



# HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Peel Street, Houghton Regis, Bedfordshire, LU5 5EY

Town Mayor: **Councillor Y Farrell**

Tel: 01582 708540

Town Clerk: **Clare Evans**

e-mail: [info@houghtonregis.org.uk](mailto:info@houghtonregis.org.uk)

11<sup>th</sup> May 2023

## HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL ANNUAL MEETING

**To: All Town Councillors**

### Notice of Meeting

**You are hereby summoned to the Annual Meeting of the Houghton Regis Town Council to be held in the Council Offices, Peel Street on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> May 2023 at 7pm.**

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  
RECORDED<sup>1</sup>**

### AGENDA

#### 1. ELECTION OF THE TOWN MAYOR

The following process is suggested:

- The retiring Town Mayor to invite nominations for a Town Mayor to hold office until the Annual Meeting in 2024.
- Members to elect a Town Mayor for 2023-24.
- The newly elected Mayor will receive the Chain of Office from the retiring Town Mayor, make and sign the statutory Declaration of Acceptance of Office and make an acceptance speech.
- A vote of thanks will be proposed to the retiring Town Mayor and he/she will receive the Past Mayor's badge.
- The retiring Town Mayor is invited to reply.

<sup>1</sup> *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 Town Mayor is invited to make his/her Announcements.

## 2. ELECTION OF THE DEPUTY MAYOR

The following process is suggested:

- The Town Mayor to invite nominations for a Deputy Town Mayor to hold office until the Annual Meeting in 2024.
- Members to elect a Deputy Town Mayor for 2023-24.
- The newly elected Deputy Town Mayor will make and sign the statutory Declaration of Acceptance of Office and receive the Chain of Office from the Town Mayor

## 3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

## 4. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

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

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

## 5. 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.

## 6. MINUTES

*Pages 9 - 15*

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2023.

**Recommendation: To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2023.**

## 7. COMMITTEE AND SUB-COMMITTEE MINUTES

*Pages 16 - 28*

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	13 <sup>th</sup> February 2023
Planning Committee	13 <sup>th</sup> March and 3 <sup>rd</sup> April 2023
Town Partnership Committee	None to present

To receive the minutes of the following sub-committees 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.**

## 8. COUNCIL CALENDAR FOR 2023-24

*Pages 29 - 38*

The draft Council Calendar, including meeting dates, member briefing dates, and council and civic event dates, for 2023/24 was presented at the Town Council meeting held on the 20<sup>th</sup> March 2023. 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 is in accordance with Standing Order 4.j.ix.

**Recommendation: To approve the Council Calendar for 2023/24.**

## 9. COMMITTEE FUNCTIONS & TERMS OF REFERENCE

*Pages 39 - 59*

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

These arrangements are set out in the Committee Functions & Terms of Reference. This document sets 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 20<sup>th</sup> March 2023, as detailed under Minute 12403, Strategic Policies 2023/24.

Under Minute 12403, Members will note that consideration was given to the following points:

- Sub-Committees and Working Groups of the Council shall consist of 5 Councillors, with the exception of the Complaints Sub-Committee, the Complaints Appeals Sub-Committee and the Disciplinary Grievance & Appeals Sub-Committee, the membership of all of which shall consist of 3 Councillors. This is now reflected in the Committee Functions & Terms of Reference as attached
- Conclusion of the New Office Sub Committee. This Sub Committee last met on 27<sup>th</sup> September 2022 where it agreed that the revised Chamber layout was suitable for

meetings and as such the building would continue to be maintained as required. It was suggested that the office accommodation for the Town Council be placed under the Corporate Services Committee. It is felt that this option provides for the most efficient use of time and as such amendments have been made in the Committee Functions & Terms of Reference as attached.

**Recommendation: To approve the Committee Functions & Terms of Reference as presented for 2023/24.**

## 10. COMMITTEE, SUB-COMMITTEE & WORKING GROUP MEMBERSHIP

Members are 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 summarises 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 <sup>2</sup>	3 members
Complaints Appeal Sub-Committee <sup>2</sup>	3 members
Personnel Sub-Committee <sup>3</sup>	5 members
Disciplinary, Grievance & Appeals Sub-Committee <sup>2</sup>	3 members
Proposed New Cemetery Sub Committee	5 members

### *Working Groups*

Events Working Group	5 members (up to)
Pride of Houghton Awards Working Group <sup>4</sup>	5 members
Combating Crime Working Group	5 members

### *Steering Groups*

Houghton Regis Neighbourhood Plan	5 members
-----------------------------------	-----------

**Recommendation: 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.**

<sup>2</sup> To be appointed as required

<sup>3</sup> To be appointed from the membership of Corporate Services Committee

<sup>4</sup> To comprise Members who do not sit on Events Working Group



---

**11. REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS**

*Pages 60 - 61*

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

Members will find attached the list of outside organisations to which the Council is invited to appoint representatives for 2023/24.

*Reporting Mechanisms*

Members who are appointed as representatives are 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 is a standing item on Town Council agendas to facilitate this.

**Recommendation:**

- 1. To appoint the councillor representatives for the listed outside organisations for 2023/24;**
- 2. To note the reporting back mechanism as set out.**

**12. STANDING ORDERS**

*Pages 62 - 87*

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

Standing Orders are ‘the written rules of a local council. they are used to confirm a council’s internal organisational and administrative procedures, procurement and procedural matters for meetings’. <sup>5</sup>

The approved Standing Orders were reviewed at the Town Council meeting held on the 20<sup>th</sup> March 2023 and considered suitable. However, since the meeting held on the 20<sup>th</sup> March 2023, members are advised that the Government has increased the threshold where councils intend to procure or award a public supply contract, public service contract or public works contract as defined by The Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (“the Regulations”), from £25,000 to £30,000 or more. Therefore, members will note amendments to values stated in Standing Orders 18bv and 18d.

**Recommendation:** **To approve Standing Orders as presented.**

**13. FINANCIAL REGULATIONS**

*Pages 88 - 103*

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

---

<sup>5</sup> Local Councils Explained, NALC

---

Financial Regulations are ‘the “standing orders” of a local council that regulate and control its financial affairs and accounting procedures’.<sup>6</sup>

The attached Financial Regulations were reviewed at the Town Council meeting held on the 20<sup>th</sup> March 2023.

Since the meeting held on the 20<sup>th</sup> March 2023, members are advised that the Government has increased the threshold where councils intend to procure or award a public supply contract, public service contract or public works contract as defined by The Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (“the Regulations”), from £25,000 to £30,000 or more. Previously, the threshold was £25,000 including VAT however, as of the 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2022 the threshold is £25,000 plus VAT.

Members will see on page 13 updated values for public contracts.

Members will also note that the regulations now include an e-notification service to advertise contract opportunities, as highlighted on the footer of page 13.

**Recommendation: To approve Financial Regulations as presented.**

#### 14. SCHEME OF DELEGATION

*Pages 104 - 106*

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

The Scheme of Delegation authorises 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 20<sup>th</sup> March 2023 and were recommended for approval.

**Recommendation: To approve the Scheme of Delegation as presented.**

#### 15. GENERAL POWER OF COMPETENCE

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

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

**Recommendation: 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.**

---

<sup>6</sup> Local Councils Explained, NALC

## 16. BANKING & SIGNING ARRANGEMENTS

### *Banking Arrangements*

Under Town Council Minute 11683 (June 2021) the signing arrangements for the councils bank accounts was approved as follows:

*To confirm the above and to approve the bank mandate be set up as follows:*

- 2 signatories from Group A (members) and 1 signatory from Group B (officers);
- Group A to comprise current serving councillors
- Group B to comprise Clerk & RFO, Democratic Services Officer, Head of Grounds Operations, Corporate Services Manager

*To remove all other signatories.*

In order to update the bank mandate to reflect the new council and some alterations to staffing the council is asked to approve the recommendation below.

### *Signing arrangements / Authorisation of Payments*

In accordance with Financial Regulation 5.2 it is requested that Council authorise 2 councillors to receive, check and authorise the payment of invoices.

### *Tithe Farm Sports Project*

Members are requested to note under Minute 11653 that authority has been given to the Chair of Environment & Leisure Committee to sign related contracts in conjunction with the Clerk. The opportunity to highlight this delegation arrangement is taken as in the next few weeks the Chair of Environment & Leisure Committee will be asked to sign the contract for the all-weather playing pitch. *This is provided for information only.*

### **Recommendation: Banking Arrangements**

**To approve the bank mandate be set up as follows:**

- 2 signatories from Group A (councillors) and 1 signatory from Group B (officers);
- Group A to comprise current serving councillors
- Group B to comprise Clerk & RFO and Head of Service

**To remove all other signatories.**

**To accord with banking requirements the following resolution is also passed:**

- if we add or remove Authorised Signatories in the “Add or Remove Authorised Signatories” section on the “About your request” page of this form, the Bank will update our mandate accordingly for the accounts we specify in this form's “About your business” section
- if we change the Signing Rules in the “Change the Signing Rules on the Mandate” section on the “About your request” page of this form, the Bank will update

---

**our mandate accordingly for the accounts we specify in this form's "About your business" section**

- **and the current mandate will continue as amended.**

**Signing Arrangements**

**To nominate 2 members to receive, check and authorise the payment of invoices.**

**17. HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

*Pages 107 - 191*

At the Town Councils' Planning meeting held on the 24<sup>th</sup> April 2023 members of the committee resolved to recommend to Council the approval, for submission to Central Bedfordshire Council, of the final version of Houghton Regis Town Councils Neighbourhood Plan.

The committee requested that this recommendation be presented to Town Council at its meeting in May so as not to wait until after the planning meeting held on the 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2023. Recommendations to either Council or other Committees, are usually considered following the approval of the minutes of the meeting where the recommendation was made. However, due to the length of time this project has taken to get to this submission stage (the Town Council appointed a planning consultant to support the development of the plan on the 16th May 2016), members of the planning committee felt it important to get this recommendation supported as soon as possible. Member were mindful though, that this item may be deferred due to the business to be conducted at the Council meeting in May.

Members will find a copy of the Neighbourhood Plan attached.

**Recommendation: To recommend to Council the approval, for submission to Central Bedfordshire Council, of the final version of Houghton Regis Town Councils Neighbourhood Plan**

**0-0**

# HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

## Minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2023 at 7.00pm

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

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

Public: 2

Apologies: Councillors: P Burgess  
E Cooper  
C Copleston  
M S Kennedy

### 12396 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllr Burgess, Cllr Cooper, Cllr Copleston and Cllr Kennedy.

### 12397 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Members were asked whether they were in favour of supporting the Friends of Windsor Drive Community Open Space's request to pursue the registration of Windsor Drive as a Community Asset.

Members queried whether indicating their support status contravened the rules of the pre-election period and were advised that the question was asked for their personal view, however, as this meeting was recorded and circulated to a wider audience, members may feel uncomfortable sharing their views during the meeting.

### 12398 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

None.

### 12399 MINUTES

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2023.

**Resolved: To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 23rd January 2023 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.**

## 12400 COMMITTEE MINUTES

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

Corporate Services Committee 28<sup>th</sup> November 2022, 16<sup>th</sup> January and 30<sup>th</sup> January 2023

*Members are referred to:*

- *12273 Local Government Pension Scheme: Statement of Local Discretions  
To recommend to Town Council that the Local Government Pension Scheme: Review of Statement of Local Discretions be approved.*
- *12275 Eye Care Policy  
To recommend to Town Council that the Town Councils Eye Care Policy be approved.*
- *12277 Health & Safety at Work Policy  
To recommend to Town Council the adoption of the Town Councils Health & Safety at Work Policy.*
- *12278 Risk Management Strategy & Schedule  
To recommend to Town Council that the HRTC Risk Management Strategy & Schedule be approved with the approved amendments.*

Community Services Committee 7<sup>th</sup> November, 15<sup>th</sup> November 2022  
Environment & Leisure Committee 14<sup>th</sup> November 2022  
Planning Committee 9<sup>th</sup> January, 30<sup>th</sup> January and 20<sup>th</sup> February 2023

*Members are referred to:*

- *Minute 12340 Neighbourhood Plan Update  
To recommend to Town Council that funds continue to be drawn from EMR 330, for the 2023/2024 financial period, for the progression of the plan to examination stage.*

Town Partnership Committee 18<sup>th</sup> October 2022

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

Office Provisions Sub Committee None to present  
Proposed New Cemetery Working Group None to present

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

- To approve that funds continue to be drawn from EMR 330, for the 2023/2024 financial period, for the progression of the plan to examination stage.
- To approve the Local Government Pension Scheme: Review of Statement of Local Discretions.
- To approve the Town Councils Eye Care Policy.
- To approve adoption of the Town Councils Health & Safety at Work Policy.
- To approve that HRTC Risk Management Strategy & Schedule be approved with the approved amendments.

#### **12401 TOWN MAYOR ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Town Mayor updated members on the many events that had been attended since the last Town Council meeting, which included the 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Minds Together, Leighton and Linslade Charity Dinner, Loo of the Year Award in Houghton Regis, Leighton and Linslade Relax and Refresh afternoon, Houghton Regis Pride of Houghton Awards, Mayor of Leighton and Linslade Civic Service and a Bingo night.

Members were advised the Deputy Mayor had attended the Mayor of Dunstable Civic Service.

#### **12402 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 Goodchild advised members that she had attended a SORTED meeting, at which discussions were held around the work that had been undertaken for the children and young people affected by domestic violence.

Cllr A Slough updated members on the Friends of Windsor Drive Community Open Space, the website was now live, Andrew Selous had visited, a march had been organised for March and a Coronation Picnic with competitions was planned.

Cllr Jones advised members he had attended a meeting of the BATPC, the meeting marked the passing of Sir Samuel Whitbread, it was advised two representatives would attend the service. Discussed was the sale of national headquarters and a review of the training offer, which was provided directly by BATPC or through outside providers.

It had been agreed that representations would be made on the Levelling Up Fund and the Regeneration Fund direct to the Government and copy NALC. Arrangements for the AGM were discussed with the venue to be confirmed.

#### **12403 STRATEGIC POLICES 2023/24**

Members were provided with the opportunity to consider key council policies and a calendar of meetings and events for 2023/24. In accordance with Standing Orders these would be presented the Town Council at the AGM on 17<sup>th</sup> May 2023.

The following points were put forward for discussion:

- Scheme of Delegation  
This policy was put forward without any suggestions for alteration / amendment
- Committee Functions & Terms of Reference

Members received a Motion for consideration. The changes suggested in the motion were highlighted in the policy received.

Members were advised that an amendment to point 2, paragraph 2 was proposed by Cllr Jones, seconded by Cllr Morgan to read:

Sub-Committees and Working Groups of the Council shall consist of 5 Councillors, with the exception of the Complaints Sub-Committee, the Complaints Appeals Sub-Committee and the Disciplinary Grievance & Appeals Sub-Committee, the membership of all of which shall consist of 3 Councillors.

The original motion read:

*Sub-Committees and Working Groups of the Council shall consist of 5 Councillors, with the exception of the Complaints Sub-Committee, the Complaints Appeals Sub-Committee, the Disciplinary Grievance & Appeals Sub-Committee and the Pride of Houghton Awards Working Group, the membership of all of which shall consist of 3 Councillors.*

Members voted in favour of the amendment; accordingly, this became the substantive motion.

The substantive motion was proposed by: Cllr Jones and seconded by Cllr Morgan  
This was carried.

It was also suggested a recommendation be put forward to Town Council in May to conclude the New Office Sub Committee. This Sub Committee last met on 27<sup>th</sup> September 2022 where it agreed that the revised Chamber layout was suitable for meetings and as such the building would continue to be maintained as required.

Members suggested that the New Office Sub-Committee meetings be left on the calendar as it was felt that it could become overlooked, alternatively it was suggested that it be incorporated into Corporate Services Committee meetings annually. Members agreed to leave the decision for the new administration in May.

It was also understood that the Events Working Group gave some consideration to the Functions & Terms of Reference of the Pride of Houghton Working Group. However, as the Pride of Houghton Working Group reported to the Community Services Committee it was not for the Events Working Group to consider such arrangements. Members were invited to put forward their suggestions to this meeting.

This item was superseded by the agreed motion presented at Committee Functions & Terms of Reference above and would consist of 5 members from May.



- 
- Standing Orders  
This policy was put forward without any suggestions for alteration / amendment
  - Financial Regulations  
The Internal Auditor suggested 2 amendments which would enable the current practices of the council to be in accordance with Financial Regulations, these amendments were highlighted in para 5.2 and 5.3.

Members were advised that a review was being undertaken of Financial Regulations and it was anticipated that further amendments would be put forward to Town Council in May. Of note, these would relate to Budgetary Control and Authority to Spend.

- Council Calendar 2023/24  
Suggested changes to the format of the current calendar included:

Allotments Working Group to meet every 2 months or more frequently if required

Members suggested it was appropriate for the Allotment Working Group to reduce the number of meetings in the calendar year, and alter the frequency to every 2 months.

Town Council

Members were invited to consider the necessity of having a Town Council meeting in December and also in January. It was felt that there was scope to combine these meetings into one. The officer preference was to remove the January meeting, this would mean that the council would set its budget in December.

Members discussed whether it was viable to combine the two meetings into one, and whether it would be more beneficial for the December or January meeting to remain.

Members received a draft calendar for 2023/24.

Members highlighted some discrepancies and requested amendments to be made to the calendar.

Members requested the comments made at this meeting be taken to the AGM in May to enable the new administration to discuss further and make appropriate decisions.

## 12404 COUNCIL ASSETS

Members were advised that the Internal auditor recommended as part of his 21/22 audit that the council review its asset register to ensure its accuracy. This work was under way. However, to aid this work the Council were requested to define an asset.

Within the Practitioners' Guide (Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance) March 2022 it advises that the term 'fixed assets' mean property, plant and equipment with a useful life of more than one year used by the authority to deliver its services.

However, it was also suggested that a monetary value be placed on the councils definition. The Internal Auditor suggested using the value recorded in Financial Regulations up to which the Clerk has the authority to spend (Para 4.4). This value was £1,000.

Other purchases made with a longevity of use of over 1 year would be recorded on an inventory list.

**Resolved: To define for HRTC an asset as being a purchase of over £1,000 with a longevity of use of over 1 year.**

#### **12405 INTERNAL AUDITOR INTERIM REPORT**

Members were advised that the interim Internal Audit (IA) for 2022/23 was completed on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2023 by IAC Audit and Consultancy Ltd.

Members received the following:

1. Cover Letter dated 27<sup>th</sup> February 2023 – this detailed the areas covered by the audit
2. Observations – this included detail on the audit test, the IA observation and any IA recommendation. In the Comments column Members would find the Clerks response to the Recommendation. Members were requested to consider the Recommendation and the response in the Comments Column.
3. Summary – this summarises the audit

Members requested some of the comments contained within the report be queried as it was felt that the council had been misrepresented in some areas of the report.

**Resolved: To support the Comments provided on the interim Internal Audit report.**

#### **12406 TITHE FARM RECREATION GROUND SPORTS PROJECT - BORROWING APPROVAL**

Members may recall in March 2022 Town Council agreed to apply for borrowing approval (Minute 11993). As this project has progressed borrowing approval had been applied for, however feedback on the application required an extension to the Resolution to confirm the annual loan repayments and comments on the precept increase.

Minute 11993 reads:

- 
- Resolved:**
- 1. To seek the Secretary of State's approval for the proposed borrowing from the Public Works Loan Board of £500,000 as an annuity loan over 28 years;*
  - 2. To fund associated repayments from 299 4871 in 2022/23 and for subsequent repayments to be funded from a new code in cost centre 299 specifically set up for loan repayments associated with this project.*

Members discussed generally discussed the relationship between the tax base and the precept and the funding requirements of the town council over the medium term. It was acknowledged the tax base would not have to be increased to fund these loan repayments.

**Resolved:** To extend Minute 11993 as follows:

- 1. To note that an annuity loan of £500,000 over 28 years will invoke an annual loan repayment of £32,551.34;**
- 2. Repayments due in 2023/24 will be met through 299-4871, subsequent repayments will be budgeted for;**
- 3. It is not intended to increase the council tax precept for the purpose of the loan repayments.**

**The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.32pm**

**Dated this 17<sup>th</sup> day of May 2023**

**Chairman**

**HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL**  
**Environment & Leisure Committee**  
**Minutes of the meeting held on**  
**13<sup>th</sup> February 2023 at 7.00pm**

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

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

Public: 2

Also present: Councillor: J Carroll

**12356 APOLOGIES**

None.

**12357 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

None.

**12358 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

**12359 MINUTES**

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2022.

**Resolved:** To confirm the minutes of the Environment & Leisure Committee meeting held on 14th November 2022 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

**12360 TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING WORKING GROUPS AND CONSIDER ANY RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED THEREIN**

Allotments Working Group 27<sup>th</sup> September 2022

**Resolved:** To receive the Minutes detailed above.

**12361 INCOME AND EXPENDITURE REPORT**

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

Members queried:

2914008 - training for Grounds staff 50% remained, it was advised some further expenditure was expected from this budget

2914036 - sleepers to be charged under 291-4037

2124015 - gas meter standing charge

2224015 - gas meter standing charge

2914015 - gas meter standing charge

2914044 - vehicle fuel, it was advised the low amount remained was due to the increased fuels costs

2824017 – Health & Safety in play areas, it was advised that most work carried out fell within maintenance budgeting.

*Members received this report for information.*

#### **12362 TITHE FARM RECREATION GROUND SPORTS PROJECT UPDATE**

Members were advised that Mr M Hatley from PCH (Design Consultants) was in attendance at the meeting to support the agenda item and respond to any queries raised.

