to ensure it is robust and clear;**
- 5. HRTC would urge CBC to review existing venues in Houghton Regis to ensure that they are fit for purpose and to explore funding opportunities to improve their accessibility and overall offer.**

17. COST OF LIVING CRISIS

Pages 77 - 79

To enable members to consider ways to help local residents during these difficult financial times.

- Recommendation:**
- 1. To contact Andrew Selous MP to press for national help and support to those most in need**
 - 2. To contact local support organisations to explore opportunities (including the local foodbank, local primary schools / school family workers, organisations supporting vulnerable adults, faith groups, the Houghton Regis Locality team, Houghton Regis Children's Centre)**
 - 3. To look to provide a weekly donation to the local foodbank up to a value to be confirmed by Members.**

18. HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN CENTRE ACTION PLAN

Pages 80 - 137

To enable members to consider the Houghton Regis Town Centre Action Plan.

- Recommendation:**
- 1. To approve the Houghton Regis Town Centre Action Plan**
 - 2. To refer the Plan to the Partnership Committee for consideration**
 - 3. To request that CBC review and update the 2008 Town Centre Masterplan**

19. POSSIBLE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF LAND AT WINDSOR DRIVE

Pages 138 - 157

To seek Councils position on possible future development on land at Windsor Drive.

- Recommendation:**
- 1. To continue to offer support to the Friends of Windsor Drive Group in terms of engaging in democratic processes;**
 - 2. To oppose any future development on Windsor Drive unless very special circumstances are shown in accordance with draft Neighbourhood Plan Policy 12.**

0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0

17th June 2022

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

To: All Town Councillors

AGENDA – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

**12. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN 2021/2022
SECTION 2 – ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS**

Members will find attached the Financial Statements which support the AGAR Section 2 for 2021/22.

Additional pages 158 - 172

0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 18th May 2022 at 7.00pm

Present: Councillors: P Burgess
J Carroll
E Cooper
C Copleston
Y Farrell Chair
S Goodchild
D Jones
M S Kennedy
T McMahon
A Slough
C Slough
S Thorne
K Wattingham

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

Public: 15

Apologies: Councillor: R Morgan

12022 ELECTION OF THE TOWN MAYOR

The retiring Town Mayor, Cllr Copleston, invited nominations for the position of Town Mayor for the period May 2022 to May 2023.

Nominee: Y Farrell	Nominated by: D Jones
	Seconded by: K Wattingham
Nominee: J Carroll	Nominated by: T McMahon
	Seconded by: Pam Burgess

There were no other nominations.

Those in Favour of electing Cllr Farrell as Town Mayor: 8
Those in Favour of electing Cllr Carroll as Town Mayor: 2

On being put to the vote Cllr Farrell was duly elected as Town Mayor for the municipal year 2022 – 2023.

The new Town Mayor read and signed the 'Declaration of Acceptance of Office'. The new Town Mayor retired to receive the mayoral robes and the Chain of Office from the retiring Town Mayor.

The new Mayor adopted the role of Chairman and thanked councillors for the opportunity and gave an acceptance speech.

In the Mayors acceptance speech, attendees were thanked, and fellow councillors were thanked for the opportunity to be mayor and pride was expressed in becoming elected with further thanks to the retiring Mayor. The Mayor was invited to choose a consort, Cllr Farrell acknowledged that family support was strong and as such could not name just one consort, but would be accompanied by various members of her family and friends over the coming year.

Cllr C Slough proposed a vote of thanks to the retiring Mayor, Cllr Copleston. In his vote of thanks Cllr C Slough highlighted the achievements and accomplishments of the retiring Mayor during her mayoral year.

The Town Mayor, Cllr Farrell, welcomed her appointment and announced that her charities for the year would be the Carers of Bedfordshire, Headway and Hub Café.

12023 ELECTION OF THE DEPUTY MAYOR

The Town Mayor invited nominations for the position of Deputy Mayor for the period May 2022 to May 2023.

Nominee:	S Thorne	Nominated by:	D Jones
		Seconded by:	M Kennedy

Nominee:	P Burgess	Nominated by:	J Carroll
		Seconded by:	T McMahon

Those in favour of electing Cllr Thorne as Deputy Town Mayor: 5
Those in favour of electing Cllr Burgess as Deputy Town Mayor: 3

On being put to the vote Cllr Thorne was duly elected as the new Deputy Town Mayor.

The new Deputy Mayor read and signed the 'Declaration of Acceptance of Office' and received the Chain of Office from the Town Mayor.

Cllr Thorne thanked fellow members for their support in her role as Deputy Mayor.

12024 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr Morgan.

12025 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

A question had been received via email: As inflation had risen from 7% to 9%, Eastbourne Borough Council had declared a cost of living emergency, with the intention to encourage other councils to do the same, to increase pressure on the government to take action, would Houghton Regis Town Council consider implementing the same approach to support the residents of Houghton Regis in these difficult times?

The Friends of Windsor Drive would like to take this opportunity to thank the outgoing Mayor Cllr Copleston for her help and support over the last 12 months, it had been very much appreciated. The Group look forward to working with the new Mayor Cllr Farrell, going forward and wished her every success.

Friends of Windsor Drive Action Group asked, what do FoWD need to do to gain the support of not just the majority, but all of the HRTC Councillors and staff?

Presently, it felt like only some of HRTC wanted to listen and work with the Group. For example, some of the questions asked in previous meetings had not received a response. The group had written to the council offering members of the Friends of Windsor Drive as co-opted members of the Partnership Committee and were still awaiting a response.

It was requested that they be made aware of any issues that are delaying responses.

Members were advised that a trial exercise had been conducted on Saturday morning, knocking on the doors of residents close to Windsor Drive. The response was overwhelmingly in support of not building on Windsor Drive. Residents wanted to understand what support was being received from HRTC Councillors. Due to the success of this trial, it would be rolled out further over the coming weeks.

12026 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

None.

12027 MINUTES

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 21st March 2022.

Resolved: To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 21st March 2022 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

12028 COMMITTEE AND WORKING GROUP MINUTES

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

Corporate Services Committee	None to present
Community Services Committee	None to present
Environment & Leisure Committee	None to present
Planning Committee	4 th April and 25 th April 2022
Town Partnership Committee	25 th January 2022

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

Personnel Sub-Committee	17 th January 2022
New Office Provisions Sub-Committee	None to present
New Cemetery Sub-Committee	None to present

Resolved: To receive the Minutes detailed above.

12029 COUNCIL CALENDAR FOR 2022-23

The draft Council Calendar, including meeting dates, member briefing dates, and council and civic event dates, for 2022/23 was presented at the Town Council meeting held on the 21st March 2022. At this meeting Members noted the draft Council Calendar, made some suggested alterations and recommended its approval at the Annual Meeting of Town Council.

The approval of the calendar of council meetings including the time and place of ordinary meetings of the council up to an including the next annual meeting of the council was in accordance with Standing Order 4.j.ix.

Resolved: To approve the Council Calendar for 2022/23.

12030 COMMITTEE FUNCTIONS & TERMS OF REFERENCE

In accordance with Standing Order 4.j.v. Council was required to review its delegation arrangements to committees and sub-committees.

These arrangements were set out in the Committee Functions & Terms of Reference. This document set out the system of delegation to the Committees, Sub-Committees and Working Groups of the Council.

The approved Committee Functions & Terms of Reference were reviewed at the Town Council meeting held on the 21st March 2022. As detailed under Minute 11987, Strategic Policies 2022/23.

Resolved: To approve the Committee Functions & Terms of Reference.

12031 COMMITTEE, SUB-COMMITTEE & WORKING GROUP MEMBERSHIP

Members were requested to:

1. Nominate and approve membership on the Town Council's Committees, Sub-Committees, Working and other Groups (Standing Order 6d);
2. To appoint Chairs of Standing Committees accordingly Groups (Standing Order 6dv).

The following summarised the committee structure and associated membership:

Standing Committees

Corporate Services Committee	7 members
Environment & Leisure Committee	7 members
Community Services Committee	7 members
Planning Committee	7 members

Joint Committees

Partnership Committee 8 members (4 Town Cllrs & 4 CBC Cllrs)

Sub-Committees

Complaints Sub-Committee* 3 members
 Complaints Appeal Sub-Committee* 3 members
 Personnel Sub-Committee* 4 members
 Disciplinary, Grievance & Appeals Sub-Committee* 3 members (To be appointed as required)
 New Office Provisions Sub Committee 5 members
 Proposed New Cemetery Sub Committee 6 members

Working Groups

Events Working Group 7 members (up to)
 Pride of Houghton Awards Working Group** 3 members
 Combating Crime Working Group 5 members

Steering Groups

Houghton Regis Neighbourhood Plan 5 members

* To be appointed from Corporate Services Committee

** To comprise Members who do not sit on Events Working Group

Members received an additional document which provided membership details as requested by councillors. It was highlighted that there remained a vacancy on Planning Committee and on Partnership Committee.

Concerns were raised over the vacancies highlighted on the report. After discussion it was agreed for Cllr C Slough to fill the vacancy on Town Partnership Committee, and Cllr Goodchild to fill the vacancy on the Planning Committee.

Members appointed chairs of Standing Committees:

Chair of Corporate Services Committee

Nominees: Cllr Jones Nominated by: Cllr Wattingham
 Seconded by: Cllr Kennedy

There were no other nominations.

On being put to the vote Cllr Jones was elected as Chair of Corporate Services Committee.

Chair of Environment & Leisure Committee

Nominees: Cllr A Slough Nominated by: Cllr Jones
 Seconded by: Cllr C Slough

There were no other nominations.

On being put to the vote Cllr A Slough was elected as Chair of Environment & Leisure Committee.

Chair of Community Services Committee

Nominees:	Cllr Wattingham	Nominated by:	Cllr Jones
		Seconded by:	Cllr Thorne

There were no other nominations.

On being put to the vote Cllr Wattingham was elected as Chair of Environment & Leisure Committee.

Chair of Planning Committee

Nominees:	Cllr Kennedy	Nominated by:	Cllr Jones
		Seconded by:	Cllr C Slough

There were no other nominations.

On being put to the vote Cllr Kennedy was elected as Chair of Planning Committee.

Resolved:

- 1. To nominate and approve membership on the Town Council's Committees, Sub Committees, Working and other Groups;**
- 2. To appoint Chairs of Standing Committees accordingly.**

12032 REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

The Town Council was invited to appoint representatives to outside organisations to act as a link between the Town Council and the organisation.

Members received the list of outside organisations with nominations to which the Council appointed representatives in 2021/22. Members were invited to appoint representatives to these outside organisations for 2022/23.

Reporting Mechanisms

Members who were appointed as representatives were requested to attend meetings of the organisations and to report to them items / issues of relevance from Houghton Regis Town Council and in turn to report back to the Town Council or the specified committee on the activities of the organisation. There was a standing item on Town Council agendas to facilitate this.

Resolved:

- 1. To appoint the councillor representatives for the listed outside organisations for 2022/23;**
- 2. To note the reporting back mechanism as set out.**

12033 STANDING ORDERS

In accordance with Standing Order 4.j.vii. Council was required to review its Standing Orders.

Standing Orders were ‘the written rules of a local council, they were used to confirm a council’s internal organisational and administrative procedures, procurement and procedural matters for meetings’. ¹

The approved Standing Orders were reviewed at the Town Council meeting held on the 21st March 2022. Following on from this meeting, further work had been completed and a report presented some additional revisions.

Members received a report which highlighted changes to Standing Orders as set out by NALC (National Association of Local Councils) and to propose inclusion of a new Standing Order to cover Virtual Attendance at meetings.

Members were advised that the values for contracts had been updated.

It was requested that the Corporate Services Committee review policies to ensure they were all gender inclusive.

Resolved: To adopt the Town Councils Standing Orders noting the following revisions and additions:

- a) Revision to Standing Order 1t(ii) to include ‘virtually or in person’
- b) Revision to Standing Order 18 – as advised by NALC (April 2022)
- c) New Standing Order number 33 - Virtual Attendance

12034 FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

In accordance with Standing Order 4.j.vii. Council was required to review its Financial Regulations.

Financial Regulations were ‘the “standing orders” of a local council that regulated and controlled its financial affairs and accounting procedures’. ²

The approved Financial Regulations were reviewed at the Town Council meeting held on the 21st March 2022. Members were advised of the updated values for public contracts.

Resolved: To approve Financial Regulations as presented.

12035 SCHEME OF DELEGATION

In accordance with Standing Order 4.j.v. Council was required to review its Scheme of Delegation.

The Scheme of Delegation authorised the Proper Officer and Responsible Financial Officer, Council and Standing Committees of the Council to act with delegated authority in the specific circumstances detailed.

The approved Scheme of Delegation was reviewed at the Town Council meeting held on 21st March 2022 and were recommended for approval.

Resolved: To approve the Scheme of Delegation as presented.

12036 GENERAL POWER OF COMPETENCE

In order for the Town Council to continue to use the General Power of Competence it needed to resolve that it met the eligibility criteria (specified below) as contained in Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011:

- At least 2/3 of Members were elected at ordinary elections or at a by-election
- The clerk held the following recognised qualifications
 - (i) The Certificate of Higher Education in Local Policy;
 - (ii) The CiLCA module on the General Power of Competence

Resolved: To confirm that Houghton Regis Town Council meets the eligibility criteria for the General Power of Competence as contained in Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011.

12037 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 updated members on Houghton Hall Park, the structure of their strategy board had changed, the chair was now an elected councillor, which was Cllr Kennedy, it was advised that there was unfortunately no tender in place for the catering contract. There was a new head gardener in post.

Cllr Thorne updated members on Dial-a-Ride, they had settled into their new offices in the Incuba, they were searching for a new manager. Citizens Advice were due to meet in two weeks, and were training staff in EDI which Cllr Thorne was undertaking.

Cllr Farrell updated members on the Memorial Hall. There were grant applications in place but the main focus was the anniversary of the hall, with an afternoon function by invitation only and a ticketed evening function.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.16pm

Dated this 20th day of June 2022

Chairman

¹ Local Councils Explained, NALC

² Local Councils Explained, NALC

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP 2022/2023

STANDING COMMITTEES – 2022/2023

Corporate Services

Cllrs: J Carroll, C Copleston, E Cooper, S Goodchild, D Jones (Chair), M Kennedy, K Wattingham

Environment & Leisure

Cllrs: P Burgess, E Cooper, Y Farrell, T McMahon, R Morgan, A Slough (Chair), S Thorne

Planning

Cllrs: J Carroll, E Cooper, D Jones, S Goodchild, M Kennedy (Chair), C Slough, S Thorne

Community Services

Cllrs: P Burgess, C Copleston, Y Farrell, S Goodchild, T McMahon, A Slough, K Wattingham (Chair)

OTHER COMMITTEES – 2022/2023

Town Partnership

Cllrs: D Jones, T McMahon, C Slough, K Wattingham

SUB-COMMITTEES – 2022/2023

Complaints Sub-Committee (Reporting to Town Council)

Cllrs: To be appointed as required.

Complaints Appeal Sub-Committee (Reporting to Town Council)

Cllrs: To be appointed as required.

Disciplinary, Grievance & Appeals Sub-Committee (Reporting to Corporate Services)

Cllrs: To be appointed as required.

Personnel Sub Committee (Reporting to Corporate Services)

Cllrs: J Carroll, C Copleston, S Goodchild, D Jones

New Office Sub Committee (Reporting to Town Council)

Cllrs: P Burgess, D Jones, T McMahon, C Slough, S Thorne

New Cemetery Sub Committee (Reporting to Town Council)

Cllrs: J Carroll, Y Farrell, M Kennedy, R Morgan, A Slough, S Thorne

WORKING GROUPS – 2022/2023

Events Working Group (Reporting to Community Services)

Cllrs: E Cooper, Y Farrell, M Kennedy, T McMahon, A Slough, C Slough, K Wattingham

Pride of Houghton Awards Working Group (Reporting to Community Services)

Cllrs: J Carroll, C Copleston, S Thorne

Combating Crime Working Group (Reporting to Community Services)

Cllrs: C Copleston, Y Farrell, M Kennedy, T McMahon, K Wattingham

Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (Reporting to Planning)

Cllrs: J Carroll, Y Farrell, S Goodchild, D Jones, A Slough

Allotments Working Group (Reporting to E&L)

Cllrs: E Cooper, Y Farrell, T McMahon, R Morgan, C Slough

DRAFT

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Corporate Services Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on
28th February 2022 at 7.00pm.

Present: Councillors: D Jones Chairman
C Copleston
S Goodchild
M S Kennedy
C Slough
K Wattingham

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

Public: 1

Remote attendance: Councillor: J Carroll
T McMahon

11953 APOLOGIES & SUBSTITUTIONS

None.

11954 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

11955 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

None.

11956 MINUTES

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 22nd November 2022.

The Chair gave his thanks to Councillor Kennedy for standing in for him due to his absence, for the meeting held on the 22nd November 2022.

Members requested that an amendment to minute number 11867 was noted: The new developments in Houghton Regis were currently not included in Op Hana patrols due to budget constraints and the council requested this be looked into however, the police would need to be approached to provide costings for additional patrols.

Resolved: To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 22nd November 2022 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

11957 TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING MEETINGS AND CONSIDER ANY RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED THEREIN

Resolved: To receive the Minutes of the Personnel Sub-Committee meeting of the 11th October 2021 and New Office Sub Committee on 15th February 2021.

11958 INCOME AND EXPENDITURE REPORT

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

Members requested clarification on communications cost at 123%. It was advised that this cost had been incurred due to the necessary replacement of obsolete phones.

It was highlighted that budget constraints had prevented some remedial work to improve I.T. and connectivity relating to hybrid meetings. It was hoped that this could be addressed in the new financial year.

11959 BANK AND CASH RECONCILIATION STATEMENTS

Members received the monthly bank and cash reconciliation statements for October, November and December 2021 and January 2022.

Members queried the amount on the reconciliation statement relating to petty cash. Members were advised that this would be clarified with the Town Clerk.

Resolved:

- 1. To approve the monthly bank and cash reconciliation statements for October, November and December 2021 and January 2022;**
- 2. For these along with the original bank statements to be signed by the Chair of Corporate Services Committee and the Council's RFO.**

11960 LIST OF CHEQUE PAYMENTS

Members received a list of payments for the period November 2021 to December 2021 (inclusive).

It was queried why a number of payments and adjustments were shown, but without the need for any payment to be made. Members were advised that this would be clarified.

11961 INVESTMENT REPORT

Members received a report for information.

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.

It was clarified to members that investments were overseen, internally, by the Town Clerk with advice from CCLA.

Members attention was drawn to a section in the report stating the notice period of 90 days for withdrawals.

11962 BUDGET FOR 2022/23

Members received the approved budget and explanation for 2022/23 for information.

The following new committee project was highlighted for information:

- Budget provision for the digitalisation project of council records

Members suggested that this be allocated to a specific cost centre rather than professional fees.

11963 INSURANCE CLAIMS

Members were advised that there had been one insurance claim from the 1st November 2021 to date.

Members received a report for information.

Claim number:	Details:	Repair cost:	Date settled:
27211391303	Repairs to Kubota	£1,512.38	4 th January 2022

11964 PUBLIC WORK LOAN BOARD – BORROWING

For members to consider the terms and requirements for the council seeking borrowing approval from the Public Work Loan Board.

It was queried whether the 2nd recommendation was necessary. It was highlighted that albeit unlikely to be needed, it put the council in a better position if funding were to be required without having the need to hold an emergency meeting.

- Resolved:**
- 1. To recommend to Town Council that an annuity loan over 28 years be applied from the Public Works Loan Board as this offers a consistency of repayment costs with repayments matching an existing capital budget provision.**
 - 2. The Chair and Vice Chair of Corporate Services Committee be authorised to liaise with the Clerk should funding be required from the CCLA Property fund.**

11965 INTERNAL AUDITOR APPOINTMENT

The Council had a statutory duty to complete an Annual Return each year. Within the Annual Return there was an annual internal audit report that provided assurance on a range of prescribed control objectives.

The internal audit testing programme was designed to focus on the areas where assurance is required for completion of the Annual Return.

The Town Council had previously, and for a number of years, used the services of Greenbiro Ltd to undertake their internal audit. As members were aware, Greenbiro Ltd had informed the Clerk that they were no longer able to provide this service.

Therefore, the Town Council was required to appoint a new internal auditor.

Members clarified and confirmed that the references from Company 'A' had been satisfactory.

Resolved: To recommend to Town Council, at the meeting to be held on 21st March 2022, that Company 'A' (IAC Audit and Consultancy Ltd) be appointed, for a period of 3 years, as the Town Councils internal auditor provider.

**The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 7.45pm
Dated this 23rd day of May 2022.**

Chairman

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL
Environment & Leisure Committee
Minutes of the meeting held on
14th February 2022 at 7.00pm

Present: Councillors: T McMahon Chairman
E Cooper
Y Farrell
R Morgan
A Slough
S Thorne

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

Public: 1

Also present: Councillor: J Carroll

11931 APOLOGIES

None.

11932 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

11933 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

11934 MINUTES

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 15th November 2021.

Resolved: To confirm the minutes of the Environment & Leisure Committee meeting held on 15th November 2021 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

11935 TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING WORKING GROUPS AND CONSIDER ANY RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED THEREIN

Allotments Working Group 5th October and 16th November 2021.

Members were advised the draft Tenancy Agreement as amended, minute number AWG21, was approved at the Environment and Leisure Committee meeting held 16th November 2021.

11936 INCOME AND EXPENDITURE REPORT

Members received the income and expenditure report, which highlighted significant variances, for Environment & Leisure Committee to date.

11937 BUDGET FOR 2022/23

Members received the approved budget and explanation for 2022/23 for information.

It was highlighted that additional funds were provided for EMR play areas and pavilion renovations. Members may like to consider the strategic objectives for this funding.

The following projects were highlighted:

- Replacement of planting beds on the Village Green
- Decoration of Village Green pavilion – funding was provided which would enable either internal or external decoration to be completed. The Head of Grounds favoured internal redecoration. Members were requested to confirm.
- External decoration of Parkside Pavilion
- Enhanced support to HHP in accordance with JVA
- Painting of railings at Village Green and Tithe Farm play areas
- 2 x new benches for Parkside Recreation ground
- Renovation of Town Sign planting bed (wooden sleepers)
- Enhancement of Parkside family area

Members acknowledged that there were many projects to consider, with significant expenditure.

Members agreed to the internal decoration of the Village Green.

Members were advised that a safety audit had been completed on the play areas which had not flagged any issues on any of the sites. Members were advised the equipment was looking tired, however, remained functional.

Members were updated on planned work for the enhancement of Parkside family area, which included a pagoda, play equipment, 2 picnic benches, litter bins and some planting of trees.

Members were requested to consider the purchase of a new Side Arm Flail to replace the bulky and cumbersome Side Arm Flail that was currently being used by the Grounds Team. Members were advised that funding was available to from EMR 352.

Resolved: To Purchase a Side Arm Flail using company 1 with funds from EMR 352.

11938 TITHE FARM RECREATION GROUND SPORTS PROJECT UPDATE

Members were advised that the application made to the land registry had been withdrawn, however, an application had been made for a 'good lease'. A planning application had been submitted and was due to be presented to the Development Management Committee on 16th February 2022. The Pitch Tender had been awarded for £761,434, the tender included the car park extension and refurbishment at an additional cost of £106,512.

The pavilion open tender had been unsuccessful therefore a closed tender process had been advised which had resulted in 2 tender returns. A tender analysis had been completed and a tender was recommended.

Members were advised that Beds F A were a non-profit organisation and would take on the complete management of the site.

Resolved:

- 1. To appoint Company B as the contractor to deliver the Tithe Farm All Weather project pavilion and associated works;**
- 2. To support the operational site management being undertaken by the Bedfordshire Football Association and for a draft agreement to be developed for formal consideration;**
- 3. To request that Town Council consider and approve an application to the Public Works Loan Board for borrowing of £500,000.**

11939 RECREATION LAND AND FACILITIES WITHIN BIDWELL WEST

Members received an update on the recreation land and facilities within Bidwell West.

Concerns were raised regarding the limited information supplied on the standard of pitches. It was requested that further information be sought.

11940 CHRISTMAS TREE

Members received the Community Services Committee report which considered the siting of a living Christmas Tree.

It was suggested by Community Services Committee that the council seek to site the tree on The Green near to the pedestrian crossing on East End subject to suitable investigations taking place. Members were invited to discuss.

Members discussed options to give a re-planted tree the best chance of survival. It was advised that a smaller tree would stand a better chance of survival after re-planting.

Members discussed alternative festive lighting ideas for Houghton Regis.

Resolved: **To seek to site the Christmas tree, near to the pedestrian crossing on East End subject to suitable investigations taking place.**

11941 VILLAGE GREEN ALTERATIONS

Members were updated on the Welcome Back Fund. Members were advised that a variation on the initial request had been submitted and a response was awaited. Members were advised that Central Bedfordshire Council may refuse the funding for the moving of the fence as that would be considered permanent structural alteration.

Members were advised that grant money had been applied for the Plant a Tree for the Jubilee initiative, and Houghton Regis had been awarded £4,700 for 5 fruit trees and 20m of willow hedging.

Resolved: To support the enhancements outlined to the Village Green provided the funding is confirmed.

11942 HIRE FEES FOR VILLAGE GREEN PAVILION AND MOORE CRESCENT PAVILION

Members were advised that there had been an increase in the hiring of Moore Crescent Pavilion. It was suggested the restricted seasonal hirability of the pavilion was off putting for prospective hirers.

A recorded vote was requested on the proposed recommendation:

In favour: Cllrs: T McMahon, Y Farrell, S Thorne, E Cooper, Abby Slough.

Against: 0

Abstentions: Cllr: Ray Morgan

Resolved: To approve the Environment & Leisure Schedule of Fees for 2022/23 for Village Green Pavilion and Moore Crescent Pavilion.

11943 FAIR & CIRCUS VISITS 2022

Members confirmed that signage regarding parking had impacted the local area positively.

Members were advised that the following visits had been requested for 2022:

Tom Smith Fair Visits

11th May to 23rd May 2022 – 13 days

Sept 5th to 12th September 2022 – 8 days

John Lawson Circus Visit

10th to 20th October 2022 – 11 days

Resolved: To approve the visits as requested.

11944 VISION UPDATE

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

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.44pm

Dated this day of

Chairman

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL
Environment & Leisure Committee
Minutes of the meeting held on
14th March 2022 at 7.00pm

Present: Councillors: T McMahon Chairman
Y Farrell
C Slough Substitute
S Thorne

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

Public: 0

Apologies: Councillor: A Slough

Also present: Councillors: J Carroll
S Goodchild
C Copleston
K Wattingham

Absent: E Cooper
R Morgan

11966 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllr A Slough (Cllr C Slough substituted).

11967 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

11968 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

11969 TERRA CROFT LEISURE GARDENS – LAND TRANSFER

To enable the council to consider the land transfer associated with the allotments at Chalk Fields, Houghton Regis.

Resolved: To authorise the signing of the land transfer associated with title number BD323949 for allotments at Chalk Fields, Houghton Regis.

11970 CREATION OF A GARDEN IN RECOGNITION OF THE IMPACT OF COVID

To enable the council to consider the creation of a garden to enable residents to remember loved ones lost due to covid.

Members discussed, at length; names, possible locations and how the remembrance garden could look and how it would be used and whether it should be dedicated to only those lost through Covid. Members agreed it should be a place where people could come to reflect and remember without the intrusion of external noise.

It was requested that a further report be presented at the next Environment and Leisure Committee meeting to be held in June.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 6.30pm

Dated this 13th day of June 2022

Chairman

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Planning Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on

16th May 2022 at 7.00pm

Present:	Councillors:	D Jones E Cooper Y Farrell C Slough	Chairman Substitute
	Officers:	Debbie Marsh Louise Senior	Corporate Services Manager Head of Democratic Services
	Public:	1	
Apologies:	Councillors:	J Carroll M S Kennedy R Morgan	
Also present: Virtual	Councillor	T McMahan S Goodchild	Central Bedfordshire Council

12015 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Cllr Carroll, Cllr Kennedy and Cllr Morgan (Cllr Cooper substituted for Cllr Morgan).

12016 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Friends of Windsor Drive asked:

- At last month's Planning Meeting, HRTC Council Planning Committee were requested to ask CBC what the impact had been on the recent Dacorum Council's temporary halt on any Development in the Chiltern Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation Zone of Influence, upon their Planning applications and what impact will this have on their proposals for Windsor Drive? We would like to know what response you as the Planning Committee have had from CBC.
- Given how the people of Houghton Regis had been treated to date regarding CBC Consultation, e.g. CBC listening Event regarding Windsor Drive, Theft of our Community Centre etc. what hope do HRTC have that CBC will actually listen to the findings of the CBC Statement of Community Involvement Consultation? Can we respectfully ask HRTC Planning Committee to feed back to CBC the fact that a very large number of residents, not just those in The Friends of Windsor Drive Group, had no faith or trust that CBC would listen;

- Given that Michael Grove abandoned the Tory manifesto pledge to build 300,000 homes a year with a plan to let communities BLOCK new housing developments and introduce 'street votes'. What are HRTC Planning Committee intending to do to use this information to push back on CBCs proposals for Windsor Drive and ask CBC to adopt this new Community driven strategy now rather than pushing ahead with proposals for Windsor Drive when the Community were absolutely against any development?

Members were advised that contact had been attempted with the owner of Dean Hollow to no avail, contact had been made with a neighbour of Dean Hollow who wished to undertake tree works in a Conservation Area, members would be kept updated.

12017 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

12018 MINUTES

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on the 25th April 2022.

Resolved: To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 25th April 2022 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

12019 PLANNING MATTERS

(a) The following planning applications were considered:

CB/22/01423/FULL Change of Use: Retail unit to a Tanning Salon.
Unit 4, All Saints View, High Street, LU5 5LQ
For: Ms Anna Kabacinska

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

CB/22/01589/FULL Reconstruction of the existing boundary front wall
104A High Street, LU5 5BJ
For: Giovanni Martuccio

Comments: Houghton Regis Town Council had no objections to this application, however, wished to express concerns that there was no information on method of construction or what materials would be used for the reconstruction of the wall.