Members were advised that a retender process had been required for the football pitch due to the significant uplift in costs. It was hoped that the Football Foundation would also uplift their grant funding.

Members were assured that the best costs were being negotiated with a view to using different contractors for different areas of the project to ensure best value for money.

It was expected that contractors would arrive on site in around 3/4 weeks to begin work on the pavilion.

It was queried why the project had experienced a delay, it was advised that prices for the pavilion had not been forthcoming despite two open tenders followed by a restricted tender, additionally, delays with discharging several of the planning conditions and drainage issues added to a significant delay with progressing the project.

Members were advised an emergency meeting would be required to agree the pitch tender.

- Resolved:**     **In light of the updated financial information provided to:**
- 1. reaffirm the Council's commitment to the Tithe Farm Sport Project;**
  - 2. to accept the Stage 2 tender from T&B including the UKPN quote for the pavilion and associated works;**
  - 3. to note the retender process for the pitch and the funding review from the Football Foundation and that a Special meeting of the Environment & Leisure Committee will be called to consider the tender report in due course.**



**12363 ENVIRONMENT & LEISURE FEES 2023/24**

Members were requested to consider the hire charges under the control of Environment & Leisure Committee for 2023/24 at the meeting held in November 2022. At this meeting members had felt unable to agree a Fee Schedule. Members had expressed concerns that increasing fees to accommodate the increases in charges that council was incurring due to the economic climate, may have a detrimental impact on the financial viability of local clubs.

Members had requested that officers liaise with clubs and report back.

This was duly carried out. Clubs expressed concerns over the affordability of increases in fees and suggested that their membership numbers may decline if their fees had to be raised accordingly.

Members were advised that the budget for 2023/24 had been set based on hire fees as per 2022/23. Although there was no budget pressure to increase fees, as members were well aware the budget setting process was difficult as costs were unknown.

To try and support local clubs whilst bearing in mind the economic pressures facing the council, it was suggested that a 5% increase in all fees be applied.

As suggested previously, football fees were excluded to enable discussions to take place with the Beds FA so that a co-ordinated approach to football fees could be achieved.

Members considered the current years fee structure and determined a fee structure for 2023/24 of a 5% increase.

**Resolved: To set fees under the control of the Environment & Leisure Committee for 2023/24 at a 5% increase on 2022/23.**

**The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 7.51pm**

**Dated this 14<sup>th</sup> day of March 2023**

**Chairman**



**HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL****Planning Committee****Minutes of the meeting held on****13<sup>th</sup> March 2023 at 7.00pm**

Present: Councillors: J Carroll  
 E Cooper  
 S Goodchild  
 D Jones  
 S Thorne  
 C Slough

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

Public: 2

Apologies: Councillor: M S Kennedy

Also present: Councillor: T McMahan

**12383 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

Apologies were received from Cllr Kennedy.

**12384 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

None.

**12385 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

**12386 MINUTES**

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on the 20<sup>th</sup> February 2023.

**Resolved To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 20th February 2023  
 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.**

**12387 PLANNING MATTERS**

**(a) The following planning applications were considered:**

CB/22/04735/LB Listed Building: Remedial work and re-covering in respect  
 of the main roof structure of the property following fire

damage and associated works of internal and external making-good and redecoration. Reconstruction of the associated garage building, including roof structure and the provision of new garage doors.

1 Houghton Court, The Green, Houghton Regis, LU5 5DY  
For: Ms V Chambury

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

CB/23/00477/FULL Change of use of existing office building to a place of worship  
70 High Street, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5BJ  
For: Luton Pentecostal Church

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

CB/23/00565/FULL Partial demolition of car sales room. Extension to the front and change of use of building to a shop. Introduction of 8 standard parking spaces, as well as the relocation of road tanker delivery point.  
Chalk Hill Garage, Chalk Hill Service Station, Chalk Hill, LU6 1RS  
For: Ascona Retails Ltd

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

**Noted:**

CB/23/00514/DOC Discharge of Condition 22 against planning permission CB/21/05575/REG3 (Development of a new leisure centre, incorporating landscaping and parking provisions. Demolition of the existing building and the construction of a new facility to include an eight-lane 25 metre community swimming pool, dedicated learner pool, confidence pool, fitness suite, exercise studio and two squash courts. Building to include a café, community space, creche, children's outdoor play zone and an outdoor fitness trail and public area.)  
Land Currently Known as Houghton Regis Academy, Kingsland Campus, Parkside Drive, Houghton Regis, LU5 5PX

CB/23/00472/DOC Discharge of Condition 3 to reserved matters application CB/20/01172/RM (Reserved Matters: following Outline Application CB/18/00067/OUT Application for the appearance, layout, scale and landscaping of proposed the development for 22 dwellings)  
Highfield Barns, Bedford Road, Houghton Regis, LU5 6JP

JJJ.



CB/23/00453/DOC Discharge of Conditions 3 and 5 against planning permission CB/22/02569/FULL (Erection of warehouse unit to create additional storage space). Cond 3 Landscaping and Cond 5 Surface Water Drainage  
Miniclipper Logistics 10 Portland Close Townsend Industrial Estate Houghton Regis Dunstable LU5 5AW

CB/23/00571/DOC Discharge of Condition 7 against planning permission CB/16/3378/REG3 Phased construction of a new Independent Living Scheme for Older Persons comprising 168 apartments with support facilities, a Restaurant & Bar, Retail  
Houghton Regis Centre, High Street, Houghton Regis, LU5 5QT

***Permissions / Approvals / Consents***

***Refusals:***

CB/22/04594/FULL Erection of a detached dwelling  
52 Drury Lane, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5ED

CB/22/04567/RM Reserved Matters: Erection of 77 dwellings, providing full details of reserved matters including appearance, landscaping, scale and layout. Pursuant to Outline Application CB/19/04220/OUT: Residential Development for up to 100 Dwellings with all matters reserved, except access.  
Land at Bury Spinney, Thorn Road, Houghton Regis, LU5 6JQ

***Withdrawals:***

None received.

**12388 CONSULTATIONS – CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE DESIGN GUIDE  
SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT AND HOUSING POLICY  
TECHNICAL GUIDANCE SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT  
CONSULTATION JANUARY 2023**

Members were reminded that Central Bedfordshire Council had commenced a six week consultation on two new planning guidance documents.

- Design Guide SPD
- Housing Policy Technical Guidance Supplementary Planning Document

*DJJ.*

The consultation commenced on the 17th January 2023 and was due to end at 10am on Wednesday 1st March 2023. At the previous planning committee meeting held on the 20<sup>th</sup> February 2023, Members were advised that Central Bedfordshire Council had invited Town and Parish Council's to join an online Topic session, on Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> March, to find out more about these documents and to allow Town and Parish Council's to add any final comments to their responses following this event.

Members were advised that the closing date for receipt of comments had been extended to 10am on Thursday 16th March to allow Town and Parish Council's to add any final comments to their responses following this online event.

At the meeting it was agreed for Cllr Jones to attend the topic session and feed back to the committee.

#### Central Bedfordshire Councils Design Guide SPD

Policy HQ1 of the adopted Local Plan set out the requirement for high quality design in Central Bedfordshire. National planning policy placed great emphasis on the need to deliver high quality new development and required Local Authorities to have up to date design guidance in place. Central Bedfordshire Council updated the Design Guide to take account of the changes to planning policy, guidance and legislation since the current Design Guide was adopted in 2014. The new Design Guide set out the key principles and standards of design for all new development in Central Bedfordshire.

#### Central Bedfordshire Councils Housing Policy Technical Guidance SPD

The delivery of the right quantity, quality and type of new housing was fundamental to achieving sustainable communities. The housing policies in the adopted Local Plan set a clear planning framework to support Central Bedfordshire Council to deliver appropriate housing development within Central Bedfordshire. The Housing Policy Technical Guidance SPD provided further detail to support these policies, setting out how the policies would be applied, what was expected from development and how applications would be assessed. The SPD covered the mix of house types required, housing for older people, affordable housing and self build and custom housing. It also included guidance on Sustainability, First Homes and Community Led Housing.

Members were reminded that this item had been a deferral from the last meeting.

Members were updated on discussion aspects of the topic session. It was highlighted the document contained new guidance regarding street trees with some revision to extension in the green belt. Adoption of the document was planned for summer 2023.

Members resolved to respond to Central Bedfordshire Councils Design Guide SPD with the following comment. That Central Bedfordshire Council applies the SPD, when consideration is given to applications that are proposing to convert offices to dwellings.

**Resolved: To consider the Town Councils response in regard to the consultation on Central Bedfordshire Councils Design Guide SPD and Central Bedfordshire Councils Housing Policy Technical Guidance SPD**

*QJT*



**12389 STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT SITES/LOCAL PLAN-  
UPDATE/PROGRESS**

**Woodside Link** – No substantive update to report.

**A5 M1 Link** – No substantive update to report.

**All Saints View** – No substantive update to report.

**Linnere** – No substantive update to report.

**Bidwell West** – No substantive update to report.

**Kingsland** – No substantive update to report.


**Windsor Drive** – No substantive update to report.

**Section 106 Monies** – No substantive update to report.

**Resolved: To note the information**

**The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 7.34pm**

Dated this 3<sup>rd</sup> day of April 2023

  
Chairman

**HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL**

**Planning Committee  
Minutes of the meeting held on  
3<sup>rd</sup> April 2023 at 7.00pm**

Present: Councillors: J Carroll  
E Cooper  
S Goodchild  
D Jones  
S Thorne  
C Slough

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

Public: 0

Apologies: Councillor: M S Kennedy

**12407 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

Apologies were received from Cllr Kennedy.

**12408 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

None.

**12409 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr C Slough advised members that he lived on the same street as two of the applications.

**12410 MINUTES**

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on the 13<sup>th</sup> March 2023.

**Resolved To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2023 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.**

**12411 PLANNING MATTERS**

**(a) The following planning applications were considered:**

CB/23/00724/FULL Two storey rear, single storey side and first floor side extensions and conversion of garage to habitable space.  
108 Douglas Crescent, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5AT  
For: Mr & Mrs S Thomas

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

CB/23/00702/FULL Two storey rear extension.  
80 Coopers Way, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5US  
For: French

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

CB/23/00166/FULL Erection of a side and rear extension to Industrial Building -  
Class B2.  
Unit 3, Arianne Business Centre, Blackburn Road, Houghton  
Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5DZ  
For: Nella Cutlery

**Comments: Houghton Regis Town Council objected to this application on the grounds of:**

- **Overdevelopment**
- **The expansion would be detrimental to neighbouring industrial units**
- **No evidence of a bat survey completed**
- **Potential loss of tree screen**

CB/23/00876/FULL Change of use to mixed agricultural and equestrian. Erection  
of stables, tack room and storage, hardstanding to apron,  
access and landscaping.  
Land off Sewell Lane Sewell Dunstable LU6 1RP  
For: Mr M Beary

**Comments: Houghton Regis Town Council acknowledged the improvements the applicant had made since the previous application; however, objections remain on the grounds of:**

- **The proposed application would be sited in open countryside with no right of access.**
- **Site is not accessible for vehicles, including HGVs, that would need to remove waste.**
- **Site is not accessible for vehicles during construction.**
- **Concerns that there could be an increase of anti-social behaviour on this site, due to its isolated location.**
- **Concerns that the proposed development would be detrimental on the local biodiversity.**

**Should Central Bedfordshire Council be minded to approve this application, then the town council respectfully requests that conditions are placed on the approval to mitigate and control the concerns raised above.**

*QJJ*

**Noted:**



CB/23/00809/DOC Discharge of Condition 20 against planning permission CB/12/03613/OUT (Outline planning permission with the details of access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale reserved for later determination. Development to comprise: up to 5,150 dwellings (Use Class C3); up to 202,500 sqm gross of additional development in Use Classes: A1, A2, A3 (retail), A4 (public house), A5 (take away); B1, B2, B8 (offices, industrial and storage and distribution); C1 (hotel), C2 (care home), D1 and D2 (community and leisure); car showroom; data centre; petrol filling station; car parking; primary substation; energy centre; and for the laying out of the buildings; routes and open spaces within the development; and all associated works and operations including but not limited to: demolition; earthworks; engineering operations. All development, works and operations to be in accordance with the Development Parameters Schedule and Plans.)  
Parcel 4, AMP1, Houghton Regis North 1, Sundon Road, Houghton Regis

CB/23/00810/DOC Discharge of Condition 26 against planning permission CB/12/03613/OUT (Outline planning permission with the details of access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale reserved for later determination. Development to comprise: up to 5,150 dwellings (Use Class C3); up to 202,500 sqm gross of additional development in Use Classes: A1, A2, A3 (retail), A4 (public house), A5 (take away); B1, B2, B8 (offices, industrial and storage and distribution); C1 (hotel), C2 (care home), D1 and D2 (community and leisure); car showroom; data centre; petrol filling station; car parking; primary substation; energy centre; and for the laying out of the buildings; routes and open spaces within the development; and all associated works and operations including but not limited to: demolition; earthworks; engineering operations. All development, works and operations to be in accordance with the Development Parameters Schedule and Plans.)  
Parcel 4, AMP1, Houghton Regis North 1, Sundon Road, Houghton Regis

CB/23/00791/DOC Discharge of Condition 35 against planning permission CB/12/03613/OUT (Outline planning permission with the details of access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale reserved for later determination. Development to comprise: up to 5,150 dwellings (Use Class C3); up to 202,500 sqm gross of additional development in Use Classes: A1, A2, A3 (retail), A4 (public house), A5 (take away); B1, B2, B8 (offices, industrial and storage and distribution); C1 (hotel),

QJJ.

C2 (care home), D1 and D2 (community and leisure); car showroom; data centre; petrol filling station; car parking; primary substation; energy centre; and for the laying out of the buildings; routes and open spaces within the development; and all associated works and operations including but not limited to: demolition; earthworks; engineering operations. All development, works and operations to be in accordance with the Development Parameters Schedule and Plans)

CB/23/00668/NMA Non-material amendment to planning permission CB/13/03217/FULL (Permission is sought for five additional caravans for Romani Gypsy families on an existing Gypsy site. The site is laid out to six separate sections and permission is sort for an additional static caravan on three of the existing pitches and two caravans (one static) on land at the top of the site. The new pitch to contain one static caravan, one touring caravan and parking for two vehicles with associated hard standing and water treatment plant. This application is part retrospective) - Amendment sought: Division of existing plot 1 into two plots (plots 1 and 1a) each with 1 static caravan, 1 touring caravan and 1 day room Plot 1, The Evergreens, Dunstable Road, Tilsworth, Leighton Buzzard, LU7 9PU

CB/23/00920/LDCP Lawful Development Certificate Proposed: Proposed use of the property for supported living accommodation for up to two dependent young persons (aged between 8 and 18) and two appropriate adults operating on a rota basis consistent with the parameters of C3 (b)) No 3 Caretakers Bungalow, Houghton Regis Campus, Parkside Drive, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5PX

***Permissions / Approvals / Consents***

CB/23/00023/FULL Change of use of amenity land with the removal of the grass verge and raised kerb and replace with tarmac access and a dropped kerb  
105 Grove Road, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5PE

***Refusals:***

None received.

***Withdrawals:***

None received.

*QJJ*



Members are informed that the recent Regulation 14 light touch public consultation, on the draft Neighbourhood Plan, closed on the 20<sup>th</sup> March 2023.

The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group is due to meet on the 4<sup>th</sup> April to consider and agree any comments/changes to the plan following consideration of all representations.

If amended the Neighbourhood Plan will need to be agreed for submission to Central Bedfordshire Council, by this committee and then by Council.

Members were advised that it was hoped the Neighbourhood Plan would be presented to the Town Council at the June meeting, however, it was advised that a guide to the timeline to go to referendum was not available.

**12413 STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT SITES/LOCAL PLAN-  
UPDATE/PROGRESS**

**Woodside Link** – No substantive update to report.

**A5 M1 Link** – No substantive update to report.

**All Saints View** – No substantive update to report.

**Linnere** – No substantive update to report.

**Bidwell West** – No substantive update to report.

**Kingsland** – No substantive update to report.

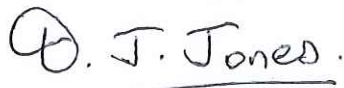
**Windsor Drive** – No substantive update to report.

**Section 106 Monies** – No substantive update to report.

**Resolved: To note the information**

**The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 7.39pm**

**Dated this 24<sup>th</sup> day of April 2023.**



**Chairman**



## Calendar of Meetings, Briefings and Events 2023 - 2024

<b>Colour Key</b>	Bank Holiday	No Scheduled meeting	Civic and Events Officer event	Community Development Officer Event
-------------------	--------------	----------------------	--------------------------------	-------------------------------------

Date	Month		Day	Committee meeting	Event	Venue	Time	Lead Officer
9th	May	2023	Tuesday	Leaders Briefing		Virtual meeting via Teams	3pm	Town Clerk
11th	May	2023	Thursday	Councillors 'Meet and Greet'		Council Chamber	6pm	
15th	May	2023	Monday	Annual Towns Meeting		St Thomas Meeting Place	7pm	Town Clerk
17th	May	2023	Wednesday	<b>Town Council (AGM)</b>		Council Chamber	7pm	Town Clerk
22nd	May	2023	Monday	Committee Briefing		Council Chamber	6pm	Head of Corporate Svcs Head of Democratic Svcs
22nd	May	2023	Monday	Planning		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Corporate Svcs
23rd	May	2023	Tuesday	Committee Briefing		Virtual meeting via Teams	2.30pm	Town Clerk Head of Democratic Svcs
23rd	May	2023	Tuesday	Allotment Working Group		Virtual meeting via Teams	3pm	Town Clerk
23rd	May	2023	Tuesday	Member Open Session		Virtual meeting via Teams	6pm	Town Clerk

24th	May	2023	Wednesday	Committee Briefing		Council Chamber	10.30am	Comm Svcs Manager Head of Dem Svcs
24th	May	2023	Wednesday	Combating Crime Working Group		Virtual meeting via Teams	11 am	Community Services Manager
29th	May	2023	Monday	Spring Bank Holiday				
30th	May	2023	Tuesday	Committee Briefing		Council Chamber	6pm	Town Clerk Head of Democratic Svcs
30th	May	2023	Tuesday	Corporate Services		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Corporate Svcs
5th	June	2023	Monday	Leaders Briefing		Virtual meeting via Teams	3pm	Town Clerk
5th	June	2023	Monday	Committee Briefing		Council Chamber	6pm	Town Clerk Head of Democratic Svcs
5th	June	2023	Monday	Environment & Leisure		Council Chamber	7pm	Town Clerk
6th	June	2023	Tuesday	Member Training - Finance		Council Chamber	6pm	Town Clerk Head of Democratic Svcs
8th	June	2023	Thursday	Committee Briefing		Council Chamber	5.00pm	Sarah Gelsthorp Head of Democratic Svcs
8th	June	2023	Thursday	Events Working Group		Virtual meeting via Teams	5.30pm	Civic and Events Manager
12th	June	2023	Monday	Committee Briefing		Council Chamber	5pm	Town Clerk Head of Democratic Svcs
12th	June	2023	Monday	Proposed New Cemetery Sub-Committee		Council Chamber	6pm	Town Clerk Head of Democratic Svcs
12th	June	2023	Monday	Planning		Council Chamber	7.00pm	Head of Corporate Svcs
19th	June	2023	Monday	Town Council		Council Chamber	7pm	Town Clerk
21st	June	2023	Wednesday	Combating Crime Working Group		Virtual meeting via Teams	11 am	Community Services Manager

27th	June	2023	Tuesday	Member Training - Council Administration and Processes		Council Chamber	6pm	Town Clerk Head of Democratic Svcs
3rd	July	2023	Monday	Leaders Briefing		Virtual meeting via Teams	3pm	Town Clerk
3rd	July	2023	Monday	Planning		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Corporate Svcs
4th	July	2023	Tuesday	Members Training - Being a good employer		Council Chamber	6pm	Town Clerk Head of Democratic Svcs
6th	July	2023	Thursday	Events Working Group		Virtual meeting via Teams	5pm	Civic and Events Manager
8th	July	2023	Saturday		Carnival			Civic and Events Manager
10th	July	2023	Monday	Committee briefing		Council Chamber	5pm	Head of Corporate Svcs Head of Democratic Svcs
10th	July	2023	Monday	Personnel Sub-Committee		Council Chamber	6pm	Head of Corporate Svcs
11th	July	2023	Tuesday	Allotment Working Group		Virtual meeting via Teams	3pm	Town Clerk
11th	July	2023	Tuesday		LLSG Trip to garden Centre		11am - 3pm	Community Services Manager
17th	July	2023	Monday	Committee Briefing		Council Chamber	6pm	Town Clerk Head of Democratic Svcs
17th	July	2023	Monday	Community Services		Council Chamber	7pm	Town Clerk
18th	July	2023	Tuesday	Partnership Committee Briefing		TBC	6pm	Town Clerk Head of Democratic Svcs
18th	July	2023	Tuesday	Town Partnership		Council Chamber	7pm	Town Clerk Head of Democratic Svcs
19th	July	2023	Wednesday	Combating Crime Working Group		Virtual meeting via Teams	11am	Community Services Manager
24th	July	2023	Monday		Skate Jam		TBC	Community Services Manager

24th	July	2023	Monday	New Office Provision Sub-Committee		Council Chamber	6pm	Town Clerk Head of Democratic Svcs
24th	July	2023	Monday	Planning		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Corporate Svcs
25th	July	2023	Tuesday		Outdoor Cinema		TBC	Community Services Manager
26th	July	2023	Wednesday		Inflatable Fun		1pm - 4pm	Community Services Manager
31st	July	2023	Monday	Member session - Corporate Dev Plan		Council Chamber		
2nd	August	2023	Wednesday		Magician		1pm - 3pm	Community Services Manager
7th	August	2023	Monday	XXXXXXXXXX				
9th	August	2023	Wednesday		Crazy Golf		1pm - 3pm	Community Services Manager
14th	August	2023	Monday	Planning		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Corporate Svcs
16th	August	2023	Wednesday	Combating Crime Working Group		Virtual meeting via Teams	11am	Community Services Manager
16th	August	2023	Wednesday		Mobile Farm		1pm - 4pm	Community Services Manager
17th	August	2023	Thursday		Family Fun day Southend Trip		8.30am - 7.00pm	Community Services Manager
21st	August	2023	Monday	XXXXXXXXXX				
24th	August	2023	Thursday	Events Working Group		Virtual meeting via Teams	5pm	Civic and Events Manager
28th	August	2023	Monday	<i>Bank holiday Summer</i>				
2nd	September	2023	Saturday		Houghton Rocks	Parkside Recreation Ground		Civic and Events Manager
4th	September	2023	Monday	<i>Leaders Briefing</i>		Virtual meeting via Teams	3pm	<i>Town Clerk</i>

4th	September	2023	Monday	Planning		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Corporate Svcs
11th	September	2023	Monday	Member session - Corporate Dev Plan		Council Chamber		
11th	September	2023	Monday	Corporate Services		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Corporate Svcs
12th	September	2023	Tuesday	Allotment Working Group		Virtual meeting via Teams	3pm	Town Clerk
18th	September	2023	Monday	Environment & Leisure		Council Chamber	7pm	Town Clerk
19th	September	2023	Tuesday		LLSG Southend Trip		8.30am - 7.00pm	Community Services Manager
20th	September	2023	Wednesday	Combating Crime Working Group		Virtual meeting via Teams	11am	Community Services Manager
25th	September	2023	Monday	Member session - Corporate Development Plan		Council Chamber		
25th	September	2023	Monday	Planning		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Corporate Svcs
28th	September	2023	Thursday	Events Working Group		Virtual meeting via Teams	5pm	Civic and Events Manager
2nd	October	2023	Monday	Town Council		Council Chamber	7pm	Town Clerk
9th	October	2023	Monday	Leaders Briefing		Virtual meeting via Teams	3pm	Town Clerk
9th	October	2023	Monday	Personnel Sub-Committee		Council Chamber	6pm	Head of Corporate Svcs
16th	October	2023	Monday	Planning		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Corporate Svcs
17th	October	2023	Tuesday	Town Partnership		Council Chamber	7pm	Town Clerk Head of Democratic Svcs
18th	October	2023	Wednesday	Combating Crime Working Group		Virtual meeting via Teams	11am	Community Services Manager
23rd	October	2023	Monday	Community Services (Grants)		Council Chamber	7pm	Town Clerk

26th	October	2023	Thursday	Events Working Group		Virtual meeting via Teams	5pm	Civic and Events Manager
30th	October	2023	Monday	Leaders Briefing		Virtual meeting via Teams	3pm	Town Clerk
5th	November	2023	Sunday		Fireworks TBC			Civic and Events Manager
6th	November	2023	Monday	Planning		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Corporate Svcs
11th	November	2023	Saturday		Armistice Day			Civic and Events Manager
12th	November	2023	Sunday		Remembrance Sunday			Civic and Events Manager
13th	November	2023	Monday	Community Services		Council Chamber	7pm	Town Clerk
14th	November	2023	Tuesday	Allotment Working Group		Virtual meeting via Teams	3pm	Town Clerk
15th	November	2023	Wednesday	Combating Crime Working Group		Virtual meeting via Teams	11 am	Community Services Manager
20th	November	2023	Monday	XXXXXXXXXX				
27th	November	2023	Monday	Proposed New Cemetery Sub-Committee		Council Chamber	6pm	Town Clerk Head of Democratic Svcs
27th	November	2023	Monday	Planning		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Corporate Svcs
29th	November	2023	Thursday	Events Working Group		Virtual meeting via Teams	5pm	Civic and Events Manager
2nd	December	2023	Saturday		Christmas Carol Service			Civic and Events Manager
4th - 6th	December	2023	Mon - Weds		Santa Float			Civic and Events Manager
4th	December	2023	Monday	Leaders Briefing		Virtual meeting via Teams	3pm	Town Clerk
4th	December	2023	Monday	Corporate Services		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Corporate Svcs

9th	December	2023			Santa's Grotto			Civic and Events Manager
11th	December	2023	Monday	Town Council		Council Chamber	7pm	Town Clerk
12th	December	2023	Tuesday		LLSG Pantomime		TBC	Community Services Manager
18th	December	2023	Monday	New Office Provision Sub-Committee		Council Chamber	6m	Town Clerk Head of Democratic Svcs
18th	December	2023	Monday	Planning		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Corporate Svcs
19th	December	2023	Tuesday		LLSG Christmas meal		TBC	Community Services Manager
20th	December	2023	Wednesday	Combating Crime Working Group		Virtual meeting via Teams	11 am	Community Services Manager
25th	December	2023	Monday	<i>Bank Holiday Christmas Day</i>				
26th	December	2023	Tuesday	<i>Bank Holiday Boxing Day</i>				
1st	January	2024	Monday	<i>Bank Holiday New Year's Day</i>				
2nd	January	2024	Tuesday	<i>Member Open Session</i>		Virtual meeting via Teams	6pm	<i>Town Clerk</i>
8th	January	2024	Monday	<i>Leaders Briefing</i>		Virtual meeting via Teams	3pm	<i>Town Clerk</i>
8th	January	2024	Monday	Planning		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Corporate Svcs
15th	January	2024	Monday	Personnel Sub-Committee		Council Chamber	6pm	Head of Corporate Svcs
16th	January	2024	Tuesday	Allotment Working Group		Virtual meeting via Teams	3pm	Town Clerk
17th	January	2024	Wednesday	Combating Crime Working Group		Virtual meeting via Teams	11 am	Community Services Manager
22nd	January	2024	Monday	Town Council		Council Chamber	7pm	Town Clerk

23rd	January	2024	Tuesday	Town Partnership		Council Chamber	7pm	Town Clerk Head of Democratic Svcs
29th	January	2024	Monday	Planning		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Corporate Svcs
1st	February	2024	Thursday	Events Working Group		Virtual meeting via Teams	5pm	Civic and Events Manager
5th	February	2024	Monday	Leaders Briefing		Virtual meeting via Teams	3pm	Town Clerk
5th	February	2024	Monday	Environment & Leisure		Council Chamber	7pm	Town Clerk
6th	February	2024	Tuesday		LLSG Lunch Date		12.30 - 2.30pm	Community Services Manager
12th	February	2024	Monday	XXXXXXXXXX				
17th	February	2024	Saturday		Pride of Houghton Awards		7 - 11pm	Civic and Events Manager
19th	February	2024	Monday	Member Open Session		Virtual meeting via Teams	6pm	Town Clerk
19th	February	2024	Monday	Proposed New Cemetery Sub-Committee		Council Chamber	6pm	Town Clerk Head of Democratic Svcs
19th	February	2024	Monday	Planning		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Corporate Svcs
21st	February	2024	Wednesday	Combating Crime Working Group		Virtual meeting via Teams	11am	Community Services Manager
26th	February	2024	Monday	Community Services		Council Chamber	7pm	Town Clerk
29th	February	2024	Thursday	Events Working Group		Virtual meeting via Teams	5pm	Civic and Events Manager
4th	March	2024	Monday	Corporate Services		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Corporate Svcs
11th	March	2024	Monday	Leaders Briefing		Virtual meeting via Teams	3pm	Town Clerk
11th	March	2024	Monday	Planning		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Corporate Svcs



18th	March	2024	Monday	Town Council		Council Chamber	7pm	Town Clerk
19th	March	2024	Tuesday	Allotment Working Group		Virtual meeting via Teams	3pm	Town Clerk
20th	March	2024	Wednesday	Combating Crime Working Group		Virtual meeting via Teams	11 am	Community Services Manager
25th	March	2024	Monday	XXXXXXXXXX				
28th	March	2024	Thursday	Events Working Group		Virtual meeting via Teams	5pm	Civic and Events Manager
29th	March	2024	Friday	Bank Holiday Good Friday				
1st	April	2024	Monday	Bank Holiday Easter Monday				
2nd	April	2024	Tuesday	Leaders Briefing		Virtual meeting via Teams	3pm	Town Clerk
2nd	April	2024	Tuesday	Planning		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Corporate Svcs
8th	April	2023	Monday	Community Services		Council Chamber	7pm	Town Clerk
15th	April	2024	Monday	Annual Towns Meeting			7pm	Town Clerk
17th	April	2024	Wednesday	Combating Crime Working Group		Virtual meeting via Teams	11 am	Community Services Manager
22nd	April	2024	Monday	Planning		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Corporate Svcs
23rd	April	2024	Tuesday	Town Partnership		Council Chamber	7pm	Town Clerk Head of Democratic Svcs
25th	April	2024	Thursday	Events Working Group		Virtual meeting via Teams	5pm	Civic and Events Manager
29th	April	2024	Monday	Environment & Leisure		Council Chamber	7pm	Town Clerk
6th	May	2024	Monday	Bank holiday Early May				

7th	May	2024	Monday	Personnel Sub-Committee		Council Chamber	6pm	Head of Corporate Svcs
13th	May	2024	Monday	Planning		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Corporate Svcs
15th	May	2024	Wednesday	Combating Crime Working Group		Virtual meeting via Teams	11 am	Community Services Manager
15th	May	2024	Wednesday	<b>Town Council (AGM)</b>		Council Chamber	7pm	<i>Town Clerk Head of Democratic Svcs</i>
27th	May	2024		<i>Bank holiday Spring Bank Holiday</i>				
3rd	June	2024	Monday	<b>Planning</b>		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Corporate Svcs



## Houghton Regis Town Council

### Committee Functions & Terms of Reference

Date of Approval:	Town Council 20 <sup>th</sup> May 2015
Date of Review:	18 <sup>th</sup> May 2016; 24 <sup>th</sup> May 2017 (amendments to HRNPSG approved 9 <sup>th</sup> October 2017); 3 <sup>rd</sup> July 2018; 15 <sup>th</sup> May 2019; 5 <sup>th</sup> May 2021, 18 <sup>th</sup> May 2022

#### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Meetings of Houghton Regis Town Council are to be conducted in accordance with the approved Standing Orders of Houghton Regis Town Council.
- 1.2 Legislation requires certain statutory functions of Houghton Regis Town Council to be discharged by the council itself. Houghton Regis Town Council cannot delegate responsibility to a committee or sub-committee for:
  1. levying or issuing a precept,
  2. borrowing money,
  3. approving the council's annual accounts,
  4. considering an auditor's report made in the public interest,
  5. confirming (by resolution) that it has the statutory criteria to exercise the power of general competence or
  6. adopting or revising the council's code of conduct.

<b>2. Committee Overview Houghton Regis Town Council</b>		
<b>Department</b>	<b>Areas of Responsibility</b>	<b>Democratic Management</b>
<b>Corporate Services</b>	Policy review & development Financial management Personnel matters Democratic management Health & safety matters	Corporate Services Committee Disciplinary, Grievance and Appeals Sub-Committee Personnel Sub-Committee
<b>Environment &amp; Leisure Services</b>	Facilities management Leisure services Recreation management Cemetery & churchyard management Allotments	Environment & Leisure Committee Allotment Working Group
<b>Community Services</b>	Community services Youth services Communications Events Mayoral services Community grants Community safety	Community Services Committee Events Working Group Pride of Houghton Awards Working Group Combating Crime Working Group
<b>Planning</b>	Planning applications Planning policy Strategic development Highways consultations	Planning Committee Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group
<b>Town</b>	Town Centre Town development	Town Council Town Partnership Committee New Cemetery Sub Committee <del>New Office Provisions Sub Committee</del> Complaints Sub Committee Complaints Appeals Sub Committee

### 3. Functions & Terms of Reference

#### Town Council

##### *Functions*

At the Annual meeting to conduct business in accordance with Standing Orders as follows:

- a. The first business conducted at the annual meeting of the council shall be the election of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council.
- b. Following the election of the Chairman of the Council and Vice-Chairman of the Council at the annual meeting, the business shall include:
  - i. In an election year, delivery by the Chairman of the Council and councillors of their acceptance of office forms unless the council resolves for this to be done at a later date. In a year which is not an election year, delivery by the Chairman of the Council of his acceptance of office form unless the council resolves for this to be done at a later date;
  - ii. Confirmation of the accuracy of the minutes of the last meeting of the council;
  - iii. Review of delegation arrangements to committees, sub-committees, staff and other local authorities;
  - iv. Review of the terms of reference for committees;
  - v. Appointment of members to existing committees;
  - vi. Appointment of any new committees in accordance with standing order 6
  - vii. Review and adoption of appropriate standing orders and financial regulations;
  - viii. In an election year, to make arrangements with a view to the Council becoming eligible to exercise the general power of competence in the future;
  - ix. Determining the time and place of ordinary meetings of the Council up to and including the next annual meeting of the Council.

At other meetings of the Council:

- To annually review the Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Health & Safety Policy, Equality & Diversity Policy, Banking Arrangements/Investment Policy, and the Committee Functions & Terms of Reference
- Before the end of January to determine the Council's overall budget for the forthcoming financial year and to set the precept accordingly.
- To receive auditors' reports and other comments and make recommendations to

Corporate Services as to any policy matters arising from them.

- To receive reports from committees and recommendations made therein.
  - To receive the Town Mayors announcements.
  - To consider and approve any short or long-term borrowing requirements including interest rates and borrowing period;
  - To approve a 4-year rolling programme of policy review
  - To receive conclusions drawn at any meeting of the Complaints and Complaints Appeals Sub-Committees. Terms of Reference
- The Town Council consists of all councillors.
  - The quorum shall be one third of all councillors (five)
  - In an election year, the annual meeting of the Council shall be held on or within 14 days following the day on which the new councillors elected take office.
  - In a year which is not an election year, the annual meeting of a Council shall be held on such day in May as the Council may direct.
  - If no other time is fixed, the annual meeting of the Council shall take place at 6pm.
  - In addition to the annual meeting of the Council, at least three other ordinary meetings shall be held in each year on such dates and times as the Council directs.

## **Corporate Services Committee**

### *Functions*

- To consider any matters referred to it by the Council or other Committees.
- To respond on behalf of the Council to initiatives from other organisations relating to matters under the Committee's jurisdiction.
- To exercise management of health and safety issues in respect of all the services of this Committee.
- To consider and determine any new contracts and any renewals of existing contracts under the jurisdiction of this committee.
- Review of arrangements, including any charters, with other local authorities and review of contributions made to expenditure incurred by other local authorities.
- Review of the Council's and/or employees' memberships of other bodies.
- To consider the suitability of the current office provision and the requirements of future office provision.
- To manage and maintain the Council Offices including office equipment and furniture.
- Reviewing the Council's procedures for handling requests made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA 2018) and to take action to comply.
- To receive information relating to the number of Freedom of Information requests received by the Clerk
- Reviewing policies of the Council as required by the Policy Document Review Schedule
- 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
  - To receive bank and cash reconciliation statements.
  - To receive and annual report (based on the previous financial year) on loans taken out, repayments made and outstanding liability
  - To confirm the use of direct debits, standing orders, BACS, CHAPS
  - Review and confirmation of arrangements for insurance cover in respect of all insured risks.
  - To recommend to Council the writing off of irrecoverable amounts.
  - To assemble and submit to the Town Council estimates of income and expenditure for each financial year in respect of all the services of this Committee no later than 30<sup>th</sup> November each year.
  - To monitor periodically the income and expenditure of the Committee.
  - To consider and determine any proposed expenditure or reduction in income for which no provision has been made in the approved budget.
  - To set the level of charges for facilities in respect of all the services of this Committee.
  - Monitor and review risk management issues
  - To exercise overall responsibility for staffing issues, excluding the appointment of the Town Clerk, who shall be appointed by the Town Council
  - To determine staff conditions of service including salary scales, working hours, employee assessments and evaluations etc
  - To determine all matters relating to staff including staffing resources and structures
  - To consider, determine and approve staff and Member training requirements
  - To receive information relating to the number of freedom of information requests received by the Town Clerk.

### *Terms of Reference*

- The Corporate Services Committee shall function and operate in accordance with the Council's approved Standing Orders.
- The Corporate Services Committee shall consist of seven Councillors. The quorum shall be half of its members (four).
- To appoint sub-committees or working groups as necessary including setting out membership and terms of reference.

## **Environment & Leisure Committee**

### *Functions*

- To consider any matters referred to it by the Council or other Committees.
- To respond on behalf of the Council to initiatives from other organisations relating to matters under the Committee's jurisdiction.
- To exercise management of health and safety issues in respect of all the services of this Committee.
- To consider and determine any new contracts and any renewals of existing contracts

under the jurisdiction of this committee.

- To assemble and submit to the Town Council estimates of income and expenditure for each financial year in respect of all the services of this Committee no later than 30<sup>th</sup> November each year.
- To monitor periodically the income and expenditure of the Committee.
- To consider and determine any proposed expenditure or reduction in income for which no provision has been made in the approved budget.
- To set the level of charges for facilities in respect of all the services of this Committee and to control the collection of revenues thereof.
- Reviewing policies of the Council as required by the Policy Document Review Schedule
- Annually review its inventory of land and assets including buildings.
- To provide and maintain all recreation grounds and pavilions, open spaces and play areas in the control of the Council.
- To manage and maintain sports provision including football pitches, the bowls green and cricket table.
- To manage and maintain the Houghton Regis Town Cemetery and All Saints Churchyard.
- To provide and maintain seats, noticeboards, litterbins and dog waste bins.
- To purchase and maintain such vehicles and equipment as may be required to carry out the Council's duties in connection with the facilities under the control of the Committee.
- To monitor all matters relating to leases and bye-laws in connection with the facilities under the control of the Committee.

#### *Terms of Reference*

- The Environment & Leisure Committee shall function and operate in accordance with the Council's approved Standing Orders.
- The Environment Committee shall consist of seven Councillors. The quorum shall be half of its members (four).
- To appoint sub-committees or working groups as necessary including setting out membership and terms of reference.

#### **Community Services Committee**

- To consider any matters referred to it by the Council or other Committees.
- To respond on behalf of the Council to initiatives from other organisations relating to matters under the Committee's jurisdiction.
- To exercise management of health and safety issues in respect of all the services of this Committee.
- To assemble and submit to the Town Council estimates of income and expenditure for each financial year in respect of all the services of this Committee no later than 30<sup>th</sup> November each year.
- To monitor periodically the income and expenditure of the Committee.
- To consider and determine any proposed expenditure or reduction in income for which no provision has been made in the approved budget.



- To set the level of charges for facilities in respect of all the services of this Committee.
- To consider and determine any new contracts and any renewals of existing contracts under the jurisdiction of this committee.
- Reviewing policies of the Council as required by the Policy Document Review Schedule
- To encourage and regulate activities and events at Council properties, venues and locations.
- To advise Environment & Leisure Committee of events using land / buildings
- To award financial grants to local organisations within an overall budget approved by the Town Council
- To review the grant application process as necessary
- To oversee and manage the promotion of the Town and the Council, including the council's newsletter and website, Christmas lights, Pride of Houghton, events
- Consider community service provision provided by outside organisations
- To provide community support to enhance community service provision
- To liaise with other organisations on community issues
- To provide support and promotion of the Town centre and the retail offer

#### *Terms of Reference*

- The Community Services Committee shall function and operate in accordance with the Council's approved Standing Orders.
- The Community Services Committee shall consist of seven Councillors. The quorum shall be half of its members (four).
- To appoint sub-committees or working groups as necessary including setting out membership and terms of reference.

### **Planning Committee**

#### *Functions*

- To consider any matters referred to it by the Council or other Committees.
- To respond on behalf of the Council to initiatives from other organisations relating to matters under the Committee's jurisdiction.
- To exercise management of health and safety issues in respect of all the services of this Committee.
- To assemble and submit to the Town Council estimates of income and expenditure for each financial year in respect of all the services of this Committee no later than 30<sup>th</sup> November each year.
- To monitor periodically the income and expenditure of the Committee.
- To consider and determine any new contracts and any renewals of existing contracts under the jurisdiction of this committee.
- To consider and determine any proposed expenditure or reduction in income for which no provision has been made in the approved budget.
- Reviewing policies of the Council as required by the Policy Document Review Schedule

- To consider all planning related applications within the Parish and to make representations to the appropriate authority on behalf of the Town Council.
- To consider matters surrounding the growth proposals, including strategic development proposals and documents from local authorities and other agencies and bodies.
- To consider highways proposals from local authorities and other agencies and bodies and to make representations to the appropriate authority on behalf of the Town Council.
- To oversee the development and introduction of a Neighbourhood Plan for Houghton Regis.

#### Delegated Powers to Officers – Planning

- Delegated applications include all applications received for consultation purposes including all planning applications, advertisement and signs.
- All delegated decisions, which are recommended for approval, will be provided in writing, to Members of the Planning Committee.
- A list of proposed delegated decisions (relating to new or proposed listed buildings, conservation areas, tree preservation orders, building preservation orders, highways, byways, bridleways and footpaths) will be circulated to all Councillors. If a Councillor wishes an application to be decided by the Committee, a written request must be made to the Town Clerk prior to the meeting.
- No applications will be delegated that fall into the following categories:
  - a) To which a written objection from a member of the public has been received by the Town Council
  - b) Any application for more than five dwellings (including flats, apartments and maisonettes)
  - c) Any application for retail or employment space
- The Town Clerk or their nominated officer, must be fully aware of the location and possible planning considerations of an application.