CB/22/01594/FULL Infill of the front canopy to form an enclosed porch
6 Townsend Terrace, LU5 5BB
For: Miss N Perring

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

-
- CB/22/01561/FULL Single storey rear and front extensions and garage conversion
82 Hillcroft, Dunstable, LU6 1TU
For: Mr Adam Watkins
- Comments: Houghton Regis Town Council had no objections to this application.**
- CB/22/01526/FULL Single storey wraparound extension.
131 Leafields, LU5 5LU
For: Andrea Dennis
- Comments: Houghton Regis Town Council had no objections to this application.**
- CB/22/01664/TD Prior Notification of Telecommunications Development -
Proposed 15.0m Phase 9 super slimline Monopole and associated ancillary works.
Park Road North Woodside Estate Houghton Regis LU5 5LE
For: CK Hutchison Networks (UK) Ltd
- Comments: Houghton Regis Town Council objects to the siting of the proposed telecommunication mast and associated cabinets for the following reasons:**
- **Policy IS6 of the supporting SSSI, states that Telecommunications development will be permitted where: (i) it would not harm the character and appearance of the built or natural environment; or (ii) the need for the development on the proposed site would outweigh such harm. The Town Council feels strongly that due to the proposed location there would be significant harm to the character and appearance of the natural environment.**
 - **The location is on a road that is considered to be one of a number of roads viewed as a green gateway into the town.**
 - **The siting would cause loss of amenity space.**
 - **Due the height of the proposed mast and the size and siting of the associated cabinets, this development would have a detrimental impact on the amenity of the area.**
 - **Whilst the Town Council acknowledges the reason for the siting of a mast around this area, it does not agree that the need would outweigh the harm, on this particular site.**

Noted:

- CB/22/01495/DOC Discharge of Condition 20 against planning permission CB/21/01242/FULL (Development of the site for E(g)(iii), B2 and B8 Uses to include Trade Counter, including details of access, servicing, landscaping, boundary treatment and associated works.)
Employment Site North of Thorn Road, Thorn Road, Houghton Regis
- CB/22/01452/DOC Discharge of Condition 17 against planning permission CB/19/02130/FULL:-(Demolition of existing residential dwelling and erection of 119 dwellings including the creation of a new vehicular access, recreational open space, parking infrastructure and associated landscaping and ancillary works.)
The Gates Land East of Bedford Road Bidwell Houghton Regis
- CB/22/01438/DOC Discharge of Condition 15 against planning permission CB/18/04641/REG3 (The development of a 20 unit, 3-storey transitional housing scheme with associated access, parking and landscaping)
Land Adjacent To St Thomas Meeting House, Windsor Drive, LU5 5SJ
- CB/22/01659/DOC Discharge of Condition 4 against planning permission CB/18/04471/FULL (48 new residential units.)
Land at Oakwell Park, Thorn Road, LU5 6JH

Permissions / Approvals / Consents***Refusals:***

None received.

Withdrawals:

- CB/22/00537/OUT Outline Application: Construction of 27 detached two bedroom properties and 2 three bedroom properties after demolition of existing bungalow with some matters reserved.
The Bungalow, Bedford Road, LU5 6JS

12020 STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT CONSULTATION APRIL 2022 -CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

Members received a letter, along with a draft consultation document, from Central Bedfordshire Council in regard to a Statement of Community Involvement Consultation.

Members were advised the Town Council had until 10am on Wednesday 1st June 2022 to submit their comments.

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

Members discussed at length the Statement of Community Involvement and acknowledged that residents had lost faith in Central Bedfordshire Council and expressed their disappointment in the processes. It was recognised that Community feedback suggested that Central Bedfordshire Council do not take comments from the community on board from consultations evidenced by those that had been held and suggested that these had not been earnest engagements.

Members suggested examples of Community Centre engagement, i.e. the issues surrounding the lack of engagement in regard to The Brook development, be included in their response to Central Bedfordshire Council.

Members were advised that a training session was being planned for Town and Parish councils, by Central Bedfordshire Council, on the Statement of Community Involvement. Date to be confirmed.

Resolved: To consider the Town Councils response to Central Bedfordshire Councils Statement of Community Involvement Consultation.

12021 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 – Members were provided with the web address, link below, to the quarterly monitoring reports

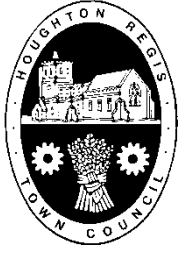
https://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/info/44/planning/458/planning_obligations/2

Resolved: To note the information

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.08pm

Dated this 6th day of June 2022.

Chairman



TOWN COUNCIL

Agenda Item 8

Date: 20th June 2022

Title: YEAR END ACCOUNTS PROCESS

Purpose of the Report: To advise members of the year end accounting processes.

Contact Officer: Clare Evans, Town Clerk

1. RECOMMENDATION

The report is provided for information only.

2. BACKGROUND

This report is provided to advise members of the year end accounting processes.

There are 3 elements to the Council's accounts:

1. Day to day accounts administration
2. Year end close down
3. Preparation of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return

The report provides guidance on each of these elements.

3. DAY TO DAY ACCOUNTS ADMINISTRATION

The administration of the council's accounts is undertaken by the Town Clerk / RFO with support from DCK Beavers.

4. YEAR END CLOSE DOWN

The RFO specifies a date for year end close down to DCK Beavers for mid May. This is to enable March invoices to be received and processed and for journals of corrections, adjustments, accruals and prepayments to be completed.

DCK Beavers then undertake the following:

1. Check prepayment, accrual and adjustments journals
2. Complete any outstanding journals over which there was a query

3. Make recommendations as appropriate to RFO & Accounts Officer
4. Check the proposed EMR transfers, make necessary amendments and input the appropriate journal entries
5. Print journal report for HRTC officer to check
6. Close down for the month of March and complete back-up
7. Closed the year and complete year end back-up.
8. Open new live company for the subsequent year's accounts.

5. PREPARATION OF THE ANNUAL GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN

The Annual Governance & Accountability Return comprises:

- Completion of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return form;
- Bank Reconciliation Statement for year end;
- Explanation of Differences to figures contained within the Annual Return form;
- Reconciliation of Boxes 7 & 8 of the Annual Return form;
- Statement of Accounts for the Year;
- Completion of Intermediate Audit Questionnaire supported by evidence specified by the external auditors.

DCK Beavers assist in the completion of the Annual Return. In preparation they require a Questionnaire to be completed in January which provides them with information on the Council's pension scheme, recruitment, advertising, publicity, asset purchases and disposals to date, leases and tenancies, and agency work. This information is provided to assist with the preparation of the Notes to the Statement of Accounts. In addition, the RFO specifies a date for the completion of the Statement of Accounts to DCK Beavers for early June dependent on the date of the Town Council meeting.

DCK Beavers provide a draft of Section 2 Statement of Accounts Notes to the Accounts by the date specified. Officers check information provided.

DCK Beavers do not prepare the following for submission with the Annual Return:

- Bank Reconciliation Statement for year end;
- Explanation of Differences to figures contained within the Annual Return form;
- Reconciliation of Boxes 7 & 8 of the Annual Return form;
- Completion of Intermediate Audit Questionnaire with evidence required

These are completed by the RFO.

6. COUNCIL VISION

The proposed action supports the Council's Vision as follows:

Aspirations

A5 To ensure the **council** is fit for purpose and efficient in its delivery of services

7. IMPLICATIONS

Corporate Implications

- This process is supported by the following council policies:
 - Standing Orders
 - Financial Regulations
 - Internal Audit, Planning & Review

Legal Implications

Smaller authorities must:

- Approve and publish the unaudited AGAR by 30th June 2022
- Must commence the period of public rights on or before 1st July 2022
- Submit the AGAR to the external auditor by 30th June 2022
- Publish the audited AGAR and notice of completion by 30th September 2022

Financial Implications

- There are no budget implications.

Risk Implications

- Failure to submit the Annual Governance & Accountability Return by 30th June 2022 would result in the external auditor issuing Qualified Accounts. This may result in reputational damage to the council.

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 report does not discriminate.

Press Contact

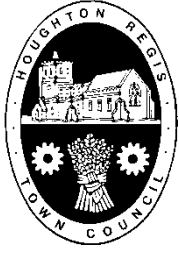
The decision relating to this agenda item will be communicated to the press, via the council's website and social media.

8. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

This is an annual process. The report provides background guidance for members information.

9. APPENDICES

None.



Date: 20th June 2022

Title: INTERNAL AUDIT 2021/22

Purpose of the Report: To present to members to internal auditors findings for the financial year 2021/22.

Contact Officer: Clare Evans, Town Clerk

1. RECOMMENDATION

To receive the Annual Internal Audit Report 2021/2022 and to approve the actions detailed in the annotated Observations report as attached.

2. BACKGROUND

Internal Audit is a function of management and forms part of the Council's internal control mechanisms. It is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level rather than eliminate all risk. It thus provides a reasonable, not absolute, assurance of effectiveness.

The audit should cover the areas of 'risk' identified by the annual return and any additional matters Council chooses. It must be based on the financial year.

The scope of the internal audit is set out in the Internal Audit Planning & Review Policy. This is reviewed on an annual basis by Corporate Services Committee. [201005 Internal Audit Planning & review policy.pdf \(houghtonregis.org.uk\)](https://www.houghtonregis.org.uk/201005%20Internal%20Audit%20Planning%20&%20review%20policy.pdf)

The internal audit for the financial year 2021/22 was carried out by IAC Audit & Consultancy Ltd on 10th May 2022 and 13th June 2022.

3. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Members will find attached from the internal auditor the following:

- Cover letters dated 19th May 2022 and 13th June 2022 – App A
- Observations reports annotated to show a response (Comments column) – App B
- Summary report – App C

- Detailed listing – App D
- Annual Internal Audit Report 2021/22 – App E

The Observations report as annotated is the suggested council’s response, with timeline, to the internal audit.

It is highlighted that the Internal Auditor has issued a negative response in respect of Control Objective M. The covering letter dated 13th June sets out the reason for the negative response to Control Objective M – the date of Announcement for the Period of the Exercise of Public Rights was stated as the same day as the date of Commencement. The date of Announcement should precede the date of Commencement. This will also require a negative response in respect of Assertion 4 of the Annual Governance Statement.

The Internal Auditor has suggested that it is highly likely that this issue will be subject to further query by the External Auditor and has suggested that it would be helpful if the council were to discuss (and Minute) a review of this issue and to include an explanatory letter when submitting the Annual Return.

The Clerk / RFO acknowledges this issue and will ensure that for future External Audits that the date of Announcement precedes the date of Commencement.

5. COUNCIL VISION

Aspirations

A5 To ensure the **council** is fit for purpose and efficient in its delivery of services

6. IMPLICATIONS

Corporate Implications

- A number of responses will need to be referred to the Corporate Services Committee for consideration;
- External support will be sourced to assist officers in reviewing internal accounting processes.

Legal Implications

- There are no legal implications arising from the recommendations

Financial Implications

- There are no financial implications arising from the recommendations

Risk Implications

- There is a reputational risk should the council not follow accounting practices.

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.

7. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

The internal audit for 2021/22 has been carried out by an independent and suitability qualified company. A number of observations have been made and an action plan to address these observations has been presented to members for consideration and approval.

8. APPENDICES

Appendix A – Cover Letter

Appendix B – Observations report – annotated

Appendix C - Summary report

Appendix D – Detailed listing

Appendix E - Annual Internal Audit Report 2021/22



Clare Evans
Town Clerk,
Houghton Regis Town Council
Council Offices
Peel Street
Houghton Regis
LU5 5EY

19th May 2022

Dear Clare,

Report on audit visit carried out on 10 May 2022

An audit visit was carried out by Kevin Rose on Tuesday 10 May 2022 as part of the annual internal audit coverage of the Council. The audit was undertaken using our standard IAC Audit Checklist, used for all Local Councils, which has 187 items. A total of 129 items were tested during this audit (including items that were examined and tested as part of the pre-audit process). The balance of 58 items will be checked during the Year End audit visit.

Areas subject to audit were;

Accounting system and records, Payment system, Risk and insurance, Budget and precept setting and monitoring, Billing, income collection and VAT, Petty cash, Payroll, Bank reconciliations, Accounting Statements, Exercise of Public Rights and Publication of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return.

Of the 129 items tested a Positive response was obtained in respect of 81 tests. 14 Negative responses were returned, of which 1 was classed as a Non Compliance, 6 as High, 10 as Medium, 0 as Low and 0 as Advisory. (34 items on the standard checklist were not applicable to your Council).

17 Observations and associated Recommendations, in respect of Accounting system and records, Payment system, Risk and insurance, Billing, income collection and VAT, Petty cash, Payroll, Bank reconciliations, Accounting Statements, Exercise of Public Rights, were raised as set out in detail in the attached Internal Audit Observation report. Our findings were discussed with the Clerk during the audit visit.

A detailed breakdown of our audit testing and Responses is set out in our Internal Audit Summary and I would encourage Councillors to review this in order that they may have greater understanding of the scope of the audit and the areas tested.

I would like to express my thanks for the assistance provided to us during our audit.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Rose'.

Kevin Rose ACMA
Director

Clare Evans
Clerk
Houghton Regis Town Council
Council Offices
Peel Street
Houghton Regis
Bedfordshire
LU5 5EY

13th June 2022

Dear Clare,

Further to my Internal Audit of the Council in respect of the 2022 Annual Return, I am submitting my report and observations to the Council. As you will notice from the attached Internal Audit Report it was unfortunately necessary to issue a negative response in respect of Control Objective M.

Control Objective M

“The authority, during the previous year (2020-21) correctly provided for the period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations (evidenced by the notice published on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set)”

Reason for the negative response Control Objective M

Regulation 14 of The Accounts and Audit Regulations (2015) sets out the requirements in respect of The Period for the Exercise of Public Rights

As you are aware, it was not possible during the internal audit to verify that the Council had properly discharged its obligations as set out in the Regulations. The date of Announcement for the Period of the Exercise of Public Rights was stated as the same day as the date of Commencement (they were both stated as 23rd June 2021). The date of Announcement should precede the date of Commencement (usually it is the next working day).

Implications in respect of the Annual Return

As previously advised it will be necessary for a negative response to be entered on the Internal Audit Report. In addition, the Council will also have to return a negative response in respect of Assertion 4 of the Annual Governance Statement.

It is highly likely that this issue will be subject to further query by the External Auditor and it would be helpful in that regard if the Council were to properly Minute a discussion of a review of this issue and to include an explanatory letter when submitting the Annual Return.

In addition to the Negative Response on the Internal Audit Report we have also responded 'Not Covered' in respect of the Control Objectives K, L and O and we are required to explain why we have done this.

- We have responded 'Not Covered' in response to Objective K is that it is not applicable to your Council as you did not certify yourself as exempt from External Audit.
- We have responded 'Not Covered' in response to Objective L is that it is not applicable to your Council as your 'annual turnover' exceeds £25,000.
- We have responded 'Not Covered' in response to Objective O as we understand that the Council does not act as Sole Managing Trustee.

In addition to this letter and the statutory Internal Audit Report I have also submitted our Internal Audit Observations and Summary to you by email. I would be grateful if you could bring all of these to the Council's attention in due course.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Rose'.

Kevin Rose ACMA
Director

Houghton Regis Town Council

Financial Year 2021-22

Interim Internal Audit Observations

A Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.

No.	Audit Test	Observation	Recommendation	Priority	Comments
1	Have Minutes been signed in accordance with the requirements of Schedule 12-paragraph 41 (2) the Local Government Act 1972 (this requires each page to be initialled and the final page signed)	<i>It was noted that a number of Minutes had not been signed in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Act 1972.</i>	The Council to ensure that all Minutes of meetings are signed in accordance with the legislative requirements. In particular Minutes of meetings should be initialled on each page and signed and dated on the final page.	High	Accepted, this will be actioned with immediate affect.

B This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.

No.	Audit Test	Observation	Recommendation	Priority	Comments
1	Do electronic bank payments require two authorisers?	<i>Electronic bank payments may be made of a Sole Authoriser basis by the Clerk. It is understood that cheque payments require three signatories.</i>	The Council, as a priority, to introduce Dual Authorisation for Online banking payments.	High	The RFO will contact the councils bank to implement this recommendation. To be actioned by 31/07/2022.
2	If payments are made under Direct Debit and Standing Order have these been subject to review and approval by Council in accordance with Financial Regulations?	<i>Direct Debits/Standing Orders have not been approved as required under the Councils Financial Regulations. (Paragraph 6.7 of the 2019 Model Financial Regulations.)</i>	Council to ensure that Direct Debits/Standing Orders are approved in accordance with Financial Regulations. (Paragraph 6.7 of the 2019 Model Financial Regulations.)	Medium	An annual report will be included on the Corporate Services agenda. This was completed on 30th May 2022 in response to the IA visit on 10th May 2022. An annual review will take place going forwards.

C This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.

No.	Audit Test	Observation	Recommendation	Priority	Comments
1	The council has reviewed its insurance requirements	<i>From a review of Minutes it was not possible to verify that the Council has reviewed its insurance requirements during the year. This was previously carried out in March 2019.</i>	Council to regularly review and update its insurance requirements	Medium	This was carried out in March 2019 when the long term agreement with the council's insurance provider was approaching conclusion. A review was completed at Corporate Services Committee 30th May 2022 in response to the IA visit on 10th May 2022. An annual review will take place going forwards.

E Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.

No.	Audit Test	Observation	Recommendation	Priority	Comments
-----	------------	-------------	----------------	----------	----------

1	Does the investment policy clearly show an awareness of investment risk being taken?	<i>Council has an Investment policy in place. This does not cover either the PSDF or the CCLA Property Fund which the Council currently holds funds with.</i>	Council needs to update its Investment Policy to include both funds held in the PSDF and CCLA Property Fund.	Medium	This is noted and a review of the Investment Policy will take place within 2022/23 by Corporate Services Committee.
---	--	---	--	--------	---

F Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.

No.	Audit Test	Observation	Recommendation	Priority	Comments
1	Petty cash value agrees to that stated in Financial Regulations	<i>It was noted that the Petty Cash balance brought forward from 2021 was £789.98. £500 cash was withdrawn end of March 2021 and an additional £250 was drawn to cash on 31st August 2021 (it appears that this money may have been spent but not recorded). At the date of audit visit the Petty Cash balance recorded in the Trial Balance was £1,105.51. The Clerk advises that the Petty Cash float actually held is £50.</i>	The Council to review transactions on nominal code 221 and agree the balance on this account to the balance of Petty Cash actually held.	Medium	This has been rectified within the year end accounts for 2021/22. The IA was correct in saying that cash had been withdrawn (to support council events) and spent but the expenditure had not been recorded.
2	Petty cash balances are regularly reconciled to cash in the petty cash tin.	<i>Petty cash balances (as recorded on Omega) are not regularly reconciled to cash in the petty cash tin. The cash tin is reconciled to a £50 Imprest balance.</i>	Council to put in place arrangements for the regular reconciliation of petty cash in hand to the accounts. This should be done on a quarterly basis.	Medium	The petty cash tin is reconciled on a monthly basis currently. However it needs to be reconciled with the accounts. A system will be put in place to ensure this happens on a quarterly basis as recommended.
3	Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts.	<i>The Council draws out cash to fund expenditure (such as payments made to volunteers). The Council does not record how this money has been spent. As a consequence the cash balance remains as unspent funds in the Council's accounts. There is also no evidence of independent review and approval of the spending of this cash.</i>	All amounts paid out from cash drawn out of the bank must be recorded in the Council's accounts as expenditure and must be subject to formal review and approval.	Medium	This is noted and will be actioned going forwards.

G Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.

No.	Audit Test	Observation	Recommendation	Priority	Comments
-----	------------	-------------	----------------	----------	----------

1	Pension deductions have been correctly computed (RAS or Superannuation/Net Pay)	<i>Some employees are not currently in the pension scheme. It is unclear how these staff 'opted out' of being in the scheme.</i>	The Council to review its arrangement for the Opting Out of the pension scheme and confirm that it is meeting its statutory obligations.	High	This will be actioned by 31st July 2022.
2	Deductions have been properly paid over to HMRC	<i>The Council does have login details for the HMRC account, so it is not possible to verify the balance recorded as on HMRC system.</i>	The Council to obtain the login details for HMRC PAYE and verify the balance recorded by HMRC agrees to the balance recorded by the Council	Medium	This will be actioned by 31st July 2022.
3	The Council has in place a process for the review and approval of overtime or Time In Lieu	<i>The Council does not have in place a formal process for the review and approval of overtime or Time In Lieu, including overtime paid to the Clerk.</i>	The Council to put in place a process for the formal review and approval of overtime. This should include a specific arrangement to confirm, in writing, whether overtime is to be paid or taken as time in lieu. The Council should put in place a formal arrangement for the review and approval of TOIL.	High	This will be actioned by 31st July 2022.

I Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.

No.	Audit Test	Observation	Recommendation	Priority	Comments
1	Any cash floats are regularly reconciled to cash on hand (interim)	<i>A cash float of £190 (on nominal account 225) drawn in March 2109 was not available in the office at the date of the audit visit. It appears that this may have been spent. (see additional Observations re Petty Cash)</i>	Cash floats should be regularly checked (at least every quarter) and agreed to the value recorded in the Councils accounts	Medium	A system will be put in place to ensure this happens on a quarterly basis as recommended.
2	There are no unexplained balancing entries in any reconciliation (Interim)	<i>It was noted that the Council is recording a balance of £1,278 on nominal code 217 NatWest Youth Council. It appears that these may be funds that should have been paid over to the Youth Council (although there is no corresponding creditor recorded in the Councils accounts for this amount)</i>	The council to review this balance and confirm its status.	High	This will be actioned by 31st July 2022.

3	Bank reconciliations have been signed and dated as evidence of independent review (Interim)	<i>Bank reconciliations have not been signed and dated as evidence of independent review.</i>	Bank reconciliations which have been subject to review should be signed and dated as evidence of this review.	Medium	Bank reconciliations for the year 2021/22 have been signed by the Chair of Corporate Services and the Clerk. They were not dated. Going forwards hard copies of Bank Reconciliations and corresponding bank statements will be available at the Corporate Services committee meeting for the Chair to sign and date. These will then be passed to the Clerk to sign and date.
---	---	---	---	--------	---

J Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.

No.	Audit Test	Observation	Recommendation	Priority	Comments
1	Stock quantities on hand have been physically verified	<i>The Council records a balance of £528 on nominal code 125 which relates to Red Diesel stock. It appears that the balance is not subject to verification and may be an old balance which has not be subject to review.</i>	The Council to review this balance and consider whether it wishes to continue to record this balance. If so, then the balance should be subject to periodic stock checking, as a minimum it should be checked at each year end.	Medium	It is not possible to accurately review this level of stock. It has been removed from the 2021/22 Statement of Accounts

M The authority, during the previous year (2020-21) correctly provided for the period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations (evidenced by the notice published on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set).

No.	Audit Test	Observation	Recommendation	Priority	Comments
1	The period for the Exercise of Public Rights commenced the day after the Council published the Accounting Statements, the Annual Governance Statement and the Notice as set out in Regulation 15.3 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.	<i>The period for the Exercise of Public Rights did not commence the day after the Council published the Accounting Statements, the Annual Governance Statement and the Notice as set out in Regulation 15.3 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. The Announcement Date and the Commencement Date were both set as 23rd June</i>	The Council MUST comply with Regulation 15.3 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 in respect of the Period for the Exercise of Public Rights.	Non Compliance	This has been rectified for 2022/23 and will continue as such going forwards.
2	Council Minutes record the dates set for the Exercise of Public Rights	<i>Council Minutes do not record the dates set for the Exercise of Public Rights.</i>	In future the Council to ensure that the date set for the Period of Exercise of Public Rights is recorded in Council Minutes.	High	This has been rectified for 2022/23 and will continue as such going forwards.

Houghton Regis Town Council

Financial Year 2021-22



IAC Audit and Consultancy Ltd

Visit date: 13- June -2022

Year End Internal Audit Observations

H Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.

No.	Audit Test	Observation	Recommendation	Priority	Comments
1	There is a register of owned assets	<i>The Council maintains an Excel asset register. It was noted on review of the register that this includes and large number of items and does not agree to the value stated in the Councils Accounting Statements. (The value for the Accounting Statements is taken from a Financial Report prepared by the Councils accountants)</i>	The Council to review the format of its asset register. As part of this the Council should look to separate small items of 'inventory' from larger value 'assets'. The value of the 'assets' on this register should agree to the Councils Accounting Statements Box 9 value.	High	The need for a a review of the registry of owned assets is accpeted. This will be completed by 31st August 2022.

Houghton Regis Town Council

Internal Audit Summary 2021-22

Interim Audit Date: 10/05/2022

Year End Audit Date 13/06/2022



Internal Control Objective	Negative Analysis					Responses				Recommendations
	Non - Compliance	High	Medium	Low	Advisory	Positive	Negative	N/A	Not Checked	
A <i>Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.</i>	0	1	0	0	0	4	1	0	0	1
B <i>This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.</i>	0	1	1	0	0	24	2	2	10	2
C <i>This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.</i>	0	0	1	0	0	4	1	2	4	1
D <i>The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.</i>	0	0	0	0	0	13	0	2	0	0
E <i>Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.</i>	0	0	1	0	0	6	0	5	12	1
F <i>Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.</i>	0	0	3	0	0	6	3	0	0	3
G <i>Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.</i>	0	2	1	0	0	13	1	8	1	3
H <i>Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.</i>	0	1	1	0	0	7	1	0	2	1
I <i>Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.</i>	0	1	3	0	0	11	4	1	0	3
J <i>Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.</i>	0	0	1	0	0	8	1	0	0	1
K <i>If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2020/21, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. (If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2020/21 AGAR tick "not covered")</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0
L <i>If the authority has an annual turnover not exceeding £25,000, it publishes information on a website/ webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the Transparency code for smaller authorities.</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	0	0

Internal Control Objective		Negative Analysis					Responses				Recommendations
		Non - Compliance	High	Medium	Low	Advisory	Positive	Negative	N/A	Not Checked	
M	<i>The authority, during the previous year (2020-21) correctly provided for the period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations (evidenced by the notice published on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set).</i>	1	1	0	0	0	3	2	0	0	2
N	<i>The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2020/21 AGAR (see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes).</i>	0	0	0	0	0	7	0	1	0	0
O	<i>(For local councils only) Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0
Total		<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>106</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>36</u>	<u>29</u>	<u>18</u>

Houghton Regis Town Council

Interim Audit Date: 10/05/2022



Internal Audit Detailed Analysis 2021-22

Year End Audit Date 13/06/2022

Internal Control Objective	Negative Analysis					Responses				Recommendations
	Non - Compliance	High	Medium	Low	Advisory	Positive	Negative	N/A	Not Checked	
A <i>Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.</i>	0	1	0	0	0	4	1	0	0	1
<i>Accounting system</i>	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
<i>Record keeping</i>	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
<i>Minutes</i>	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
<i>Other</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0
B <i>This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.</i>	0	1	1	0	0	24	2	2	10	2
<i>Financial Regulations & Standing Orders</i>	0	0	0	0	0	10	0	0	0	0
<i>RFO</i>	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0
<i>Powers</i>	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
<i>Payment Controls</i>	0	1	1	0	0	2	2	1	3	2
<i>Expenditure Controls</i>	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	0
<i>VAT Compliance</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
<i>Credit/Debit Cards</i>	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	0
<i>Tenders</i>	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0
<i>Grants</i>	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0
<i>Other</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0
C <i>This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.</i>	0	0	1	0	0	4	1	2	4	1
<i>Risk</i>	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	1	0	0
<i>Minutes</i>	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0
<i>Insurance</i>	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	2	1
<i>Internal Controls</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
<i>Other</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0
D <i>The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.</i>	0	0	0	0	0	13	0	2	0	0
<i>Budget & Precept setting</i>	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	0
<i>Auditors Reports</i>	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	0
<i>Accounting Statements</i>	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
<i>Budget monitoring</i>	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
<i>Reserves</i>	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	0
<i>Other</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0
E <i>Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.</i>	0	0	1	0	0	6	0	5	12	1
<i>Investments</i>	0	0	1	0	0	4	0	0	0	1
<i>Fees & Charges</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0
<i>Leases</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
<i>Debt control</i>	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0

2021-22 Houghton Regis Town Council Internal Audit

	Billing & Collection	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0
	Precept	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
	Cash income	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0
	VAT Compliance	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	3	1
	Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
F	<i>Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.</i>	0	0	3	0	0	6	3	0	0
	Accounting	0	0	2	0	0	1	2	0	0
	Payment controls	0	0	1	0	0	2	1	0	0
	Reimbursement	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
	Reporting	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
	Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
G	<i>Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.</i>	0	2	1	0	0	13	1	8	1
	Contracts	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0
	PAYE	0	0	1	0	0	3	0	1	0
	Deductions	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
	Pension	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
	Members Allowances	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0
	Accounting	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
	Changes to terms and conditions	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Payroll Approval	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0
	Overtime	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0
	Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
H	<i>Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.</i>	0	1	1	0	0	7	1	0	2
	Asset Register	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
	Additions & Disposals	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	1
	Verification	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Accounting	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
	Investments & Loans	0	0	1	0	0	2	1	0	0
	Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
I	<i>Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.</i>	0	1	3	0	0	11	4	1	0
	Preparation	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0
	Review	0	1	1	0	0	3	2	0	0
	Cash balances	0	0	2	0	0	1	2	1	0
	Accounting	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0
	Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
J	<i>Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.</i>	0	0	1	0	0	8	1	0	0
	Accounting basis	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
	Prior year	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
	Current Year	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
	Creditors	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
	Accounting Statements	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
	Stocks	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0

2021-22 Houghton Regis Town Council Internal Audit

	Debtors	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
	PWLB	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
	Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
K	<i>If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2020/21, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. (If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2020/21 AGAR tick "not covered"</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0
	Council Resolution	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
	Criteria	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
	Publication	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
	Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
L	<i>If the authority has an annual turnover not exceeding £25,000, it publishes information on a website/ webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the Transparency code for smaller authorities.</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	0	0
	Expenditure publication	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
	AGAR publication	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0
	Member responsibilities	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
	Assets publication	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
	Publication of Minutes	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
	Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
M	<i>The authority, during the previous year (2019-20) correctly provided for the period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations (evidenced by the notice published on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set).</i>	1	1	0	0	0	3	2	0	0	2
	Publication	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
	Commencement	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
	Duration	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
	Minutes	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
	Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
N	<i>The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2019/20 AGAR (see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes).</i>	0	0	0	0	0	7	0	1	0	0
	Publication	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	1	0	0
	Approval	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0
	Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
O	<i>(For local councils only) Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0
	Meetings	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
	Accounting	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
	Statutory Returns	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
	Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Total	1	7	12	0	0	106	16	36	29	18

Annual Internal Audit Report 2021/22

Houghton Regis Town Council

<https://www.houghtonregis.org.uk/> ONLY AVAILABLE WEBSITE/WEBPAGE ADDRESS

During the financial year ended 31 March 2022, this authority's internal auditor acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with the relevant procedures and controls in operation and obtained appropriate evidence from the authority.

The internal audit for 2021/22 has been carried out in accordance with this authority's needs and planned coverage. On the basis of the findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in this table. Set out below are the objectives of internal control and alongside are the internal audit conclusions on whether, in all significant respects, the control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of this authority.

Internal control objective	Yes	No*	Not covered**
A. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.	✓		
B. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	✓		
D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	✓		
E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
F. Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.	✓		
G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	✓		
H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	✓		
I. Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.	✓		
J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	✓		
K. If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2020/21, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. (If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2020/21 AGAR tick "not covered")			✓
L. The authority publishes information on a free to access website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with any relevant transparency code requirements			✓
M. The authority, during the previous year (2020-21) correctly provided for the period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations (evidenced by the notice published on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set).		✓	
N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2020/21 AGAR (see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes).	✓		
O. (For local councils only) Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.	Yes	No	Not applicable
			✓

For any other risk areas identified by this authority adequate controls existed (list any other risk areas on separate sheets if needed).