#### *Terms of Reference*

- The Planning Committee shall function and operate in accordance with the Council's approved Standing Orders.
- The Planning Committee shall consist of seven Councillors. The quorum shall be half of its members (four).
- To appoint sub-committees or working groups as necessary including setting out membership and terms of reference.

#### **Houghton Regis Town Partnership**

This is a joint Houghton Regis Town Council and Central Bedfordshire Council committee. See Appendix A, attached, for relevant Committee Functions & Terms of Reference.

### **Complaints Sub-Committee (reporting to Town Council)**

#### *Functions*

To act as the Complaints Committee in accordance with the Council's approved Complaints Procedure, including:

- To consider and make recommendations on any complaints received which fall under the approved Complaints Policy;
- To report its deliberations to Town Council;

#### *Terms of Reference*

- The Sub Committee shall comprise 3 councillors;
- Membership of the Sub Committee shall be drawn from Town Council who have not been named within the complaint.
- The quorum shall be three members.

### **Complaints Appeals Sub-Committee (reporting to Town Council)**

#### *Functions*

- To consider and make recommendations on any appeals which relate to complaints received which fall under the approved Complaints Policy;
- To report its deliberations to Town Council;

#### *Terms of Reference*

- The Sub Committee shall comprise 3 councillors;
- Membership of the Sub Committee shall be drawn from Town Council who were not members of the original Complaints Sub-Committee and have not been named within the complaint.
- The quorum shall be three members.

### **Personnel Sub-Committee (Reporting to Corporate Services Committee)**

#### *Functions*

- Overview of staffing structure and staffing budget, ensuring that it is commensurate with objectives of the Council.
- Review staff sickness absence.
- Receive reports and review of Employee Assistance Programme
- Review staff training
- Identify and agree training needs for the Town Clerk and Members
- Ensure Council employees are working in a safe environment
- To consider and recommend to Corporate Services Committee any changes to employees pay, emoluments or terms and conditions of employment

- Review Job Description and Contract of Town Clerk annually or when there is a significant change
- Receive notification of the Town Clerk's annual leave and matters relating to overtime working and sickness.
- Succession plan for key staff who may wish to retire.
- Agree the recruitment process for the Town Clerk and other senior members of staff.
- If supported by the conclusion of a disciplinary process to consider the termination of contract for the Town Clerk and other senior members of staff.
- Act as interview panel for the posts of Town Clerk and other senior members of staff (final approval for the appointment of the Clerk rests with Council as per Standing Orders).
- Appoint one member of the Committee as the Clerks Appointed Person, preferably the Chair, to act as contact for day to day matters, support, handle leave requests, absence from work and to feed matters to Committee where any decisions/action is needed and to undertake the Clerks appraisal.
- Report any outcomes of employee complaints received.

#### *Terms of Reference*

- The Personnel Sub-Committee shall function and operate in accordance with the Council's approved Standing Orders.
- The Personnel Sub-Committee shall consist of 5 Councillors
- Membership of the Sub Committee shall be drawn from Town Council
- The quorum shall be three members.

#### **Disciplinary, Grievance & Appeals Sub-Committee Group (reporting to Corporate Services)**

*Due to the sensitive nature of the matters raised under this Sub-Committee, these meetings are not open to the public.*

#### *Functions:*

- Delegated powers to hear and action, as appropriate, employee disciplinary, grievance and appeal matters where these are beyond the authority delegated to the Clerk in the Scheme of Delegation;
- To consider and recommend to Town Council any disciplinary, grievance or appeal relating to the Clerk

#### *Terms of Reference:*

- The Disciplinary, Grievance and Appeals Sub-Committee shall consist of 3 Councillors.
- Membership of the Sub Committee shall be drawn from Town Council.
- The quorum shall be three members.

---

**Proposed New Cemetery Sub Committee (reporting to Town Council)***Functions*

1. To consider any matters referred to it by the Town Council or any other Committee
2. To consider and determine matters surrounding the development of a new cemetery for Houghton Regis, including but not restricted to:
  - Environmental matters
  - Policy matters
  - Visual impact matters
  - Design matters
  - Public consultation matters
  - Future operation and management of the cemetery
3. To commission specialist services such as may be deemed appropriate in progressing options for future cemetery provision.
4. To report and to make such recommendations to Town Council as appropriate.

*Terms of Reference*

- The Proposed New Cemetery Sub Committee shall function and operate in accordance with the Council's approved Standing Orders.
- The Proposed New Cemetery Sub Committee shall consist of 5 members. The quorum shall be half of its members (three).

**Events Working Group (reporting to Community Services Committee) (meetings to be held within normal working hours)***Functions*

- To set an annual programme of events and to request suitable funding from the Community Services Committee no later than October in each financial year
- To consider all aspects relating to planning and hosting of council events, including health and safety requirements
- To monitor and review each council event.
- Delegated authority is given to the Town Clerk and the Civic & Events Officer to take decisions on the arrangements for council events.
- To report to the Community Services Committee on the outcome of its deliberations.

*Terms of Reference*

- The Events Working Group shall function and operate in accordance with the Council's approved Standing Orders.

- The Events Working Group shall consist of 5 members. As the Working Group has no delegated authority to take decisions there is no quorum of members required.

**Pride of Houghton Awards Working Group (reporting to Community Services Committee) (meetings to be held within normal working hours)**

*Functions*

- To consider the nominations put forward from members of the public in relation to the Pride of Houghton Award scheme and determine the award winners.

*Terms of Reference*

- The Pride of Houghton Awards Working Group shall function and operate in accordance with the Council's approved Standing Orders.
- The Pride of Houghton Awards Working Group shall consist of 5 councillors. The quorum shall be three members.
- The Pride of Houghton Awards Working Group shall not comprise of any co-opted members or members of the Events Working Group.

**Combating Crime Working Group (reporting to Community Services Committee) (meetings to be held within normal working hours)**

*Functions*

- To monitor the Council's Service Level Agreement with Bedfordshire Police for the provision of additional policing within the parish of Houghton Regis known as Operation Hanna
- To receive bi-monthly written reports and monthly verbal reports from Bedfordshire Police on the work completed under Operation Hanna
- To consider the forthcoming months actions by Bedfordshire Police under Operation Hanna
- To monitor the Council's Service Level Agreement with Central Bedfordshire Council for the management of the re-deployable CCTV cameras
- To manage the formulation and implementation of the Council's Community Safety Strategy
- To manage action under the Council's enviro crime project
- To report its decisions to Community Services Committee

*Terms of Reference*

- The Combating Crime Working Group shall function and operate in accordance with the Council's approved Standing Orders.
- The Combating Crime Working Group shall consist of five councillors. The

quorum shall be half its members (three).

### **~~New Office Provisions Sub Committee (reporting to Town Council)~~**

#### *~~Functions~~*

- ~~1. Reflecting on the growth agenda to give consideration to;
  - a) the suitability of the current office provision
  - b) the requirements of future office provision~~
- ~~2. To give consideration to future office provision including options for retaining or developing the current site, options for renting / leasing, purchasing or developing;~~
- ~~3. To commission specialist services such as may be deemed necessary in progressing options for future office provision;~~

#### *~~Terms of Reference~~*

- ~~1. The New Office Sub Committee shall function and operate in accordance with the Council's approved Standing Orders;~~
- ~~2. The New Office Sub Committee shall consist of five councillors, the quorum of which shall be 3.~~

### **Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (reporting to Planning Committee)**

The Steering Group comprises Members of Houghton Regis Town Council, a Member of Central Bedfordshire Council and representatives from the Community.

See Appendix B, attached, for relevant Committee Functions & Terms of Reference.

### **Allotment Working Group**

#### *Functions*

1. To consider all matters relating to the provision and management of allotments in Houghton Regis including:
  - New site specification
  - Allotment associations
  - Allotment tenancies
  - Management
  - Fees and charges

#### *Terms of Reference*

1. The Allotment Working Group shall function and operate in accordance with the Council's approved Standing Orders.
2. The Allotment Working Group shall consist of five Councillors. The quorum shall be half of its members (three)





## **APPENDIX A**

### **Houghton Regis Town Partnership Committee <sup>1</sup>**

#### **Purpose**

1. To influence decisions and help shape initiatives and their delivery for the benefit of the whole town taking into account the needs of the town, customers, employees, residents, visitors, traders, property owners and developers.
2. To develop and encourage public participation and engagement and take into consideration the resident voice in the work of the Committee

#### **Objectives**

1. Help improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural vitality of the town
2. Ensure a partnership and collaborative approach to achieve the delivery of town regeneration, including influencing Section 106 funding received for town improvements and community facilities.
3. Opportunities to delegate funding decisions to the Committees should be explored, such as Section 106 received to spend on community facilities.
4. The Committee will make decisions on any joint funding allocated to it.
5. Influence and help shape strategies / plans that impact on the future viability of the town.
6. Provide a forum for briefing Members of the Joint Committee on all key issues affecting the town, at the discretion of the Chairman and Vice Chairman.
7. Make recommendations on strategically significant projects to the relevant Council's decision-making committees, including Committees of the Town Council.
8. Develop and maintain joint branding of communication, agendas and minutes.
9. To enable communities to discuss services and influence decisions at the local level as to how these services are delivered
10. To provide a forum for two-way communication about public service delivery and the implementation and effectiveness of policies affecting the town.

---

<sup>1</sup> These were considered by the Partnership Committee at its meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> April. The Terms of reference remain to be formally approved by Central Bedfordshire Council.

11. Promote resilience by encouraging communities to do more for themselves and champion local solutions.
12. Consider the ways in which proposals and initiatives can help to advance equality of opportunity, eliminate discrimination and foster good relations.

### **Membership**

1. Four Councillors from Central Bedfordshire Council and four Councillors from Biggleswade Town Council (Biggleswade Joint Committee).
2. Four Councillors from Central Bedfordshire Council and four Councillors from Houghton Regis Town Council (Houghton Regis Partnership Committee).
3. Five Councillors from Central Bedfordshire Council and five Councillors from Leighton-Linslade Town Council (Leighton-Linslade Partnership Committee).
4. Five Councillors from Central Bedfordshire Council and five Councillors from Dunstable Town Council (Dunstable Joint Committee).

*Who must be elected representatives of the wards.*

5. Two substitutes from each Council will be permitted to attend meetings as full Committee representatives. A Councillor who sits on both CBC and the Town Council can substitute. Central Bedfordshire Council Councillors shall not substitute a Town Councillor on the Committee and vice versa.
6. Substitutes for Central Bedfordshire Council Members on the Joint Committee must be a ward councillor in the town in the first instance or if not available a substitute must be an Executive Member. Substitutes for the Town Council Members of the Joint Committee will be a ward town councillor
7. Members are appointed annually.
8. All Members of the Committee should have the interests of the town as a priority, not their own wards.

### **Meetings and Quorum**

1. At least 3 Members from each Council must be in attendance for the meeting to be quorate.
2. Meetings will be held a minimum of once per year and up to 4 per year and take place at venues in the area
3. The Committee may also organise extra ordinary meetings at the discretion of the Chairman and Vice Chairman.
4. In addition to the Committee meetings, the Committee can organise other forms of engagement to take place such as themed discussions / task and finish groups and community conferences, including joint meetings or events with other Joint Committees in Central Bedfordshire.
5. All meetings will be open to the public unless exempt items are discussed

### **Chairman and Vice Chairman**

1. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman shall be appointed from and by the Joint Committee's core membership; each Council must be represented in either role.
2. The appointed Chairman and Vice-Chairman will hold their post for a period of one year, after which they may stand for re-election.
3. The Vice Chairman will preside in the absence of the Chairman. If neither is present, the Committee members in attendance will appoint a Chairman from amongst them for the duration of that meeting.
4. The Chairman and Vice Chairman will be responsible for the content of the Committee agendas and will allow committee members and other stakeholders to submit agenda topics which will be included unless the proposed agenda item is not relevant to the Purpose and/or Objectives of the Joint Committee.

### **Secretariat**

1. Either Council can administer the Joint Committee, according to their own Standing Orders. The Committee will decide annually which Council is to administer the Committee.
2. Agendas, minutes and press releases will be issued under joint branding.
3. The secretariat will prepare, monitor and keep up to date an annual work plan to set the broad direction and priorities for the Committee.

### **Decision making arrangements**

1. Only members of the Committee can vote. Co-opted Members have no voting rights.
2. The Committee will not have any decision-making powers regarding planning applications and will not seek to duplicate or hinder the work of Central Bedfordshire Council as the Local Planning Authority.
3. The Committee will reach decisions by a simple majority. The Chairman will have the casting vote in the case of a tie.

### **Co-option**

1. To support engagement with local stakeholders the Committee can co-opt members from local representative groups, as appropriate up to a maximum of 15. Each co-opted Member will be able to engage fully in all discussions but will not have any voting rights. Co-opted members can be removed from the Committee by joint agreement of the Chairman and Vice Chairman.
2. The list of Co-opted Members should be reviewed annually.

### **Governance**

1. The Minutes and action log for the Joint Committee will be presented to Central Bedfordshire Council. The detail of where this will be presented will be determined by Central Bedfordshire Council and reported back to the Joint Committee.

## APPENDIX B

### Houghton Regis Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

<b>HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN STEERING GROUP TERMS OF REFERENCE</b>		
<b>1.</b>	<b>Background</b>	
1.1	Houghton Regis Town Council has resolved to produce a Neighbourhood Plan and has determined that it will cover the Parish of Houghton Regis.	
1.2	The Town Council, while retaining full responsibility for the Plan, recognizes that the content of the Plan must be driven by the community and the need to draw on skills and expertise from outside the Council.	
1.3	A Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group will lead the project to successful completion.	
<b>2.</b>	<b>Name</b>	
2.1	The name of the group will be <b>Houghton Regis Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group. (HRNPSG)</b>	
<b>3.</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	
3.1	The main purpose of the Group is to oversee the preparation of the Plan in order that it will be progressed to Independent Examination and a successful community referendum and ultimate adoption.	
3.2	The Steering Group will engage the local community to ensure that the Plan is truly representative of the ambitions of Houghton Regis. The Group will maximize support for the approach taken in the NP by ensuring high levels of community engagement throughout the plan-making process.	
3.3	Liaise with, and direct the work of, consultants and specialists engaged to further the Plan as appropriate.	
3.4	Consider the options and develop policies to inform the future development and use of land in the neighbourhood area.	
3.5	Be aware of the development areas identified in the Local Plan, including establishing further development areas if they are required.	
3.6	Ensure the NP is supported by effective on-going programmes of communication and consultation with the community, CBC, businesses, adjoining parishes, developers and other key parties.	

	3.7	Identify sources of funding.
	3.8	Liaise with statutory, and other, relevant authorities and organizations to ensure the Plan is as comprehensive and inclusive as possible.
	3.9	Identify ways of involving the whole community and gather the views and opinions of as many groups and organizations in the community as possible.
	3.10	Determine the types of consultation and information gathering to be used.
	3.11	Be responsible for the analysis arising from consultations and the production and distribution of the final reports.
	3.12	Conform to national policies and with EU and Human Rights legislation.
	3.13	Report back regularly to the Town Council on progress, significant issues and budgetary implications.
	3.14	Present key documents and the draft NP for consultation with the Town Council, local residents, CBC, businesses, the Independent Examiner, and assist in arrangements for the Referendum.
	3.15	Present recommendations for the implementation of The Plan.
<b>4.</b>	<b>Membership and Conduct</b>	
	4.1	The HRNPSG will be formed from current Town Councillors, CBC Councillors for the town and local members of the community. The Group will be comprised of up to 12 members, the composition of which to be 5 Town Councillors, (appointed by the full Town Council), 1 CBC Councillor and 6 representatives from the local community. The Town Clerk, or Senior Manager, will be present in an <i>ex-officio</i> , non-voting capacity at all meetings. The Group will only be quorate when 50% of its members are present.
	4.2	The HRNPSG may co-opt additional support to carry out specific task for as short or long a period as necessary.
	4.3	Membership is voluntary.
	4.4	All members of the HRNPSG must abide by the Code of Conduct of Houghton Regis Town Council and in doing so must submit a register of interests.
	4.5	All members of the HRNPSG must declare any personal interest that may be perceived as being relevant to the decisions or recommendations made by it. This may include membership of an organization, ownership or interest in land or business or any other matter likely to be relevant to the work undertaken by the HRNPSG.
	4.6	A person will cease to be a member of the HRNPSG upon notification to the Chairman in writing of their wish to resign.
<b>5.</b>	<b>Meetings</b>	
	5.1	The HRNPSG will elect a Chairman, Vice-Chair, Secretary and Treasurer from its membership to remain in these positions until the project is complete. If these positions should become vacant, the Group will elect an alternative.
	5.2	In the absence of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, the HRNPSG will elect a Chairman from its members present at the meeting, for that meeting.
	5.3	The HRNPSG will arrange its own meeting schedule and will meet as required.
	5.4	At least 7 days clear notice of meetings will be sent to members via email.

	5.5	The Secretary will keep a record of meetings and circulate the Minutes to HRNPSG members and the Town Council (via the Planning Committee Clerk) no more than 14 days after each meeting.
	5.6	Decisions made by HRNPSG will be by consensus at Group meetings. Where a vote is required, each member will have one vote. A simple majority vote will be required to support any motion. The Chairman will have one casting vote.
<b>6.</b>	<b>Working Groups</b>	
	6.1	HRNPSG may establish working groups for dealing with specific issues, made up of Members of the Steering Group and volunteers from the community, to aid them in any NP related work.
	6.2	Each working group will have a lead person from the HRNPSG.
<b>7.</b>	<b>Affiliations, Interests and Contributions.</b>	
	7.1	The HRNPSG will not itself be affiliated to any particular political party. It is recognized that Councillors and community members may have such affiliations, which will be declared where relevant.
	7.2	The Localism Act and Houghton Regis Town Council's Code of Conduct will apply to all members of the HRNPSG. All members of the HRNPSG must declare any pecuniary interest that may be perceived as being relevant to a decision of the HRNPSG. This may include membership of an organization, ownership of land or a business, or any other matter that may be considered to be relevant. Such declarations must be recorded and publically available.
	7.3	Having declared an interest, that member will not take part in a discussion or vote on the related issue. In event of disagreement, the Chairman's decision will be binding. Organizations and businesses may assist in the production of the NP and may contribute to the cost of producing it. Details of any donations or assistance must be made publicly available and must not influence the recommendations of The Plan.
<b>8.</b>	<b>Finance</b>	
	8.1	Funding, including grants, will be applied for and held by the Town Council, who will ring-fence the funds for Neighbourhood Plan development work.
	8.2	HRNPSG will notify the Town Council (via the Planning Committee) of any planned expenditure <b>before</b> it is incurred
<b>9.</b>	<b>Conduct</b>	
	9.1	It is expected that all HRNPSG members will abide by the principles and practice of the Town Council Code of Conduct, including the declaration of interests.
	9.2	Whilst members as individuals will be accountable to their parent organizations, the HRNPSG as a whole is accountable to the wider community for ensuring that The Plan reflects their collective expectations.
	9.3	HRNPSG will achieve this through applying the following principles:

	i	Be clear and open when their individual roles or interests are in conflict;
	ii	Treat everyone with dignity, courtesy and respect, regardless of their age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity or religion and belief; and
	iii	Actively promote equality of access and opportunity.
<b>10</b>	<b>Changes to the Terms of Reference</b>	
	10.1	This document may be amended with the support of at least two-thirds of the current membership at a HRNPSG meeting and with the approval of the Town Council.
<b>11</b>	<b>Dissolution of the HRNPSG</b>	
	11.1	The HRNPSG will continue to operate until the adoption of the Neighbourhood Plan.
	11.2	Upon dissolution of the HRNPSG, any remaining resources will be passed to the Town Council.



**HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL**  
Peel Street, Houghton Regis, Bedfordshire, LU5 5EY  
Telephone: 01582 708540  
Email: [info@houghtonregis.org.uk](mailto:info@houghtonregis.org.uk)  
[www.houghtonregis.org.uk](http://www.houghtonregis.org.uk)

---

### **Representatives on Outside Organisations 2023/2024**

<b>All Saints View Stakeholder Group</b>	Cllr x 1	No details on dates, times, venue. Notes: Facilitated by CBC. Whilst the new administration is formed, they are not seeking a representative for this group.
<b>Bedfordshire Association of Town &amp; Parish Councils</b>	Cllr x 3	Date: October 2023 Frequency: Annual Time: evening Venue: TBC Notes: 3 cllrs are invited to attend the BATPC AGM (usually in October). At present Cllr Jones is also on the Board of the BATPC. He will remain on the Board until October.
<b>Bedfordshire Bus Users' Forum</b>	Cllr x 1	This is a newly established group and the frequency, timing and location of the meetings is not yet confirmed.
<b>Chews Foundation</b>	Cllr x 1	Date: Tuesday 6 <sup>th</sup> June & Tuesday 5 <sup>th</sup> December Frequency: bi-annual Time: 10am Venue: Chew's House, High Street South Dunstable Notes: Agenda paperwork is sent via email.
<b>Citizens Advice</b>	Cllr x 1	Date & Time: 3 <sup>rd</sup> August at <a href="#">3.pm</a> 14 <sup>th</sup> September at <a href="#">6.pm</a> (AGM) 2 <sup>nd</sup> November at <a href="#">3.pm</a> Venue: CA Offices in Dunstable Date: TBC Frequency: Monthly Time: evening
<b>Friends of Windsor Drive Community Open Space</b>	Cllr x 1	Venue: alternating venues in Houghton Regis Notes: A full agenda is supplied before every meeting.