Date(s) internal audit undertaken

24/05/2021

DD/MM/YYYY

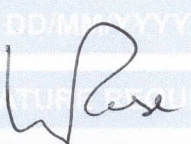
DD/MM/YYYY

Name of person who carried out the internal audit

Mr Kevin Rose ACMA - IAC Audit & Consultancy Ltd

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit

SIGNATURE REQUIRED



Date

13/06/2022

*If the response is 'no' please state the implications and action being taken to address any weakness in control identified (add separate sheets if needed).

**Note: If the response is 'not covered' please state when the most recent internal audit work was done in this area and when it is next planned; or, if coverage is not required, the annual internal audit report must explain why not (add separate sheets if needed).

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2021/22

We acknowledge as the members of:

ENTER NAME OF AUTHORITY

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2022, that:

	Agreed		'Yes' means that this authority:
	Yes	No*	
1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.			<i>prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.</i>
2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.			<i>made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.</i>
3. We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.			<i>has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.</i>
4. We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.			<i>during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.</i>
5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.			<i>considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.</i>
6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.			<i>arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority.</i>
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.			<i>responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.</i>
8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.			<i>disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.</i>
9. (For local councils only) Trust funds including charitable. In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.	Yes	No	N/A <i>has met all of its responsibilities where, as a body corporate, it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts.</i>

*Please provide explanations to the external auditor on a separate sheet for each 'No' response and describe how the authority will address the weaknesses identified. These sheets must be published with the Annual Governance Statement.

This Annual Governance Statement was approved at a meeting of the authority on:

DD/MM/YY

and recorded as minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

Signed by the Chairman and Clerk of the meeting where approval was given:

Chairman

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Clerk

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

ENTER PUBLICLY AVAILABLE WEBSITE/WEBPAGE ADDRESS

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2021/22 for

Houghton Regis Town Council

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2021 £	31 March 2022 £	
1. Balances brought forward	588,594	651,812	Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of previous year.
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	904,518	969,231	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.
3. (+) Total other receipts	108,584	228,169	Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.
4. (-) Staff costs	-470,267	-528,469	Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	-24,069	-24,069	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).
6. (-) All other payments	-455,548	-550,395	Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).
7. (=) Balances carried forward	651,812	746,279	Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).
8. Total value of cash and short term investments	668,873	755,015	The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – To agree with bank reconciliation.
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	3,734,865	3,862,735	The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.
10. Total borrowings	231,596	217,208	The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).
11. (For Local Councils Only) Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)	Yes	No	The Council, as a body corporate, acts as sole trustee for and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets. N.B. The figures in the accounting statements above do not include any Trust transactions.
		✓	

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2022 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

Signed by Responsible Financial Officer before being presented to the authority for approval

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Date

10/06/2022

I confirm that these Accounting Statements were approved by this authority on this date:

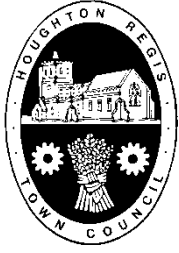
DD/MM/YY

as recorded in minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

Signed by Chairman of the meeting where the Accounting Statements were approved

SIGNATURE REQUIRED



TOWN COUNCIL

Agenda Item 13

Date: 20th June 2022

Title: Review Ear Marked Reserves

Purpose of the Report: To present to Town Council a six monthly review of ear marked reserves.

Contact Officer: Clare Evans, Town Clerk

1. RECOMMENDATION

This report is provided for information purposes.

2. BACKGROUND

Members may recall that at the June 2021 Town Council meeting it was requested that a system be put in place to review ear marked reserves on a 6 monthly basis. Accordingly members will receive a report on ear marked reserves at the January (alongside the precept and budget setting process) and June (alongside the year end accounts process) town council meetings.

3. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Members will find attached:

- Appendix A - Predicted Summary of Movements of Earmarked Reserves for 2022/23
- Appendix B – Tithe Farm Sports Provision – Project Funding schedule

The predicted use of ear marked reserves is based on ongoing projects and on aspirations included in the Vision.

The 'Notes' column highlights significant points for movements in 2022/23.

For movements in 2022/23 the following points are highlighted:

- It is difficult to predict the closing balance of general reserves for 2022/23 at this time, accordingly these have been left the same as the opening balance;
- EMR 322 – due to an increase in this EMR from the agreed transfer in from General

Reserves, this EMR will be used to support the Tithe Farm Sports Provision Project. However there is further funding available in this EMR which could be used to further support this project and thus reduce the borrowing requirement. It is suggested though that it may be more beneficial to retain this fund. There are 2 reasons for this suggestion:

1. in case of significant unforeseen work;
2. the pavilion tender included a price for the build costs, some of the contractors on-costs are linked to the build cost. Should the build cost not have been included in the tender at an accurate value (this is a possibility at this difficult financial time) in may be that the cost of the pavilion increases.

By retaining this scope for additional funding in the EMR, the council will find it easier to absorb any price fluctuations.

- EMR 327 – this fund is typically used to fund major play area refurbishments. It is highlighted that the council’s play areas are all over 10 years old now and significant funding may be required in the near future for refurbishment. Additional budget provision was made during the budget setting process to support this EMR;
- EMR 330 – it is hoped that this fund will be used to support the publication of the Houghton Regis Neighbourhood Plan. However should this project be delayed this fund will remain available;
- EMR 348 – as members are aware the council has authorised the 12 month monitoring of the land at Grendall Lane. This monitoring will conclude during 2022/23. Dependent on the results of the monitoring some or all of this fund may be required for further work on this project. Funds will also be used to purchase new vaults for the Garden of Remembrance. Work needs to be completed on accounting for the income from the Garden of Remembrance to be used to fund the purchase of further vaults;
- EMR 351 – it is hoped that further allotment sites may come forward in 2022/23, some funding from this reserve may be required to help establish new sites. Members are requested to note that the council remains to be invoiced by the developers for the additional shed bases, this outstanding liability has been accounted for in the year end accounts for 2021/22;
- EMR 352- there has been to date an annual transfer out from this fund to offset maintenance costs. However in accordance with the Town Council minute 11801 this transfer out has not been included in the budget for 2022/23. However to accord with the requirements of the s106 the council need to be using this fund to maintain the area. It is suggested that this transfer out again be included in budgets subsequent to 2022/23;
- Deferred income – it has been agreed to use this funding to support the Tithe Farm Sports Provision Project (Minute 11908).

4. COUNCIL VISION

Aspirations

A2 To effectively and proactively **represent** our community

A5 To ensure the **council** is fit for purpose and efficient in its delivery of services

5. IMPLICATIONS

Corporate Implications

- Interim monitoring of EMR movements is useful and aids the efficient delivery of

council services.

Legal Implications

- There are no legal implications.

Financial Implications

- There are no financial implications.

Risk Implications

- It is good local government accounting practice to ensure that EMR's are retained to support future identified projects.

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.

6. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

A 6 monthly review of EMR's is useful to confirm anticipated transfers in and out of EMR's.

7. APPENDICES

- Appendix A - Predicted Summary of Movements of Earmarked Reserves for 2022/23
- Appendix B – Tithe Farm Sports Provision Project Cost Summary

2022/23							
Committee	Schedule of Earmarked Reserves		Predicted	Transfer In	Transfer Out	Predicted	Notes
			Opening Balance			Closing Balance	
			01.04.22			31.03.23	
			£	£	£	£	
Town Council	310	General Reserves - Predicted	417,477	0	0	417,477	
E&L	320	All Saints Churchyard Wall	2,816	0	0	2,816	To be used to fund repairs as required.
E&L	322	Pavilion Renovation	231,849	0	160,341	71,508	It is anticipated that this EMR will be used to help fund Tithe Farm Sports project. The project funding outlined to E&L includes this contribution, however as this EMR is greater Members may like to increase the project contribution to reduce the PWLB borrowing requirement.
E&L	327	Play Areas	70,651	25,000	0	95,651	Typically this fund gets built up over time to fund major improvements to play areas. The transfer in of £25000 is from 299-4999. This transfer in is dependent on 299-4999 not having to be used during the year.
Comm Serv	330	Community Development	20,000		20,000	0	To be used to fund the Neighbourhood Plan process and production. It is hoped that this project will complete in 2022/23
Corp Serv	332	Elections	6,127	12,000	0	18,127	Typically this fund gets built up over time to fund any by-election or main election. This fund may be used in 2022/23 to fund any arising by-election. The transfer in will come from 102-4131
E&L	348	Cemetery	78,891	0	20,000	58,891	£10k To be used to fund the environmental assessment of the land at Grendall Lane. £10k to be used to purchase additional vaults for the Garden of Remembrance.
E&L	351	Allotments	49,560	0	0	49,560	To be used to fund enhancements to any allotment provision.
E&L	352	Former Railway Line	28,729	0	3,000	25,729	This has to date been an annual transfer out to help fund the ongoing maintenance of this land in accordance with the s106 agreement. In accordance with Town Council minute 11801 this transfer out has not been shown in the budget. However to accord with the requirements of the s106 the council needs to be using this to fund ongoing maintenance. To be transferred to 281-4992
Town Council	355	New Office Provision	165,000	0	0	165,000	
		TOTAL EARMARKED RESERVES	653,623	37,000	203,341	487,282	
E&L	S106	Deferred Income	230,575	0	230,575	0	To be used to help fund Tithe Farm Sports project

Tithe Farm Recreation Ground

Cost Summary- Option C (Clubroom/ Remodel existing pavilion/ resurface existing car park)

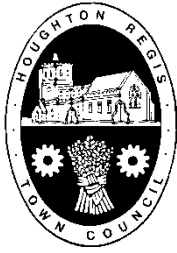
31st May 2022

Project Reference: 324-1 - Football Development Centre

Grey cells will auto-complete and do not require editing

Notes	£GBP
CBC s106 (1)	99,884.00
CBC s106 (2)	172,500.00
CBC s106 (3)	187,947.00
CBC Community Asset grant	25,000.00
HRTC deferred income	230,575.00
HRTC- EMR322	160,341.06
Town Council PWBL	413,164.38
Football Foundation	956,400.00
Shortfall	0.00
0 Project Budget	£ 2,245,811.44

		£GBP	Notes
1.1 Works Costs			
1.1.1 Pavilion	Taken from QS cost plan	567,072.00	Based on 4 changing room pavilion only (see adjustments for clubroom costs)
1.1.2 External works			
- Drainage	Taken from QS cost plan	109,500.00	
- External services	Taken from QS cost plan	19,000.00	Provisional allowance
- Roads/ paving/ landscaping etc.	Taken from QS cost plan	35,881.00	Excludes resurface of car park
1.1.3 Refurbishment/ part demolition of existing pavilion			See 1.2.12
1.1.4 Provisional Sums	Taken from QS cost plan	13,000.00	
1.2 Adjustments			
1.2.1 Omit prov sums for external services		19,000.00	
1.2.2 New power supply		20,000.00	Provisional Sum
1.2.3 New water supply		5,000.00	Provisional Sum
1.2.4 Gas supply		-	N/A
1.2.5 Omission of drainage scheme		109,500.00	
1.2.6 Addition of revised drainage scheme		34,300.00	Reduced scope. Fieldturf to attenuate pitch to Anglian Water requirements.
1.2.7 Addition of grass-protecta car park		38,500.00	Reduce scope to fit budget
1.2.8 BREEAM		10,000.00	
1.2.9 Extra over for clubroom		213,087.00	
1.2.10 ASHPs		20,000.00	
1.2.11 Existing carpark surface and entrance		65,000.00	
1.2.12 Repurpose existing changing rooms		100,000.00	
1.2.13 Main contractors oh/p		12,508.55	
1.3 Main Contractor Costs			
1.3.1 Main contractor design fees	Taken from T&B tender	61,945.00	Development from RIBA Stage 4
1.3.2 PCSA costs	Taken from T&B tender	16,800.00	
1.3.2 Main contractors oh/p	Taken from T&B tender	25,775.86	Priced at 3.5%
1.3.3 Preliminaries	Taken from T&B tender	116,142.32	Based on 28 weeks
1.3.4 Contingency	Taken from T&B tender	30,000.00	
Pavilion Sub-total		1,365,011.73	
2 FTP			
2.1 FTP		761,434.00	PCH still have limited information on what is included within this figure at this stage
FTP Sub-total		761,434.00	
3 Statutory Fees			
3.1 Planning			
- Pre-App	Central Beds	1,258.96	
- Application fee	Central Beds	1,178.33	
- Discharge of conditions	soy	190.00	Dependent upon approval
3.2 Building Regulations		-	Included in T&B tender and FTP tender
		2,627.29	
4 Professional Fees			
4.1 PCH fees to support of grant		5,000.00	
4.2 Client side Project Management/ Architecture/ QS/ Client side M&E on pavilion	6.5%	88,725.76	
4.3 Project Management for FTP/ Framework Administrator	RLF	-	Outside of project cost
4.4 Structural/Civil Engineer	Inertia	950.00	SUDS strategy for planning
4.5 M&E and Sustainability strategy	Bannerman Consulting Engineers	2,560.00	To support planning and tender process
		92,235.76	
5 Surveys/Reports/Other Costs			
5.1 Topographical Survey	By JPP		
5.2 Geotechnical Surveys	By JPP		
5.3 Bid support	Castele	6,930.00	
5.4 Legal Fees		2,000.00	Provisional allowance
5.5 Furniture		-	Fixed furniture included
5.6 Land registry costs		TBC	
5.7 OS Maps		572.66	
5.9 Drainage to the existing car park		15,000.00	Potential planning obligation
		24,502.66	
6 VAT		-	Dependent on specialist advice
		-	
ANTICIPATED PROJECT COST		£ 2,245,811.44	



Date: 20th June 2022

Title: CLIMATE CHANGE

Purpose of the Report: To enable members to consider steps to help to address climate change.

Contact Officer: Clare Evans, Town Clerk

1. RECOMMENDATION

1. To take suitable steps to ensure the current work of the council follows a sustainable ethos. This could cover facilities and services, purchases, and working practices;
2. To engage with the community to seek to assess the level of community support to set up a Green Task Force whose remit would include investigating the funding sources available to assist in the development and delivery of a Green Action Plan;
3. To report back on the level of community support and if sufficient to consider the staff resource necessary;
4. Once community support and staff resource has been confirmed to consider declaring a climate emergency.

2. BACKGROUND

A request for the council to consider declaring a climate change emergency was made at the Annual Town's Meeting in April. This report sets out the issues and options around this suggestion.

3. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

For guidance from the National Association of Local Councils on climate change members are referred to the NALC website: [Climate change \(nalc.gov.uk\)](https://www.nalc.gov.uk)

This provides advice relevant to the town and parish council sector on:

- What is climate change
- The climate change report 2021
- Climate change case studies

- What can your local council do

In addition various topics are covered in more depth.

Members are reminded that within the approved Vision is the following:

Objective 1: Grow your own

Includes:

Enhance biodiversity and support wildlife

Objective 2: A Greener Cleaner Houghton Regis

Includes:

Offer recycling in open spaces

Objective 4: Our community

Includes:

To provide high quality green spaces for leisure and recreation, healthier living, urban attractiveness, improved air quality

Members will find additional information on what Central Bedfordshire Council have done and are doing by following this link [Climate change - tackling it and our strategy | Central Bedfordshire Council](#)

4. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

The NALC section on ‘What can your local council do’ suggests the following:

- Declare a climate emergency
- Create a task force to establish a green agenda that includes developing a resilience policy and engaging in flood defence measures
- Develop and promote green transport plans, including safe routes to school
- Ensure that all council buildings are as energy-efficient as possible and that energy is not wasted through unnecessary heating and lighting
- Use green energy sources and environmentally friendly products
- Plan for a green community in a neighbourhood plan
- Limit the use of plastics, especially single-use plastics, in your council
- Reduce waste and recycle as much as possible
- Protect important open spaces and carbon sinks and consider creating a community orchard and/or wildflower meadow and/or allotments
- Look at the existing powers of councils regarding climate change

Members are invited to consider and discuss the following:

A reduction of the councils and communities carbon footprint is supported by the Vision. However declaring a climate emergency is as extensive project as it would look to embed significant changes in the operational working of the council and also individual lifestyle choices. The council needs to identify:

- the resource (staff and finance) it has available to deliver such a project;
- the community appetite for such a project in terms of community engagement and action (time and financial resource)

For this work to be meaningful it would require a firm and long term commitment from the council and the community. The following is suggested

1. To take suitable steps to ensure the current work of the council follows a sustainable ethos. This could cover facilities and services, purchases, and working practices. It is highlighted that this may result in higher costs being incurred;
2. To engage with the community to seek to assess the level of community support to set up a Green Task Force whose remit would include developing a Green Action Plan and investigating funding sources available to assist in delivery of the Action Plan;
3. To report back on the level of community support and if sufficient to consider the staff resource necessary;
4. Once community support and staff resource has been confirmed to consider declaring a climate emergency.

5. COUNCIL VISION

Aspirations

- A1 To develop and enhance **partnerships** between HRTC, stakeholders, partners, community groups and residents
- A5 To ensure the **council** is fit for purpose and efficient in its delivery of services

Objective 1: Grow your own

- 1.1 To support HHP kitchen garden
- 1.2 To support appropriate management of the Woodside Link Community Orchard
- 1.3 Establish allotments within new housing developments
- 1.4 Encourage healthy eating and food awareness
- 1.5 To increase edible planting
- 1.6 Enhance biodiversity and support wildlife

Objective 2: A Greener Cleaner Houghton Regis

- 2.1 To reduce the use of paper by the council
- 2.2 To increase recycling by the council
- 2.3 To encourage sustainable transport including use of public transport, walking and cycling
- 2.4 To provide outdoor fitness equipment in parks and open spaces

Objective 4: Our community

- 4.1 To create or enhance community facilities which support community development and cohesion
- 4.4 To help to protect and preserve historic gems
- 4.5 To provide high quality green spaces for leisure and recreation, healthier living, urban attractiveness, improved air quality

6. IMPLICATIONS

Corporate Implications

- Policy implications – should an Action Plan be developed this would need to be embedded in Council policy & practices. It would place a requirement on the Council from May 2023
- Staff implications – there is no staff resource available within the current staff

team to develop this initiative. The council would need to provide the staff resource necessary

- Training implications for staff and cllrs (Ext Auditors report 2018/19) – officers and staff would benefit from relevant and specific training
- Consultation including with youth council as appropriate – the report suggests community consultation to help to assess the appetite for such work

Legal Implications

- There are no legal implications arising from the recommendations

Financial Implications

- There are no financial implications arising from the recommendations

Risk Implications

- Capacity – there is no staff capacity to take this forward beyond the recommendations provided
- Reducing the carbon footprint is a national drive there is a reputational risk should the council not support this

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

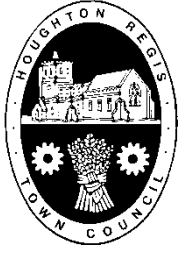
The decision relating to this agenda item will be communicated to the press, via the website and social media.

7. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

It is right that the council should take all possible steps to reduce its own carbon impact and also support the local community in taking what steps they can as well. However there are concerns over staff capacity to deliver on this work and this must be addressed should members decide to proceed. There are also concerns over committing the new Council in May 2023 to a significant piece of work and of placing additional financial burden on the council and its community. It may transpire that external funding becomes available to support such work and this would be very welcomed.

8. APPENDICES

None



TOWN COUNCIL

Agenda Item 15

Date:	20th June 2022
Title:	Dunstable Market Charter
Purpose of the Report:	To provide members will information in regard to Dunstable Town Councils Market Charter and associated implications for Houghton Regis Town Council when holding events
Contact Officer:	Clare Evans, Town Clerk

1. RECOMMENDATION

To note the report.

2. BACKGROUND

There is an historic Market Charter that covers the provision of markets in Dunstable.

It is understood that Central Bedfordshire Council, through delegated powers, have accepted that Dunstable Town Council shall operate and promote its Charter Market.

Officers from Houghton Regis Town Council always inform Dunstable Town Council of upcoming events that contain stalls and therefore could constitute being classed as a market.

Earlier this year Dunstable Town Council were informed of an event Houghton Regis Town Council were proposing to hold, the Easter Egg Hunt, which also contained stalls. This time the response from Dunstable Town Council was to charge Houghton Regis Town Council £50 for a licence for this event, as the event was in conflict with a craft market they were holding and thereby in conflict with the market charter. As the number of stalls were kept to a minimum, under 5, Dunstable Town Council waived their fee for this event.

Officers from Houghton Regis Town Council understand that Houghton Hall Park Visitors Centre have been charged a fee for once monthly events that were being held at Houghton Hall Park. These were Craft/Farmers Market type events.

Members will find attached a copy of Dunstable Town Councils Market Rights

Policy.

3. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Dunstable Town Council have confirmed that Houghton Regis Town Council events that are established as a community event, i.e. the Carnival, would not be charged. However, should the Town Council hold any event that does not fall within the remit of Dunstable Town Councils Market Rights Policy a fee may apply. This could also apply to events such as the Carnival in the future, should the number of stalls increase or indeed the type of stall holders change i.e. commercial.

Dunstable Town Councils Town Centre Services Officer has confirmed that the list of proposed events, provided by Houghton Regis Town Councils Civic and Events Officer, at the beginning of the year are considered and should anything seem to conflict with the Market Rights Policy, the Civic and Events Officer is informed.

Dunstable Town Councils Town Centre Services Officer stated that Dunstable Town Council is keen to work with Houghton Regis Town Council and will try, wherever possible, to avoid charging Houghton Regis Town Council for a licence to hold their event or even worse case scenario, to refuse a licence all together.

4. COUNCIL VISION

Aspirations

A5 To ensure the **council** is fit for purpose and efficient in its delivery of services

Objective 4: Our community

4.3 To provide activities for young people, families and older people

5. IMPLICATIONS

Corporate Implications

- There are no corporate implications arising from the recommendations.

Legal Implications

- Breach of Charter

Financial Implications

- Suitable budget provision to cover cost to Dunstable Town Council should a fee apply.

Risk Implications

- Reputation – there is a reputational risk should an event take place that conflicts with the Charter where a licence has not been issued.

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.

6. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

Under the Market Charter Dunstable Town Council has the right to charge for or refuse to issue a licence for an event in Houghton Regis, if the event conflicts with their policy.

Members may wish to refer to the guidance contained within Dunstable Town Councils Market Rights Policy when considering a list of events or changing the style of an historic event.

7. APPENDICES

Appendix 'A' – Dunstable Town Councils Market Rights Policy

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL MARKET RIGHTS POLICY

Background & Introduction

Dunstable Town Council manages Dunstable Market.

The legal definition of a market, being “a concourse of buyers and sellers”, with five or more trading positions, shall apply when determining the nature of any given event. Any event deemed a market (private or charity), that is to fall within 6 2/3 miles of Dunstable Market, falls within the confines of this Market Rights Policy.

Managing Market Rights

Market Rights are used by Dunstable to manage the markets and fairs that take place within the town, to ensure that the retailing and entertainment environments are successful ones. This process involves the strategic planning of all markets that are to be licensed across the town, to avoid concentrating too many markets within a limited location which could lead to a lack of vitality and viability. Dunstable Town Council therefore reserve the right to refuse a licence within six and two third miles of an existing Licensed Market which operates on the same day.

Licensing Events

Irrespective of the location of the market or fair, any permission from either the owner of the land / premise, or planning consent that may have been approved, a separate Market Rights Licence is still required. Without this the market or fair cannot take place. Markets will only be licensed once an application for a Market Rights Licence has been successful. Any market that takes place without such a licence is in breach of the law and will be subject to legal action.

If the application is successful, a Market Rights Licence will be issued detailing the responsibilities of the both the operator and Dunstable Town Council, upon completion of which permission will be granted for the market to operate.

The licences available for issue depend upon the operational requirements. The licences available are:

- Single Market Licence (for an individual market or fair, including those operating over more than one consecutive day).
- Multiple Market Licence (for several individual markets or fairs within a year).

All licensed markets will be monitored and Council Officers may from time-to-time and without notice visit the market to ensure that all the operator’s commitments are being adhered to. Any breaches of, or deviations from, the Market Rights Licence may result in the removal of the Market Rights permission and the subsequent closure of the market.

The Dunstable Town Council Market Regulations comprehensively lay out the quality standards and aspirations that need to be met by any operator running a market operation. The approval of a Market Rights Licence is on the condition that these standards are adhered to and fulfilled. In addition, the operator will agree to the terms of the licence under Market Rights and to make all associated payments.

Dunstable Town Council will require the licensee to assume full responsibility for all operational aspects of the market or fair operation, including regulatory and legislative requirements such

as health & safety management, site management and the relevant insurance(s) required for the market.

Application Process

Applications for a Market Rights Licence are available by post, on the Dunstable Town Council website (www.dunstable.gov.uk) or on request by email(Annette.clynes@dunstable.gov.uk). Applications should be submitted to Dunstable Town Council at least 21 days in advance of the proposed market. Dunstable Town Council will review all valid applications and appraise each, paying particular attention to:

- the type of market or fair and the commodities being offered for sale
- the purpose of the market or fair
- the length of the market or fair
- the number of individual trading spaces
- the number and type of markets or fairs operating within the locality
- the health & safety plans
- the required insurances
- compliance with the quality standards

Applications will not be valid where the required mandatory information, supporting documents or payments has not been provided, and / or where the application is delivered less than 21 days in advance of the market. Once a valid Market Rights Licence application is received, we will provide a conclusive decision within 14 days. Successful applicants will then be issued a Market Rights Licence to sign and return and make payment of the required licence payment by the prescribed deadline, prior to the commencement of the market or fair. Where the signed licence and / or payment is not received by the deadline, the licence will not be completed and the permission will not be granted.

Market Rights Licence Payments

All Market Rights Licences are subject to a payment, and licences will not be completed until the corresponding payment has been made as instructed. The payment will relate to the processing and issuance of documentation, and the monitoring of the Market Rights Policy and licence. Payments are required for all successful applications, and these must be made to Dunstable Town Council prior to the issue of the Market Rights Licence providing permission for the operation of the market or fair.

Administration Payment

Administration payments, relate to the issuance of documentation. The payment varies depending upon the type of licence agreement, either single or multiple. In addition, legal fees may also be passed to the applicant should there be a need to agree a more comprehensive legal agreement, in the case of multiple licence agreements.

Licence Payment

In addition to the above, a licence payment will be charged, based on the type of market being presented. A distinction will be made between car boot and tabletop sales, and all other markets and fairs, as explained below. A reduction to the licence payment may be applicable depending upon whether the market is part of a Local Authority Partnership, or where all the proceeds are being donated to a charity. Applicants must provide sufficient evidence to support any partnership agreement or charity donations. On occasions a market or fair may apply for and be licensed for a certain amount of trading spaces, but then may find that the actual event operates with more trading spaces than initially expected. In such circumstances Dunstable Town Council must be notified of this variation within seven days after the market or fair has

taken place. You will then be required to pay any additional licence payment and will be issued with a confirmation of the variation to the licence.

Returned Payments

Cashless payments returned as unpaid for any reason (e.g. insufficient funds), will be subject to an administrative payment and an alternative payment method will need to be agreed with Dunstable Town Council.

Payment Refunds

Applicants may apply to cancel a Market Rights Licence, and will be applicable to a refund of the licence payment provided that written notice is received by at least seven days prior to the actual date of commencement of the proposed market or fair. Administration payments are not refundable. When cancelling a Market Rights Licence, all the necessary arrangements need to have been instigated to advise the general public of the cancellation of the market and evidence of which must accompany the written cancellation notice.

Type of Market or Fair

Car Boot and Tabletop Sales

Car boot sales and tabletop sales should be restricted, as far as possible, to householders selling surplus household articles. No new goods should be available for sale. The Council may request proof of goods being sold. The car boot and tabletop sale description will also cover events such as computer, records, toy and book fairs providing all other car boot and tabletop sale criteria are met.

Charity and Community Markets

Proof of non profit making other than funds to assist a charity or community event must be supplied if requested. Applications for a charity market must include the charity registration number. Dunstable Town Council may request proof of charitable status and charity accounts. A charity/community market may allow up to 50% of the traders to be professional. Anymore will be considered a commercial market.

All Other Markets

All other markets include both traditional and specialist markets. Traditional markets will be general retail markets where a variety of goods are available, including new items. This can include car boot and tabletop sales where the sellers are not householders selling surplus household items. Specialist Markets are those where there is a specialised theme or grouping of commodities that make the event more than either a car boot sale or traditional market e.g. Antique or Farmers' Market, and exhibitions where retailing is undertaken.

Permanent Markets and Attractions

Permanent Markets are those markets that wish to be open for the majority of shopping days throughout the year. Attractions include one off events where there is not a market but a separate type of attraction (such as a large ride) where there are not a number of trading positions available to meet the above guidance. Such events will not normally be issued with a typical Market Rights Licence, but instead will have a negotiated contract that meets the needs of the market as well as providing suitable remuneration for the provision of Market Rights. These agreements will provide a more realistic annual licence payment and can provide a more lengthy contractual term.

Non-compliance with this Policy

Any non-compliance will be raised in the first instance with the individual or organisation in order to try to negotiate an agreeable outcome. Should a suitable agreement not be found,

Dunstable Town Council may take legal action against the individual or organisation in question. In addition, Dunstable Town Council reserves the right to refuse any future Market Rights Licences to events that are proposed by such individuals, businesses or organisations. In any instance Dunstable Town Council reserves the right to withdraw a Market Rights Licence and the associated permission for any market operation to continue, as and when necessary.

Comments, compliments and complaints

Dunstable Town Council operates a comments, compliments and complaints procedure. If you wish to make a complaint about any Market Rights Licensing matters, you have the right to utilise this by contacting Dunstable Town Council (www.dunstable.gov.uk). Members of the public also have the right to use this process to comment on any market, fair or individual traders.

“Receipt of a written complaint will be acknowledged and recorded within three working days and the complainant will be given contact details for the relevant Head of Service.”

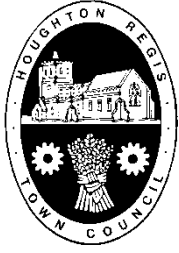
Contact

Dunstable Town Council, Grove House, 76 High Street North, Dunstable, Bedfordshire.
LU6 1NF

Telephone: 01582 513000

Email: info@dunstable.gov.uk

Website: www.dunstable.gov.uk



Date: 20th June 2022

Title: BEDFORD SQUARE COMMUNITY CENTRE (BSCC)

Purpose of the Report: To enable members to consider the current and future use of Bedford Square Community Centre

Contact Officer: Clare Evans, Town Clerk

1. RECOMMENDATION

To contact the CBC Monitoring Officer for advice on how to take the following points forward:

1. BSCC has long been an underused asset within HRTC. It has however always held the scope to be a central and integral part of the towns community. For it to achieve this potential it required the proactive administrative and community support. HRTC would urge CBC to engage with its local communities to support community health and development;
2. The partial use of the centre by the college is a significant loss to a number of local groups who have struggled with the loss of an affordable and central facility. HRTC would urge CBC to take necessary steps to ensure that other local venues under its control are affordable and available for such groups;
3. HRTC would urge CBC to take a more proactive role in managing, promoting and supporting previous users of this centre to encourage their growth and development;
4. HRTC would urge CBC to review the booking process to ensure it is robust and clear;
5. HRTC would urge CBC to review existing venues in Houghton Regis to ensure that they are fit for purpose and to explore funding opportunities to improve their accessibility and overall offer.

2. BACKGROUND

Members have requested that a report be presented to Town Council to enable members to consider the community impact on the partial change in use of BSCC and the request made at the Annual Towns' Meeting on 11th April 2022 for HRTC to

make an official complaint to CBC.

Until September 2021 BSCC had been available consistently for community groups and local residents to hire. In September 2021 CBC enabled Central Bedfordshire College (CB College) to use the community centre as an education facility.

BSCC is now used term time only, Monday to Friday during academic hours by CB College. BSCC continues to be available to hire by community groups and local residents in the evenings and at weekends and during school holidays.

The partial change in use was undertaken by Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) without prior consultation or communication. CBC have recognised this failing and have apologised publicly.

The longer term decision over the use of BSCC was considered by CBC Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee (CRO&SC) on 27th January 2022 ([01 May 2019 onwards | Powered by Box](#)).

In accordance with the resolution from CRO&SC, the matter was then considered by CBC Executive on 8th February 2022 . The committee report can be found here [08.a Houghton Regis Community Centre.pdf | Powered by Box](#) and minutes here [Minutes of the Meeting - 8 February 2022.pdf | Powered by Box](#)

This process appears to be in accordance with the CBC Constitution which enables O&SC's to refer matters to Executive: [Councillors, political control, constitution and webcasting | Central Bedfordshire Council](#)

Representations were made by HRTC at both these meetings for BSCC to remain as in community use.

The current situation is that the centre will continue to be used by CB College but will be available to hire by community groups and local residents in the evenings and at weekends and during school holidays.

3. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

HRTC councillors, CBC ward councillors and residents have expressed their concerns over this change at the following meetings:

Town Partnership on 23rd November 2021
[Council Meetings | Houghton Regis Town Council](#)

Town Council on 13th December 2021 – HRTC consultation response to CBC
[Council Meetings | Houghton Regis Town Council](#)

The response centred on:

1. should remain in full community use;
2. BSCC is at the centre of the community;
3. provides a basis for a network of local support, community cohesion, consultations and events, building health and wellbeing opportunities, and social wealth;

4. The loss of the BSCC is contrary to the Houghton Regis emerging Neighbourhood Plan which seeks retention of the Community Centre;
5. supports other services located within the Bedford Square centre and also within the wider Houghton Regis town centre;
6. contributes to the vibrancy of the town centre and the local community.
7. The condition of the centre and the internal facilities make it an adaptable and flexible space, ideally place to be the heart of the community.
8. The centre would benefit from a more accessible booking system, local marketing to improve awareness and a more affordable price structure in relation to out of office hours bookings to make it a vibrant and well used facility which is able to serve the needs of the community of Houghton Regis

Annual Towns' Meeting on 11th April 2022

[Council Meetings | Houghton Regis Town Council](#)

It was requested that HRTC make an official complaint about the loss of community access to BSCC through CBC's complaints procedures and to take the matter further if necessary.

The Clerk has visited the centre and has held conversations with relevant CBC officers over the use of the centre, the hire-ability of the centre and access to the equipment of previous users.

At the time the Clerk visited the centre the foyer was clean and tidy and welcoming. The staff member on reception was welcoming. The front hall was tidy and clean. The tables and chairs were set out in an education style. There were educational posters on the walls. The rear hall was also clear and tidy, there was however 2 structures in there which, it is understood, that the students used to learn decorating skills. These were roughly 1m square at the base and 2m high. For external hires these cannot be removed from the hall.

It was reported to the Clerk that the centre was being increasingly booked in the evenings and at weekends. The large room is fully booked every evening of the week and also quite a high number of weekends; other rooms also have bookings – all of which are external hirers. However it was highlighted that as the centre is now primarily an educational training site some rooms are not suitable for some hirers. CBC have confirmed that they will do all they can to accommodate any request.

Bookings are made by emailing or phoning a specific CBC officer. Should this officer not be at work, their email and phone is monitored by another member of staff. There is no generic email address or phone number to use. CBC officers reported that they had made contact with various user groups who had equipment stored in the centre and were in the process of making arrangements for the return of items.

4. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

Based on feedback provided by councillors and members of the public at the above meetings, HRTC members have requested the opportunity to consider options going forwards. To select the most suitable option it is suggested that members may first like to consider what outcome they are seeking to achieve and, should they wish to make a complaint, to identify the specifics of the complaint.

Based on feedback already given at previous meetings complaints have centred around (wording in brackets is in response):

- lack of community consultation on change in use (CBC have apologised to HRTC through email and publicly through the Partnership Committee)
- the Overview & Scrutiny recommendation to Executive was not followed (CBC constitution does not require this)
- flawed booking process (CBC have confirmed the booking process)
- the removal of groups equipment with no notice and access proving difficult to reclaim (CBC have confirmed that they are in dialogue with the different groups)

The CBC complaints process does not cover this issue ([Customer feedback | Central Bedfordshire Council](#)). As such it is suggested that should the council wish to proceed that the CBC Monitoring Officer be contacted for advice.

It is suggested that due process should be confirmed and followed by HRTC. The following points are suggested:

1. BSCC has long been an underused asset within HRTC. It has however always held the scope to be a central and integral part of the towns community. For it to achieve this potential it required the proactive administrative and community support. HRTC would urge CBC to engage with its local communities to support community health and development;
2. The partial use of the centre by the college is a significant loss to a number of local groups who have struggled with the loss of an affordable and central facility. HRTC would urge CBC to take necessary steps to ensure that other local venues under its control are affordable and available for such groups;
3. HRTC would urge CBC to take a more proactive role in managing, promoting and supporting previous users of this centre to encourage their growth and development;
4. HRTC would urge CBC to review the booking process to ensure it is robust and clear;
5. HRTC would urge CBC to review existing venues in Houghton Regis to ensure that they are fit for purpose and to explore funding opportunities to improve their accessibility and overall offer.

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

Objective 4: Our community

- 4.1 To create or enhance community facilities which support community development and cohesion
- 4.2 To enhance existing facilities to enable improved community use and accessibility

6. 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

- There are no financial implications arising from the recommendations

Risk Implications

- There is a reputational risk in not considering local representation

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 will be communicated to the press, via the website and social media.

7. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

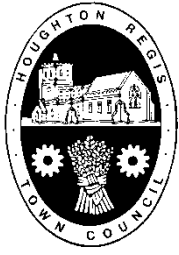
By their own admission CBC did not manage the partial change of use of BSCC well. Public apologies have been made. The centre has always been an underused facility, possibly as it has only ever been managed as a hall for hire and not managed as a true community centre.

CB College are providing a very valuable education facility from this venue and CBC have worked towards ensuring that the venue is available for community use outside of education hours.

It is however suggested that proactive work on behalf of CBC would help to address this wider community loss in terms support for community development and growth and a proactive review of existing facilities to ensure that they are accessible and affordable to local users.

8. APPENDICES

None



Date:	20th June 2022
Title:	COST OF LIVING CRISIS
Purpose of the Report:	To enable members to consider ways to help local residents during these difficult financial times.
Contact Officer:	Clare Evans, Town Clerk

1. RECOMMENDATION

- 1. To contact Andrew Selous MP to press for national help and support to those most in need**
- 2. To contact local support organisations to explore opportunities (including the local foodbank, local primary schools / school family workers, organisations supporting vulnerable adults, faith groups, the Houghton Regis Locality team, Houghton Regis Children's Centre)**
- 3. To look to provide a weekly donation to the local foodbank up to a value to be confirmed by Members.**

2. BACKGROUND

A request for the council to consider declaring a cost of living crisis was made at the Annual Meeting of the Town Council in May 2022. This report sets out the issues and options around this suggestion.

Members may recall that when this request was made reference was made to Eastbourne Borough Council, who had declared a cost of living crisis:

[https://democracy.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/documents/g3418/Public%20reports%20pack%2018th-May-2022%2018.00%20Eastbourne%20Borough%20Council%20Full%20Council.pdf?T=10#page=\[3\]](https://democracy.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/documents/g3418/Public%20reports%20pack%2018th-May-2022%2018.00%20Eastbourne%20Borough%20Council%20Full%20Council.pdf?T=10#page=[3])

3. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Central Bedfordshire Council have recognised the financial difficulties many are currently facing and have provided this help and support on their website:

<https://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/cost-of-living>

There are significant levels of deprivation in Houghton Regis: [Statistics and census information | Central Bedfordshire Council](#)

There are many ways in which the town council could help ease the financial burden on residents, however any options must be fair, equitable and manageable. There are some limitations which are worth highlighting:

- The town council cannot make a direct financial payment to individual households
- The town council does not hold any databases which identify households who may have financial pressures
- Some support options may have a cost to the council and as such the council will need to identify the budget it would use.

This is a new area of work for the council and as such members are requested to confirm their support for further investigation of options so that a more comprehensive report can be prepared for consideration at the next meeting.

This work is likely to take some time to progress, as such it is suggested that in the meantime the council could consider making a regular monthly donation to the local foodbank. Members are requested to consider a suitable amount. It is thought that the foodbank ask that donations of food are made, if this is the case and members agreed to making a donation it is likely that a weekly food order would be placed by HRTC for delivery to the foodbank. Members need to identify the funding source. There is scope within General Reserves or Members may prefer to reallocate an existing budget.

The following actions are suggested:

1. To contact Andrew Selous MP to press for national help and support to those most in need
2. To contact local support organisations to explore opportunities (including the local foodbank, local primary schools / school family workers, organisations supporting vulnerable adults, faith groups, the Houghton Regis Locality team, Houghton Regis Children's Centre)
3. To look to provide a weekly donation to the local foodbank up to a value to be confirmed by Members.

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

6. IMPLICATIONS

Corporate Implications

- Staff implications – a weekly food order would need to be placed

Legal Implications

- There are no legal implications arising from the recommendations

Financial Implications

- Members need to identify the funding source for this work.

Risk Implications

- The recommendations aim to support our local community.

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

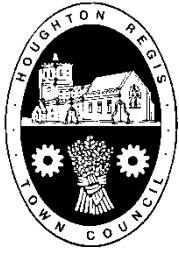
The decision relating to this agenda item will be communicated to the press, via the website and social media.

7. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

It is right that the council should take all possible steps to support its community in these difficult financial times. Any support provided must be fair and equitable. This can be best achieved by working with existing local agencies.

8. APPENDICES

None



Date: 20th June 2022

Title: HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN CENTRE ACTION PLAN

Purpose of the Report: To enable members to consider the Houghton Regis Town Centre Action Plan.

Contact Officer: Clare Evans, Town Clerk

1. RECOMMENDATION

1. To approve the Houghton Regis Town Centre Action Plan
2. To refer the Plan to the Partnership Committee for consideration
3. To request that CBC review and update the 2008 Town Centre Masterplan

2. BACKGROUND

As members will recall part of the Welcome back fund included the commissioning of a Town Centre Action Plan. This Plan has now been developed by Place Make in consultation with members and officers.

3. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

The Action Plan includes the following sections:

- Introduction
- Context
- Vision
- Delivery
- Acronyms

The Section Delivery includes an Action plan for future work split into short, medium and longer term actions. The Actions are broad ranging in terms of scope, deliverability and timescales.

This is a comprehensive and exiting Plan, and if approved and taken forward will provide demonstrable benefits to the town as a whole and in particular the town centre.

4. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

Members are requested to consider approving this Action plan so that it is incorporated into Council policy and the work plan of the town council.

However it is necessary to consider how the action plan can be taken forward.

As a first step it is suggested that CBC be approached to explore how this Plan can be embedded within CBC, the initial part of this process would be to refer the Plan to the Partnership Committee to seek to refer the Plan to CBC at committee level.

It is suggested that support from CBC be secured initially to hopefully enable more detailed discussions to take place.

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

Objective 2: A Greener Cleaner Houghton Regis

- 2.3 To encourage sustainable transport including use of public transport, walking and cycling

Objective 3: A safe and vibrant town

- 3.8 To support local businesses and retailers

Objective 4: Our community

- 4.1 To create or enhance community facilities which support community development and cohesion
- 4.2 To enhance existing facilities to enable improved community use and accessibility
- 4.4 To help to protect and preserve historic gems
- 4.5 To provide high quality green spaces for leisure and recreation, healthier living, urban attractiveness, improved air quality

6. IMPLICATIONS

Corporate Implications

- To refer the Houghton Regis Town Centre Action Plan to the Partnership Committee
- In approving the Houghton Regis Town Centre Action Plan it would effectively become council policy and the council would need to work on implementation
- The future work load arising from the Plan needs to be assessed, there is no existing staff capacity to absorb this work load.
- It would be appropriate to actively share this Plan with residents and stakeholders to seek their views and comments.

Legal Implications

- There are no legal implications arising from the recommendations

Financial Implications

- There are no financial implications arising from the recommendations

Risk Implications

- There is a risk to the town as an urban settlement in not addressing the shortfalls identified.

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 will be communicated to the press, via the website and social media.

7. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

The Town Centre Action Plan is a comprehensive and forward thinking plan which will be of great benefit to the town as a whole, to stakeholders and residents. It will serve to ensure that the town centre is fit for purpose as the town grows and develops. To deliver on the action plan will require a firm commitment from HRTC and CBC.

8. APPENDICES

Appendix A – Summary

Appendix B – Houghton Regis Town Centre Action Plan

Appendix C – Settlement Plan

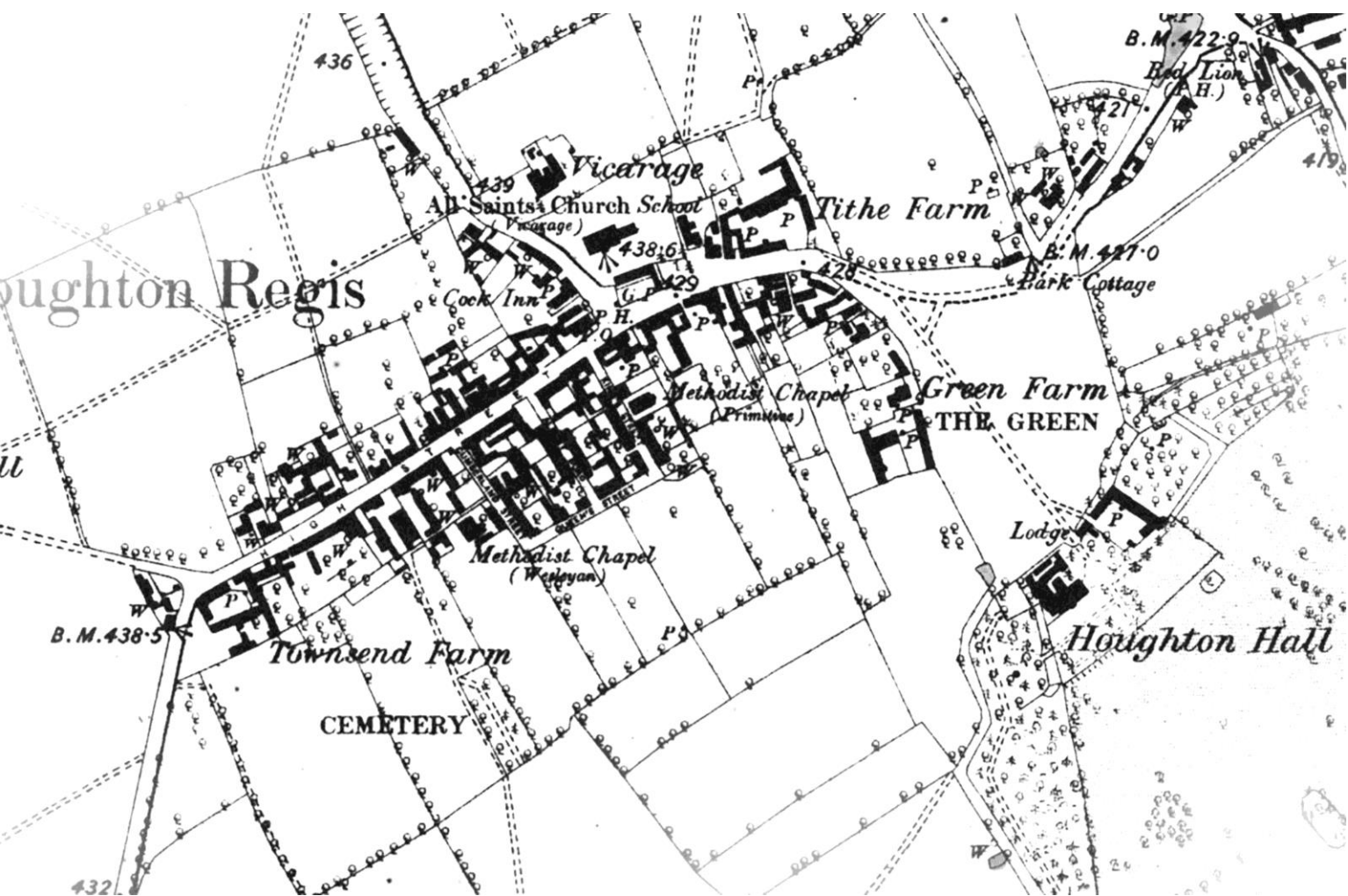


Houghton Regis Town Centre Action Plan

Summary | May 2022



Saelig Hoctone, Hocton, Howgton, Kyngshouton, Kynges Houghton ...



... Houghton Regis has a rich history that extends as far back as the Neolithic and Iron Ages

Multiple indicators suggest that something special is happening ...

- While the Parish includes above average rates of single parent households, youth unemployment and children in income deprived households, it remains **10% safer than the average district crime rate** (*crimerate.co.uk*).
- Despite being strategically located in the middle of the Cambridge-Oxford growth zone, it has a particularly **strong sense of community and identity**:
 - An above average number of residents shop locally.
 - Half of all shops are independently owned.
 - 78% of residents work in Central Bedfordshire - 20% within 2km of their homes, 35% within 10km of their homes and 23% across the wider district.
- It is also one of the **most culturally diverse** towns in the district - 10% more so than the district average.
- Only 2% of commercial premises are currently available.



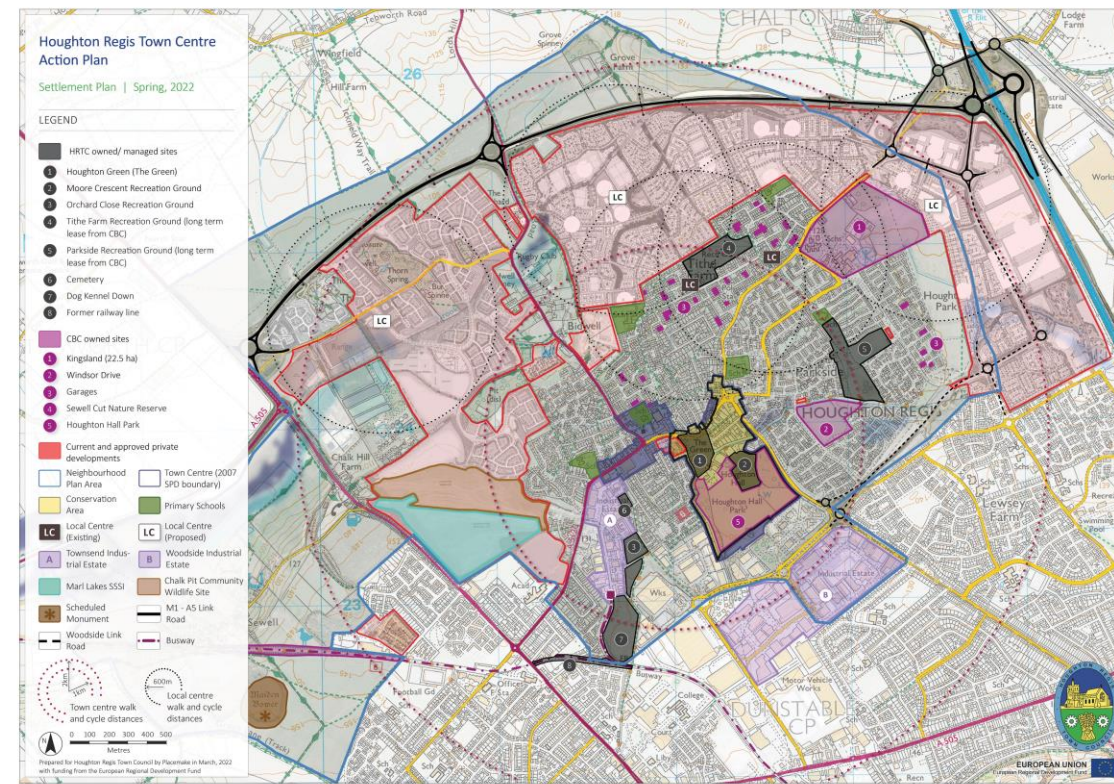
However, the town centre is straining ...

- Since the 1970's, **town centre activities have contracted** to the limits of the shopping centre (Bedford Square).
- The shopping centre is privately owned and faces away from the rest of the town – unfortunately, **the face of historic Houghton is now the back of the shops.**
- There is **no core area of civic space.**
- According to the most recent benchmarking report;
 - Almost 70% of residents are concerned by the poor appearance of the town centre (45% above the national average).
 - 50% of residents are concerned by safety (30% higher than the national average).
 - 68% would not recommend a visit (40% more than the national average).
 - Footfall has dropped by 1/3 on pre-pandemic levels.
- It is **disconnected from the wider regional/ national public transport networks**, there is limited connectivity between the town's assets and the public realm is dominated by cars.
- Despite having multiple natural and physical assets, **tourism and hospitality are almost non-existent.**



Committed growth represents both a significant opportunity and challenge ...

- Over the next 10 – 15 years, **Houghton's population will double from 17,500 residents to 34,300.**
- This will be more than present-day **Dunstable (34,000)**, **Hitchin (33,350)** and **Letchworth (33,250)**, which each have more expansive and diverse town centre offers.
- It will also be **significantly greater than its Chiltern neighbours of Berkhamstead (19,000) and Flitwick (13,180)**, which have mainline train stations and direct links to London and Bedford.
- **New residents have already started arriving** to the expansion area – if these turn to Milton Keynes, Luton or Hitchin for their local amenity, social and community needs, there is a concern that the existing centre will continue to decline and the town will spilt into 'new' and 'old' communities.



Recognising the need for urgent action, the Town Council initiated the preparation of a Town Centre Action Plan

- Prepared in 2022 and funded through the Welcome Back Fund.
- Intended to provide an overarching vision to guide decision making and engagement with stakeholders.
- Identifies short, medium and long term projects that can be completed by the town council and multiple stakeholders to reverse the gradual decline of the town centre.
- Highlights ‘action areas’ for further study – independently or through the revised Town Centre Maser Plan SPD, 2008.



*If the town centre is to cater for the needs on additional 16,400 residents, there is an critical need to **improve** and **expand** the existing town centre offer ...*

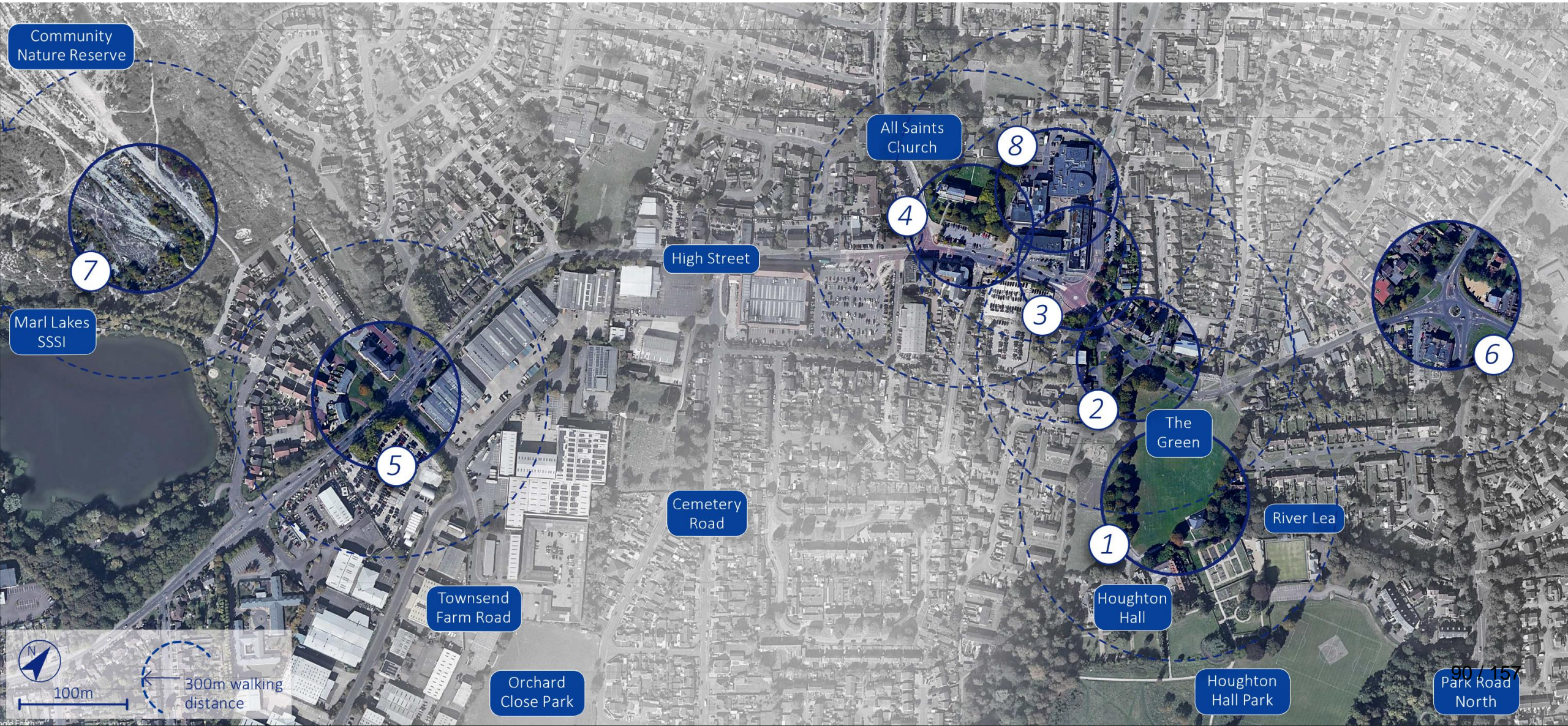
- Improve:
 - Efficiency of existing natural and built assets.
 - Levels of safety and visual appearance.
 - Offer: encourage visitors to stay longer than 1 hour (65% of all visitors leave within 60 minutes).
 - Connectivity – locally, regionally and nationally.
 - Identity – historic Haughton and a gateway to the Chilterns AONB.

Create:

- Additional accommodation for employment, retail, hospitality and tourism activities.
- Core area of civic space and a connected public realm.
- Leisure, recreational, education and community facilities.



Fortunately, the foundations are already in place to provide a sustainable settlement of 34,000 residents with a strong sense of place and identity ...



Catalyst Projects 4.2

- 3 Pedestrian and cycle access along a desire line from The Green to Bedford Square.



Existing conditions with no crossing

At the moment, the link between The Green and the shopping centre is severed, limiting the potential for synergy and connectivity between the High Street and Houghton Hall Park.

Ideally, this link would follow the natural desire line (or as near as possible) and be treated as a signalised junction to maximise footfall.



- 4 Interface of the church yard, car park and the entrance to Bedford Square to create a shared surface, market place and an off-street waiting area for buses.

The absence of a core area of civic space in the town centre has been discussed throughout this document. While the shopping arcade has partially fulfilled this role, this suffers from poor visibility from the High Street, which limits its potential to function as a true market place.

From the plan that is included in Section 3.3, the area in front of All Saints Church appears to have been used for such activities. Centrally located and highly visible, this links the church with the pedestrian area and the library and aligns with existing crossings on the High Street.

While the area is currently used as a car park, the recent Benchmarking Report suggests there



Existing conditions - multiple obstacles for access and movement

to be an over provision of parking in the town centre. Additionally, the Conservation Statement recommends improvements to the public realm around the Grade I listed church.

The reinstatement of a market place on the site of the car park might be a long term ambition. However, in the short term, perhaps ten or fifteen spaces might be removed from the eastern side, together with the large planters next to these in order to create a central space.

This could be combined with repaving the full parking area for markets and events on particular days. If successful, the remaining spaces may be gradually removed over time.



Market Place, Hitchin



Town Centre Action Plan
Houghton Regis
Spring, 2022

Format

1. Introduction	3. Vision
1.1 Introduction	3.1 Introduction
1.2 Role and Purpose	3.2 Vision Statement
1.3 Associated Documents	3.3 Objectives
2. Context	4. Delivery
2.1 Introduction	4.1 Phasing Plan
2.2 What is place making and why does it matter?	4.2 Catalyst Projects
2.3 Historic Houghton	4.3 Next Steps
2.4 Settlement Context	5. Acronyms
2.5 The Town Centre	
2.6 Constraints	
2.7 Opportunities	
2.8 Overview	

Houghton Regis Town Council
Peel Street, Houghton Regis, Bedfordshire, LU5 5EY
Tel: 01582 708 540
Email: info@houghtonregis.org.uk
www.houghtonregis.org.uk

Houghton Regis Town Centre Action Plan 3

3 Vision

5 Integrate existing employment areas as part of the town centre.	6 De-clutter the public realm and provide a core area of public open space for community events.
---	--

The public realm through the town centre is cluttered with various signs, bins, benches, bollards, planters and flags that are restricting pedestrian movement and opportunities for communal events.

In addition, since the area in front of All Saints Church became a car park, there is no longer a dedicated area of public open space that can provide as a market place or town square.

Identify opportunities to improve east-west connectivity and create alternative routes for movement.

With the exception of the High Street, there are no east-west vehicular links through the centre. As a result, all traffic is focused along the High Street, which creates congestion at peak times and difficulties when sections of this are closed.

Creating these connections will enable the distribution of traffic across a wider network and release pressure on the High Street, while also improving access to employment areas and HH Park and stimulating pedestrian and cycle movement.

Given that over 50% of residents work within 10km of their homes and only 2% of ground floor units are currently vacant, there is a fantastic opportunity for synergic activity between the town's employment, leisure and retail/hospitality areas.

91 / 157

Houghton Regis Town Centre Action Plan

Spring, 2022



Thank You



Town Centre Action Plan

Houghton Regis

Spring, 2022

Cover image: Woodland Walk, Houghton Hall Park

The document has been prepared for Houghton Regis Town Council (HRTC) by Placemake in March, 2022 with invaluable input from the Steering Committee, Town Councillors and the Town Clerk, Clare Evans.