<b>Hospice at Home Volunteers</b>	Cllr x 1	<p>Date: 4<sup>th</sup> July 2023, 7pm  Frequency: TBC  Time: TBC (previously daytime, may change)  Venue: Salvation Army Citadel in Bull Pond Lane, Dunstable.  Notes:  The next Trustee committee meeting is in the diary for 15<sup>th</sup> November 2023, although the charity are considering future arrangements including the possibility of reverting to Tuesday meetings, in the evening rather than at lunchtime, and a possible change of venue.</p>
<b>Houghton Hall Park Project Board</b>	Cllr x 1	<p>Date: 27<sup>th</sup> July  Frequency: Quarterly  Time: 10am-12pm  Venue: Microsoft Teams  Notes:  The Board is higher level decision making group with voting powers from both councils as stipulated in the formal Joint Venture Agreement.</p>
<b>Houghton Hall Park MAG</b>	Cllr x 1	<p>Date: Thursday 13th July  Frequency: Quarterly  Time: 10am-12pm  Venue: Microsoft Teams  Notes:  CBC have suggested that it is less imperative for an elected member to sit on the MAG as it's quite an operational forum discussing day to day management with input from specialised officers</p>
<b>Houghton Regis North Stakeholder Group</b>	Cllr x 1	<p>Date: June / July  Frequency: ad hoc  Time: not advised  Venue: Microsoft Teams</p>
<b>Memorial Hall Committee</b>	Cllr x 2	<p>Date: TBC  Frequency: every other month on a Tuesday  Time: 7pm  Venue: HR Memorial Hall</p>
<b>SORTED</b>	Cllr x 1	<p>Date: TBC  Frequency: ad hoc  Time: evenings  Venue: SORTED, Dunstable  Notes:  The council has been invited to nominate a representative to attend the trustees meetings. SORTED have suggested that the representative try to attend a couple of Trustee mtgs per year to stay in touch with the organisation at a more strategic level.</p>
<b>South Beds Dial-a-Ride</b>	Cllr x 1	<p>SBDAR have asked for a representative to be nominated but at this point are unable to give an indication of when their mtgs are likely to be.</p>



## Houghton Regis Town Council

### Standing Orders

Date of Approval:	Town Council 22 <sup>nd</sup> June 2015
Date of Review:	18 <sup>th</sup> May 2016; 18 <sup>th</sup> July 2017; 3 <sup>rd</sup> July 2018; 8 <sup>th</sup> October 2018 (following advice from NALC); 15 <sup>th</sup> May 2019; 18 <sup>th</sup> May 2022; 17 <sup>th</sup> May 2023

Based on NALC Model Standing Orders 2018 (Revised 2020) and updated April 2022 (Update to Model Standing Order 18 only).

#### Contents

##### Preface

1. Meetings Generally
2. Proper Officer
3. Responsible Financial Officer
4. Ordinary Council Meetings
5. Disorderly Conduct at Meetings
6. Committees & Sub-Committees
7. Presence of Non-Members of Committees at Committee Meetings
8. Working Groups
9. Extraordinary Meetings of the Council, Committees and Sub-Committees
10. Questions
11. Motions For A Meeting That Require Written Notice To Be Given To The Proper Officer
12. Motions at a Meeting that do not require Written Notice
13. Rules of Debate at Meetings
14. Rules of Debate – Resolutions
15. Previous Resolutions
16. Draft Minutes
17. Accounts and Accounting Statements
18. Financial Controls And Procurement
19. Estimates / Precepts
20. Execution and Sealing of Legal Deeds
21. Management of Information
22. Handling Staff Matters
23. Voting on Appointments
24. Canvassing of And Recommendations by Councillors
25. Code of Conduct and Dispensations
26. Code of Conduct Complaints
27. Restrictions on Councillor Activities
28. Communication with District and County or Unitary Councillors
29. Relations with The Press/Media
30. Responsibilities to Provide Information
31. Responsibilities under Data Protection Legislation

- 32. Standing Orders Generally
- 33. Virtual attendance

Appendix A – Procedure for Recording Meetings

## PREFACE

This is a set of Standing orders based on the model set of Standing orders produced by NALC (April 2018), revised 2020 and updated April 2022. Standing Orders that are in **bold type** contain legal and statutory requirements and are to be adopted without changing them or their meaning. Standing Orders not in bold are designed to help councils operate effectively but do not contain statutory requirements therefore they may be adopted or amended to suit a council's needs.

If the words "Local Council's" are used, it means Parish and Town Council's in England and Community and Town Council's in Wales.

For convenience, the word "councillor" is used in model standing orders and, unless the context suggests otherwise, includes a non-councillor with or without voting rights.

It is, of course, recognised that local councillors can be male or female. Therefore, wherever the masculine gender is used this should be interpreted as also meaning the feminine gender.

The Chairman of a Town Council is entitled to use the title "Town Mayor". The title confers no additional powers on the chairman, and, in particular, has no implications for his conduct in meetings.

*Notes:*

- *The word "Chairman" includes "Town Mayor" and means the person actually presiding at a meeting*
- *The word "Vice-Chairman" includes "Deputy Town Mayor"*
- *Where appropriate use of the word "he" is to include the meaning "she"*
- *The word "Council" includes "committee," where any function has been delegated.*

## STANDING ORDERS

### 1. MEETINGS

- Full Council meetings
- Committee meetings
- Sub-committee meetings

Smoking is not permitted at any meeting of the Council.

All meetings of the Town Council shall be held at the Council Offices, Peel Street, Houghton Regis at 7pm unless the Council decides otherwise.

- a **Meetings shall not take place in premises which at the time of the meeting are used for the supply of alcohol, unless no other premises are available free of charge or at a reasonable cost.**

- b **The minimum three clear days for notice of a meeting does not include the day on which notice was issued, the day of the meeting, a Sunday, a day of the Christmas break, a day of the Easter break or of a bank holiday or a day appointed for public thanksgiving or mourning.**
- c **The minimum three clear days' public notice for a meeting does not include the day on which the notice was issued or the day of the meeting unless the meeting is convened at shorter notice**
- d **Meetings shall be open to the public unless their presence is prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for other special reasons. The public's exclusion from part or all of a meeting shall be by a resolution which shall give reasons for the public's exclusion.**
- e 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.
- f The period of time designated for public participation at a meeting in accordance with standing order 1(e) above shall not exceed 15 minutes unless directed by the chairman of the meeting.
- g Subject to standing order 1(f) above, a member of the public shall not speak for more than 3 minutes.
- h In accordance with standing order 1(e) above, a question shall not require a response at the meeting nor start a debate on the question. The chairman of the meeting may direct that a written or oral response be given.
- i A person shall raise his hand when requesting to speak.
- j A person who speaks at a meeting shall direct his comments to the chairman of the meeting.
- k Only one person is permitted to speak at a time. If more than one person wants to speak, the chairman of the meeting shall direct the order of speaking.
- l **Subject to standing order 1(m), a person who attends a meeting is permitted to report on the meeting whilst the meeting is open to the public. To "report" means to film, photograph, make an audio recording of meeting procedures, use any other means for enabling persons not present to see or hear the meeting as it takes place or later or to report or to provide oral or**

**written commentary about the meeting so that the report or commentary is available as the meeting takes place or later to persons not present.**

*See Appendix A for the Procedure for Recording Meetings*

- m A person present at a meeting may not provide an oral report or oral commentary about a meeting as it takes place without permission.**
- n The press shall be provided with reasonable facilities for the taking of their report of all or part of a meeting at which they are entitled to be present.**
- o Subject to standing orders which indicate otherwise, anything authorised or required to be done by, to or before the Chairman of the Council may in his absence be done by, to or before the Vice-Chairman of the Council (if there is one).**
- p The Chairman of the Council, if present, shall preside at a meeting. If the Chairman is absent from a meeting, the Vice-Chairman of the Council, (if there is one) if present, shall preside. If both the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman are absent from a meeting, a councillor as chosen by the councillors present at the meeting shall preside at the meeting.**
- q Subject to a meeting being quorate, all questions at a meeting shall be decided by a majority of the councillors and non-councillors with voting rights present and voting.**
- r The chairman of a meeting may give an original vote on any matter put to the vote, and in the case of an equality of votes may exercise his casting vote whether or not he gave an original vote.**

*See standing orders 4(h) and (i) for the different rules that apply in the election of the Chairman of the Council at the annual meeting of the council.*
- s Unless standing orders provide otherwise, voting on a question shall be by a show of hands. At the request of a councillor, the voting on any question shall be recorded so as to show whether each councillor present and voting gave his vote for or against that question. Such a request shall be made before moving on to the next item of business on the agenda.**
- t The minutes of a meeting shall include an accurate record of the following:**
  - i. the time and place of the meeting;**
  - ii. the names of councillors who are present (virtually or in person) and the names of councillors who are absent, with or without apologies;**
  - iii. interests that have been declared by councillors and non-councillors with**

- voting rights;
  - iv. the grant of dispensations (if any) to councillors and non-councillors with voting rights;
  - v. whether a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights left the meeting when matters that they held interests in were being considered;
  - vi. if there was a public participation session; and
  - vii. the resolutions made.
- u **A councillor or a non-councillor with voting rights who has a disclosable pecuniary interest or another interest as set out in the Council's code of conduct in a matter being considered at a meeting is subject to statutory limitations or restrictions under the code on his right to participate and vote on that matter.**
- v **No business may be transacted at a meeting unless at least one-third of the whole number of members of the council are present and in no case shall the quorum of a meeting be less than three.**  
*See standing order 6d(vii) for the quorum of a committee or sub-committee meeting.*
- w **If a meeting is or becomes inquorate no business shall be transacted** and the meeting shall be closed. The business on the agenda for the meeting shall be adjourned to another meeting.
- x A meeting shall not normally exceed a period of 2.5 hours unless by agreement of those Members present.

## 2 PROPER OFFICER

- a The Proper Officer shall be either (i) the clerk or (ii) other staff member(s) nominated by the Council to undertake the work of the Proper Officer when the Proper Officer is absent.
- b The Proper Officer shall:
- i. **at least three clear days before a meeting of the council, a committee or a sub-committee,**
    - **serve on councillors, by delivery or post at their residences or by email authenticated in such a manner as the Proper Officer thinks fit, a signed summons confirming the time, place and the agenda (provided the councillor has consented to service by email) and**

- **Provide, in a conspicuous place, public notice of the time, place and agenda (provided that the public notice with agenda of an extraordinary meeting of the council convened by councillors is signed by them);**

*See standing order 1(b) for the meaning of clear days for a meeting of a full council and standing order 1(c) for a meeting of a committee.*

- ii. subject to standing order 11, include on the agenda all motions in the order received unless a councillor has given written notice at least 5 days before the meeting confirming his withdrawal of it;
- iii. **convene a meeting of full council for the election of a new Chairman of the Council, occasioned by a casual vacancy in his office;**
- iv. **facilitate inspection of the minute book by local government electors;**
- v. **receive and retain copies of byelaws made by other local authorities;**
- vi. retain acceptance of office forms from councillors;
- vii. retain a copy of every councillor's register of interests;
- viii. assist with responding to requests made under the freedom of information legislation and rights exercisable under data protection legislation, in accordance with and subject to the council's relevant policies and procedures;
- ix. liaise, as appropriate, with the Council's Data Protection Officer (if there is one);
- x. receive and send general correspondence and notices on behalf of the council except where there is a resolution to the contrary;
- xi. assist in the organisation of, storage of, access to, security of and destruction of information held by the Council in paper and electronic form subject to the requirements of data protection and freedom of information legislation and other legitimate requirements (e.g. the Limitation Act 1980);
- xii. arrange for legal deeds to be executed;  
*(See also standing order 20);*
- xiii. arrange or manage the prompt authorisation, approval, and instruction regarding any payments to be made by the council in accordance with the council's financial regulations;
- xiv. record every planning application notified to the council and the council's response to the local planning authority;
- xv. refer a planning application received by the council to the Chairman or in his absence Vice-Chairman of the Planning Committee within two working days of receipt to facilitate an extraordinary meeting if the nature of a planning application requires consideration before the next ordinary meeting of Planning Committee if an extension of time is not agreed by the Planning Department;
- xvi. manage access to information about the council via the publication



scheme; and

- xvii. retain custody of the seal of the council (if any) which shall not be used without a resolution to that effect.

*See also standing order 20.*

- c. The Proper Officer or other staff member(s) nominated by the Council shall be present at every meeting of the council, committee or sub committee.

### **3 RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER**

- a The council shall appoint appropriate staff member(s) to undertake the work of the Responsible Financial Officer when the Responsible Financial Officer is absent.

### **4 ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETINGS**

- a **In an election year, the annual meeting of the council shall be held on or within 14 days following the day on which the new councillors elected take office.**
- b **In a year which is not an election year, the annual meeting of a council shall be held on such day in May as the council decides.**
- c **If no other time is fixed, the annual meeting of the council shall take place at 6pm.**
- d **In addition to the annual meeting of the council, at least three other ordinary meetings shall be held in each year on such dates and times as the council decides.**
- e **The first business conducted at the annual meeting of the council shall be the election of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman (if there is one) of the Council.**
- f **The Chairman of the Council, unless he has resigned or becomes disqualified, shall continue in office and preside at the annual meeting until his successor is elected at the next annual meeting of the council.**
- g **The Vice-Chairman of the Council, if there is one, unless he resigns or becomes disqualified, shall hold office until immediately after the election of the Chairman of the Council at the next annual meeting of the council.**
- h **In an election year, if the current Chairman of the Council has not been re-**

**elected as a member of the council, he shall preside at the annual meeting until a successor Chairman of the Council has been elected. The current Chairman of the Council shall not have an original vote in respect of the election of the new Chairman of the Council but must give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.**

- i **In an election year, if the current Chairman of the Council has been re-elected as a member of the council, he shall preside at the annual meeting until a new Chairman of the Council has been elected. He may exercise an original vote in respect of the election of the new Chairman of the Council and shall give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.**
  
- j Following the election of the Chairman of the Council and Vice-Chairman (if there is one) of the Council at the annual meeting, the business shall include:
  - i. **In an election year, delivery by the Chairman of the Council and councillors of their acceptance of office forms unless the council resolves for this to be done at a later date. In a year which is not an election year, delivery by the Chairman of the Council of his acceptance of office form unless the council resolves for this to be done at a later date;**
  - ii. Confirmation of the accuracy of the minutes of the last meeting of the council;
  - iii. Review of delegation arrangements to committees, sub-committees, staff and other local authorities;
  - iv. Review of the terms of reference for committees;
  - v. Appointment of members to existing committees;
  - vi. Appointment of any new committees in accordance with standing order 6;
  - vii. Review and adoption of appropriate standing orders and financial regulations;
  - viii. In an election year, to make arrangements with a view to the Council becoming eligible to exercise the general power of competence in the future;
  - ix. Determining the time and place of ordinary meetings of the Council up to and including the next annual meeting of the Council.

## **5 DISORDERLY CONDUCT AT MEETINGS**

- a No person shall obstruct the transaction of business at a meeting or behave offensively or improperly. If this standing order is not adhered to, the chairman of the meeting shall request such person(s) to moderate or improve their conduct.
  
- b If person(s) disregard the request of the chairman of the meeting to moderate or

improve their conduct, any councillor or the chairman of the meeting may move that the person be no longer heard or excluded from the meeting. The motion, if seconded, shall be put to the vote without discussion.

- c If a resolution made under standing order 5(b) above is ignored, the chairman of the meeting may take further reasonable steps to restore order or to progress the meeting. This may include temporarily suspending or closing the meeting.

## **6 COMMITTEES & SUB-COMMITTEES**

- a **Unless the council determines otherwise, a committee may appoint a sub-committee whose terms of reference and members shall be determined by the committee.**

- b **The members of a committee may include non-councillors unless it is a committee which regulates and controls the finances of the council.**

- c **Unless the council determines otherwise, all the members of an advisory committee and a sub-committee of the advisory committee may be non-councillors.**

- d The council may appoint standing committees or other committees as may be necessary, and:

- i. shall determine their terms of reference;
- ii. shall determine the number and time of the ordinary meetings of a standing committee up until the date of the next annual meeting of full council;
- iii. shall permit a committee, other than in respect of the ordinary meetings of a committee, to determine the number and time of its meetings;
- iv. shall, subject to standing orders 6(b) and (c), appoint and determine the terms of office of members of such a committee;
- v. shall, after it has appointed the members of a standing committee, appoint the chairman of the standing committee;
- vi. shall permit a committee other than a standing committee, to appoint its own chairman and vice chairman at the first meeting of the committee;
- vii. shall determine the place, notice requirements and quorum for a meeting of a committee and a sub-committee which shall be no less than three;
- viii. shall determine if the public may participate at a meeting of a committee;
- ix. shall determine if the public and press are permitted to attend the meetings of a sub-committee and also the advance public notice requirements, if any, required for the meetings of a sub-committee;

- x. shall determine if the public may participate at a meeting of a sub-committee that they are permitted to attend; and
  - xi. may dissolve a committee.
- e All committees may exercise on behalf of the Council any of the functions delegated to them as set out in their terms of reference and subject to any statutory provision. No committee shall be obliged to exercise the functions delegated to it, but can if it so wishes refer matters to the council for decision;
- f Each Committee shall submit to the Council a report of the proceedings of any meetings held since the Council last met.

**7 PRESENCE OF NON-MEMBERS OF COMMITTEES AT COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

- a. Any Councillor may attend, and with the permission of the Committee Chair speak on particular matters at a meeting, not in private session, of a Committee or Sub-Committee of which he is not a member but may not vote.
- b. A member who has proposed a resolution, which has been referred to any committee of which he is not a member, may explain his resolution to the committee but shall not vote.
- c. A Member of a Committee, who is not able to attend for any reason, may appoint as a substitute a Councillor who is not a member of that Committee. Notification of such a substitution shall be given to the Town Clerk or the Chairman before the start of the meeting. This substitute Member may take part in the proceedings as if he were a member of it.

**8 WORKING GROUPS**

- a. The Council may create working groups, whose name, and number of members and the bodies to be invited to nominate members shall be specified.
- b. The Clerk shall inform the members of each working group of the terms of reference of the group.
- c. A working group may make recommendations and give notice thereof to the Council or Committee or Sub Committee
- d. A working group may consist wholly of persons who are not members of the Council.
- e. Working Group meetings are to be held in normal office hours (to start not earlier than 10am and to finish not later than 6.30pm)

**9 EXTRAORDINARY MEETINGS OF THE COUNCIL, COMMITTEES AND SUB-COMMITTEES**

- a **The Chairman of the Council may convene an extraordinary meeting of the council at any time.**
- b **If the Chairman of the Council does not call an extraordinary meeting of the council within seven days of having been requested in writing to do so by two councillors, any two councillors may convene an extraordinary meeting of the council. The public notice giving the time, place and agenda for such a meeting must be signed by the two councillors.**
- c The chairman of a committee or a sub-committee may convene an extraordinary meeting of the committee or the sub-committee at any time.
- d If the chairman of a committee or a sub-committee does not call an extraordinary meeting within 3 days of having been requested by to do so by 2 members of the committee or the sub-committee, any 2 members of the committee or the sub-committee may convene an extraordinary meeting of a committee and a sub-committee.

## **10 QUESTIONS**

- a A councillor may seek an answer, at a meeting of the council, a question concerning any business of the Council provided 2 clear days notice of the question has been given to the Proper Officer.
- b Questions from a councillor not related to items of business on the agenda for a meeting shall only be asked during the part of the meeting set aside for such questions.
- c Every question shall be put and answered without discussion.

## **11 MOTIONS FOR A MEETING THAT REQUIRE WRITTEN NOTICE TO BE GIVEN TO THE PROPER OFFICER**

- a A motion shall relate to the responsibilities of the meeting for which it is tabled and, in any event, shall relate to the performance of the council's statutory functions, powers and obligations or an issue which specifically affects the council's area or its residents.
- b No motion may be moved at a meeting unless it is on the agenda and the mover has given written notice of its wording to the Proper Officer at least 10 clear days before the meeting. Clear days do not include the day of the notice or the day of the meeting.
- c The Proper Officer may, before including a motion on the agenda received in accordance with standing order 11(b), correct obvious grammatical or

typographical errors in the wording of the motion.

- d If the Proper Officer considers the wording of a motion received in accordance with standing order 11(b) is not clear in meaning, the motion shall be rejected until the mover of the motion resubmits it, in writing to the Proper Officer, so that it can be understood at least 8 clear days before the meeting.
- e If the wording or subject of a proposed motion is considered improper, the Proper Officer shall consult with the chairman of the forthcoming meeting or, as the case may be, the councillors who have convened the meeting, to consider whether the motion shall be included in the agenda or rejected.
- f The decision of the Proper Officer as to whether or not to include the motion on the agenda shall be final.
- g Motions received shall be recorded and numbered in the order that they are received.
- h Motions rejected shall be recorded with an explanation by the Proper Officer for their rejection.

## **12 MOTIONS NOT REQUIRING WRITTEN NOTICE**

- a The following motions may be moved at a meeting without written notice to the Proper Officer;
  - i. to correct an inaccuracy in the draft minutes of a meeting;
  - ii. to move to a vote;
  - iii. to defer consideration of a motion;
  - iv. to refer a motion to a particular committee or sub-committee;
  - v. to appoint a person to preside at a meeting;
  - vi. to change the order of business on the agenda;
  - vii. to proceed to the next business on the agenda;
  - viii. to require a written report;
  - ix. to appoint a committee or sub-committee and their members;
  - x. to extend the time limits for speaking;
  - xi. to exclude the press and public from a meeting in respect of confidential or sensitive information which is prejudicial to the public interest;
  - xii. to not hear further from a councillor or a member of the public;
  - xiii. to exclude a councillor or member of the public for disorderly conduct;
  - xiv. to temporarily suspend the meeting;
  - xv. to suspend a particular standing order (unless it reflects mandatory statutory or legal requirements);
  - xvi. to adjourn the meeting; or

xvii. to close a meeting.