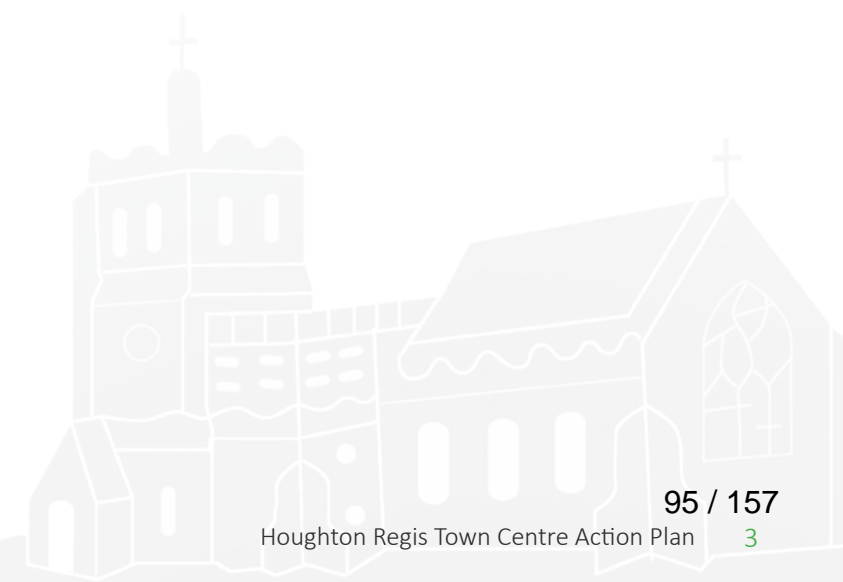
The study has been facilitated with funding from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), administered by Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC).

Drawings and illustrations are generally by Placemake© unless otherwise referenced in captions. Aerial imagery by Google.

1. Introduction
 - 1.1 Introduction
 - 1.2 Role and Purpose
 - 1.3 Associated Documents
2. Context
 - 2.1 Introduction
 - 2.2 What is place making and why does it matter?
 - 2.3 Historic Houghton
 - 2.4 Settlement Context
 - 2.5 The Town Centre
 - 2.6 Constraints
 - 2.7 Opportunities
 - 2.8 Overview
3. Vision
 - 3.1 Introduction
 - 3.2 Vision Statement
 - 3.3 Objectives
4. Delivery
 - 4.1 Phasing Plan
 - 4.2 Catalyst Projects
 - 4.3 Next Steps
5. Acronyms



Houghton Regis Town Council
Peel Street, Houghton Regis, Bedfordshire, LU5 5EY
Tel: 01582 708 540
Email: info@houghtonregis.org.uk
www.houghtonregis.org.uk



1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Saelig Hoctone, Hocton, Howgton, Kyngshouton, Kynges Houghton- the settlement that is today known as Houghton Regis (or Houghton locally) has a rich history that extends as far back as the Neolithic and Iron Ages.

During this time, it has been a Roman and Saxon settlement, a royal manor and an important component of Bedfordshire's hat making heritage.

While the nearby towns of Luton, Leighton Buzzard and Dunstable grew as trading and transport hubs along the primary arteries of Watling Street and the Icknield Way, Houghton fostered a particular role as a local producer.

It prospered through the parish's fertile lands at the foot of the Chiltern Hills and the source of the River Lea and was adopted as the King's demesne land, providing for the royal households of the Saxon, Norman and Tudor periods (giving rise to the title, 'Kyngeshouton').

While retaining a focus on agriculture, the town has consistently repositioned itself to cater for different market trends and demand, from plaiting, weaving, duck breeding and small holding in the 18th and 19th Centuries to printing and engineering in the 19th and 20th Centuries.

According to Pat Lovering in 'Royal Houghton: The Story of Houghton Regis', the town's workforce was so adept at this that 'when factory inspectors visited Houghton in 1869, they found that every cottage in the village contained plaiters but that agriculture continued as before'. While, the 1851 Census records 82 straw plaiters at Puddlehill who quickly turned to smallholding and duck breeding once the plait industry began to wane!

This diversification, flexibility and ingenuity enabled the community to sustain itself during poor harvests while also keeping up-to-date with new manufacturing processes and technology.

During the 1950's and 1970's, Houghton was tasked with accommodating significant growth and expansion. According to the Conservation Area Statement (2008), the extent of this 'threatened its position and identity as a rural village strongly based upon agriculture to a larger residential settlement'.

However, while the arrangement of such development undoubtedly had an impact on the social and physical fabric of Houghton Regis, the town retained its self-sufficiency and a strong sense of identity.



View of Houghton Court (Grade II listed) from Houghton Hall Park

According to the 2021 Town Centre Benchmarking Study, over 50% of all shops are independently owned and 70% of residents shop locally. While, 78% of all residents still work in Central Bedfordshire; 20% within 2km of their homes, 35% within 10km of their homes and 23% across the wider district (Draft HRNP, 2021).

Presently, there are 17,500 residents in the Parish, including Bidwell, Sewell, and Thorn (Draft HRNP). However, committed development up to the A5-M1 link road represents another growth burst of 7,000 homes and 16,800 residents, doubling the scale and population of the current settlement.

Such expansion brings significant opportunities for historic Houghton. However, to harness these, it is important that the town centre can once again become the hub for all of Houghton Regis without damaging the particular character and sense of community that exists today.

This is clearly a delicate balance and it will take a long time to reverse the gradual contraction of town centre activities that has taken place over a number of decades. However, this document provides the first step towards regenerating and reinvigorating the town centre to cater for the daily needs of 34,000 residents.

1 Introduction

1.2 Role and Purpose

‘Central Houghton Regis - a hub and a heart: aiming for a town centre which attracts people from across the parish and beyond.’

Houghton Regis Draft Neighbourhood Plan 2020-2035

This Action Plan has been prepared for Houghton Regis Town Council (HRTC) with assistance from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the Government’s Welcome Back Fund (WBF), administered through Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC).

It presents a long term strategy for the expansion of the town centre offer to meet the needs of an additional 16,800 residents while at the same time, minimising the impact on the existing community.

The significant increase in facilities that will be required from sports pitches and allotments to jobs and transportation is considered in greater detail in the Draft Neighbourhood Plan (HRNP).

This recognises the need for the town centre to become a ‘heart’ that will unify new and existing communities, ‘attracting people from across the Parish and beyond’. As the basis for engagement with stakeholders, it identifies opportunities for new accommodation within the existing urban fabric, including the two mixed-use clusters of ‘Town Centre East’ and ‘Town Centre West’.

This Action Plan is intended to support the aspirations of the HRNP and provide a particular focus on placemaking in the town centre. Or con-

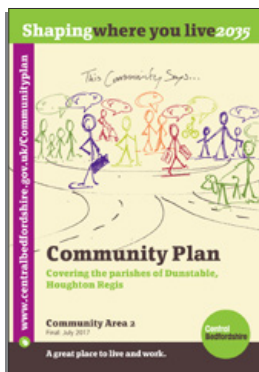
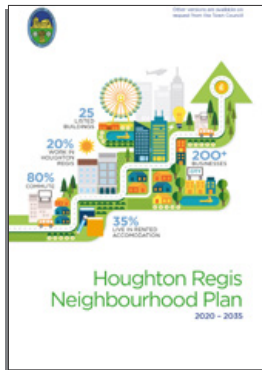
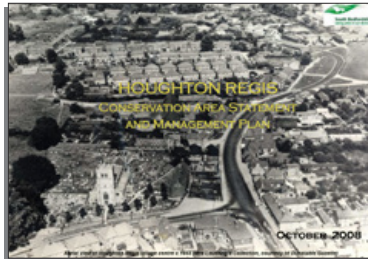
versely, how the overall offer can be improved by harnessing the value of Houghton’s assets, maximising opportunities and minimising constraints. This approach is discussed in greater detail in Section 2.2.

A Town Centre Master Plan was prepared in 2007- 2008 and is currently adopted by CBC as supplementary planning guidance (SPG). Conceived before the approval of new development in the expansion area, this is now somewhat outdated and the requirement for a revised strategy is noted in the Local Plan (CBC, 2015- 2035). However, with construction of new homes already underway and residents arriving, there is a pressing need for a holistic strategy that can be used to inform decision making in the town centre at this time.

The principal objectives of this document are therefore to:

1. Provide a viable and sustainable vision for the town centre as a ‘heart’ and a ‘hub’ for the expanded settlement.
2. Identify key objectives and a number of short, medium and long term actions to deliver this vision.
3. Coordinate engagement with stakeholders and the appropriation of funding.
4. Consider opportunities for new development and investment.
5. Assist in informing a future Town Centre Master Plan or Framework to replace the currently adopted 2008 strategy.

Associated Documents 1.3



Above: Sample of current policy and advisory material

There is a wide range of statutory and advisory material available to inform a town centre strategy, from the aspirations of local residents and the Town Council to CBC's placemaking design guidance, the recently adopted Local Plan and a market assessment of existing retail and commercial activities.

The following material has been reviewed as the basis for the preparation of this study:

- CBC Local Plan 2015- 2035
- Central Bedfordshire Design Guide, CBC, 2014
- Local Area Transport Plan (LTP) Baseline Report - Dunstable & Houghton Regis (CBC, 2011)
- CBC Local Plan (2015-2035) – Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report (Oct. 2016)
- Levelling Up Fund Application Form, CBC, 2021
- CBC Community Plan (July 2017)
- Houghton Regis Conservation Area Statement, CBC, 2008
- Our Vision: Our Town, HRTC, 2020- 2024
- Draft Houghton Regis Neighbourhood Plan, HRTC, 2020 - 2035
- Town Benchmarking Report, People and Places, 2021

This document is intended to sit alongside the Draft Neighbourhood Plan, which will shortly be presented to CBC for review and hopefully, adoption as a statutory document.

In time, it is hoped the Action Plan will provide a precursor to a revised Town Centre Master Plan or Framework Plan that can be adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance for the duration of the Local and Neighbourhood Plan periods.

Of particular interest has been the results of the Community Plan (2017) and the Town Centre Benchmarking Report (2021), which provide an indication of current market forces, social trends and significantly, the aspirations of local residents.

Reference should also be made to Pat Lovering's 'Royal Houghton: The Story of Houghton Regis of Bedfordshire' (1986), which provides an interesting and informative overview of the town's unique history since the Norman Conquest and chronicle in the Domesday Book of 1086.

2 Context

2.1 Introduction



Above: Historic map of Bedfordshire (Grose, 1787) with 'Houghton' denoted by a blue circle



Above: Regional location plan

Something special is happening in Houghton Regis; while placemaking often involves creating a sense of place and identity, a number of indicators suggest these are already in existence.

According to the recently completed Benchmarking Report (2021), half of all shops are independently owned, an above average number of residents shop and work locally and only 2% of units are currently vacant. Such figures are particularly interesting given that they are based on data that was collected during the pandemic.

Additionally, while the Parish includes above average rates of single parent households, youth unemployment and children in income deprived households (CBC, 2021), it remains 10% safer than the average district crime rate (crimerate.co.uk). The town is also one of the most culturally diverse in the district - 10% more so than the district average (CBC, 2021).

Such statistics are often seen in reverse, where higher levels of diversity and lower levels of household income correlate with higher rates of anti-social behaviour and a break down in community and physical infrastructure.

The town's apparent self-sufficiency is also unusual given its strategic location, being close to London and the M1 and in the middle of the Oxford-Cambridge growth zone. This might have originated from the town's heritage as a local producer or because of a missing link in the regional transport network. Alternately, it could be owing to the safeguarding of demesne and ecclesiastic land, through which, Houghton has retained a variety of open spaces, a semi-rural character and a degree of separation from Luton and Dunstable.

In any case, it provides a good basis for the town's ability to integrate the projected increase in population and also, for the development of a sustainable town centre strategy.

What is place making and why does it matter? 2.2



Yew Avenue, Houghton Hall Park

‘Fantastic communities don’t happen by accident; they happen because members of these communities have a clear picture of how they want their place to be in the future and take action to make their vision a reality’.

Councillor James Jamieson, Leader of CBC, 2020

In November 2020, CBC adopted a vision for how the district would be in 2050, being, ‘a great place to live and work... a place to prosper, a place to be proud of and a place to call home’. These objectives are clear and rooted in the principles of sustainable communities. However, the question is then, what constitutes a ‘great’ place?

There is a wealth of national and regional guidance to define this, from the National Design Guide (2021) and Building for a Healthy Life (Homes England, 2020) to CBC’s Design Guide and Urban Design (2014).

The NDG provides ten principles for ‘well-designed places’. Essentially, these ‘have individual characteristics which work together to create its physical character. The ten characteristics help to nurture and sustain a sense of community. They work to positively address environmental issues affecting climate’.

Character, community and climate are at the core of many definitions of ‘great’, ‘successful’ or ‘sustain-

able’ communities. There is a particularly strong connection between ‘character’ and ‘community’. Places with a clear and distinct identity also tend to have close communities. Ultimately, residents that are proud of their home town, city or village settle for longer and are more invested in its management and maintenance.

From the indicators that are noted in the previous section, for various reasons, Houghton Regis has fostered a strong sense of identity and through this, a close community. The basis for any visioning strategy would then be to strengthen rather than attempting to recreate this.

To achieve this, it is first necessary to understand what has generated a particular sense of place in the first instance and then, how this might be improved. These aspects are considered in greater detail through consideration of the settlement’s historic and physical context over the following pages.

2 Context

2.3 Historic Houghton



Above: Historic maps from 1800 to 1960

Houghton's past is brimming with significant events and occurrences that provide an impression of daily life throughout the history of Britain. Excavations at Maiden Bower, a Grade II Scheduled Ancient Monument, suggest Neolithic and Early Bronze Age activity and Romano-British occupation while a number of Roman villas have been discovered at Puddle Hill. According to the Conservation Statement (HRCAS, 2008), finds in surrounding fields indicate settlement activity in the parish from the Stone Age.

For a number of years, Houghton was at the unhappy interface between Saxon and Danish occupied territory (Lovering, 1986). It became a Royal manor at the end of the 1st millennium with direct links to Edward the Confessor and William the Conqueror (Lovering, 1986).

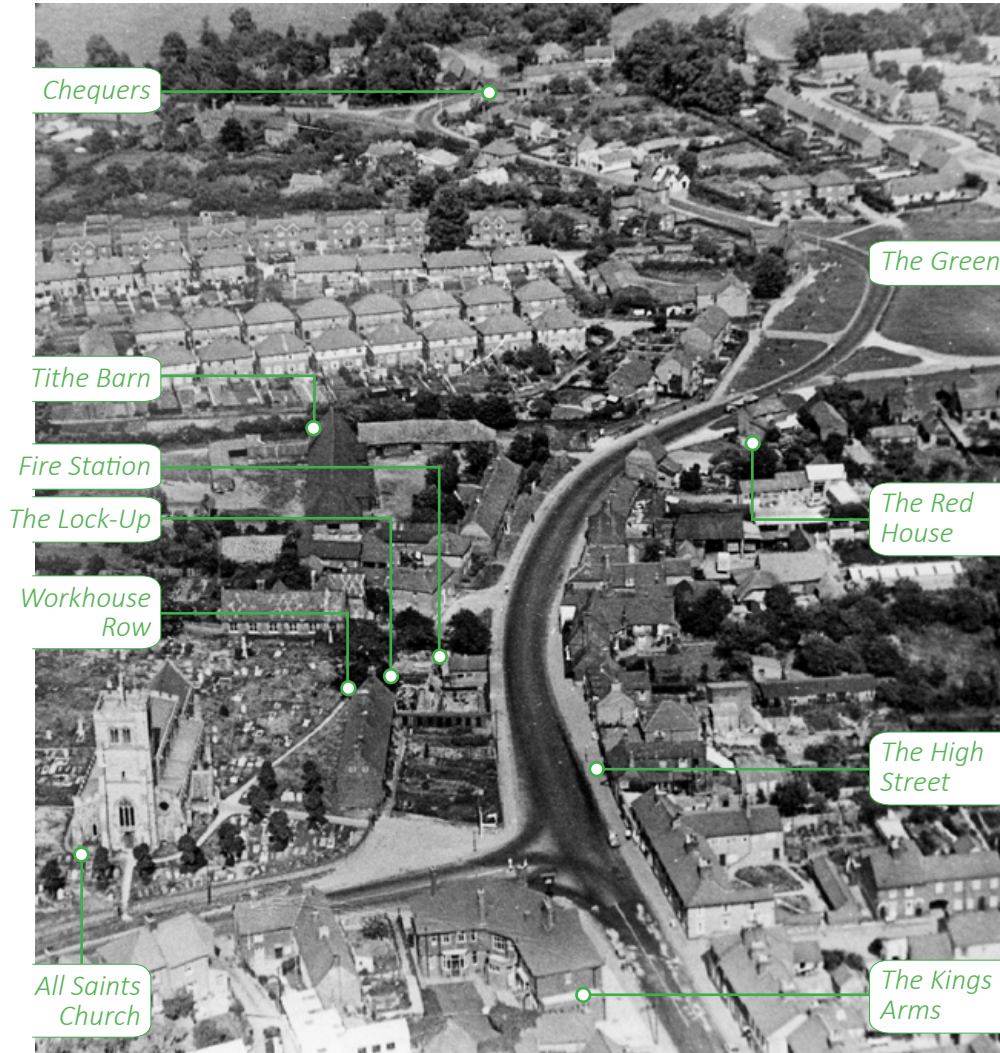
Since then, its history is intertwined with events that are rooted in British and International culture, from the naming of 'Vauxhall' - a London borough and car manufacturer to Hollywood's Golden Age through Gary Cooper, whose father was originally from the parish. Collectively, these have formed a special character and identity that distinguishes Houghton from any other place.

The town's physical form is also unique. The central core, which includes the High Street, village green and Houghton Hall, is now a designated conservation area. According to the HRCAS; 'the layout within the conservation area has changed little over the centuries. Centred on The Green, it is still largely based upon historic pre-urban roads and tracks'.

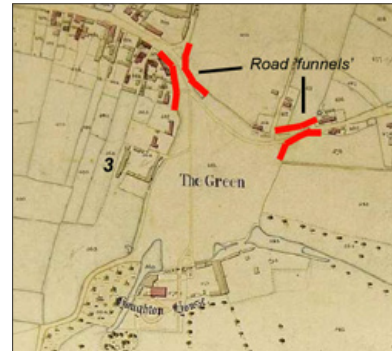
The Statement identifies a view from The Green to All Saints Church, a sense of enclosure along the High Street and active building frontages as characteristics of historic Houghton.

Another particularly interesting aspect is the funnelling of the High Street at either side of The Green, which was presumably intended to control livestock that would have been grazing on the common land. The effect of the narrowing and widening of the High Street around the Green can still be experienced today.

The aerial image that is included on the following page provides an impression of the character of the High Street sometime after the post-war construction of new homes at Tithe Farm but before the demolition of the Tithe Barn in 1964.



Above: Aerial image of the Conservation Area, presumably taken between 1945 and 1964 (Houghton Regis Heritage Society archives)



Above: Extract from the HRCAS showing the location of the two road funnels at The Green



Above: Historic images of the High Street (HRHS)

From this, the alternation between enclosure and openness is clearly apparent. This was achieved through a strong building line, which defined a series of open spaces, framed views and created active street frontages.

Unfortunately, the effect of this has been somewhat lost today. On the south side of the High Street, the current Morrisons supermarket and the recently completed mixed-use accommodation at Whitehouse Close by CBC maintain the historic building line.

However, on the north side, the removal of Workhouse Row and the old Fire Station have reduced the original sense of enclosure. While, through orientating the shopping centre away from the High Street, the active frontages that once provided passive surveillance and an attractive streetscape around a key node have been replaced by a 160m long blank facade.

2 Context

2.4 Settlement Context



In the Settlement Hierarchy of the 2015-2030 Local Plan, Houghton Regis is classified as one of eight 'major' service centres and one of five secondary service centres. Slightly smaller than the 'Principal' centres of Dunstable, Leighton Buzzard and Biggleswade, secondary centres are considered to be more local in character and offering. According to the Local Plan, these have 'a range of shops including some national multiple retailers and many independent shops' and 'provide a range of services, facilities and leisure uses and (are) home to a number of businesses'.

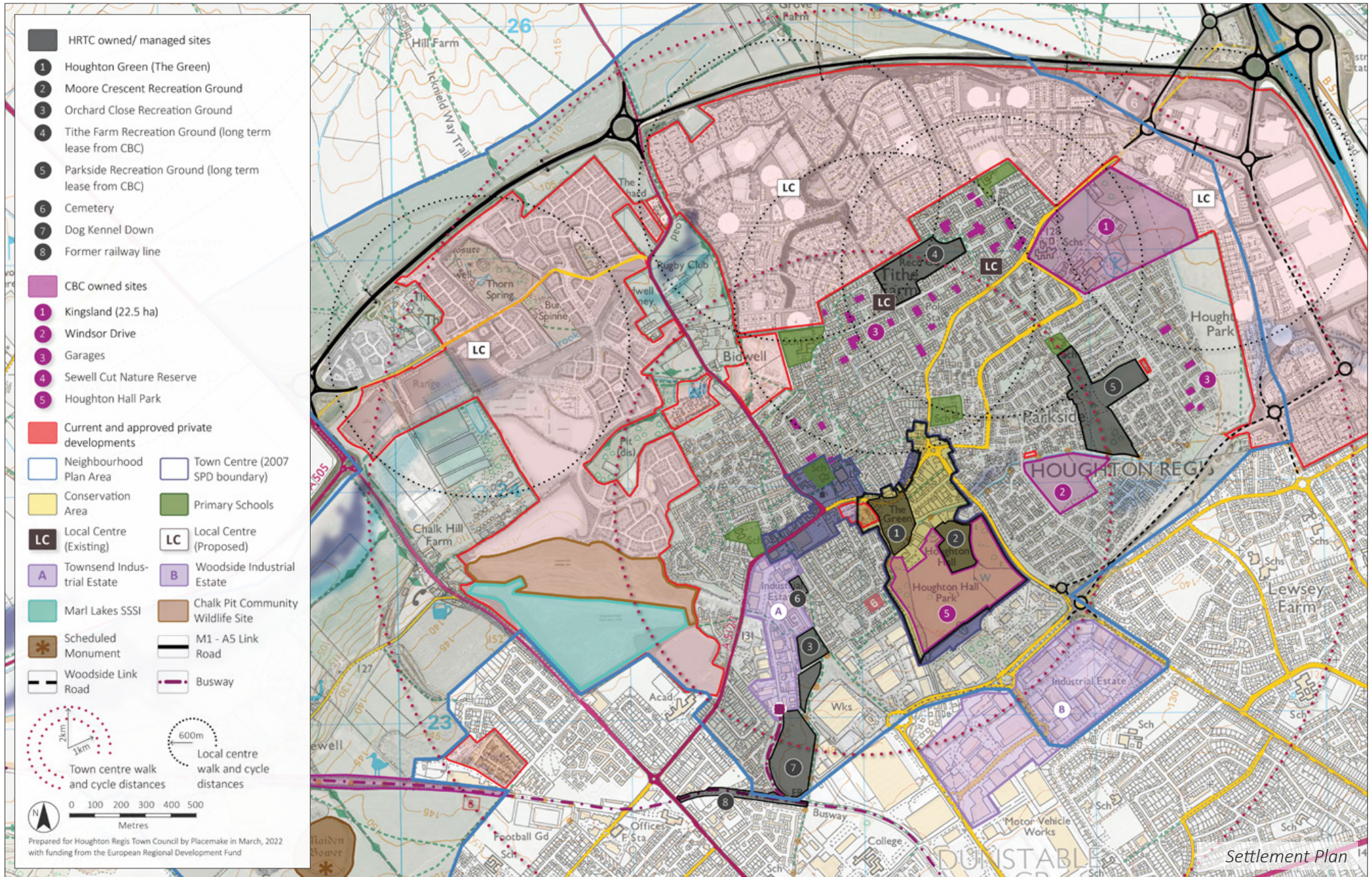
This impression is consistent with the aspirations of the Neighbourhood Plan for, 'a 'market town' and local services offer - designed with smaller/ specialist retail as well as small/ medium food shopping' and also, with the findings of the most recent Town Centre Benchmarking Study (2021).

The plan on the following page combines existing and committed development across the parish to provide an illustration of how this will appear in 10-15 years time.

The extent of committed development (denoted by a red boundary and fill), in relation to the scale of existing town is clearly apparent. Once completed, the urban area of the settlement will extend up to the new M1-A5 link road.

Fortunately, the town centre will remain relatively centrally located and within 2km of all homes. This is important to ensure that it can become a true 'centre' for all residents while also supporting sustainable modes of transport and reducing congestion.

The plan also shows areas that are under the ownership and management of the town council and CBC. Predominantly areas of open space, activities in these areas can be influenced more easily, thereby providing opportunities for short term gains. A good example of this is the cafe at Houghton Hall Park with similar facilities at Marl Lakes and The Green identified in the Neighbourhood Plan.



2 Context

2.5 The Town Centre

The Town Centre Master Plan SPD of 2008 provides a boundary for a central area that is shown on the figure to the right. This broadly corresponds with the limits of the conservation area in addition to All Saints Church and a 500m section of the High Street up the Mill Lane junction.

At the heart of this is Houghton Green - or, 'The Green'. According to the Conservation Statement; 'The Green reinforces village character, and is an essential element of the historic layout of Houghton Regis. It remains a strong central focus, established in early times, and the remainder of the village has evolved in relation to it'.

This is apparent from the plan, which shows a number of the town's key destinations within a 600m walking or cycle distance. These include a 1km section of the High Street, the Busway, employment activities at Woodside and Nimbus Park, the source of the River Lea and Orchard Close and Windsor Drive recreation areas. The Marl Lake, Parkside, Windsor Drive and Blue Waters Wood are all located within a 1km radius.

From the old images and historic maps in Section 2.3, the High Street appears as a spine of activity. However, since 1960, town centre amenities have gradually reduced to the extent of Bedford Square - a privately owned and managed shopping centre - and the immediate area around



this. Arranged according to a 1960's fashion, the shopping centre currently faces away from the High Street and The Green, thereby limiting the potential for integration with the wider town.

The Benchmarking Report (People and Places, 2021) provides a good health check of the current retail and commercial offer. From this, the town centre would appear to be under-performing in relation to the scale of opportunity that exists. For instance, although 70% of town centre users shop locally (26% higher than the national average) and 67% visit regularly, only 34% of all visitors stay for longer than an hour. Also, although over half of all shops are independently owned, there are no 'key attractors'.

Combined, these statistics indicate a demand for a more diverse, stimulating and engaging offer while there appears to be something that is currently deterring attractor outlets from investing in Houghton. According to the report, this could be owing to the perception of safety and visual appearance, which are both considered to be particular concerns for residents. Worryingly, 68% of residents would not currently recommend a visit to the town centre – 40% higher than the national average.

The report also identifies concerns regarding footfall, which has dropped by 1/3 on pre-pandemic levels and a potential surplus of parking provision. Conversely, 60-70% of visitors wish to see better public spaces and more community events. These aspirations accord with the CBC's Community Plan (July 2017), with residents expressing a desire for a market in some capacity.



All Saints Church (Grade I listed heritage asset)



New shops and apartments on the High Street by CBC



Bedford Square Shopping Arcade

2 Context

2.6 Opportunities

The town centre presents a number of exciting opportunities to improve and extend the current offer:

1. A strong sense of community and identity with an active and engaged town council.
2. A sustainable local economy with a particular character; an above average number of residents shop, live and work locally, only 2% of retail/ commercial units are vacant and the majority of shops are independently owned.
3. A rich history that tells a unique story; Saelig Hochtone, Houstone, Howghton, Kingeshoughton, Kynges Houghton and Houghton Regis.
4. A diverse, multicultural community; 10% more residents from black, asian and minority ethnic backgrounds than the district average.
5. A number of built and natural assets within close proximity; from a SSSI nature reserve and 42 acres of Green Flag parkland to a Grade I listed, 14th century church and a Grade II listed, Scheduled Ancient Monument.
6. An interesting and compact layout.
7. A semi-rural character with a number of open spaces.
8. Strategically located; less than 10km from an expanding international airport, 5km from a mainline train station with regular services to London, 3km from the M1 and at the edge of the Chilterns AONB.
9. Committed growth that will bring an additional 16,000 visitors to the town centre's amenities.
10. The basis for a sustainable transport strategy that is integrated with the wider regional network at Luton and Legrave mainline train stations.



Strong sense of community

Expansion

Constraints 2.7



Poor first impression



Visual and physical barriers to connectivity and cohesion



Car dominated public realm and streetscape



There are also a number of aspects that appear to be restricting the potential of the town centre;

1. Poor first impression whether arriving from along the High Street or the Busway; at present, it is too easy to drive through the town centre without realising.
2. From signage and advertising to hidden heritage assets, there is little indication of 'Historic Houghton'.
3. Town centre amenities have contracted to the immediate area around the shopping centre.
4. Insufficient activities to occupy visitors for more than an hour.
5. Limited commercial space for new and established businesses; only 2% of units are currently vacant.
6. Limited variety in the retail and hospitality offer while tourism is almost non-existent.
7. Closed frontages along main roads reduce safety by not providing any natural surveillance.
8. At present, the public realm is cluttered with various barriers to movement while there is no dedicated market square.
9. Car dominated streetscapes.
10. Limited physical and visual links between the town's assets; at present, these appear to be operating independently rather than as part of a stronger, unified offer.
11. Regional public and sustainable transportation is reliant on the guided busway that ends almost 1km from the heart of the town centre and Leagrave Station, which lies outside the parish area and involves a torturous route across the town.

2 Context

2.8 Overview

Results from the recently completed market study and the 2017 community survey suggest that the town centre is currently under-performing with demand for commercial, retail and hospitality space and activities outstripping supply.

In part, this is due to a lack of available space, caused by the contraction of town centre activities over the past 50 years. Where these extended along a 1km section of the High Street in the mid-20th Century, today's centre is limited to the shopping arcade and the immediate area around this.

The impact of this on the fortunes of the wider town is compounded by the poor arrangement of the shopping centre. Like many self-contained centres of the 1960's, this was originally planned to address a new shopping street - Bedford Square - rather than the High Street. As a result, the face of the town is currently the back of the shops.

This layout is contrary to contemporary planning ethos, which is based on providing active frontages that are visually stimulating and improve safety through passive surveillance ('eyes on the street'). Interestingly, according to the Conservation Area Statement, these were also prominent characteristics of the pre-war town centre.

Currently, blank façades, bin stores, parking and loading areas

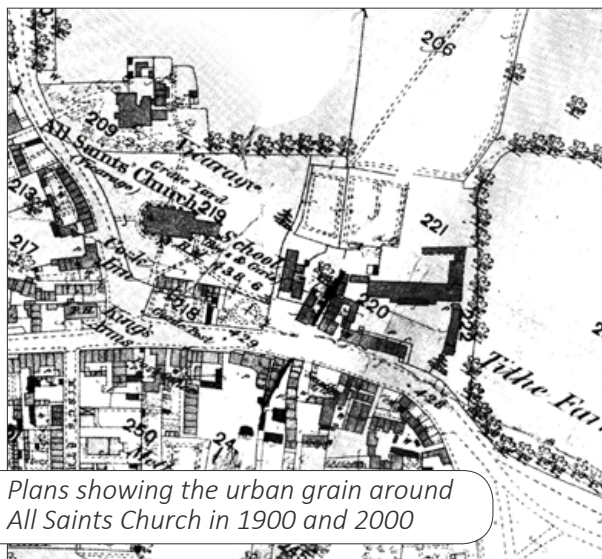
occupy a 160m long, prime commercial frontage at perhaps the most prominent location in the town.

The impact of this on safety and appearance is reflected in the findings of the market study and the community survey. Almost 70% of residents are concerned by poor appearance (45% above the national average) and 68% would not recommend a visit (40% more than the national average).

Without passive surveillance along long sections of the public realm, almost 50% of residents are also concerned by safety - almost 30% higher than the national average.

Appearance, safety and a lack of available commercial space are perhaps the most significant constraints that are holding back growth in the town centre. Through the combined effect of these, footfall has dropped by 30-40% on pre-pandemic level. Unfortunately, without change, this trend is likely to continue as residents seek a more engaging town centre experience elsewhere and businesses soon follow in search of greater footfall and consequently, sales.

At present, residents still appear to be committed to the town centre; almost 70% shop locally (26% higher than the national average) and 67% visiting regularly.



Plans showing the urban grain around All Saints Church in 1900 and 2000



Blank façades negatively impact safety and visual appearance in the shopping centre



New cafe, visitor centre and offices at Houghton Hall Park

Furthermore, 60-70% of residents would like to see the improvement of existing facilities, in particular, enhancements to the public realm for pedestrian and cycle movement and more community events.

According to the 2017 community survey, residents also expressed a desire for a more expansive and efficient public transport network. This covers the two aspects of local and regional connectivity. An efficient local system will improve social cohesion between new and existing communities. However, there is a particular concern for Houghton's regional connectivity.

For the public transport system to operate effectively, there is a need to fully integrate the local and regional networks. Currently, regional transport links are from Leagrave main-line train station, which provides direct access to Bedford and London, and the Busway, which provides direct access to Luton's Central and Parkway station.

However, with the guided section of the Busway ending before the High Street and a torturous route to Leagrave Station, there is a fear that the critical link between the local and the regional/ national networks is missing.

2 Context

2.8 Overview



Above: Busway (guided and conventional) network



Above: End of the guided busway in relation to a 600m walking distance from the heart of the town centre

While limited regional connectivity may have helped to forge a particular identity in the town, it might also be restricting access to employment, education and training opportunities further afield.

Ultimately, there are a number of constraints and opportunities that can be considered to repair and reinvigorate the town centre. Significantly though, businesses and residents would still appear to be committed to the town centre and, it is assumed, would welcome positive changes.

Furthermore, Houghton has a special story that differentiates it from the neighbouring towns and has developed a particular character, a strong sense of community and a diverse demographic. It is interesting to note that while 48% of residents believe safety to be a negative aspect of the town centre (28% higher than the national average), according to crime records, the town is in fact 10% safer than the district average. This suggests that perhaps appearance is negatively impacting the overall perception of safety.

With the influx of an additional 16,800 residents

over the next 10- 15 years, Houghton's population will be the same as the nearby towns of Hitchin (33,350), Letchworth (33,250) and Hatfield (29,616), which each have more expansive and diverse town centre offers. It will also be significantly greater than its Chiltern neighbours of Berkhamstead (19,000) and Flitwick (13,180), which have mainline train stations and direct links to London.

To accommodate this growth, it will be necessary to develop a more fulfilling and engaging town centre experience that will occupy the attention of visitors for longer than 60 minutes. This will not happen by improving the retail provision alone but through grouping a series of complimentary activities and events to form a unified offer with greater synergy and footfall between these. For instance, a route from Nimbus Park to Marl Lakes would incorporate Houghton Hall Park, The Green, High Street, shopping centre, Busway, employment activities at Woodside and the Nature Reserve.

Additionally, given Houghton's heritage and diversity of assets, the potential for tourism is seemingly untapped.



View across Houghton Hall Park; a Green Flag awarded area of public open space and the 'green lung' of Houghton Regis (CBC)

Rather than attempting to replicate the offers of other towns, a sustainable, place-based approach focuses on strengthening Houghton's 'USP'. Within the preparation of this study, the following aspects have been identified:

1. Character: Houghton has a strong sense of community and identity.
2. History: Royal connections and heritage as a local producer since Roman times.
3. Form: a variety of open spaces along the High Street.
4. Assets: a variety of built and natural assets within close proximity to the centre.
5. Self-sufficiency: despite its strategic location, an above average number of residents shop and work locally, half of all shops are independently owned and only 2% of units are currently vacant.
6. Diversity: an above average number of residents from different backgrounds compared to other towns in the district.
7. Location: at the edge of the Chiltern Hills AONB - a nationally recognised area of natural beauty and destination for tourism.

Maximising the value of these characteristics is central to the long term vision strategy for the town centre as the heart of the extended settlement.

3 Vision

3.1 Introduction

Royal Houghton has survived and prospered in many difficult circumstances over the centuries; the enormous growth of the area in the last three decades has undoubtedly presented a challenge to any faced in the past.

I am sure that the new town will not only meet that challenge in its own shrewd and inimitable way, but make from it a Houghton of which we can continue to be proud’.

Mrs. Pat Lovering, ‘Royal Houghton: the story of Houghton Regis, Bedfordshire’, 1986

This section provides an outline of a strategy to guide the development of the town centre as the heart of a settlement of 32,000 residents while at the same time, maintaining the particular sense of place and identity that make Houghton special.

It should be emphasised that it is not the intention of this document to replicate the 2008 Town Centre Master Plan SPD, which, according to the Local Plan, is due to be revised within the Plan period.

Rather, as noted in Section 1.2, the core objective is to establish an overarching vision for the centre as the basis for engagement with stakeholders and decision-making at a critical time that sees existing footfall diminishing at the same time as new residents are arriving to the expansion area.

In the first instance, a Vision Statement has been prepared with the intention of establishing a clear rationale that can be adopted by the town council as a common goal.

This aligns with the Neighbourhood Plan objec-

tives for the town centre as a ‘heart’ and a ‘hub’ and is specifically presented in a manner that can be copied and reproduced in isolation of this document.

Following this, ten objectives have been identified as the basis for the Phasing Plan that follows in the next section. These represent broad principles for the enhancement of the town centre in relation to the predominant constraints and opportunities that are outlined in the previous section, together with Houghton’s particular assets and ‘USP’.

The objectives provide the link between ‘analysis’ and ‘delivery’, where each is intended to strengthen a particular area or component that is currently under-performing.

The Phasing Plan in Section 3.2 outlines different ways that each objective can be delivered in the short, medium and long term.

As the town centre has been gradually contracting for the past half century, there is no ‘silver bullet’ that can instantly reverse the so-

cial, environmental and physical impact of this. Instead, transformation will occur gradually through a number of actions that are aimed at tackling different aspects of the town centre experience.

As a result, the nature of the projects that are outlined in Section 3.2 vary from cost effective ‘quick wins’ that can be delivered in the short term to long term, physical projects that will require a high level of investment and collaboration with multiple stakeholders to realise.

The core intent is that all short, medium and long term actions are coordinated to tackle existing blockages and maximise the value of the town’s physical and natural assets.



Images:

Top left: The tuck shop next to the Red House and the old Free School (HRHS archives).

Top right: Cricket at Houghton Green in 2005 (HRHS)

Bottom: View towards across The Green towards Houghton Hall (HRHS)

3 Vision

3.2 Vision Statement

This section has been specifically prepared to be read independently from the body of this document.

In this manner, both short and long statements may be reproduced by HRTC for different purposes.

As a result, there is some duplication of text with other sections of this document.

A centre for all Houghton Regis: the social, retail, business and community hub of a sustainable town with a special history and character.

Archaeological studies indicate the origins of a settlement in the parish since the Stone and Iron Ages. Through its fertile lands at the foot of the Chiltern Hills and the source of the River Lea, Houghton grew as a local producer during Saxon and Roman times and became the breadbasket for the royal households of the Norman and Tudor periods (giving rise to the title, 'Kyngheshouton').

Despite its strategic location in the middle of the Oxford-Cambridge growth zone and bursts of rapid expansion in the late 20th Century, the town has retained a strong local economy. At present, half of all shops are independently owned, an above average number of residents shop and work locally and only 2% of units are currently vacant (Town Benchmarking Report, 2021).

Extensive housing development of a particular mix and without sufficient supporting facilities hasn't been without impact. Today, these areas register above average rates of single parent households, youth unemployment and children in income deprived households (CBC, 2021).

At the same time, records show Houghton Regis to be 10% safer than the district average (crimerate.co.uk). Additionally, the town has a diverse, multicultural population and a proactive town council that places social cohesion at the heart of the Neighbourhood Plan and Vision Strategy.

The overall impression is of a sustainable, self-sufficient town with a strong sense of community and identity.

Improving facilities in particular areas is clearly a priority. However, equally pressing is the necessity to strengthen the town centre to cater for the needs of an additional 16,800 residents that will be relocating to the parish within the next 10-15 years.

Such expansion also brings significant opportunities for the local economy, particularly in the areas of retail and hospitality. While, given the town's variety of natural and built assets, the potential for tourism is seemingly untapped.

With a sustainable local economy, strong sense of com-



munity and semi-rural character, the ingredients for future proofing the town centre are already in place.

However, if Houghton is to avoid becoming amalgamated into a greater urban area with Luton and Dunstable or split between ‘new’ and ‘old’ towns, it is essential that the centre becomes a hub for all residents with a distinct identity, a diverse offer and better public transport connectivity.

To do this, it will need to achieve the following aspects:

1. A centre that caters for the needs of all residents, bringing together new and existing communities.
2. A busy, mixed-use hub for a sustainable local economy.
3. A unique sense of place and identity that is steeped in history.
4. A fulfilling visitor experience with a series of activities and attractions for day, night and overnight visitors.
5. A safe, attractive and stimulating environment.
6. A well-connected place – locally and regionally.

Images:

Top: VE Day celebration at The Green in 1945 (HRHS)

Bottom: Line dancers on the High Street at the Jubilee Carnival in 2006 (HRHS)

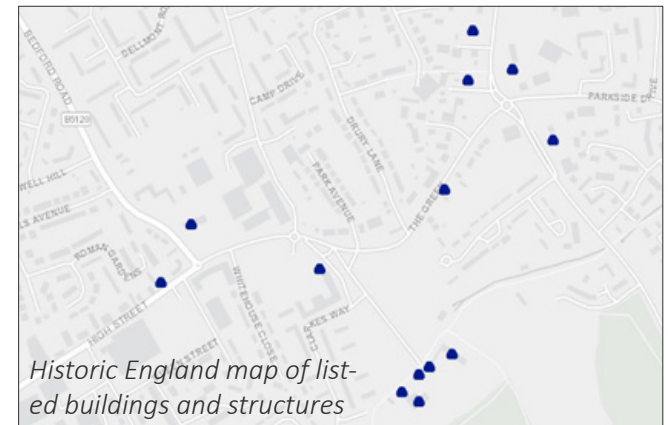
3 Vision

3.3 Objectives

Ten overarching objectives have been identified to guide the transformation of the town centre:

1. Historic Houghton: celebrate the town's rich history and build a unique sense of place and identity around this.
2. Unify the assets to provide a stronger, more robust and engaging town centre experience.
3. Welcome to Royal Houghton: improve the first impression through strengthening key views and gateways (road and bus).
4. Re-establish the High Street as a central spine with new opportunities to grow and diversify the commercial offer.
5. Integrate existing employment areas as part of the town centre.
6. De-clutter the public realm and provide a core area of public open space for community events.
7. Identify opportunities to improve east-west connectivity and create alternative routes for movement.
8. Develop an efficient public transport strategy that integrates local and regional services.
9. Strengthen the open space network to provide a series of spaces for different activities, support a semi-rural character and reflect the town's heritage as producer.
10. Establish a structure to assist and monitor delivery.

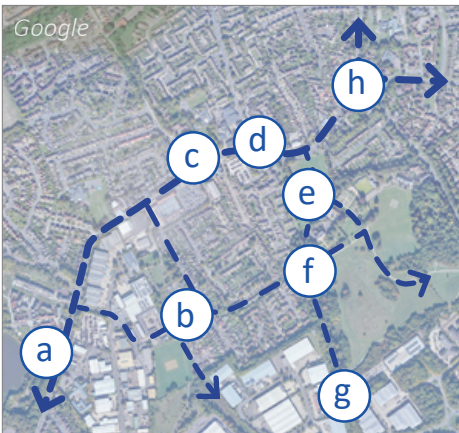
- 1 **Historic Houghton: celebrate the town's rich history and build a unique sense of place and identity around this.**



Houghton has many heritage assets and a long history that would be the envy of many settlements. However, for some reason, these aspects are not immediately apparent to visitors and the overarching identity is unclear.

Luton is known for its airport and hat manufacturing, St. Albans for the Abbey and Milton Keynes as a New Town. There is a need to clearly define what makes Houghton special- for instance, a local producer, royal manor or a gateway to the Chilterns - and consistently reinforce this message through branding, marketing, street furniture and signage.

2 Unify the assets to provide a stronger, more robust and engaging town centre experience.



A diverse mix of attractions are located within a 600m walk of The Green, including Grade II listed heritage assets, a Green Flag park, shopping centre, traditional High Street and employment activities at Woodside, Nimbus Park and Houghton Hall. A 1km cycle ride includes a nature reserve, SSSI and a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

At present, these activities are all operating independently. However, integrating them as part of a unified offer would improve access, synergy and footfall for all.

3 Welcome to Royal Houghton: improve the first impression through strengthening key views and gateways (road and bus).



At present, visitors to the town centre are currently greeted by blank frontages and 'red flags', such as the weapon drop bin, empty planter boxes and commercial bins. This creates a negative impression from the outset while weapon drops, railings and surveillance cameras can have an adverse impact on security compared to more passive measures such as active frontages, increased footfall and soft landscaping.

Ultimately, if the town centre is to attract more visitors, it is essential to improve its front door and garden.

4 Re-establish the High Street as a central spine with new opportunities to grow and diversify the commercial offer.



While the town centre extended from Townsend Farm (Mill Road) to the pond and coach houses at The Green, this has gradually contracted to the limits of the shopping centre over the past 50 years.

However, if it is to become the hub for an additional 16,800 residents, more public space and amenities are required. Within this, the High Street provides an opportunity to once again become a spine of activity through the settlement.

3 Vision

- 5 Integrate existing employment areas as part of the town centre.



With the exception of the some accommodation at Houghton Hall and along the High Street, the town centre limits exclude the commercial areas of Woodside, Cemetery Road and Nimbus Park (Town Centre Master Plan SPD, 2008).

Given that over 50% of residents work within 10km of their homes and only 2% of ground floor units are currently vacant, there is a fantastic opportunity for synergic activity between the town's employment, leisure and retail/ hospitality areas.

- 6 De-clutter the public realm and provide a core area of public open space for community events.

The public realm through the town centre is cluttered with various signs, bins, benches, bollards, planters and flags that are restricting pedestrian movement and opportunities for communal events.

In addition, since the area in front of All Saints Church became a car park, there is no longer a dedicated area of public open space that can provide as a market place or town square.

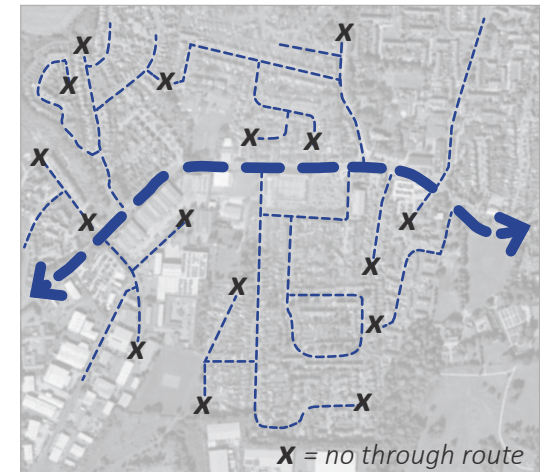


Historic urban grain and public realm

- 7 Identify opportunities to improve east-west connectivity and create alternative routes for movement.

With the exception of the High Street, there are no east-west vehicular links through the centre. As a result, all traffic is focussed along the High Street, which creates congestion at peak times and difficulties when sections of this are closed.

Creating these connections will enable the distribution of traffic across a wider network and release pressure on the High Street, while also improving access to employment areas and HH Park and stimulating pedestrian and cycle movement.



8 Develop an efficient public transport strategy that integrates local and regional services.



An effective local service will significantly improve access to the town centre, support cohesion between new and existing communities and reduce traffic along the High Street. This should be integrated with regional connections at Leagrave Station and the Busway to facilitate access to wider employment, education and training opportunities. A central hub should be located around All Saints and the shopping centre with additional stops at the employment areas, library and The Green.

9 Strengthen the open space network to provide a series of spaces for different activities, support a semi-rural character and reflect the town’s heritage as producer.

A prominent characteristic of Houghton is its open space network, which combines leisure and recreational areas with a Green Flag park, nature reserve and a SSSI. Collectively, this provides a semi-rural character that integrates with the wider Chilterns AONB.

At present, some spaces appear under utilised and without any clear purpose. However, considering these as a network of spaces with a different function and character will improve efficiency, use and access. For instance, where two recreational areas are located in close proximity, the function of one may be varied to include allotments, an ecology area or a skate or splash park.



10 Establish a structure to assist and monitor delivery.



Above: Hitchin Information Centre is a multi-purpose space that includes the Town Centre Manager’s office, tourist information, a shop and a gallery.

The nearby towns of Hitchin, Biggleswade and Letchworth that have similar populations to Houghton after expansion each have full or part time Town Centre Managers.

The dedicated role of these is to oversee the day-to-day operations of the town centre and work with local residents, businesses, stakeholders and contractors to consistently monitor and improve the town centre offering.

4 Delivery

4.1 Phasing Plan

The following table includes various short, medium and long term projects that will assist in delivering each of the objectives that are noted in the previous section. A number of these can be completed by the town council while others will require engagement with multiple stakeholders and investment to realise.

Through this approach, transformation will occur in a phased and coordinated manner and while long term projects might generate the greatest single impact, there are multiple short and medium term interventions that can be completed to realise the common objective.

No.	Action	Delivery (years)		
		1 - 3	3 - 5	5 - 10
1.0	Historic Houghton: celebrate the town's rich history and build a unique sense of place and identity around this.			
1	Town Council approval of the identity and vision strategy.	*		
2	Coordinated branding and marketing to enforce a clear and consistent message.	*		
3	Promote activities and events that will specifically support Houghton's identity as a local producer and a gateway to the Chilterns AONB. For instance, a farmer's market, flower show, urban farm or the beginning of walking, cycling or trekking routes into the Chilterns.	*		
4	Identify any historic dates or events that can be celebrated - for instance, a village fete or cricket matches on The Green.	*		
5	Identify any other heritage assets that might be eligible for listing.	*		
6	Identify potential funding mechanisms for improving heritage assets or access to these - for instance, Maiden Bower and All Saints Church.	*		
7	Prepare a map of attractions in the town centre.	*		
9	Review the appetite for a 'Britain in Bloom' campaign or the potential for a formal event by an organisation such as the Royal Horticultural Society at Houghton Hall Park and The Green.	*		
10	Develop a tourism strategy with a series of activities for day and overnight visitors.		*	
11	Instal signage on floors and walls to increase awareness of heritage assets or activities and events that took place at particular locations.		*	
12	Establish a centrally located tourism/ heritage office with space for exhibitions.		*	*
14	Physical restoration of particular heritage assets.			*
15	Review and update the 2008 Town Centre Conservation Area Statement SPD.			*

No.	Action	Delivery (years)		
		1 - 3	3 - 5	5 - 10
2.0	Unify the assets to provide a stronger, more robust and engaging town centre experience.			
1	Define the main links between key destinations and identify opportunities to improve these or form new connections.	*		
2	Review the appetite for a collective organisation of business owners and operators, for instance, the Houghton Regis Business Association or Forum, with a single point of reference for ease of communication.	*		
3	Establish regular channels of communication with local business owners and operators and monthly/ bi-monthly meetings to identify opportunities for synergy.	*		
4	Review the potential for greater public access to privately owned assets. For instance, a licence for a hospitality or leisure offer at the gravel pit lake or 'Open Door' weekends with guided walks around the Red House, Houghton Hall and All Saints.	*		
5	Refresh surfaces and planting along existing key routes.	*		
6	Initiate feasibility and technical studies for physical improvements along new or existing key routes, for instance, resurfacing or new signage.	*		
7	Update and expand the 2008 Town Centre boundary to incorporate surrounding activities.		*	
8	Implement new surfacing and signage along key existing routes.		*	*
9	Implement the construction of new links.			*
3.0	Welcome to Royal Houghton: improve the first impression through strengthening key views and gateways (road and bus).			
1	Initiate Action Area Plans for the west and eastern gateways.	*		
2	Engagement with stakeholders to identify long and short term solutions for improving the elevation of the shopping centre along the High Street and Tithe Farm Road.	*		
3	Instal temporary screening of blank facades around the shopping centre through posters, planting or render.	*		
4	Improve existing conditions at the back of the shops and parking. For instance, surface treatment, lighting and communal bin stores with screening.	*		
5	Remove the weapons bin from the entrance of the shopping centre and any outdated signs or sign boards.	*		
6	Identify a series of key views across the town. For instance, from The Green to All Saints Church or the top of the Chalk Hills to Houghton Hall.	*		
7	Initiate a feasibility and options study for extending the guided Busway up to the High Street.	*	*	
8	Establish a central hub for tourism and information.		*	
9	Initiate feasibility studies for new seating and resting areas that can take advantage of key view corridors.		*	
10	Initiate physical works at the eastern gateway.		*	

4 Delivery

No.	Action	Delivery (years)		
		1 - 3	3 - 5	5 - 10
3.0	Welcome to Royal Houghton: improve the first impression through strengthening key views and gateways (road and bus).			
11	Simplify and coordinate signage, surface treatment and street furniture along the High Street.		*	
12	Identify opportunities to reinforce the connection to agricultural production and a semi-rural character. For instance, hanging baskets, formal street planting and informal meadow planting/ rewilding along key routes.		*	
13	Depending on the result of the feasibility study, improve paving along Townsend Farm Road and a new interchange at the guided Busway or, develop a new interchange closer to the shopping centre.		*	*
14	Initiate physical works at the western gateway.			*
15	Renew surface treatment and street furniture along the High Street.			*
16	Initiate feasibility studies for the improvement of surface treatment, planting and street furniture on the approach to the east and west gateways.			*
4.0	Re-establish the High Street as a central spine with new opportunities to grow and diversify the commercial offer.			
1	Repair any damaged pavements, tarmac, signage and lighting along the High Street.	*		
2	Initiate an advisory campaign to improve street frontages along the High Street, possibly coupled with grants for businesses or land owners as an incentive.	*		
3	Initiate long and short term measures to improve the shopping centre elevation along the High Street and Tithe Farm Road.	*	*	*
4	Engagement with CBC and landowners along the High Street to review opportunities for additional accommodation and active frontages.	*		
5	Initiate a feasibility study to review the potential for designed cycle routes along the High Street.		*	
6	Identify opportunities to diversify the existing commercial offer and provide a more sustainable mix with a greater provision of offices, retail and multi-purpose space.		*	
7	Review all signage, surfaces and street furniture along the High Street and identify components that can be renewed or replaced.		*	
8	Develop new commercial accommodation along the High Street with a focus on retail accommodation at ground floor and offices/ multi-purpose space above this.			*
9	Renew surface treatment and street furniture along the length of the High Street.			*

No.	Action	Delivery (years)		
		1 - 3	3 - 5	5 - 10
5.0	Integrate existing employment clusters as part of the town centre.			
1	Update and expand the 2008 Town Centre boundary to incorporate adjoining commercial activities.	*		
2	Review the appetite for a collective organisation of business owners and operators with a single point of reference for ease of communication.	*		
3	Establish regular channels of communication with local business owners and operators and monthly/ bi-monthly meetings to identify opportunities for synergy.	*		
4	Engagement with stakeholders to identify opportunities to diversify the mix of commercial accommodation nearer to the High Street.	*		
5	Develop a programme of quarterly or bi-monthly job fairs and training events to encourage synergy between local businesses, residents and other amenities in the town centre.	*		
6	Improve pedestrian and cycle routes between the High Street and employment areas.		*	
7	Renew paving and signage along Townsend Farm Road and Park Road North.			*
6.0	De-clutter the public realm and provide a core area of public open space for community events.			
1	Engagement with CBC to establish a timeframe for updating the 2008 Town Centre Master Plan.	*		
2	Engagement with CBC and stakeholders to review improvements to the existing public realm in the shopping centre.	*		
3	Remove the weapons bin from the entrance of the shopping centre and any outdated signs or sign boards.	*		
4	Develop a programme of quarterly/ bi-monthly events on the full or eastern section of the car park at All Saints Church.	*		
5	Prepare an Action Area Plan for the car park at All Saints and the interface between the church yard and the pedestrian arcade.	*		
6	Initiate the revised Town Centre Master Plan study, including a section with guidance regarding suitable materials, street furniture and the treatment of shop frontages.	*	*	
7	Review the potential for off-road bus stops near to the Action Area Plan.		*	
8	Detail design of a new market square in the Action Area Plan.		*	
9	Initiate construction of 'Market Place' or 'All Saints Square'.		*	*
10	Develop a programme of monthly/ bi-monthly events in the new market square.			*

4 Delivery

No.	Action	Delivery (years)		
		1 - 3	3 - 5	5 - 10
7.0	Identify opportunities to improve east-west connectivity and create alternative routes for movement.			
1	Consultation with CBC's technical teams to identify opportunities to improve east-west vehicular connectivity away from the High Street.	*		
2	Prepare feasibility studies and conduct engagement.	*		
3	Identify potential sources of funding and investment.		*	
4	Prepare technical design.		*	
5	Initiate construction.			*
8.0	Develop an efficient public transport strategy that integrates local and regional services.			
1	Engagement with CBC's technical teams to review the potential to extend the Busway up to the High Street, develop an interchange around All Saints church and square, improve links to Leagrave Station and identify routes for local services.	*		
2	Initiate a transport study to identify and appraise options for an integrated and sustainable public transport strategy.	*		
3	Identify potential sources of funding for technical design, construction and operations.	*		
4	Engagement with local operators to identify opportunities to improve the use and efficiency of the existing system.	*		
5	Advertising and information campaigns to improve awareness of local and regional services.	*		
6	Initiate a feasibility study to review the potential for automated signs at bus stops.	*		
7	Maintenance of existing bus stops.	*	*	
8	Technical design of new routes and stops.		*	
9	Install automated systems and seating at the most commonly used or evenly spaced stops.		*	
10	Initiate construction of new routes and stops.			*
9.0	Strengthen the open space network to provide a series of spaces for different activities, support a semi-rural character and reflect the town's heritage as producer.			
1	Initiate a review of the use and function of different open spaces and pedestrian and cycle links between these.	*		
2	Initiate a review of the extent and condition of Public Rights of Way (PROW) that connect to the wider network - in particular, towards Sewell/ Maiden Bower and the Chiltern Hills AONB.	*		
3	Engagement with CBC's ecology, landscape and PROW teams to consider opportunities to improve the efficiency and biodiversity of existing spaces.	*		
4	Review the potential for rewilding some areas with meadow planting and natural habitats.	*		
5	Review the appetite for a 'Britain in Bloom' campaign or the potential for a formal event by an organisation such as the Royal Horticultural Society at Houghton Hall Park and The Green.	*		

No.	Action	Delivery (years)		
		1 - 3	3 - 5	5 - 10
9.0	Strengthen the open space network to provide a series of spaces for different activities, support a semi-rural character and reflect the town's heritage as producer.			
6	Foster closer links with the Chilterns AONB, including a formal walk from a new visitor centre at the Marl Lakes SSSI.	*		
7	Review the potential for improvements to the Marl Lakes as has happened at Houghton Hall Park and identify opportunities for funding and investment to facilitate this.	*		
8	Prepare a map of local walks and cycle routes to promote use and awareness.	*		
9	Integrate The Green into the Park Run circuit and initiate regular 'Park Walks' from The Green.	*		
10	Develop an annual programme of events at The Green, from Park Runs and Walks to exhibition cricket matches and Christmas and farmers markets.	*	*	
11	Develop an Action Area Plan for The Green.	*	*	
12	Improve the River Lea corridor and Lilly Lane.		*	
13	Improve the interface between the Kitchen Garden, pavilion and River Lea with an opportunity for a resting place, sign post, information panel or kiosk.		*	
14	Provide a turning space for vehicles at the end of Redhouse Court and parking spaces along this for access to Houghton Hall and Park from the north.		*	
15	Resurface Redhouse Court with a more sensitive, semi-permeable material such as stone setts, cellular grassed paving or a resin bonded aggregate with a swale along one side.		*	
16	Initiate development of a new visitor centre and Green Infrastructure at Marl Lakes to establish this as key area of open space in the district.		*	*
17	Improve surfaces, boundaries and furniture along PROW and bridleways.			*
10.0	Establish a structure to assist and monitor delivery.			
1	Approval and adoption of the Neighbourhood Plan.	*		
2	Engagement with CBC to review the pros, cons and impact of forming a Business Improvement District (BID).	*		
3	Initiate the revised Town Centre Master Plan study with a design guide section.	*		
4	Review the potential for a dedicated Town Centre and Evening Economy Manager on a full or part time basis.	*		
5	Establish social media platforms to promote events and activities.	*		
6	Establish a physical presence for the Town Council in the town centre, potentially connected to a tourist information facility and a small shop selling local and 'Royal Houghton' branded produce.		*	
7	Review and update the Town Centre Action Plan.			*

4 Delivery

4.2 Catalyst Projects

- ① The Green: pavilion, source of the River Lea/ Houghton Brook, access to Houghton Hall Park and the treatments of Redhouse Court and Lilly Lane.
- ② High Street frontage of Bedford Square and the view from The Green to All Saints Church.
- ③ Pedestrian and cycle access along a desire line from The Green/ Redhouse Court to Bedford Square.
- ④ Interface of the church yard, car park and the entrance to Bedford Square to create a shared surface, market place and an off-street waiting area for buses.
- ⑤ Junction of Townsend Farm Road and the High Street as a western gateway, including the connection to the Busway.
- ⑥ Junction of East End Road, Park Road North, Windsor Drive and Sundon Road as an eastern gateway to the town centre and approach to Houghton Hall Park and Nimbus Park.
- ⑦ Formal access and visitor centre at Marl Lakes SSSI.
- ⑧ Interface between Bedford Square and the library/ health centre

A number of action areas have been identified across the town centre as the basis for further study.

Strategically located at prominent intersections or focal points, these represent opportunities to improve connectivity between destinations, footfall and/ or visual impact.

A holistic approach combining urban, landscape and built form treatment should be considered for each place that will require engagement with different stakeholders and authorities to realise.

Where implementation might represent a long term process through securing funding and regulatory consents, temporary measures can be considered for quick wins and short term gains.

Additionally, each catalyst area can be treated as a separate project that can be phased and delivered independently. However, the use of common signage, paving and street furniture is recommended to maintain a unified impression.

The general location of each action area is identified on the following page with a short description and impression of potential character and treatment to follow.

Adjacent page:

Plan to show the location of catalysts projects



4 Delivery

4.2 Catalyst Projects

- 1 The Green: pavilion, source of the River Lea/ Houghton Brook, access to Houghton Hall Park and the treatments of Redhouse Court and Lilly Lane.



The Green plays an essential role in tying the town centre together; it is the historic heart of Houghton and an integral connection between Houghton Hall, the Park and the High Street.