### **13 RULES OF DEBATE AT MEETINGS**

- a Motions on the agenda shall be considered in the order that they appear unless the order is changed at the discretion of the chairman of the meeting.
- b A motion (including an amendment) shall not be progressed unless it has been moved and seconded.
- c A motion on the agenda that is not moved by its proposer may be treated by the chairman of the meeting as withdrawn.
- d If a motion (including an amendment) has been seconded, it may be withdrawn by the proposer only with the consent of the seconder and the meeting.
- e An amendment is a proposal to remove or add words to a motion. It shall not negate the motion.
- f If an amendment to the original motion is carried, the original motion (as amended) becomes the substantive motion upon which further amendment(s) may be moved.
- g An amendment shall not be considered unless early verbal notice of it is given at the meeting and, if requested by the chairman of the meeting, is expressed in writing to the chairman.
- h A councillor may move an amendment to his own motion if agreed by the meeting. If a motion has already been seconded, the amendment shall be with the consent of the seconder and the meeting.
- i If there is more than one amendment to an original or substantive motion, the amendments shall be moved in the order directed by the chairman of the meeting.
- j Subject to standing order 13(k), only one amendment shall be moved and debated at a time, the order of which shall be directed by the chairman of the meeting.
- k One or more amendments may be discussed together if the chairman of the meeting considers this expedient but each amendment shall be voted upon separately.

- l A councillor may not move more than one amendment to an original or substantive motion.
  
- m The mover of an amendment has no right of reply at the end of debate on it.
  
- n Where a series of amendments to an original motion are carried, the mover of the original motion shall have a right of reply either at the end of debate on the first amendment or at the very end of debate on the final substantive motion immediately before it is put to the vote.
  
- o Unless permitted by the chairman of the meeting, a councillor may speak once in the debate on a motion except:
  - i. to speak on an amendment moved by another councillor;
  - ii. to move or speak on another amendment if the motion has been amended since he last spoke;
  - iii. to make a point of order;
  - iv. to give a personal explanation; or
  - v. to exercise a right of reply.
  
- p During the debate of a motion, a councillor may interrupt only on a point of order or a personal explanation and the councillor who was interrupted shall stop speaking. A councillor raising a point of order shall identify the standing order which he considers has been breached or specify the other irregularity in the proceedings of the meeting he is concerned by.
  
- q A point of order shall be decided by the chairman of the meeting and his decision shall be final.
  
- r When a motion is under debate, no other motion shall be moved except:
  - i. to amend the motion;
  - ii. to proceed to the next business;
  - iii. to adjourn the debate;
  - iv. to put the motion to a vote;
  - v. to ask a person to be no longer heard or to leave the meeting;
  - vi. to refer a motion to a committee or sub-committee for consideration;
  - vii. to exclude the public and press;
  - viii. to adjourn the meeting; or
  - ix. to suspend particular standing order(s) excepting those which reflect mandatory statutory or legal requirements.



- s Before an original or substantive motion is put to the vote, the chairman of the meeting shall be satisfied that the motion has been sufficiently debated and that the mover of the motion under debate has exercised or waived his right of reply.
- t Excluding motions moved under Standing Order 13(r), the contributions or speeches by a councillor shall relate only to the motion under discussion and shall not exceed 3 minutes without the consent of the chairman of the meeting.




#### **14 RULES OF DEBATE – RESOLUTIONS**

- a No discussion of the Minutes shall take place except upon their accuracy. Corrections to the Minutes shall be made by resolution and must be initialled by the Chairman.
- b. A member shall direct his speech to the question under discussion or to a personal explanation or to a question of order.
- c. A member shall remain seated when speaking unless requested to stand by the Chairman.
- d. The ruling of the Chairman on a point of order or on the admissibility of a personal explanation shall not be discussed.
- e. Members shall address the Chairman. If two or more members wish to speak, the Chairman shall decide whom to call upon.
- f. Whenever the Chairman speaks during a debate all other members shall be silent.

#### **15 PREVIOUS RESOLUTIONS**


- a A resolution shall not be reversed within six months except either by a special motion, which requires written notice by at least 6 councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing order 11, or by a motion moved in pursuance of the recommendation of a committee or a sub-committee.
- b When a motion moved pursuant to standing order 15(a) has been disposed of, no similar motion may be moved within a further six months.

#### **16 DRAFT MINUTES**

-  Full Council meetings
-  Committee meetings
-  Sub-committee meetings

- a If the draft minutes of a preceding meeting have been served on councillors with the agenda to attend the meeting at which they are due to be approved for

accuracy, they shall be taken as read.

- b There shall be no discussion about the draft minutes of a preceding meeting except in relation to their accuracy. A motion to correct an inaccuracy in the draft minutes shall be moved in accordance with standing order 12(a)(i).
- c The accuracy of draft minutes, including any amendment(s) made to them, shall be confirmed by resolution and shall be signed by the chairman of the meeting and stand as an accurate record of the meeting to which the minutes relate.
- d If the chairman of the meeting does not consider the minutes to be an accurate record of the meeting to which they relate, he shall sign the minutes and include a paragraph in the following terms or to the same effect:  
“The chairman of this meeting does not believe that the minutes of the meeting of the ( ) held on [date] in respect of ( ) were a correct record but his view was not upheld by the meeting and the minutes are confirmed as an accurate record of the proceedings.”
-  e **If the Council’s gross annual income and expenditure (whichever is higher) does not exceed £25,000, it shall publish draft minutes on a website which is publicly accessible and free of charge not later than one month after the meeting has taken place.**
- f Subject to the publication of draft minutes in accordance with standing order 16(e) and standing order 30(a) and following a resolution which confirms the accuracy of the minutes of a meeting, the draft minutes or recordings of the meeting for which approved minutes exist shall be destroyed.

## 17. ACCOUNTS AND ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS

- a “Proper practices” in standing orders refer to the most recent version of “Governance and Accountability for Local Council’s – a Practitioners’ Guide”.
- b All payments by the council shall be authorised, approved and paid in accordance with the law, proper practices and the council’s financial regulations.
- c The Responsible Financial Officer shall supply to each member a list of all receipts and payments.
- d The Responsible Financial Officer shall provide to each Standing Committee meeting a statement to summarise:
  - i. the committees’ income and expenditure for the year to date;

- ii the committee's aggregate income and expenditure for the year to date;
  - iii the balances held which includes a comparison with the budget for the financial year and highlights any actual or potential overspends.
- e As soon as possible after the financial year end at 31 March, the Responsible Financial Officer shall provide:
  - i. each councillor with a statement summarising the council's receipts and payments (or income and expenditure) for the last quarter and the year to date for information; and
  - ii. to the full council the accounting statements for the year in the form of Section 2 of the annual governance and accountability return, as required by proper practices, for consideration and approval.
- f The year-end accounting statements shall be prepared in accordance with proper practices and applying the form of accounts determined by the council (receipts and payments, or income and expenditure) for a year to 31 March. A completed draft annual governance and accountability return shall be presented to each councillor at least 14 days prior to anticipated approval by the Council. The annual governance and accountability return of the council, which is subject to external audit, including the annual governance statement, shall be presented to council for consideration and formal approval before 30 June.

## **18 FINANCIAL CONTROLS AND PROCUREMENT**

- a The Council's financial regulations may make provision for the authorisation of the payment of money in exercise of any of the Council's functions to be delegated to a committee, sub-committee or to an employee.
- b The council shall consider and approve financial regulations drawn up by the Responsible Financial Officer, which shall include detailed arrangements in respect of the following:
  - i. the keeping of accounting records and systems of internal controls;
  - ii. the assessment and management of financial risks faced by the council;
  - iii. the work of the independent internal auditor in accordance with proper practices and the receipt of regular reports from the internal auditor, which shall be required at least annually;
  - iv. the inspection and copying by councillors and local electors of the council's accounts and/or orders of payments; and
  - v. whether contracts with an estimated value below ~~£25,000~~ **£30,000** due to special circumstances are exempt from a tendering process or procurement exercise.
- c Financial regulations shall be reviewed regularly and at least annually for fitness

of purpose.

- d A public contract regulated by the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 with an estimated value in excess of ~~£25,000~~ £30,000 but less than the relevant thresholds in standing order 18(g) is subject to the “light touch” arrangements under Regulations 109-114 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 unless it proposes to use an existing list of approved suppliers (framework agreement).**
- e Subject to additional requirements in the financial regulations of the council, the tender process for contracts for the supply of goods, materials, services or the execution of works shall include, as a minimum, the following steps:
- i. a specification for the goods, materials, services or the execution of works shall be drawn up;
  - ii. an invitation to tender shall be drawn up to confirm (i) the council’s specification (ii) the time, date and address for the submission of tenders (iii) the date of the council’s written response to the tender and (iv) the prohibition on prospective contractors contacting councillors or staff to encourage or support their tender outside the prescribed process;
  - iii. the invitation to tender shall be advertised in a local newspaper and in any other manner that is appropriate;
  - iv. tenders are to be submitted in writing in a sealed marked envelope addressed to the Proper Officer;
  - v. tenders shall be opened by the Proper Officer in the presence of at least one councillor after the deadline for submission of tenders has passed;
  - vi. tenders are to be reported to and considered by the appropriate meeting of the council or a committee or sub-committee with delegated responsibility.
- f Neither the council, nor a committee or a sub-committee with delegated responsibility for considering tenders, is bound to accept the lowest value tender.
- g Where the value of a contract is likely to exceed the threshold specified by the Office of Government Commerce from time to time, the Council must consider whether the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 or the Utilities Contracts Regulations 2016 apply to the contract and, if either of those Regulations apply, the Council must comply with procurement rules. NALC’s procurement guidance contains further details.**

## **19 ESTIMATES / PRECEPTS**

- a. The Council shall approve written estimates for the coming financial year at its

meeting before the end of January. Once the Estimates have been accepted they shall be known as the Budget.

- b. Any committee desiring to incur expenditure shall give the Proper Officer a written estimate of the expenditure recommended for the coming year no later than 30<sup>th</sup> October.

## **20 EXECUTION AND SEALING OF LEGAL DEEDS**

- a A legal deed shall not be executed on behalf of the council unless authorised by a resolution.
- b **Subject to standing order 20(a) above, any two councillors may sign, on behalf of the council, any deed required by law and the Proper Officer shall witness their signatures.**

## **21 MANAGEMENT OF INFORMATION**

See also standing order 31.

- a **The Council shall have in place and keep under review, technical and organisational measures to keep secure information (including personal data) which it holds in paper and electronic form. Such arrangements shall include deciding who has access to personal data and encryption of personal data.**
- b **The Council shall have in place, and keep under review, policies for the retention and safe destruction of all information (including personal data) which it holds in paper and electronic form. The Council's retention policy shall confirm the period for which information (including personal data) shall be retained or if this is not possible the criteria used to determine that period (e.g. the Limitation Act 1980).**
- c **The agenda, papers that support the agenda and the minutes of a meeting shall not disclose or otherwise undermine confidential information or personal data without legal justification.**
- d **Councillors, staff, the Council's contractors and agents shall not disclose confidential information or personal data without legal justification.**
- e To assist councillors and staff such information will normally be printed on pink papers and marked as confidential.

## **22 HANDLING STAFF MATTERS**

- a Any persons responsible for all or part of the management of staff shall treat as

confidential the written records of all meetings relating to their performance, capabilities, grievance or disciplinary matters.

- b The council shall keep all written records relating to employees secure. All paper records shall be secured and locked and electronic records shall be password protected and encrypted.
- c In accordance with standing order 21(a), persons with line management responsibilities shall have access to staff records referred to in standing order 22(a).
- d Access and means of access by keys and/or computer passwords to records of employment referred to in above shall be provided only to the Clerk.
- e The Clerk shall conduct an appraisal of all Council employees and shall keep a written record of it. The Chairman of the Council and the Chairman of Corporate Services Committee or in their absence, the Vice-Chairman of the Council shall conduct an appraisal of the Clerk and shall keep a written record of it. Significant outcomes of the appraisals shall be reported to the Corporate Services Committee.
- f Any grievance shall be handled in accordance with the Council's approved Grievance policy.
- g Any disciplinary matter shall be handled in accordance with the Council's approved Disciplinary policy.
- h Any staff sickness shall be handled in accordance with the Council's approved Sickness Management policy.

## **23 VOTING ON APPOINTMENTS**

- a Where more than two persons have been nominated for a position to be filled by the council and none of those persons has received an absolute majority of votes in their favour, the name of the person having the least number of votes shall be struck off the list and a fresh vote taken. This process shall continue until a majority of votes is given in favour of one person. A tie in votes may be settled by the casting vote exercisable by the chairman of the meeting.

## **24 CANVASSING OF AND RECOMMENDATIONS BY COUNCILLORS**

- a. Canvassing of members of the Council or of any committee, directly or indirectly, for any appointment under the Council shall disqualify the candidate for such appointment. The Proper Officer shall disclose the requirements of this standing order to every candidate.
- b. A councillor or a member of a committee or sub-committee shall not solicit a

person for appointment to or by the Council or recommend a person for such appointment or for promotion; but, nevertheless, any such person may give a written testimonial of a candidate's ability, experience or character for submission to the Council with an application for appointment.

- c. This standing order shall apply to tenders as if the person making the tender were a candidate for an appointment.

## 25 CODE OF CONDUCT AND DISPENSATIONS

*See also standing order 1(u).*

- a All councillors and non-councillors with voting rights shall observe the code of conduct adopted by the council.
- b Unless he has been granted a dispensation, a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights shall withdraw from a meeting when it is considering a matter in which he has a disclosable pecuniary interest. He may return to the meeting after it has considered the matter in which he had the interest.
- c Unless he has been granted a dispensation, a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights shall withdraw from a meeting when it is considering a matter in which he has another interest if so required by the council's code of conduct. He may return to the meeting after it has considered the matter in which he had the interest.
- d **Dispensation requests shall be in writing and submitted to the Proper Officer** as soon as possible before the meeting, or failing that, at the start of the meeting for which the dispensation is required.
- e A decision as to whether to grant a dispensation shall be made by a meeting of the council, or committee or sub-committee for which the dispensation is required and that decision is final.
- f A dispensation request shall confirm:
  - i. the description and the nature of the disclosable pecuniary interest or other interest to which the request for the dispensation relates;
  - ii. whether the dispensation is required to participate at a meeting in a discussion only or a discussion and a vote;
  - iii. the date of the meeting or the period (not exceeding four years) for which the dispensation is sought; and
  - iv. an explanation as to why the dispensation is sought.
- g Subject to standing orders 25(d) and (f), dispensations requests shall be considered at the beginning of the meeting of the council, or committee or a sub-



committee for which the dispensation is required.

- h **A dispensation may be granted in accordance with standing order 25(e) if having regard to all relevant circumstances the following apply:**
  - i. **without the dispensation the number of persons prohibited from participating in the particular business would be so great a proportion of the meeting transacting the business as to impede the transaction of the business or**
  - ii. **granting the dispensation is in the interests of persons living in the council's area or**
  - iii. **it is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation.**

## **26 CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINTS**

- a Code of conduct complaints will be received, investigated and decided upon by the District or Unitary Council (Central Bedfordshire Council).
- b Upon notification by the District or Unitary Council that it is dealing with a complaint that a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights has breached the council's code of conduct, the Proper Officer shall, subject to standing order 21 above, report this to the council.
- c Where the notification in standing order 26(a) relates to a complaint made by the Proper Officer, the Proper Officer shall notify the Chairman of Council of this fact, and the Chairman shall nominate another staff member to assume the duties of the Proper Officer in relation to the complaint until it has been determined and the council has agreed what action, if any, to take in accordance with standing order 26(e).
- d The council may:
  - i. provide information or evidence where such disclosure is necessary to progress an investigation of the complaint or is a legal requirement ;
  - ii. seek information relevant to the complaint from the person or body with statutory responsibility for investigation of the matter;
- e **Upon notification by the District or Unitary Council that a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights has breached the council's code of conduct, the council shall consider what, if any, action to take against him. Such action excludes disqualification or suspension from office.**

**27 RESTRICTIONS ON COUNCILLOR ACTIVITIES**

- a. Unless authorised by a resolution, no councillor shall:
  - i. inspect any land and/or premises which the council has a right or duty to inspect; or
  - ii. issue orders, instructions or directions.

**28 COMMUNICATING WITH DISTRICT AND COUNTY OR UNITARY COUNCILLORS**

- a An invitation to attend a meeting of the council shall be sent, together with the agenda, to the ward councillor(s) of the Unitary Council representing the area of the council.

**29 RELATIONS WITH THE PRESS/MEDIA**

- a Requests from the press or other media for an oral or written comment or statement from the Council, its councillors or staff shall be handled in accordance with the Council's policy in respect of dealing with the press and/or other media.

**30 RESPONSIBILITIES TO PROVIDE INFORMATION**

*See also standing order 31.*

- a **In accordance with freedom of information legislation, the Council shall publish information in accordance with its publication scheme and respond to requests for information held by the Council.**
- b **The Council shall publish information in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government (Transparency Requirements) (England) Regulations 2015.**

**31. RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER DATA PROTECTION LEGISLATION**

**(Below is not an exhaustive list).**

*See also standing order 21*

- a The Council may appoint a Data Protection Officer.
- b **The Council shall have policies and procedures in place to respond to an individual exercising statutory rights concerning his personal data.**
- c **The Council shall have a written policy in place for responding to and managing a personal data breach.**
- d **The Council shall keep a record of all personal data breaches comprising the facts relating to the personal data breach, its effects and the remedial**

**action taken.**

- e. **The Council shall ensure that information communicated in its privacy notice(s) is in an easily accessible and available form and kept up to date.**
- f. **The Council shall maintain a written record of its processing activities.**

**32 STANDING ORDERS GENERALLY**

- a All or part of a standing order, except one that incorporates mandatory statutory or legal requirements, may be suspended by resolution in relation to the consideration of an item on the agenda for a meeting.
- b A motion to add to or vary or revoke one or more of the council's standing orders, except one that incorporates mandatory statutory or legal requirements, shall be proposed by a special motion, the written notice by at least 2 councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing order 11.
- c The Proper Officer shall provide a copy of the council's standing orders to a councillor as soon as possible after he has delivered his acceptance of office form.
- d The decision of the chairman of a meeting as to the application of standing orders at the meeting shall be final.

**33. VIRTUAL ATTENDANCE**

- a A councillor who attends, virtually, a meeting of the council, or as an appointed member of a committee or sub-committee, may not take part in any discussion (unless specifically agreed to by the Chair) and has no right to vote.
- b Virtual attendance, by virtue of not being physically present, may render a meeting inquorate, see standing order 1w. Therefore, any councillor who intends to attend a meeting, virtually, must inform the Chair of their intention, prior to the meeting taking place, in order to avoid the meeting being inquorate.
- c An appointed member of a committee or sub-committee, who is unable to attend a meeting in person, in the first instance shall seek a substitute.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Procedure for recording meetings**

The Openness of Local Bodies Regulations 2014 allows any person attending a public local government meeting to report proceedings by taking photographs, filming, audio recording, or by using social media.

It is courteous to advise the council or committee via the clerk that recording will take place.

Where the council has been notified of filming in advance a notice shall be displayed "Please note that filming, recording or photography may take place at this meeting when the public and press are not lawfully excluded"

1. The council and officers shall afford reasonable facilities for the recording of the meeting.
2. Any filming, recording or photography of meetings shall only be permitted from the Public Seating Areas.
3. No additional lighting or flash photography shall be used except by agreement of the chairman.
4. Recording equipment shall not be left unattended at meetings.
5. Devices that may emit an alarm tone shall be switched to silent mode.
6. Persons recording the meeting shall not interrupt or interfere, or cause to make such noise as the chairman regards as disruptive, while a meeting is in progress. The chairman may direct recordings to stop if the interruption, interference or noise prevents the smooth running of the meeting.
7. Commentary by the recording person(s) shall not be permitted during the recording.
8. Only council members and council officers may be expressly recorded. Permission to record other persons present must be agreed with those persons. Permission to record those under 16 must be given by their parent or guardian.
9. All recording shall be visible to anyone at the meeting.
10. The council shall not be liable for any publishing actions of the person(s) making the recording. Permission to publish content identifying a member of the public is advisable.
11. Recording will be suspended if a resolution is passed by the meeting to exclude the public.
12. Recording will be suspended if the Chairman suspends the meeting due to disorderly conduct.
13. Anyone reporting proceedings by making use of social media should not disturb the business of the meeting,
14. Any kind of reporting or filming of the meeting should be compliant with the Human Rights Act, the Data Protection Act and the laws of libel and defamation.
15. Only the official signed minutes of the council and its committees will be recognised as the formal, statutory and legally binding record of the meeting.



## Houghton Regis Town Council

### Financial Regulations

Date of Approval:	Town Council 29 <sup>th</sup> September 2014
Date of Review:	18 <sup>th</sup> May 2016; 18 <sup>th</sup> July 2017; 3 <sup>rd</sup> July 2018; 15 <sup>th</sup> May 2019; 18 <sup>th</sup> May 2022; 17 <sup>th</sup> May 2023

Based on NALC Financial Regulations

#### Contents

1.	GENERAL .....	2
2.	ACCOUNTING AND AUDIT (INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL) .....	4
3.	ANNUAL ESTIMATES (BUDGET) AND FORWARD PLANNING .....	5
4.	BUDGETARY CONTROL AND AUTHORITY TO SPEND .....	6
5.	BANKING ARRANGEMENTS AND AUTHORISATION OF PAYMENTS .....	7
6.	INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE MAKING OF PAYMENTS .....	8
7.	PAYMENT OF SALARIES .....	10
8.	LOANS AND INVESTMENTS .....	10
9.	INCOME .....	11
10.	ORDERS FOR WORK, GOODS AND SERVICES .....	12
11.	CONTRACTS .....	12
12.	PAYMENTS UNDER CONTRACTS FOR BUILDING OR OTHER CONSTRUCTION WORKS .....	14
13.	STORES AND EQUIPMENT .....	14
14.	ASSETS, PROPERTIES AND ESTATES .....	14
15.	INSURANCE .....	15
16.	CHARITIES .....	15
17.	RISK MANAGEMENT .....	15
18.	SUSPENSION AND REVISION OF FINANCIAL REGULATIONS .....	15

These Financial Regulations were adopted by the Council at its Meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> September 2014.

## **1. GENERAL**

- 1.1. These financial regulations govern the conduct of financial management by the council and may only be amended or varied by resolution of the council. Financial regulations are one of the council's three governing policy documents providing procedural guidance for members and officers. Financial regulations must be observed in conjunction with the council's standing orders<sup>1</sup> and any individual financial regulations relating to contracts.
- 1.2. The council is responsible in law for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective, and that the council has a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of the council's functions, including arrangements for the management of risk.
- 1.3. The council's accounting control systems must include measures:
  - for the timely production of accounts;
  - that provide for the safe and efficient safeguarding of public money;
  - to prevent and detect inaccuracy and fraud; and
  - identifying the duties of officers.
- 1.4. These financial regulations demonstrate how the council meets these responsibilities and requirements.
- 1.5. At least once a year, prior to approving the Annual Governance Statement, the council must review the effectiveness of its system of internal control which shall be in accordance with proper practices.
- 1.6. Deliberate or wilful breach of these Regulations by an employee may give rise to disciplinary proceedings.
- 1.7. Members of Council are expected to follow the instructions within these Regulations and not to entice employees to breach them. Failure to follow instructions within these Regulations brings the office of Councillor into disrepute.
- 1.8. The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) holds a statutory office to be appointed by the council. The Clerk has been appointed as RFO for this council and these regulations will apply accordingly.
- 1.9. In accordance with the Council's Staffing Structure, the Clerk / RFO is supported by the Accounts Officer. Where RFO is referred to in the Financial Regulations the Accounts Officer may carry out part or all of the stated requirement under the supervision of the Clerk / RFO.
- 1.10. The RFO;
  - acts under the policy direction of the council;

---

<sup>1</sup> Model standing orders for councils © 2018, are available via NALC's website.

- administers the council's financial affairs in accordance with all Acts, Regulations and proper practices;
  - determines on behalf of the council its accounting records and accounting control systems;
  - ensures the accounting control systems are observed;
  - maintains the accounting records of the council up to date in accordance with proper practices;
  - assists the council to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of its resources; and
  - produces financial management information as required by the council.
- 1.11. The accounting records determined by the RFO shall be sufficient to show and explain the council's transactions and to enable the RFO to ensure that any income and expenditure account and statement of balances, or record of receipts and payments and additional information, as the case may be, or management information prepared for the council from time to time comply with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 1.12. The accounting records determined by the RFO shall in particular contain:
- entries from day to day of all sums of money received and expended by the council and the matters to which the income and expenditure or receipts and payments account relate;
  - a record of the assets and liabilities of the council; and
  - wherever relevant, a record of the council's income and expenditure in relation to claims made, or to be made, for any contribution, grant or subsidy.
- 1.13. The accounting control systems determined by the RFO shall include:
- procedures to ensure that the financial transactions of the council are recorded as soon as reasonably practicable and as accurately and reasonably as possible;
  - procedures to enable the prevention and detection of inaccuracies and fraud and the ability to reconstruct any lost records;
  - identification of the duties of officers dealing with financial transactions and division of responsibilities of those officers in relation to significant transactions;
  - procedures to ensure that uncollectable amounts, including any bad debts are not submitted to the council for approval to be written off except with the approval of the RFO and that the approvals are shown in the accounting records; and
  - measures to ensure that risk is properly managed.
- 1.14. The council is not empowered by these Regulations or otherwise to delegate certain specified decisions. In particular any decision regarding:



- setting the final budget or the precept (Council Tax Requirement);
- approving accounting statements;
- approving an annual governance statement;
- borrowing;
- writing off bad debts;
- declaring eligibility for the General Power of Competence; and
- addressing recommendations in any report from the internal or external auditors,

shall be a matter for the full council only.

1.15. In addition, the council must:

- determine and keep under regular review the bank mandate for all council bank accounts;
- approve any grant or a single commitment in excess of the revenue budget provided; and
- in respect of the annual salary for any employee have regard to recommendations about annual salaries of employees made by the relevant Committee in accordance with its terms of reference.

1.16. In these financial regulations, references to the Accounts and Audit Regulations or ‘the regulations’ shall mean the regulations issued under the provisions of section 27 of the Audit Commission Act 1998, or any superseding legislation, and then in force unless otherwise specified.

In these financial regulations the term ‘proper practice’ or ‘proper practices’ shall refer to guidance issued in *Governance and Accountability for Local Councils – a Practitioners’ Guide (England)* issued by the Joint Practitioners Advisory Group (JPAG), available from the websites of NALC and the Society for Local Council Clerks (SLCC) or *Governance and Accountability for Local Councils in Wales - A Practitioners’ Guide*, available from the websites of One Voice Wales (OVW) and SLCC as appropriate.

## **2. ACCOUNTING AND AUDIT (INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL)**

2.1. All accounting procedures and financial records of the council shall be determined by the RFO in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations, appropriate Guidance and proper practices.

2.2. On a regular basis, at least once in each quarter, and at each financial year end, the Corporate Services Committee shall consider and verify bank reconciliations (for all accounts) produced by the RFO. The Corporate Services Committee chairman shall sign the reconciliations and the original bank statements (or similar document) as evidence of verification. This activity shall on conclusion be reported, including any exceptions, to and noted by the council.

2.3. The RFO shall complete the annual statement of accounts, annual report, and any related documents of the council contained in the Annual Return (as specified in proper

practices) as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year and having certified the accounts shall submit them and report thereon to the council within the timescales set by the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

- 2.4. The council shall ensure that there is an adequate and effective system of internal audit of its accounting records, and of its system of internal control in accordance with proper practices. Any officer or member of the council shall make available such documents and records as appear to the council to be necessary for the purpose of the audit and shall, as directed by the council, supply the RFO, internal auditor, or external auditor with such information and explanation as the council considers necessary for that purpose.
- 2.5. The internal auditor shall be appointed by and shall carry out the work in relation to internal controls required by the council in accordance with proper practices.
- 2.6. The internal auditor shall:
  - be competent and independent of the financial operations of the council;
  - report to council in writing, or in person, on a regular basis with a minimum of one annual written report during each financial year;
  - to demonstrate competence, objectivity and independence, be free from any actual or perceived conflicts of interest, including those arising from family relationships; and
  - have no involvement in the financial decision making, management or control of the council.
- 2.7. Internal or external auditors may not under any circumstances:
  - perform any operational duties for the council;
  - initiate or approve accounting transactions; or
  - direct the activities of any council employee, except to the extent that such employees have been appropriately assigned to assist the internal auditor.
- 2.8. For the avoidance of doubt, in relation to internal audit the terms ‘independent’ and ‘independence’ shall have the same meaning as is described in proper practices.
- 2.9. The RFO shall make arrangements for the exercise of electors’ rights in relation to the accounts including the opportunity to inspect the accounts, books, and vouchers and display or publish any notices and statements of account required by Audit Commission Act 1998, or any superseding legislation, and the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 2.10. The RFO shall, without undue delay, bring to the attention of all councillors any correspondence or report from internal or external auditors.

### **3. ANNUAL ESTIMATES (BUDGET) AND FORWARD PLANNING**

- 3.1 Each committee shall review its three year forecast of revenue and capital receipts and payments. Having regard to the forecast, it shall thereafter formulate and submit proposals for the following financial year to the council not later than the end of November each year including any proposals for revising the forecast.

- 3.2 The RFO must each year, by no later than the end of November, prepare detailed estimates with explanations of all receipts and payments including the use of general and ear marked reserves and all sources of funding for the following financial year in the form of a budget to be considered by the relevant committees and the council.
- 3.3 The council shall consider annual budget proposals in relation to the council's three year forecast of revenue and capital receipts and payments including recommendations for the use of reserves and sources of funding and update the forecast accordingly.
- 3.4 The council shall ensure that a minimum of 3 months net revenue expenditure is in general reserves.
- 3.5 The council shall fix the precept (council tax requirement), and relevant basic amount of council tax to be levied for the ensuing financial year not later than by the end of January each year. The RFO shall issue the precept to the billing authority and shall supply each member with a copy of the approved annual budget.
- 3.6 The approved annual budget shall form the basis of financial control for the ensuing year.

#### **4. BUDGETARY CONTROL AND AUTHORITY TO SPEND**

- 4.1. Unspent provisions in the revenue or capital budgets for completed projects shall not be carried forward to a subsequent year.
- 4.2. No expenditure may be authorised that will exceed the amount provided in the revenue code other than by resolution of the council, or duly delegated committee. During the budget year and with the approval of council having considered fully the implications for public services, unspent and available amounts may be moved to other budget codes or to an earmarked reserve as appropriate ('virement').
- 4.3. The salary budgets are to be reviewed at least annually in October for the following financial year at the Corporate Services Committee. The RFO will inform committees of any changes impacting on their budget requirement for the coming year in good time.
- 4.4. In cases of extreme risk to the delivery of council services, the clerk may authorise revenue expenditure on behalf of the council which in the clerk's judgement it is necessary to carry out. Such expenditure includes repair, replacement or other work, whether or not there is any budgetary provision for the expenditure, subject to a limit of

£1000. The Clerk shall report such action to the chairman as soon as possible and to the council as soon as practicable thereafter.

- 4.5. No expenditure shall be authorised in relation to any capital project and no contract entered into or tender accepted involving capital expenditure unless the council is satisfied that the necessary funds are available and the requisite borrowing approval has been obtained.
- 4.6. All capital works shall be administered in accordance with the council's standing orders and financial regulations relating to contracts.
- 4.7. The RFO shall regularly provide each committee with a statement of receipts and payments to date under each head of the budgets, comparing actual expenditure to the appropriate date against that planned as shown in the budget and shall show explanations of material variances. For this purpose "material" shall be in excess of 15% of the budget.
- 4.8. Changes in earmarked reserves shall be approved by council as part of the budgetary control process.

## **5. BANKING ARRANGEMENTS AND AUTHORISATION OF PAYMENTS**

- 5.1. The council's banking arrangements, including the bank mandate, shall be made by the RFO and approved by the council; banking arrangements may not be delegated to a committee. They shall be regularly reviewed for safety and efficiency.
- 5.2. On a regular basis, and not less than monthly, the RFO shall prepare a schedule of payments requiring authorisation, by two signatories, and present the schedule, together with the relevant invoices. The two signatories shall review the schedule for compliance and, having satisfied themselves shall authorise payment. The approved schedule shall be signed (electronically or in person) ruled off and initialled by the two signatories.
- 5.3. A detailed list of all payments made shall be disclosed, to members, through the Corporate Services Committee. Personal payments (including salaries, wages, expenses and any payment made in relation to the termination of a contract of employment) may be summarised to remove public access to any personal information.
- 5.4. All invoices for payment shall be examined, verified and certified by the RFO to confirm that the work, goods or services to which each invoice relates has been received, carried out, examined and represents expenditure previously approved by the council.
- 5.5. The RFO shall examine invoices for arithmetical accuracy and analyse them to the appropriate expenditure heading. The RFO shall take all steps to pay all invoices submitted, and which are in order, within the suppliers payment terms.
- 5.6. The Clerk and RFO shall have delegated authority to authorise the payment of items only in the following circumstances:
  - a) When a payment is necessary the Clerk / RFO certify that there is no dispute or other reason to delay payment a list of payments shall be submitted to authorised signatories for approval.;

- b) An expenditure item relating to continuing contracts and obligations provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the authorised signatories;
  - c) fund transfers within the councils banking arrangements up to the sum of £50,000, provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the authorised signatories.
- 5.7. In respect of grants a duly authorised committee shall approve expenditure within any limits set by council and in accordance with any Policy statement approved by council.
- 5.8. Members are subject to the Code of Conduct that has been adopted by the council and shall comply with the Code and Standing Orders when a decision to authorise or instruct payment is made in respect of a matter in which they have a disclosable pecuniary or other interest, unless a dispensation has been granted.
- 5.9. The council will aim to rotate the duties of members in these Regulations so that onerous duties are shared out as evenly as possible over time.

## **6. INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE MAKING OF PAYMENTS**

- 6.1. The council will make safe and efficient arrangements for the making of its payments.
- 6.2. Following authorisation under Financial Regulation 5 above, the council, a duly delegated committee or, if so delegated, the Clerk or RFO shall give instruction that a payment shall be made.
- 6.3. All payments shall be effected by cheque or other instructions to the council's bankers, or otherwise, in accordance with a resolution of the Corporate Services Committee.
- 6.4. Cheques or orders for payment drawn on the bank account in accordance with the schedule as presented to the authorised signatories shall be signed by two members of council and countersigned by an authorised officer in accordance with a resolution instructing that payment. A member who is a bank signatory, having a connection by virtue of family or business relationships with the beneficiary of a payment, should not, under normal circumstances, be a signatory to the payment in question.
- 6.5. To indicate agreement of the details shown on the cheque or order for payment with the counterfoil and the invoice or similar documentation, the signatories shall each also initial the cheque counterfoil.
- 6.6. Cheques or orders for payment shall not normally be presented for signature other than at the regular meeting (not less than monthly) of the authorised signatories. Any signatures obtained away from such meetings shall be reported to the authorised signatories.
- 6.7. Payments made by variable Direct Debit, Standing Order, BACS or CHAPS are to be signed by two members and an officer and payments are reported to the authorised signatories.
- 6.8. The approval of the use of Direct Debit, Standing Order, BACS or CHAPS shall be renewed by resolution of the council every year.

- 6.9. If thought appropriate by the Clerk payment for certain items may be made by internet banking transfer provided evidence is retained and any payments are reported to the authorised signatories as made.
- 6.10. Where a computer requires use of a personal identification number (PIN) or other password(s), for access to the council's records on that computer, a note shall be made of the PIN and Passwords and shall be handed to and retained by the Clerk in a sealed dated envelope.
- 6.11. No employee or councillor shall disclose any PIN or password, relevant to the working of the council or its bank accounts, to any person not authorised in writing by the council or a duly delegated committee.
- 6.12. Regular back-up copies of the records on any computer shall be made and shall be stored securely off site.
- 6.13. The council shall ensure that anti-virus, anti-spyware and firewall, software with automatic updates, together with a high level of security, is used.
- 6.14. Where internet banking arrangements are made with any bank, the Clerk /RFO shall be appointed as the Service Administrator. The Bank Mandate approved by the council shall identify a number of councillors who will be authorised to approve transactions on those accounts. The bank mandate will state clearly the amounts of payments that can be instructed by the use of the Service Administrator alone, or by the Service Administrator with a stated number of approvals.
- 6.15. Access to any internet banking accounts will be directly to the access page (which may be saved under "favourites"), and not through a search engine or e-mail link. Remembered or saved passwords facilities must not be used on any computer used for council banking work. Breach of this Regulation will be treated as a very serious matter under these regulations.
- 6.16. Changes to account details for suppliers, which are used for internet banking may only be changed on written notification by the supplier and supported by authority for change signed by the Clerk.
- 6.17. Any Debit Card issued for use will be specifically restricted to the Clerk / RFO and will also be restricted to a single transaction maximum value of £1000 unless authorised by council or committee in writing before any order is placed.
- 6.18. Any corporate credit card or trade card account opened by the council shall be subject to automatic payment in full at each month-end. Personal credit or debit cards of members or staff shall not be used under any circumstances.
- 6.19. The Clerk / RFO may provide petty cash to officers for the purpose of defraying operational and other expenses. Vouchers for payments made shall be forwarded to the Clerk / RFO with a claim for reimbursement.
  - a) The RFO shall maintain a petty cash float of £250 for the purpose of defraying operational and other expenses. Vouchers for payments made from petty cash shall be kept to substantiate the payment.
  - b) The RFO shall maintain as postage float of up to £800 for the purpose of postage.

- c) Income received must not be paid into the petty cash float but must be separately banked, as provided elsewhere in these regulations.
- d) Payments to maintain the petty cash float shall be shown separately on the schedule of payments presented to council under 5.2 above.

## **7. PAYMENT OF SALARIES**

- 7.1. As an employer, the council shall make arrangements to meet fully the statutory requirements placed on all employers by PAYE and National Insurance legislation. The payment of all salaries shall be made in accordance with payroll records and the rules of PAYE and National Insurance currently operating, and salary rates shall be as agreed by council, or duly delegated committee.
- 7.2. Payment of salaries and payment of deductions from salary such as may be required to be made for tax, national insurance and pension contributions, or similar statutory or discretionary deductions must be made in accordance with the payroll records and on the appropriate dates stipulated in employment contracts, provided that each payment is reported to the next available council meeting, as set out in these regulations above.
- 7.3. No changes shall be made to any employee's pay, emoluments, or terms and conditions of employment without the prior consent of the Corporate Services Committee.
- 7.4. Each and every payment to employees of net salary and to the appropriate creditor of the statutory and discretionary deductions shall be recorded in a separate confidential record. This confidential record is not open to inspection or review (under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 or otherwise) other than:
  - a) by the internal auditor;
  - b) by the external auditor; or
  - c) by any person authorised under Audit Commission Act 1998, or any superseding legislation.
- 7.5. The total of such payments in each calendar month shall be reported with all other payments as made as may be required under these Financial Regulations, to ensure that only payments due for the period have actually been paid.
- 7.6. Any termination payments shall be supported by a clear business case and reported to the council. Termination payments shall only be authorised by council.

## **8. LOANS AND INVESTMENTS**

- 8.1. All borrowings shall be effected in the name of the council, after obtaining any necessary borrowing approval. Any application for borrowing approval shall be approved by Council as to terms and purpose. The application for Borrowing Approval, and subsequent arrangements for the Loan shall only be approved by full council.
- 8.2. Any financial arrangement which does not require formal Borrowing Approval from the Secretary of State (such as Hire Purchase or Leasing of tangible assets) shall be

subject to approval by the full council. In each case a report in writing shall be provided to council in respect of value for money for the proposed transaction.

- 8.3. All loans and investments shall be negotiated in the name of the Council and shall be for a set period in accordance with council policy.
- 8.4. The Council shall ensure the approved Banking Arrangements, Investment Strategy and Investment Arrangements are in accordance with relevant regulations, proper practices and guidance and shall be reviewed by the council at least annually.
- 8.5. All investments of money under the control of the council shall be in the name of the council.
- 8.6. All investment certificates and other documents relating thereto shall be retained in the custody of the RFO.
- 8.7. Payments in respect of short term or long term investments, including transfers between bank accounts held in the same bank, or branch, shall be made in accordance with Regulation 5 (Authorisation of payments) and Regulation 6 (Instructions for payments).

## **9. INCOME**

- 9.1. The collection of all sums due to the council shall be the responsibility of and under the supervision of the RFO.
- 9.2. Particulars of all charges to be made for work done, services rendered or goods supplied shall be agreed annually by the council, notified to the RFO and the RFO shall be responsible for the collection of all accounts due to the council.
- 9.3. The council will review all fees and charges at least annually, following a report of the Clerk.
- 9.4. Any sums found to be irrecoverable and any bad debts shall be reported to the council and shall be written off in the year.
- 9.5. All sums received on behalf of the council shall be banked intact as directed by the RFO. In all cases, all receipts shall be deposited with the council's bankers with such frequency as the RFO considers necessary.
- 9.6. The origin of each receipt shall be entered on the paying-in slip.
- 9.7. Personal cheques shall not be cashed out of money held on behalf of the council.
- 9.8. The RFO shall promptly complete any VAT Return that is required. Any repayment claim due in accordance with VAT Act 1994 section 33 shall be made at least annually coinciding with the financial year end.
- 9.9. Where any significant sums of cash are regularly received by the council, the RFO shall take such steps as are agreed by the council to ensure that more than one person is present when the cash is counted in the first instance, that there is a reconciliation to some form of control such as ticket issues, and that appropriate care is taken in the security and safety of individuals banking such cash.



- 9.10. Any income arising which is the property of a charitable trust shall be paid into a charitable bank account. Instructions for the payment of funds due from the charitable trust to the council (to meet expenditure already incurred by the authority) will be given by the Managing Trustees of the charity meeting separately from any council meeting (see also Regulation 16 below).

## **10. ORDERS FOR WORK, GOODS AND SERVICES**

- 10.1. A schedule of Purchase Orders shall be maintained by the RFO for all work, goods and services unless a formal contract is to be prepared.
- 10.2. All members and Officers are responsible for obtaining value for money at all times. An officer issuing an official order shall ensure as far as reasonable and practicable that the best available terms are obtained in respect of each transaction, usually by obtaining three or more quotations or estimates from appropriate suppliers, subject to any *de minimis* provisions in Regulation 11 (1) below.
- 10.3. A member may not issue an official order or make any contract on behalf of the council.
- 10.4. The RFO shall verify the lawful nature of any proposed purchase before the issue of any order, and in the case of new or infrequent purchases or payments, the RFO shall ensure that the statutory authority shall be reported to the meeting at which the order is approved so that the Minutes can record the power being used.