Retaining an open area for events and activities such as a fête, a fair or playing cricket is important. However, strengthening the edges of Redhouse Court and Woodlands Avenue will frame the central space and guide cycle and pedestrian movement around this. The interface of Lilly Lane and the River Lea, the Kitchen Gardens and The Green provides an opportunity for a seating area and kiosk for a farm/ flower shop or a cafe that can integrate the surrounding activities.

- 2 High Street frontage of Bedford Square and the view from The Green to All Saints Church.

The view from The Green to the High Street and the tower of All Saints Church was a characteristic of historic Houghton. Coupled with the gentle sweep and narrowing of the High Street through the road funnels at either side of The Green, this would have created a strong sense of arrival to the town from the east.

Unfortunately, this view is now occupied by the back of the shopping centre and a landscape of commercial bins, roller shutters, blank façades and parking. These present a series of 'red flags' for visitors and a negative impression from the outset.

If the town centre is to have any chance of accommodating the increased population, it is essential to improve this view through screening or remodelling the built form while also providing an opportunity for a prime commercial frontage at a prominent location.



- 3 Pedestrian and cycle access along a desire line from The Green to Bedford Square.



At the moment, the link between The Green and the shopping centre is severed, limiting the potential for synergy and connectivity between the High Street and Houghton Hall Park.

Ideally, this link would follow the natural desire line (or as near as possible) and be treated as a signalised junction to maximise footfall.



- 4 Interface of the church yard, car park and the entrance to Bedford Square to create a shared surface, market place and an off-street waiting area for buses.

The absence of a core area of civic space in the town centre has been discussed throughout this document. While the shopping arcade has partially fulfilled this role, this suffers from poor visibility from the High Street, which limits its potential to function as a true market place.

From the plan that is included in Section 3.3, the area in front of All Saints Church appears to have been used for such activities. Centrally located and highly visible, this links the church with the pedestrian area and the library and aligns with existing crossings on the High Street.

While the area is currently used as a car park, the recent Benchmarking Report suggests there

to be an over provision of parking in the town centre. Additionally, the Conservation Statement recommends improvements to the public realm around the Grade I listed church.

The reinstatement of a market place on the site of the car park might be a long term ambition. However, in the short term, perhaps ten or fifteen spaces might be removed from the eastern side, together with the large planters next to these in order to create a central space.

This could be combined with repaving the full parking area for markets and events on particular days. If successful, the remaining spaces may be gradually removed over time.



4 Delivery

4.2 Catalyst Projects

5 Junction of Townsend Farm Road and the High Street as a western gateway, including the connection to the Busway.

At present, it is too easy to pass through the town centre without realising. Additionally, there is a need to begin expanding the central area for the doubling of the population.

The junction between Townsend Farm Road and the High Steet provides an opportunity to establish a gateway before the curve in the High Street towards the shopping centre. Additionally, this location would incorporate the Busway and commercial activities at Woodside while also being within 200m from the Marl Lakes and the nature reserve.

Ideally, this would be coupled with an extension of the Busway up to the High Street to improve regional connectivity both to and from Houghton.



6 Junction of East End Road, Park Road North, Windsor Drive and Sundon Road as an eastern gateway to the town centre and approach to Houghton Hall Park and Nimbus Park.



The location of the current roundabout at Chequers presents a similar opportunity to strengthen a gateway to the town centre from the east.

Historic maps show this to be an important hub within the town (East End), with the chantry farm, a couple of inns and ponds, which were presumably used for cleaning wagons, watering livestock or as part of the natural drainage system for the River Lea.

Such a gateway would also support wayfinding to Houghton Hall Park and Nimbus Park, assisting in the integration of these as part of the wider town centre offer.

⑦ Formal access and visitor centre at Marl Lakes.

The Marl Lakes SSSI and community nature reserve represent an invaluable area of ecology and biodiversity within 300m of the High Street. Integrating these into the town centre significantly expands the offer and creates a north-west anchor of open space to synergise with Houghton Hall Park at the south-east.

Additionally, this area provides an opportunity to improve integration with the wider Chilterns AONB landscape, drawing nature into the heart of the town. The provision of a similar offer to the visitor centre/ cafe and parking at Houghton Hall Park would help to establish this as a destination, perhaps coupled with a heritage, arts or wildlife centre.



⑧ Interface between Bedford Square and the library/ health centre.

In the absence of a designated area of civic space, the area in front of the library has assumed this role. However, activity within the space and footfall across this is restricted by changes in level and a collection of bollards, planters, lighting poles and trees.

Furthermore, the space is dominated by a long, blank elevation that provides no passive surveillance or visual stimulation. It is perhaps the treatment of this area that is generating the concerns of local residents for safety and appearance that are noted in the Benchmarking Report.

However, strategically located along the pedestrianised shopping street and in front of a busy destination in the library and health centre, transformation of this area can have a significant impact on the character of the town centre. Additionally, if treated correctly, it would improve access to shops, provide a space for communal activities and seasonal events and create valuable commercial frontages.



Existing conditions: a missed opportunity to stimulate activity and footfall



Letchworth town centre



Hitchin town centre

Marl Lakes that is similar to the current facility at Houghton Hall Park.

- Public transport operators (with CBC) to review the potential to improve and integrate local and regional services and the opportunity for a transit hub along the High Street.

In addition to engagement on these aspects, it is hoped the Draft Neighbourhood Plan can be submitted to CBC as a matter of priority for review and adoption as a statutory planning document.

It would also be of value to consider how the action areas and catalyst projects that are outlined in Section 4.2 might be phased and delivered. In the first instance, this will involve identifying relevant stakeholders, potential funding and investment mechanisms and feasibility with CBC's technical departments as the basis for further consultation and study.

BID	Business Improvement District
CBC	Central Bedfordshire Council
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
HRCAS	Houghton Regis Conservation Area Statement, 2008
HRNP	Houghton Regis Neighbourhood Plan 2020- 2035 (Draft)
HRTC	Houghton Regis Town Council
PROW	Public Rights of Way
NDG	National Design Guide, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2021
SPD	Supplementary Planning Document
TBR	Town Benchmarking Report, People and Places, 2022



P22121



Houghton Regis Town Council

Peel Street
Houghton Regis
Bedfordshire LU5 5EY

Tel: 01582 708540
info@houghtonregis.org.uk
www.houghtonregis.org.uk

placemake.

EUROPEAN UNION
European Regional Development Fund



Houghton Regis Town Centre Action Plan

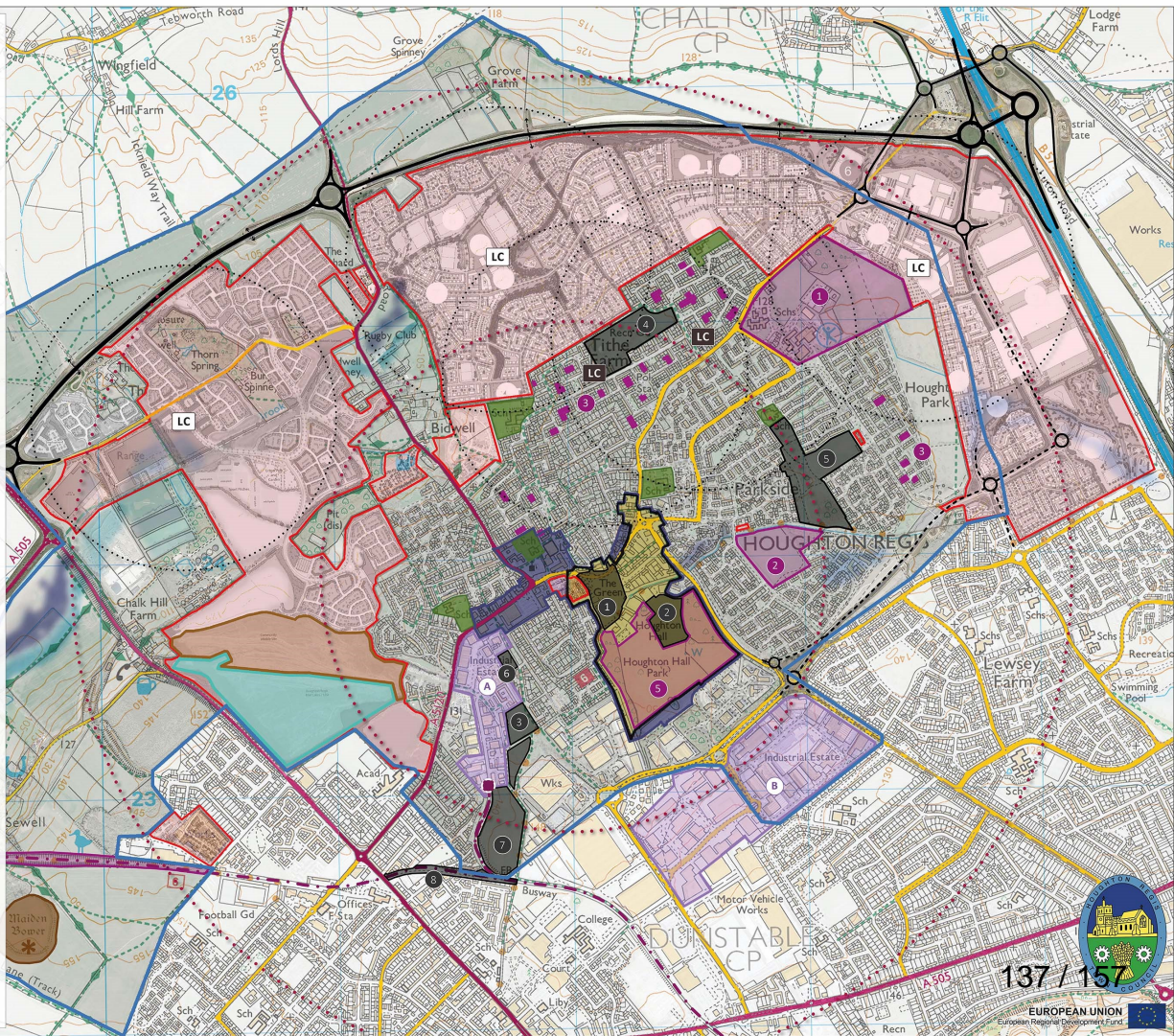
Settlement Plan | Spring, 2022

LEGEND

- HRTC owned/ managed sites
 - 1 Houghton Green (The Green)
 - 2 Moore Crescent Recreation Ground
 - 3 Orchard Close Recreation Ground
 - 4 Tithe Farm Recreation Ground (long term lease from CBC)
 - 5 Parkside Recreation Ground (long term lease from CBC)
 - 6 Cemetery
 - 7 Dog Kennel Down
 - 8 Former railway line
 - CBC owned sites
 - 1 Kingsland (22.5 ha)
 - 2 Windsor Drive
 - 3 Garages
 - 4 Sewell Cut Nature Reserve
 - 5 Houghton Hall Park
 - Current and approved private developments
 - Neighbourhood Plan Area
 - Conservation Area
 - LC Local Centre (Existing)
 - LC Local Centre (Proposed)
 - A Townsind Industrial Estate
 - B Woodside Industrial Estate
 - Marl Lakes SSSI
 - Chalk Pit Community Wildlife Site
 - Scheduled Monument
 - Woodside Link Road
 - M1 - A5 Link Road
 - Busway
- Town centre walk and cycle distances

Local centre walk and cycle distances

0 100 200 300 400 500 Metres

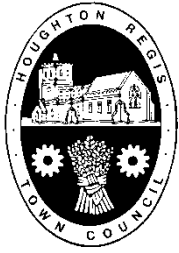


Prepared for Houghton Regis Town Council by Placemake in March, 2022 with funding from the European Regional Development Fund



137 / 157

EUROPEAN UNION
European Regional Development Fund



Date: 20th June 2022

Title: Land at Windsor Drive

Purpose of the Report: To seek Councils position on possible future development on land at Windsor Drive

Contact Officer: Clare Evans, Town Clerk

1. RECOMMENDATION

- 1. To continue to offer support to the Friends of Windsor Drive Group in terms of engaging in democratic processes;**
- 2. To oppose any future development on Windsor Drive unless very special circumstances are shown in accordance with draft Neighbourhood Plan Policy 12.**

2. BACKGROUND

Representatives of the Friends of Windsor Drive have attended a number of council meetings requesting answers to questions raised. Answers have been provided, at the meeting or in an email following the meeting.

However, the Friends of Windsor Drive would like a definitive answer to the following:

What is the Town Councils position on possible future development on this land?

3. CONSULTATION BACKGROUND TO DATE

Central Bedfordshire Council have stated:

Central Bedfordshire Council have made no commitment to building on Windsor Drive, yet it is an option that is being explored because there is an opportunity for the land to be enhanced to enable more people to enjoy the open space that is there. A budget of £20.6 million for this development, if it does go ahead, has been allocated as part of Central Bedfordshire Councils financial planning.

Arising from public interest CBC have held 2 Listening Events.

Members were provided the opportunity to attend a listening event, arranged by Central Bedfordshire Council, on Tuesday 28th September to share their thoughts on Windsor Drive alongside the housing need in Houghton Regis.

The key themes coming out of this meeting were as follows:

- Affordability - there are concerns over the cost of properties deemed affordable in the area, and a feeling that any new properties would primarily benefit families moving out of London and Luton, rather than families in Houghton Regis and Dunstable. However, not all heard from were opposed to development of the site, citing enduring concerns with Houghton Regis families in poor housing.
- Open space – the land is an invaluable resource to local people and has been used for healthy activities such as a holiday football scheme. Without open space, health inequalities will be exacerbated. There is also concern over flood risk.
- Context of the wider area – the current high street offer is considered to be poor, and the area would benefit from additional infrastructure to serve the expanding community, including healthcare, better public realm and play/leisure facilities.
- Perception - there is a mistrust of Central Bedfordshire Council and its Development Management Committee among some in Houghton Regis, which is creating suspicion around the future of Windsor Drive. In particular there are questions over the proportion of the site being considered for development and clarity is needed.

A second listening event was held by Central Bedfordshire Council, for local residents and interested parties, on the 13th November 2021. For information, a feedback document provided by CBC, from this event, is attached (Appendix A). This document summarises local responses to the proposal of housing development on Windsor Drive, Houghton Regis.

3. DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK AND LOCAL PLANS

National Planning Policy Framework NPPF

NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It provides a framework within which locally prepared plans for housing and other development can be produced. Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan (this includes local and neighbourhood plans), unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The National Planning Policy Framework must be taken into account in preparing the development plan, and is a material consideration in planning decisions. A new version of the National Planning Policy Framework was published on 20 July 2021.

Central Bedfordshire Councils Local Plan

To help inform where new development should take place, the Local Plan sets out a hierarchy of settlements. The hierarchy takes account of local sustainability credentials such as access to a variety of services and facilities (including schools, shops and public transport links) and is based on existing provision. The hierarchy helps to provide a framework for considering the levels of new development to be

directed through the Development Management process. There are four tiers included in the Settlement Hierarchy - Major Service Centres, Minor Service Centres, Large Villages, and Small Villages. Houghton Regis is defined as a Major Service Centre within the Local Plan. Major service centres are larger settlements with a highly diverse range in services and facilities, including schools, healthcare, varied retail offerings and a strong availability of public transport.

There is no allocation of development for Windsor Drive, detailed within the Local Plan and therefore any development would need to go through the proper planning process and be reliant on not conflicting with those policies contained within it.

Houghton Regis Town Councils Draft Neighbourhood Plan

Houghton Regis Town Councils draft Neighbourhood Plan had gone through a six-week statutory public consultation process (Regulation 14). Many comments were received, some were in regard to Windsor Drive and specifically against any proposed development. The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group are still reviewing the draft plan alongside all comments received. Ordinarily the draft plan would be updated and be presented to Council for adoption before being submitted to Central Bedfordshire Council for them to move the process towards a referendum however, the Government have introduced a First Homes Policy. Central Bedfordshire Council have advised that they will implement this policy when clear guidance is available however, all Neighbourhood Plans, in development, are required to make reference to this policy. Therefore, it is advised that another 6-week Regulation 14 consultation public consultation will now have to be undertaken.

What became clear following the Regulation 14 consultation was that although the draft Neighbourhood Plan designated a number of areas as Local Green Space/ Key Landscaped Areas, one of which was Windsor Drive Recreation Ground, it did not have the evidence to underpin this statement. There needs to be clear evidence for when the plan is reviewed by the Secretary of State, prior to the plan going to referendum. The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group recently appointed a consultant to undertake an evidence gathering exercise that could confirm these designations and inclusions. At the time of writing this report, this exercise has not been completed nor reported on.

Draft Neighbourhood Plan policy 12 (Open Space, Recreation & Community Facilities), lists a number of sites, which includes Windsor Drive, the policy states that no change will be permitted other than in very special circumstances.

Before the revised plan can be the subject of another Regulation 14 consultation, the revised plan will be presented to the town councils planning committee for their consideration. Should the planning committee support the revised draft plan they then in turn would make a recommendation to Council for Council to adopt the revised plan.

4. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

- Central Bedfordshire Council have not provided a definitive proposal in regard to any development on this land.
- The draft Neighbourhood Plan states no change will be permitted other than in very special circumstances. It is however highlighted that as the draft plan is still

in the early stages of the adoption process the draft plan can only attract minimal weight as a material consideration, when determining a planning application.

- Members have previously mentioned concerns that should they verbalise an opinion at this stage they may be precluded from expressing a view at any future consultation stage. Advice from National Association of Local Councils is attached Appendix B. Members are specifically referred to paragraphs 8-10.

It is difficult to suggest how it is best to proceed. The following points have been considered when formulating the recommendation to this report:

1. Without a doubt the council must ensure it retains its position of being able to comment on any scheme which does come forward.
2. There is also an understanding that one aspect of the role of a local council is that it will support local groups and residents within its parish in pursuing their aims and objectives. Support does not necessarily mean 'agree with' but it is more taken to mean to provide reasonable assistance in order for the group to pursue their aims and objectives.
3. The Draft NHP does include a policy which covers development on open spaces. This draft plan has been through a consultation process and has been formally considered by the HRTC Planning Committee. It is therefore suggested that it does hold some weight. As outlined above the draft NHP states that there will be no change unless there are very special circumstances. It is for any developer or promotor of a site to identify what these very special circumstances are.

The recommendation stated above reflects on these points and seeks to provide a suitable way forward.

5. COUNCIL VISION

Aspirations

A2 To effectively and proactively **represent** our community

6. IMPLICATIONS

Corporate Implications

- There are no corporate implications arising from the recommendation.

Legal Implications

- There are no legal implications arising from the recommendation.

Financial Implications

- There are no financial implications arising from the recommendation.

Risk Implications

- There are no risk implications arising from the recommendation.

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. APPENDICES

Appendix A – Listening event feedback (CBC)

Appendix B – NALC Legal Topic Note 81

Windsor Drive Open Space

Listening event – 13 November 2021
Feedback

A great place to live and work.

Introduction

This document summarises an engagement event held by Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) to collect local responses to the proposal of housing development on Windsor Drive, Houghton Regis.

Central Bedfordshire Council determined that an open and transparent engagement event preceding any further site surveys or a formal planning process should be delivered to provide up to date information on the Council's thinking and provide an opportunity for early input. To this end, community consultation specialists BAS Consultancy and Play Disrupt were engaged to lead the process.

The team transcribed conversations and recorded key topics following spoken discussions with participants in addition to collecting data via three creative tasks, as described below.

Creative tasks

a. Current use

To uncover popular as well as less common current uses of Windsor Drive, Play:Disrupt devised an activity which collected a number of different pieces of data:

- Types of activity
- Frequency of activity
- Demographics undertaking activity
- Time of day activity is done

The activity invited participants to represent their activity on a map of Windsor Drive to show routes, spaces and uses. Responses are summarised in the section below.

b. Future use

To engage people with ideas for the future of Windsor Drive, Play:Disrupt created a 'Subbuteo'-style board in the shape of Windsor Drive, reflecting its current common use as a football practice pitch. Around the edge, instead of advertisements, were questions. These questions asked if any improvements were to be made to Windsor Drive in the future, what they might be.

These questions were:

- What do we need for the future of Windsor Drive?
- What facilities?
- What activities?
- What kind of place?
- What's the atmosphere?
- Who is it for?
- What kinds of habitat?
- What must be kept?



- What's missing in Houghton Regis?

The activity was well used and engaged with. The public used flags, plasticine and models to put across their views. Results are described in the Responses section and full feedback is collated in **Appendix 2**.

c. General amenities

Play:Disrupt created a board for stakeholders to record the general facilities and amenities that were lacking in the area or that the area needed less of. These are described in the Responses section of this report below.

Responses

The outcome of the creative tasks and conversations is detailed below.

Current use

Common activities (dog walking, jogging, taking children to play, walking) were prompted but attendees added many more, shown here:

<i>Complete list of activities reported as taking place on Windsor Drive Open Space</i>	
Exercise classes/groups	Picnics
Walking	Butterflies/birds/nature
Cycling	Playing in snow
Football	Geo-cacheing
Kite flying	Looking at it- view
Dog walking	Pokemon Go
Jogging	Golf pitching
Taking children to play	Drone flying
Learning to ride a bike	Spending time being around other people in community, chatting to others, watching life

The most frequently described activities were walking (36) and dog walking (19), followed by jogging (9) and taking children to play (9).

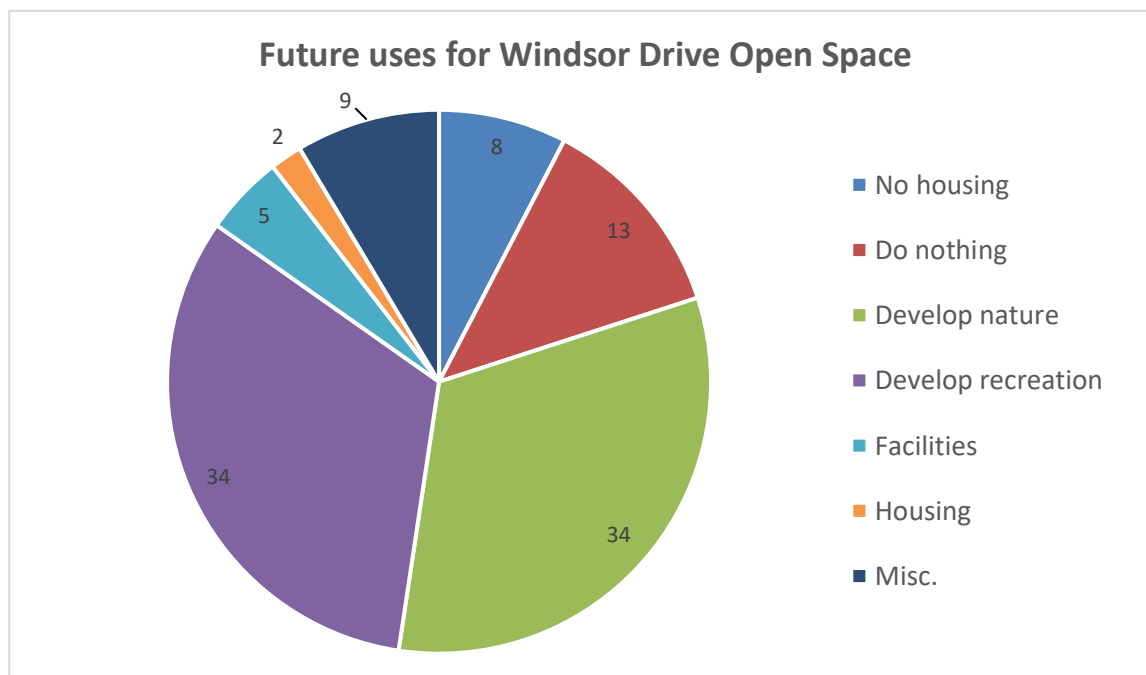
Windsor Drive's daytime use is over three times higher than evening and night use which may be partly explained by the lack of lighting. The most popular time to use Windsor Drive is in the afternoon.

Those who use Windsor Drive do so with great frequency, with running and dog walking being mostly daily occurrences.

Full feedback is available in **Appendix 1**.

Future use

Feedback from the 'Future Use' creative task has been grouped into seven themes:



The most common feedback was to develop nature and recreation on Windsor Drive.

Where recreational development was called for, this commonly fell into one of four categories:

- a. Seating
- b. Paths
- c. Accessibility
- d. Exercise/activity

Common themes around developing nature include: rewilding, planting trees, managing and rejuvenating the brook, wildlife habitat improvement, wildflower seeding, wildlife signage.

Eight responses specified that no housing should be built on Windsor Drive, and an additional thirteen responses specified that nothing at all should be done on Windsor Drive.

Five responses called for new facilities: new daycare centre for special needs adults, more GPs, dentists, doctors, schools, local community shop, mobile coffee shack. Two responses specified certain types of housing provision: bungalows for disabled people and council housing.

General amenities and facilities

In the 'more of' less of' area, doctors' surgeries and greenery/nature were frequently mentioned in the 'more of' category. Also mentioned were floodplains, police presence, and homes sized for those wishing to downsize. In the 'less of' category a common view was to see less housing, housing without infrastructure, traffic and poverty.

Full feedback is available in **Appendix 2**.

The transcribed conversations reflect the data collected in the above three activities: lack of infrastructure, need for green spaces for mental health, lack of doctors and health provision, antisocial behaviour, need for better access to green space.

Windsor Drive is important to the community intergenerationally, with important life moments taking place there. There is a great deal of love and appreciation for the place, particularly after coronavirus and the close access to green space it provided. At least one person cited the reason for buying their house was the proximity to this green space.

The lack of infrastructure provision (particularly doctors and dentists) was often mentioned. The community feels that a lot of housing has been built in Houghton Regis, but not enough infrastructure provision for those additional residents.

What also became clear during the listening exercise was the lack of trust attendees had in the council, and the belief that the council will go ahead with plans despite any objections raised.

Full feedback is available in **Appendix 3**.

Appendix 1. Collated responses to Exercise 1 – Uses of Windsor Drive Open Space

Demographics																		
Activities	Exercise classes/groups		Cycling	Football	Kite Flying	Dog Walking	Jogging	Taking children to play	Picnics	Butterflies, birds, nature	Playing in snow	Geo-caching	Looking at it-view	Pokemon Go	Golf Pitching	Drone flying	Spending time being around other people in community, chatting to others, watching life. Learning to ride a bike	
Demographic List	Walking																	
Children		5	1	1	1		1	3		2					1			
Teenagers	1	3		1				1							1			
Young Adults		6	1	1	1		4	2			1	1		1	1			
Adults	2	13	2				8	7		2	1	1		1	1			
Families	1	5	1	1	2		3		5	1	1	1						
Elderly		1					3										1	
Disabled (people)		2		1													1	
Visually Impaired																	1	
Wheelchair Users		1															1	
Hearing Impaired																	1	
Total	4	36	5	5	4		19	9	9	1	5	2	3	0	2	3	0	3

Time of day																	
Activities	Exercise classes/groups		Cycling	Football	Kite Flying	Dog Walking	Jogging	Taking children to play	Picnics	Butterflies, birds, nature	Playing in snow	Geo-caching	Looking at it-view	Pokemon Go	Golf Pitching	Drone flying	Spending time being around other people in community, chatting to others, watching life. Learning to ride a bike
Time of day	Walking																
Morning	2	13	3	2			14	4	1			2	1		2		
Afternoon	9	15	5	5	4		16	4	8	1		3	1		2		
Evening	2	8		2	1		7	4	3	1			1		2		
Night		4		1			4	1					1		1		

Frequency																	
Activities	Exercise classes/groups		Cycling	Football	Kite Flying	Dog Walking	Jogging	Taking children to play	Picnics	Butterflies, birds, nature	Playing in snow	Geo-caching	Looking at it-view	Pokemon Go	Golf Pitching	Drone flying	Spending time being around other people in community, chatting to others, watching life. Learning to ride a bike
Frequency	Walking																
Daily	4x per week	every couple of days			4x per week	twice a week	bi-weekly to month	every sn	Every few weeks	every day							weekly during day light
	3x per week	weekly			2-3 times per week	every day			Every few weeks	every day							
	every few days	weekly			every day	every day			every sn	Every few weeks	every day						
	every day	everyday			2 x per day	1x per week											
	2x day				everyday	everyday											
	every day				everyday	everyday											
	weekly				everyday	everyday											
	daily				everyday	everyday											
	twice a week				everyday	everyday											
	weekends				everyday	everyday											
	weekly				everyday	everyday											
	daily				every day	every day											
	daily				every day	every day											
	daily																
	daily																
	daily																
	weekly																
	daily																
	weekly																
	daily																
	weekends																

Appendix 2. Collated data from exercise 2: Future uses for Windsor Drive Open Space

Feedback from activity regarding the future of Windsor Drive	No housing	Do nothing	Develop nature	Develop recreation	Facilities	Housing	Misc.	Detail
Comment (raw, from flags)	8	13	34	34	5	2		9
No housing	No housing							
No to housing. Keep green space-nature- mental health	No housing							
NO BUILDING HOUSES	No housing							
Absolutely NO MORE HOUSING	No housing							
Calm friendly- NO HOUSES	No housing							
No to housing. Keep green space-nature- mental health	No housing							
More trees. No houses of flat or building	No housing		develop nature					
Don't build in condensed areas!	No housing							
Keep as an open space- DO NOT DO ANYTHING WITH IT. LEAVE IT ALONE		do nothing						
Don't build on WD, leave it as it is		do nothing						
Keep it as it is		do nothing						
Leave it as it is		do nothing						
Retain as it is. Should have green space		do nothing						
Keep as open space		do nothing						
Keep it open for dog-walking and walking		do nothing						
Keep for exercise for people to use. Don't change it		do nothing						
KEEP OUR GREEN SPACE AND REDUCE OUR CARBON FOOTPRINT		do nothing						
There is a need for quiet green space for people to enjoy		do nothing						
keep as a quiet area for mindfulness and mental health		do nothing						
Keep green for school activities		do nothing	develop nature					
Keep green space. Government advice to keep us healthy!		do nothing	develop nature					
Build new day care centre for special needs adults- replace one being closed in Houghton Regis					facilities			
More GPs, dentists, doctors					facilities			
Local/community shop. run by community					facilities			
Coffee shack (mobile)				develop recreation	facilities			
Doctors, GPs, Schools					facilities			
Disabled bungalows						housing		
Council houses						housing		
Don't forget the river. Reduce tree cover/shading. Reprofile banks			develop nature					
Rejuvenate the brook. Clean & accessible			develop nature					
Developed further for nature- edges- flora and fauna			develop nature					
wildlife place and long grass			develop nature					
pond & wildflowers			develop nature					
Link with improvements to surrounding landscape on Parkside			develop nature					
Wildlife reserve			develop nature					
Create/improve wet woodland. Sort drainage into it. SUDS			develop nature					
wildflowers growing in sections/edges			develop nature					
keep woodland area for wildlife			develop nature					
Re-Wind & sealing and open green space			develop nature					
Green spaces- take the carbon out of the atmosphere			develop nature					
More wildflowers, trees, keep it green for everyone and wildlife			develop nature					
Re-wilding			develop nature					
Mitigating flooding. The big green sponge			develop nature					
Woodland and lake			develop nature					
Retain areas supporting wildlife			develop nature					
Plant Britain- plant trees			develop nature					
Better management of green space			develop nature					
Wildlife signage (info board)			develop nature					
More trees in the middle			develop nature					
Community based biodiversity projects			develop nature					
re-wild and natural space			develop nature					
Pond and park with benches			develop nature	develop recreation				seating
maintain and make walkway in the wooded area			develop nature	develop recreation				paths
Open space for walking dogs			develop nature	develop recreation				
More seating to enjoy the open spaces			develop nature	develop recreation				seating
Nature trail connection			develop nature	develop recreation				paths
more wheelchair access to nature reserve spaces			develop nature	develop recreation				accessibility
Community event and/or gardening			develop nature	develop recreation				exercise/activity
Allotments			develop nature	develop recreation				exercise/activity
Seating, and waste management				develop recreation				seating
Seating areas				develop recreation				seating
Clarity around cycling/footpath use				develop recreation				
Running track				develop recreation				exercise/activity
Outdoor gym for older people				develop recreation				exercise/activity
playground				develop recreation				exercise/activity
low intervention sports facilities (football)				develop recreation				exercise/activity
More lighting with paths around it!!				develop recreation				paths & lighting
Dog poo bins and benches needed				develop recreation				seating
Pathways with lighting so it can be used at night too				develop recreation				paths
maintain walking space for walking/exercise				develop recreation				exercise/activity
Needs some parking (there is already a lack)				develop recreation				parking
Craft fairs				develop recreation				exercise/activity
Not accessible!				develop recreation				accessibility
More sports for players				develop recreation				exercise/activity
Disabled access				develop recreation				accessibility
SAFER				develop recreation				safety
Public seats/picnic area. car park				develop recreation				seating
Accessible pathways				develop recreation				accessibility
Community children's recreation ground				develop recreation				exercise/activity
5 a side multi use games area				develop recreation				exercise/activity
Path area. Seating area. Pathways. Rubbish bins				develop recreation				paths & seating
Pavilion/meeting space				develop recreation				
Cricket pitch				develop recreation				exercise/activity
Tea house facility				develop recreation				
That development on WD would set a precedent for other green spaces to be developed							Misc.	
Quiet, peaceful, chilled							Misc.	
More open spaces like WD							Misc.	
There are other spaces with better facilities than WD							Misc.	
Better crossing/Good traffic calming							Misc.	
50%/65% is also including tree areas- no							Misc.	
Quiet, serene, open, relaxing							Misc.	
Looking at it VIEW							Misc.	
Community oriented							Misc.	

Appendix 3. Collated data from exercise 3: general amenities for Houghton Regis

More of	Less of
Hospital! Capacity?	Poverty- hidden/visible
Network of cycle/natural/footpath trails- wheel chair accessible and plenty of biodiversity	No housing on Windsor Drive
Greenways	Traffic and associated noise
Greenspace for wildlife and trees	No more housing- we are not a dumping ground. We had lack of open space even for football 20 years ago
Capacity Doctors Surgery	Development on green spaces
Bungalows included in new building schemes- important for access, mobility, downsizing (these should always be included in new developments)	Expensive houses with no thought to infrastructure- Dr/school/congestion/police/leisure/facilities
Trees in highstreets, and on grass areas and verges	New housing developments
More Doctors surgeries	Building new houses
Green open spaces	Amazon Prime vans driving through Houghton Regis to get to Boscombe Road- make them use the link road
Flood plains	No new housing in existing open spaces
police on the beat	No more housing in nature/sports/community areas
Natural open spaces	Building new houses and destroying our greens
Improve Houghton Brook	Do not want houses on park
Green open space for walks and sport	Dogwalking space remains the way it is
Provision/thinking in new development for other end of market (downsizing)	
Council houses	

Revised August 2014

PREDETERMINATION

Introduction

1. Decisions made by local authorities and other public bodies which are based on bias or predetermination have always been open to legal challenge by judicial review. There is useful caselaw which gives guidance on how decision-makers such as councillors should avoid bias and predetermination (see paragraphs 11-12 below).
2. Being predetermined is different from having a disclosable interest. Issues of conduct may occur alongside those of predetermination but, equally, the two issues may occur entirely separately. For example being determined to oppose building next to your own house may be both ; being opposed to building at the other end of the village may be predetermination but may not be a disclosable interest.

Section 25 of the Localism Act 2011

3. S.25 of the Localism Act 2011 (“the 2011 Act”) is intended to deal with challenges to the validity of decisions taken by parish councils (or in Wales a community council) because a member or co-opted member is alleged to have had a closed mind when voting. The full text of s.25 is in the Appendix to this LTN.
4. A ‘co-opted member’ of a relevant authority is defined as a person who is not a member of the authority but who (a) is a member of any committee or sub-committee of the authority, or (b) is a member of, and represents the authority on, any joint committee or joint sub-committee of the authority, and who is entitled to vote on any question which falls to be decided at any meeting of the committee or sub-committee.

5. 'Relevant authorities' includes all principal authorities in England and Wales, parish councils in England, community councils in Wales, National Park Authorities and the Broads Authority.

Purpose and objectives of section 25 of the 2011 Act

6. By introducing s.25, the Government has not attempted to change caselaw in respect of predetermination and bias but it has attempted to clarify it.
7. The explanatory notes to the 2011 Act in relation to s.25 say that it 'clarifies how the common law concept of "predetermination" applies to councillors in England and Wales'.
8. 'Predetermination occurs where someone has a closed mind, with the effect that they are unable to apply their judgment fully and properly to an issue requiring a decision. Decisions made by members and co-opted members of relevant authorities later judged to have predetermined views have been quashed. [I]f members or co-opted members have given a view on an issue, this does not show that they have closed minds on that issue. If they have campaigned on an issue or made public statements about their approach to an item of council business, they will be able to participate in discussion of that issue in the council and to vote on it if it arises in an item of council business requiring a decision.'
9. S.25 provides that a member or co-opted member is not to be taken to have had a closed mind 'just because' they 'had previously done anything that directly or indirectly indicated what view he/she took, or would or might take, in relation to a decision'.
10. It must be remembered that predetermination is different from pre-disposition. There are no restrictions on a member or co-opted member holding a provisional view on an issue (pre-disposition) but there is a problem if he/she acts with a closed mind on a subject (predetermination).

The courts

11. In a number of cases including R. (on the application of Island Farm Development Ltd) v Bridgend CBC (2006) and the Court of Appeal decision in

R. (on the application of Lewis) v Redcar and Cleveland BC (2008) the courts have already gone a long way in recognising that councillors need to be councillors and that not all that they think or say beforehand is necessarily what they do at the point of decision making - they may be swayed by argument at the meeting.

12. In National Assembly for Wales v Condon and another [2006] the court recognised that there is a two stage test for predetermination. First the behaviour complained of has to be relevant to the issue. Second the situation has to be one where a notional fair-minded and well-informed observer, looking objectively at all circumstances, would consider that there is a real risk that the decision maker has refused even to consider a relevant argument or would refuse to consider a new argument.
13. In both the courts and the 2011 Act there is a presumption against predetermination by local decision makers. This is to enable democracy to work in the way it has developed.
14. But the presumption that there is no closed mind can be rebutted. In a situation where a member said something like "over my dead body" in respect of voting a particular way on an issue, the 2011 Act does not change the legal position that if the member could be shown to have approached a decision with a closed mind, that could affect the validity of the decision. In other words it is for a complainant to prove that a closed mind existed in a particular case rather than for one to be assumed by any set of circumstances.
15. So, if a member had expressed views on a particular issue but when taking the decision they had approached this with an open mind and taken account of all the relevant information, they will not have predetermined the issue.
16. However, the more extreme the view expressed by a councilor, the more difficult in practice it will be to be able to get away from the impression that they would approach the decision with a closed mind.

Examples where there is no predetermination

- a) A councillor who stated that he was against any further development in the community. Subsequently voting against a planning application does not show predetermination.

- b) A parish councillor is also a councillor on the local planning authority. He would not have predetermined his view on a planning application to be decided by the principal authority just because the parish council had already considered and he had voted for or against that planning application. The important issue is that the councillor must be prepared to reconsider the planning application at principal authority level in the light of the material information and considerations presented there.
- c) A councillor who helped a resident to object to a new play area. She would not have predetermined the issue if she subsequently voted against a motion to have the play area just because of helping the resident.
- d) A councillor's pre-election campaign included opposing a proposed incinerator. After he was elected, he voted to end the negotiations to sell local council land for development of an incineration plant. There is no presumption that the councillor has predetermined his decision because of his election campaign statements.
- e) A councillor's political group on a community council has a planning policy which supports housing development in the area. The councillor votes to support a new affordable housing development in the area. The policy in itself is not evidence of the councillor's closed mind about the affordable housing scheme. When voting on a decision to support a particular planning application, the councillor would have to have regard to considerations which are specific to the application even though because of his political group's planning policy he might be predisposed to be in favour of it.

Summary

- 17. In all the above examples, a council's decision will be safe from a successful legal challenge if the councillors' approach is objective and fair and they consider all the relevant and material issues.
- 18. If there is evidence of predetermination by one or more councillors then the council decision could be subject to a successful Judicial Review. The decision could be quashed and the council would have to reconsider and re-make the decision without the predetermination.

19. In practice many of such challenges come from individuals or companies that have had planning applications adversely commented upon or refused.

Other relevant Legal Topic Notes (LTNs):

LTN	Title	Relevance
5	Parish, Town and Community Council Meetings	Sets out the relevant principles in respect of decision making
7	Non-Councillor Members of Committees	Sets out the relevant principles in respect of decision making.
15	Legal Proceedings	sets out judicial review proceedings

© NALC 2014

Appendix

LOCALISM ACT 2011

Section 25

(1) Subsection (2) applies if—

(a) as a result of an allegation of bias or predetermination, or otherwise, there is an issue about the validity of a decision of a relevant authority, and

(b) it is relevant to that issue whether the decision-maker, or any of the decision-makers, had or appeared to have had a closed mind (to any extent) when making the decision.

(2) A decision-maker is not to be taken to have had, or to have appeared to have had, a closed mind when making the decision just because—

(a) the decision-maker had previously done anything that directly or indirectly indicated what view the decision-maker took, or would or might take, in relation to a matter, and

(b) the matter was relevant to the decision.

(3) Subsection (2) applies in relation to a decision-maker only if that decision-maker—

(a) is a member (whether elected or not) of the relevant authority, or

(b) is a co-opted member of that authority.

(4) In this section—

“co-opted member”, in relation to a relevant authority, means a person who is not a member of the authority but who—

(a) is a member of any committee or sub-committee of the authority, or

(b) is a member of, and represents the authority on, any joint committee or joint sub-committee of the authority,

and who is entitled to vote on any question which falls to be decided at any meeting of the committee or sub-committee;

“decision”, in relation to a relevant authority, means a decision made in discharging functions of the authority, functions of the authority's executive, functions of a committee of the authority or functions of an officer of the authority (including decisions made in the discharge of any of those functions otherwise than by the person to whom the function was originally given);

“elected mayor” has the meaning given by section 9H or 39 of the Local Government Act 2000;

“member”—

(a) in relation to the Greater London Authority, means the Mayor of London or a London Assembly member, and

(b) in relation to a county council, district council, county borough council or London borough council, includes an elected mayor of the council;

“relevant authority” means—

(a) a county council,

(b) a district council,

(c) a county borough council,

(d) a London borough council,

(e) the Common Council of the City of London,

(f) the Greater London Authority,

(g) a National Park authority,

(h) the Broads Authority,

(i) the Council of the Isles of Scilly,

(j) a parish council, or

(k) a community council.

(5) This section applies only to decisions made after this section comes into force, but the reference in subsection (2)(a) to anything previously done includes things done before this section comes into force.

© NALC 2014

Houghton Regis Town Council

Unaudited Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 March 2022

Houghton Regis Town Council

Table of Contents

31 March 2022

	Page
Table of Contents.....	2
Council Information.....	3
Statement of Accounting Policies.....	4
Income and Expenditure Account.....	6
Balance Sheet.....	7
Notes to the Accounts.....	8
1 Interest and Investment Income.....	8
2 Publicity.....	8
3 General Power of Competence.....	8
4 Tenancies.....	8
5 Pensions.....	8
6 Fixed Assets - Additions and Disposals.....	9
7 Fixed Assets.....	9
7 Fixed Assets (cont'd).....	10
8 Investments.....	12
9 Current Asset Investments.....	12
10 Stocks.....	12
11 Debtors.....	12
12 Creditors and Accrued Expenses.....	13
13 Agency Work.....	13
14 Hire Purchase and Lease Obligations.....	13
15 Loans.....	13
16 Usable Capital Receipts Reserve.....	14
17 Earmarked Reserves.....	14
18 Capital Commitments.....	14
19 Contingent Liabilities.....	14

Houghton Regis Town Council

Council Information

31 March 2022

(Information current at 20th June 2022)

Mayor

Cllr Mrs Y. Farrell

Councillors

Cllr P. Burgess
Cllr J. Carroll
Cllr E. Cooper
Cllr C. Copleston
Cllr S. Goodchild
Cllr D. Jones
Cllr M. Kennedy
Cllr T. McMahon
Cllr R. Morgan
Cllr A. Slough
Cllr C. Slough
Cllr Ms S. Thorne
Cllr K. Wattingham

Town Clerk

Mrs Clare Evans

Auditors

Mazars LLP
Salvus House
Aykley Heads
Durham
DH1 5TS

Internal Auditors

IAC Audit & Consultancy Ltd
23 Westbury Rd
Yarnbrook
Wiltshire
BA14 6AG

Houghton Regis Town Council
Statement of Accounting Policies
31 March 2022

Auditors

The name and address of the External Auditors is provided for information only.

These Statements are not subject to audit and the External Auditors have no responsibility for them.

Accounting Convention

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the Accounting Guidance Notes for Local Councils (the Guide) issued by The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) as applicable to a medium sized council.

These accounts have been prepared having regard to the fundamental accounting concepts of: Going Concern, Prudence, Accruals, Relevance, Consistency, Reliability, Comparability, Understandability and Materiality.

The accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

Fixed Assets

All expenditure on the acquisition, creation or enhancement of fixed assets is reported in the notes to the accounts, provided that the fixed asset yields benefits to the authority and the services it provides for a period of more than one year. Fixed assets are valued on the basis recommended by CIPFA. The year end values are stated on the following basis:

land, operational properties and other operational assets are reported in notes to the accounts at cost (where known) or at insurance values current when first reported as approximating to the lower of net replacement cost and net realisable value at that time (previous years at current insurance values).

certain community assets are the subject of restrictive covenants as to their; use and/or future disposal. Such assets are therefore considered to have no appreciable realisable value and are included at nominal value only.

Revenue Grants

Revenue grants are credited to income when conditions attached thereto have been fulfilled and/or equivalent expenditure has been incurred. Grants received in respect of which the conditions have not been fulfilled, or expenditure incurred, are carried forward as deferred revenue grants.

Investments

Investments are included in the balance sheet at historic cost and realised gains or losses are taken into the income and expenditure account as realised. Details are given at notes 8 and 9.

Debtors and Creditors

The council reviews the level of its commercial debtors on a regular basis and provisions are made, as required, where the likelihood of amounts proving ultimately collectable is in doubt.

Value Added Tax

Income and Expenditure excludes any amounts related to VAT, as all VAT suffered/collected is recoverable from or payable to HM Revenue and Customs. Any amounts not so recoverable are treated as a separate expense.

Houghton Regis Town Council
Statement of Accounting Policies
31 March 2022

External Loan Repayments

The council is not required by the Guide to incorporate external borrowings in its Balance Sheet. Details are shown at note 15.

Leases

The council is not required by the Guide to incorporate Hire Purchase and/or Finance Lease obligations in its Balance Sheet. Details are shown at note 14.

Reserves

The council maintains certain reserves to meet general and specific future expenditure. The purpose of the council's reserves is explained in notes 16 to 17.

The council maintains certain reserves to meet general and specific future expenditure. The purpose of the council's reserves is explained in note 17.

Interest Income

All interest receipts are credited initially to general funds.

Pensions

The pension costs that are charged against precept in the council's accounts, in respect of its employees, are equal to the contributions paid to the funded pension scheme for those employees.

These contributions are determined by the fund's actuary on a triennial basis and are set to meet 100% of the liabilities of the pension fund, in accordance with relevant government regulations.

The next actuarial valuation was due at 31st March 2022 and any change in contribution rates as a result of that valuation will take effect from 1st April 2023.

Houghton Regis Town Council
Income and Expenditure Account
31 March 2022

	Notes	2022 £	2021 £
INCOME			
Precept on Principal Authority		969,231	904,518
Agency Services	13	4,412	11,721
Capital Receipts, Grants and Loan Proceeds		111,541	26,743
Interest and Investment Income	1	29,166	32,367
Leisure and Recreation		37,168	9,139
Cemetery & Churchyard		17,472	18,812
Community & Youth		1,185	5,722
Miscellaneous		994	1,025
Community Development		3,456	555
Sale of Assets		22,775	2,500
		1,197,400	1,013,102
EXPENDITURE			
Establishment/General Administration		598,497	532,683
Election Expenses		7,813	3,060
Capital Expenditure incl Capital Grants	6	159,752	156,458
Loan Interest and Capital Repayments		24,069	24,069
Operational Expenditure:			
Leisure and Recreation inc. Pavilions		145,501	112,418
Cemetery & Churchyard		4,174	8,929
Planning and Development		5,593	1,321
Democratic Representation and Management		9,805	6,758
Town Security		48,146	38,587
Public Toilets		20,029	12,848
Community Development		52,402	22,722
Grants Under Specific Powers		16,969	26,716
Community Services		10,183	3,315
		1,102,933	949,884
General Fund			
Balance at 01 April 2021		366,508	251,527
Add: Total Income		1,197,400	1,013,102
		1,563,908	1,264,629
Deduct: Total Expenditure		1,102,933	949,884
		460,975	314,745
Transfer (to)/from Earmarked Reserves	17	(43,498)	51,763
General Reserve Balance at 31 March 2022		417,477	366,508

The notes on pages 8 to 14 form part of these unaudited statements.

Houghton Regis Town Council

Balance Sheet

31 March 2022

	Notes	2022 £	2022 £	2021 £
Long Term Assets				
Investments Other Than Loans	8		600,000	600,000
Current Assets				
Stock	10	-		528
Debtors and prepayments	11	82,834		48,369
Investments	9	735,500		637,000
Cash at bank and in hand		19,515		31,873
		<u>837,849</u>		<u>717,770</u>
Current Liabilities				
Creditors and income in advance	12	<u>(352,145)</u>		<u>(326,533)</u>
Net Current Assets			485,704	391,237
Total Assets Less Current Liabilities			<u>1,085,704</u>	<u>991,237</u>
Total Assets Less Liabilities			<u>1,085,704</u>	<u>991,237</u>
Capital and Reserves				
Earmarked Reserves	17		668,227	624,729
General Reserve			417,477	366,508
			<u>1,085,704</u>	<u>991,237</u>

Signed:

CLlr Mrs Y. Farrell

Mayor

.....

Mrs Clare Evans

Responsible Financial Officer

Date:

.....

The notes on pages 8 to 14 form part of these unaudited statements.

Houghton Regis Town Council

Notes to the Accounts

31 March 2022

1 Interest and Investment Income

	2022	2021
	£	£
Interest Income - General Funds	29,166	32,367
	<u>29,166</u>	<u>32,367</u>

2 Publicity

Section 5 of the Local Government Act 1986 requires the council to disclose expenditure on publicity. Details are shown under the following broad categories:

	2022	2021
	£	£
Other Advertising	-	162
Councils Website	826	260
Newsletter	5,105	1,976
	<u>5,931</u>	<u>2,398</u>

3 General Power of Competence

With effect from 28th September 2015 Houghton Regis Town Council acquired the right to exercise the General Power of Competence extended to Town and Parish Councils under the Localism Act 2011 by S.I. 2012 No 965 (The Parish Councils (General Power of Competence) (Prescribed Conditions) Order 2012). Therefore, with effect from 28th September 2015 the council no longer exercises the powers conveyed by Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

4 Tenancies

During the year the following tenancies were held:

Council as landlord

Tenant	Property	Rent p.a.	Repairing /
		£	Non-Repairing
NONE			

Council as tenant

Landlord	Property	Rent p.a.	Repairing /
		£	Non-Repairing
Central Bedfordshire Council	Workshop	15,500	Non-Repairing
Central Bedfordshire Council	Parkside Recreation Ground	50	N/A
Central Bedfordshire Council	Tithe Farm Recreation Ground	5	N/A

5 Pensions

For the year of account the council's contributions equal 25.80% of employees' pensionable pay. These contributions will increase to 26.80%, in future years, in order to provide adequately for future liabilities.

Houghton Regis Town Council

Notes to the Accounts

31 March 2022

6 Fixed Assets - Additions and Disposals

	2022	2021
	£	£
	Cost	Cost
During the year the following assets were purchased:		
Operational Land and Buildings	30,343	60,000
Vehicles and Equipment	75,130	41,258
Infrastructure Assets	42,429	48,000
Community Assets	11,850	7,200
	<u>159,752</u>	<u>156,458</u>
	Proceeds	Proceeds
During the year the following assets were disposed of:		
Vehicles and Equipment	<u>22,775</u>	<u>2,500</u>
	<u>22,775</u>	<u>2,500</u>

7 Fixed Assets

	2022	2021
	£	£
	Value	Value
At 31 March the following assets were held:		
<u>Land and Buildings</u>		
Bowls Green Shed	2,800	2,800
Houghton Regis Memorial Hall	293,000	293,000
Council Offices and Land	260,400	260,400
Sports Pavilion Moore Crescent	340,020	336,765
Leasehold-Tithe Farm Pavilion	138,900	138,900
Leasehold-Tithe Farm Sports Development Project	23,248	-
Leasehold-Parkside Pavilion	154,784	154,784
Leasehold - Orchard Close Pavilion	115,940	112,100
Leasehold-Village Green Pavilion	459,836	459,836
	<u>1,788,928</u>	<u>1,758,585</u>

Houghton Regis Town Council

Notes to the Accounts

31 March 2022

	<u>2022</u>	<u>2021</u>
7 Fixed Assets (cont'd)		
<u>Vehicles and Equipment</u>		
Recreation Ground Equipment	66,113	57,481
Office Equipment	39,761	34,740
Office Boiler	2,990	2,990
Office Furniture	100,226	100,226
Pavilion Furniture & Equipment	7,446	7,446
Play and Sports Equipment & Safety Surfaces	272,208	272,208
Skate Park	90,306	90,306
M U G A	30,062	30,062
Christmas Decorations	57,187	57,187
Kubota Tractor M9540 - LK09 EPL	35,000	35,000
Ford Transit Tipper MK 18 WYJ	22,620	22,620
Ford Ranger EX67 KKW	16,942	16,942
Ford Ranger EN68 VTG	22,520	-
P7E Trailer	795	795
LT106G Trailer	2,465	2,465
Ifor Williams Trailer	800	800
Work Platform (f/lift)	650	650
Dennis Mower	1,500	1,500
Verticut Mower	1,200	1,200
Ransomes Cylinder Mower	850	850
Hayter Mower	2,137	2,137
Hayter Mower (2018)	535	535
Trimax Snake Mower	19,950	19,950
Hayter Pro Rotary Mower	1,149	-
Pro Virtue SVP Mower x 2	748	-
Verti-Cutter	1,329	1,329
Harrier Grass Cutter x 2	1,400	1,400
Shibara CM274 Grass Cutter	-	3,000
Stihl AR300L	1,320	1,320
Stihl RMA765 Mower	1,037	1,037
Kubota Mower LR21 HKO	17,000	-
Sissis Autorake	5,209	-
Tractor Rotavator	4,300	-
Spearhead Flail arm and Cab guard	-	10,835
Kubota Flail Deck	7,104	-
Mitsubishi truck KY64BGK	15,000	15,000
Exac Post Hole Borer	1,500	1,500
Dump Trailer 12' x 6'	4,650	4,650
JCB Mini Excavator	3,476	18,076
Kubota K15 DXU	14,116	14,116
Kubota F3890 (KX68 BDZ)	18,368	18,368
Kubota F3890 (KX68 BEJ)	18,368	18,368
Rotowash	7,176	7,176
CCTV Equipment	18,028	18,028
Anti-Ram Bollards	5,592	5,592
Gazebos	905	905
Cemetery Earth Augur	670	670
Hot Water Pressure Cleaner	18,219	18,219
Shibarua Tractor LK 17 KTD	19,755	19,755
Sports Equipment (Village Green)	69,999	69,999
Outdoor Gym	4,100	4,100
Kubota RTV KX20 CCJ	15,250	15,250

Houghton Regis Town Council

Notes to the Accounts

31 March 2022

	2022	2021
7 Fixed Assets (cont'd)		
Defibrillators	10,092	10,092
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	1,080,123	1,036,875
	<hr/>	<hr/>
<u>Infrastructure Assets</u>		
Gates and Fencing	92,569	92,569
Bowls Irrigation System	7,290	7,290
Speed Activated Signs	9,226	9,226
Town Signs & Noticeboards	10,685	10,685
Litter Bins	5,941	5,941
Bollards - Village Green Grnd	7,192	7,192
Benches	4,991	2,618
Flame Beacon	2,204	2,204
Flag Poles	5,875	5,875
Floodlights (Tithe Farm Skate Park)	15,844	15,844
Bedford Rd Wall (All Saints Gate)	20,018	20,018
Village Green Play Area Resurfacing	48,000	48,000
Resurface Orchard Close Play Area	21,081	-
Parkside Family Picnic Area	8,975	-
Allotment Shed Bases	10,000	-
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	269,891	227,462
	<hr/>	<hr/>
<u>Community Assets</u>		
Civic Regalia	4,779	4,779
War Memorial	9,363	9,363
Village Green	1	1
Tithe Farm Recreation Ground	1	1
Land rear of Orchard Close	1	1
Houghton Regis Cemetery	97,785	97,785
New Cemetery Development	11,850	-
Orchard Close Recreation Ground	1	1
Land rear of Houghton Court	1	1
Land rear of Village Green Pavilion	1	1
Land Adj Chapel Path	1	1
Land off Townsend Farm Road	1	1
All Saints Churchyard	1	1
Land at Moore Crescent	1	1
Land at The Baulk	1	1
Land at Orchard Close	1	1
Parcels within Dog Kennel Down Area	1	1
Parkside Recreation Ground	1	1
Part of The Paddocks	1	1
Former Railway Line	1	1
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	123,793	111,943
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	3,262,735	3,134,865
	<hr/>	<hr/>

The basis of valuation of the above assets is set out in the Statement of Accounting Policies.

Houghton Regis Town Council

Notes to the Accounts

31 March 2022

8 Investments

	Investments Other Than Loans
	£
Cost	
At 01 April 2021	600,000
At 31 March 2022	<u>600,000</u>
Amounts Written Off	
At 31 March 2022	<u>-</u>
Net Book Value	
At 31 March 2022	<u>600,000</u>
	<u>600,000</u>
At 01 April 2021	<u>600,000</u>
	<u>600,000</u>

9 Current Asset Investments

	2022	2021
	£	£
L A Deposit Fund Account	735,500	637,000
	<u>735,500</u>	<u>637,000</u>

10 Stocks

	2022	2021
	£	£
Groundsmans Materials	-	528
	<u>-</u>	<u>528</u>

11 Debtors

	2022	2021
	£	£
Trade Debtors	46,515	13,317
Trade Debtors	46,515	13,317
VAT Recoverable	16,734	20,234
Other Debtors	5,350	269
Prepayments	6,885	7,223
Accrued Income	7,350	7,326
	<u>82,834</u>	<u>48,369</u>

Houghton Regis Town Council

Notes to the Accounts

31 March 2022

12 Creditors and Accrued Expenses

	2022	2021
	£	£
Trade Creditors	54,466	54,109
Other Creditors	1,695	1,673
Accruals	35,109	9,876
Income in Advance	300	300
Capital Receipts in Advance	260,575	260,575
	<u>352,145</u>	<u>326,533</u>

13 Agency Work

During the year the Council undertook the following agency work on behalf of other authorities:

Commissioning Authority and Nature of Work	2022	2021
	£	£
St Vincents School - Grounds Maintenance	-	3,750
Central Bedfordshire Council - Dog Bin Emptying	1,200	850
Central Bedfordshire Council - Ground Works	3,212	7,121
	<u>4,412</u>	<u>11,721</u>

A final claim for reimbursement to 31 March 2022 has been made.

During the year the Council commissioned no agency work to be performed by other authorities.

14 Hire Purchase and Lease Obligations

At 31 March the following hire purchase agreement(s) and lease(s) were in operation:

Hire/Lessor	Purpose	Annual Lease/Hire Payable	Year of Expiry
		£	
Grenke Leasing Ltd	Photocopier (5 Years Lease)	2,079	2024

15 Loans

At the close of business on 31 March 2022 the following loans to the council were outstanding:

Lender	Loan Period	Amount	Years Remaining
		£	
Public Works Loan Board	24 Years from 19 th October 2009	101,381	12
Public Works Loan Board	24 Years from 5 th February 2010	115,827	12

Houghton Regis Town Council

Notes to the Accounts

31 March 2022

16 Usable Capital Receipts Reserve

	2022	2021
	£	£
Capital receipts (asset sales) during the year	22,775	-
<i>Less:</i>		
Capital used to fund expenditure	(22,775)	-
Balance at 31 March	-	-

The Usable Capital Receipts Reserve represents capital receipts available to finance capital expenditure in future years.

17 Earmarked Reserves

	Balance at 01/04/2021	Contribution to reserve	Contribution from reserve	Balance at 31/03/2022
	£	£	£	£
Other Earmarked Reserves	624,729	123,632	(80,134)	668,227
Total Earmarked Reserves	624,729	123,632	(80,134)	668,227

The Other Earmarked Reserves are credited with amounts set aside from revenue to fund specific known commitments of the council.

The Other Earmarked Reserves at 31 March 2022 are set out in detail at Appendix A.

18 Capital Commitments

The council had no other capital commitments at 31 March 2022 not otherwise provided for in these accounts.

19 Contingent Liabilities

The council is not aware of any contingent liabilities at the date of these accounts.

Houghton Regis Town Council**Notes to the Accounts****31st March 2022****Schedule of Earmarked Reserves**

	<u>Balance at</u> <u>01/04/2021</u>	<u>Contribution</u> <u>to reserve</u>	<u>Contribution</u> <u>from reserve</u>	<u>Balance at</u> <u>31/03/2022</u>
	£	£	£	£
All Saints Churchyard Wall	2,374	442		2,816
Pavilion Renovation	146,389	100,000	(2,088)	244,301
Play Areas	81,732	10,000	(21,081)	70,651
Community Development	20,000		(5,593)	14,407
Elections	1,940	4,187		6,127
Tithe Farm Play Area Maintenance	-			-
Mayors Civic Regalia & Chain	-			-
Cemetery Provision	74,208	3,283		77,491
Allotments	64,560		(15,000)	49,560
Former Railway Line	31,789	3,000	(4,300)	30,489
Memorial Hall Trust Grant	-			-
Office Provision	200,000		(35,000)	165,000
Knife Crime	1,737		(1,737)	-
TOTAL EARMARKED RESERVES	624,729	120,912	(84,799)	660,842