## **11. CONTRACTS**

- 11.1. Procedures as to contracts are laid down as follows:
- a. Every contract shall comply with these financial regulations, and no exceptions shall be made otherwise than in an emergency provided that this regulation need not apply to contracts which relate to items (i) to (vi) below:
    - i. for the supply of gas, electricity, water, sewerage and telephone services;
    - ii. for specialist services such as are provided by solicitors, accountants, surveyors and planning consultants;
    - iii. for work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which consist of repairs to or parts for existing machinery or equipment or plant;
    - iv. for work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which constitute an extension of an existing contract by the council;
    - v. for additional audit work of the external auditor up to an estimated value of £500 (in excess of this sum the Clerk and RFO shall act after consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of council); and
    - vi. for goods or materials proposed to be purchased which are proprietary articles and / or are only sold at a fixed price.
  - b. Where the council intends to procure or award a public supply contract, public service contract or public works contract as defined by The Public Contracts

Regulations 2015 (“the Regulations”) which is valued at ~~£25,000~~ £30,000 or more, the council shall comply with the relevant requirements of the Regulations<sup>2</sup>.

- c. The full requirements of The Regulations, as applicable, shall be followed in respect of the tendering and award of a public supply contract, public service contract or public works contract which exceed thresholds in The Regulations set by the Public Contracts Directive 2014/24/EU (which may change from time to time)<sup>3</sup>.
- d. When applications are made to waive financial regulations relating to contracts to enable a price to be negotiated without competition the reason shall be embodied in a recommendation to the council.
- e. Such invitation to tender shall state the general nature of the intended contract and the Clerk shall obtain the necessary technical assistance to prepare a specification in appropriate cases. The invitation shall in addition state that tenders must be addressed to the Clerk in the ordinary course of post. Each tendering firm shall be supplied with a specifically marked envelope in which the tender is to be sealed and remain sealed until the prescribed date for opening tenders for that contract.
- f. All sealed tenders shall be opened at the same time on the prescribed date by the Clerk in the presence of at least one member of council.
- g. Any invitation to tender issued under this regulation shall be subject to Standing Orders<sup>4</sup> and shall refer to the terms of the Bribery Act 2010.
- h. When it is to enter into a contract of less than ~~£25,000~~ £30,000 in value for the supply of goods or materials or for the execution of works or specialist services other than such goods, materials, works or specialist services as are excepted as set out in paragraph (a) the Clerk or RFO shall obtain 3 quotations (priced descriptions of the proposed supply); where the value is below £3,000 and above £250 the Clerk or RFO shall strive to obtain 3 estimates. Otherwise, Regulation 10.2 above shall apply.
- i. The council shall not be obliged to accept the lowest or any tender, quote or estimate.
- j. Should it occur that the council, or duly delegated committee, does not accept any tender, quote or estimate, the work is not allocated and the council requires further pricing, provided that the specification does not change, no person shall be permitted to submit a later tender, estimate or quote who was present when the original decision making process was being undertaken.

<sup>2</sup> The regulations require councils to use **both** the Contract Finders website **and** Find-a-Tender (the UK e-notification service) to advertise contract opportunities, and set out the procedures to be followed in awarding new contracts and to publicise the award of new contracts

<sup>3</sup> Thresholds currently applicable are:

- a. For public supply and public service contracts £213,477
- b. For public works contracts £5,336,937

<sup>4</sup> Based on NALC’s model standing order 18 © 2018 National Association of Local Councils

**12. PAYMENTS UNDER CONTRACTS FOR BUILDING OR OTHER CONSTRUCTION WORKS**

- 12.1. Payments on account of the contract sum shall be made within the time specified in the contract by the RFO upon authorised certificates of the architect or other consultants engaged to supervise the contract (subject to any percentage withholding as may be agreed in the particular contract).
- 12.2. Where contracts provide for payment by instalments the RFO shall maintain a record of all such payments. In any case where it is estimated that the total cost of work carried out under a contract, excluding agreed variations, will exceed the contract sum of 5% or more a report shall be submitted to the council.
- 12.3. Any variation to a contract or addition to or omission from a contract must be approved by the council and Clerk to the contractor in writing, the council being informed where the final cost is likely to exceed the financial provision.

**13. STORES AND EQUIPMENT**

- 13.1. The officer in charge of each section shall be responsible for the care and custody of stores and equipment in that section.
- 13.2. Delivery Notes shall be obtained in respect of all goods received into store or otherwise delivered and goods must be checked as to order and quality at the time delivery is made.
- 13.3. Stocks shall be kept at the minimum levels consistent with operational requirements.
- 13.4. The RFO shall be responsible for periodic checks of stocks and stores at least annually.

**14. ASSETS, PROPERTIES AND ESTATES**

- 14.1. The Clerk shall make appropriate arrangements for the custody of all title deeds and Land Registry Certificates of properties held by the council. The RFO shall ensure a record is maintained of all properties held by the council, recording the location, extent, plan, reference, purchase details, nature of the interest, tenancies granted, rents payable and purpose for which held in accordance with Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 14.2. No tangible moveable property shall be purchased or otherwise acquired, sold, leased or otherwise disposed of, without the authority of the council, together with any other consents required by law, save where the estimated value of any one item of tangible movable property does not exceed £500.
- 14.3. No real property (interests in land) shall be sold, leased or otherwise disposed of without the authority of the council, together with any other consents required by law, In each case a Report in writing shall be provided to council in respect of valuation and surveyed condition of the property (including matters such as planning permissions and covenants) together with a proper business case (including an adequate level of consultation with the electorate).
- 14.4. No real property (interests in land) shall be purchased or acquired without the authority of the full council. In each case a Report in writing shall be provided to

council in respect of valuation and surveyed condition of the property (including matters such as planning permissions and covenants) together with a proper business case (including an adequate level of consultation with the electorate).

- 14.5. The RFO shall ensure that an appropriate and accurate Register of Assets and Investments is kept up to date. The continued existence of tangible assets shown in the Register shall be verified at least annually, possibly in conjunction with a health and safety inspection of assets.

## **15. INSURANCE**

- 15.1. Following the annual risk assessment (per Financial Regulation 17), the Clerk/ RFO shall effect all insurances and negotiate all claims on the council's insurers.
- 15.2. The RFO shall keep a record of all insurances effected by the council and the property and risks covered thereby and annually review it.
- 15.3. All appropriate members and employees of the council shall be included in a suitable form of security or fidelity guarantee insurance which shall cover the maximum risk exposure as determined annually by the council, or duly delegated committee.

## **16. CHARITIES**

- 16.1. Where the council is sole managing trustee of a charitable body the Clerk and RFO shall ensure that separate accounts are kept of the funds held on charitable trusts and separate financial reports made in such form as shall be appropriate, in accordance with Charity Law and legislation, or as determined by the Charity Commission. The Clerk and RFO shall arrange for any Audit or Independent Examination as may be required by Charity Law or any Governing Document.

## **17. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 17.1. The council is responsible for putting in place arrangements for the management of risk. The Clerk shall prepare, for approval by the council, risk management policy statements in respect of all activities of the council. Risk policy statements and consequential risk management arrangements shall be reviewed by the council at least annually.
- 17.2. When considering any new activity, the Clerk shall prepare a draft risk assessment including risk management proposals for consideration and adoption by the council.

## **18. SUSPENSION AND REVISION OF FINANCIAL REGULATIONS**

- 18.1. It shall be the duty of the council to review the Financial Regulations of the council from time to time. The Clerk shall make arrangements to monitor changes in legislation or proper practices and shall advise the council of any requirement for a consequential amendment to these financial regulations.

- 18.2. The council may, by resolution of the council duly notified prior to the relevant meeting of council, suspend any part of these Financial Regulations provided that reasons for the suspension are recorded and that an assessment of the risks arising has been drawn up and presented in advance to all members of council.

\* \* \*



## Houghton Regis Town Council

### Scheme of Delegation

Date of Approval:	Town Council 18 <sup>th</sup> April 2016
Date of Review:	24 <sup>th</sup> May 2017; 3 <sup>rd</sup> July 2018; 15 <sup>th</sup> May 2019; 20 <sup>th</sup> July 2020

This Scheme of Delegation authorises the Proper Officer and Responsible Financial Officer (which may be one and the same person), Council and Standing Committees of the Council to act with delegated authority in the specific circumstances detailed.

#### 1. **Responsible Financial Officer**

The Town Clerk shall be the Responsible Financial Officer to the Council and shall be accountable for the Town Councils accounting procedures, in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations in force at any given time.

#### 2. **Proper Officer**

2.1 The Town Clerk shall be the Proper Officer of the Council and as such is specifically authorised to:

- 2.1.1 Receive declarations of acceptance of office;
- 2.1.2 Receive and record notices disclosing pecuniary interests;
- 2.1.3 Receive and retain plans and documents;
- 2.1.4 Sign Notices or other documents on behalf of the Council;
- 2.1.5 Receive copies of By-laws made by a Primary local authority;
- 2.1.6 Certify copies of By-laws made by the Council;
- 2.1.7 Sign summonses to attend meetings of the Council.
- 2.1.8 To receive documents in relation to Complaints received under The Members' Code of Conduct and report this at the next convenient meeting of the Council.
- 2.1.9 Ensure compliance with all legal requirements impacting upon the business of the Council

2.2 In addition, the Town Clerk has the delegated authority to undertake the following matters on behalf of the Council:

- 2.2.1 The day to day administration of services, together with routine inspection and control.
- 2.2.2 Authorisation to call any extra meetings of the Council or any Committee as necessary, having consulted with the Chairman of the Council and/or Chairman of the appropriate Committee.

- 2.2.3 Day to day supervision and control of any staff employed by the Council, for example, to recruit staff, manage development and training needs, record and monitor absences, approve leave arrangements and handle informal grievances and disciplinary matters;
- 2.2.4 Undertake training or attendance at Conferences as previously authorised within budget.
- 2.3 Delegated actions of the Town Clerk shall be in accordance with Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and this Scheme of Delegation and with specific directions/policy given by the Council from time to time.

### **3. Council**

The following matters are reserved to the Council for decision, notwithstanding that the appropriate Committee(s) may make recommendations thereon for the Council's consideration.

- (i) Setting the Precept;
- (ii) Borrowing money;
- (iii) Making, amending or revoking Standing Orders, Financial Regulations or this Scheme of Delegation and approving Terms of Reference for the Council's Standing Committees;
- (iv) Making, amending or revoking By-laws;
- (v) Making of Orders and entering into Contracts under any Statutory powers;
- (vi) Matters of principle or policy;
- (vii) Nomination and appointment of representatives of the Council to any other authority, organisation or body;
- (viii) Any proposed new undertakings;
- (ix) Prosecution or defence in a court of law;
- (x) Nomination or appointment of representatives of the Council at any inquiry on matters affecting the Town, excluding those matters specific to a committee;
- (xi) Approval of the Annual Return (Statement of Accounts) (at no later than the June Council meeting);
- (xii) Appointment or dismissal of the Town Clerk;
- (xiii) Any other matters not otherwise devolved/delegated to a Committee of the Council.

### **4 Standing Committees**

Standing Committees are authorised to act at all times in accordance with their Terms of Reference as agreed by Council. In the event of a dispute regarding where authority for a specific issue may lie it will be the decision of Council which will determine.

### **5 Sub-Committees and Working Groups**

Sub-Committees and Working Groups may be formed by resolution of the appropriate Standing Committee at any time but before being established a written report must first be prepared with evidence to the committee outlining why such sub-committee/working group is necessary and why the work cannot be undertaken by the committee itself. It will be for the standing committee to formally approve the terms of reference of such sub-committee/working party.

**6 Delegation – Limitations**

Committees, Sub-Committees and Working Groups shall, at all times, act in accordance with the Councils Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and this Scheme of Delegation and, where applicable, any other rules, regulations, schemes, statutes, By-laws or orders made and with any directions given by the Council from time to time.





# HOUGHTON REGIS NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

**2020 - 2035**

Submission Version April 2023



## Contents

Foreword.....	5
1. Introduction.....	6
2. Status of EU Regulations .....	6
3. The Strategic Policy Context.....	7
The National Planning Policy Framework .....	7
4. Sustainable Development .....	7
5. Local Planning Documents .....	7
6. Neighbourhood Area .....	8
Map 1: Houghton Regis Neighbourhood Area .....	8
7. Context.....	9
2011 Census information .....	10
History.....	11
8. Consultation .....	13
Issues Survey .....	13
The Neighbourhood Plan Survey 2018 .....	13
9. Vision, Objectives and Aims .....	16
10. Town Centre and Local Centres.....	19
Town Centre .....	19
Houghton Regis Town Centre Action Plan .....	22
Town Centre Boundary and Areas.....	22
Map 2: Town Centre Areas.....	23
Houghton Regis Town Centre Master Plan .....	25
Local Centres .....	27
11. Housing and Development.....	31
Houghton Regis Town .....	31
Growth Areas .....	32
Hamlets .....	33
Housing Affordability .....	34
Infill Development and Redevelopment.....	35
Sustainable and Secure Design and Construction .....	36
Sustainable Building.....	36
Safety and Security .....	39

12. Green Spaces & Recreation .....	40
Open Spaces .....	41
Formal Recreation Facilities .....	42
Local Green Spaces .....	45
Map 3: Local Green Spaces .....	47
Houghton Hall Park.....	47
Chalk Pit Nature Reserve.....	49
Map 4: Chalk Pit Nature Reserve.....	50
Rights of Way .....	52
13. Biodiversity and Natural Features .....	55
Biodiversity.....	55
Natural Features.....	56
Hilltops and Viewpoints .....	56
Map 5: Protected Springs.....	57
14. Heritage.....	59
15. Business, Employment and Education .....	63
Map 6: Employment Areas.....	67
16. Transport, Connectivity and Parking.....	68
Roads .....	69
Public Transport.....	69
Non-motorised transport.....	71
Cycle Routes .....	71
Parking .....	72
17. Infrastructure Provision .....	76
18. Implementation .....	78
Working in partnership .....	78
Funding and Implementation.....	78
19. Monitoring and Review.....	80
Annexe 1: Policies Map.....	81
Annexe 2: Listed Buildings and Structures .....	82
Annexe 3: Table of Aims and Policies .....	83

## List of Policies

Policy TC1: Town Centre .....	24
Policy TC2: High Street West .....	24
Policy TC3: High Street North .....	24
Policy TC4: All Saints View .....	25
Policy TC5: Houghton Regis Masterplan .....	26
Policy TC6: Local Centres .....	30
Policy H1: Affordable Housing .....	34
Policy H2: Sustainable Development .....	38
Policy GSR1: Play and Recreation Spaces .....	43
Policy GSR2: Sports facilities and Open space provision as part of new development .....	43
Policy GSR3: Local Green Spaces .....	46
Policy GSR4: Chalk Pit Nature Reserve .....	51
Policy GSR5: Rights of Way .....	53
Policy BNF1: Biodiversity and Protecting Natural Features .....	58
Policy HE1: Heritage .....	61
Policy BE1: Employment .....	66
Policy TCP1: Access and Connectivity .....	71
Policy TCP2: Parking .....	74
Policy I1: Infrastructure for new development .....	77





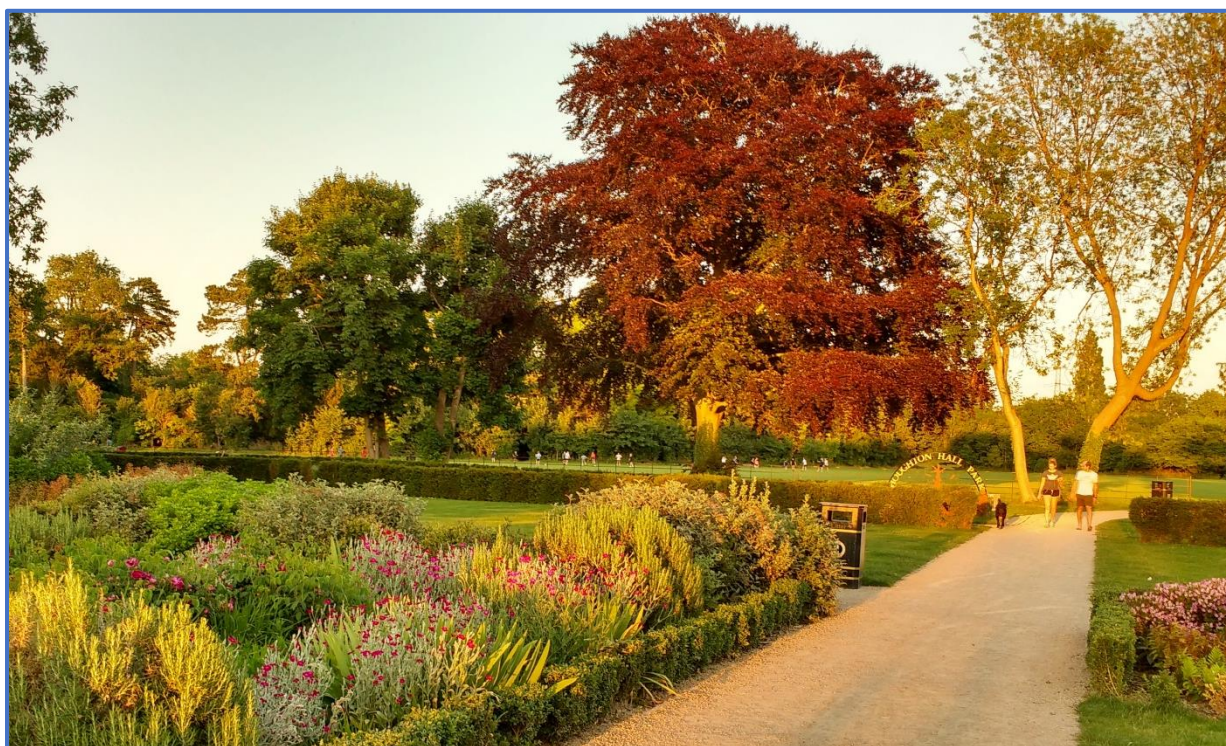
# Foreword

Houghton Regis in 2022 is a modern community centred around a historical core, with two new areas of major development on its northern and eastern edge bringing tremendous opportunities and challenges.

Key themes of the Neighbourhood Plan include proposals for the future of the town centre, the integration of new developments with the existing community, new commercial and residential developments, and protecting the environment and features which contribute to the charm and appearance of the area. The vitality and viability of Houghton Regis will only continue with suitable and adequate facilities within the town and sustainable transport to connect with the surroundings.

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

The Plan covers the period up to 2035.



*Figure 1: The formal gardens in Houghton Hall Park*

# 1. Introduction

- 1.1 In 2011, the Localism Act introduced a new opportunity for local communities to shape their future formally as part of the planning system. Neighbourhood Plans can be produced by Parish and Town Councils and when they have gone through all the required steps and processes, they become part of the development plan for the area. This means that any planning applications will have to take account of policies contained within the Neighbourhood Plan. It also provides local people with a say on how land use and buildings can develop over time, such as protecting open spaces and improving local character.
- 1.2 Producing a Neighbourhood Plan is a formal process involving several stages, governed by the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012, but critically important is that the Plan is developed with continuing community involvement. In order to rigorously test the policies of a Neighbourhood Plan, an independent Examination is carried out. The Neighbourhood Plan must conform to the following 'basic conditions'. It must:
- have regard to national policy;
  - be in general conformity with strategic local policy;
  - contribute to the achievement of sustainable development;
  - be compatible with EU obligations; and
  - meet prescribed conditions and comply with prescribed matters
- 1.3 Once the Plan has passed Examination, it is voted upon in a referendum by Parish residents and if a simple majority 'yes' vote is achieved, then the Neighbourhood Plan is 'made' by Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) and comes into force as a planning document with legal weight in decision-making.

## 2. Status of EU Regulations

- 2.1 The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Regulations (Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations, 2004) and the Habitats Regulations (Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017) previously implemented the requirements of the SEA and Habitats Directives in England. These Regulations will continue to apply unless new legislation is introduced to withdraw or amend them. In most cases, Neighbourhood Plans do not require a full Assessment in



either case, but must be screened to confirm that this is the case. This Neighbourhood Plan has been screened for both SEA and HRA and does not require full assessments.

## 3. The Strategic Policy Context

### The National Planning Policy Framework

- 3.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in July 2021 and sets out the Government’s approach to sustainable development. At the heart of the NPPF is the ‘presumption in favour of sustainable development’. Essentially, it is about positive growth with economic, social and environmental gains being sought simultaneously through the planning system. Neighbourhood planning forms part of the NPPF approach to planning, to allow local communities to shape sustainable development within their area and to enable local communities to address their strategic needs and priorities. The NPPF states that Neighbourhood Plans should set out a positive vision for the future of the local area with planning policies to determine decisions on planning applications, including policies which set out the quality of development that should be expected for the area, based on stated objectives for the area’s future and an understanding and evaluation of its defining characteristics.

## 4. Sustainable Development

- 4.1 The Neighbourhood Plan must contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The NPPF states that pursuing sustainable development includes making it easier to create jobs in villages, to promote gains in biodiversity, to achieve better quality design, to improve people’s quality of life, and to provide a wider choice of high quality homes.
- 4.2 Therefore, the aims, objectives, policies and proposals of the Neighbourhood Plan should be assessed against their ability to achieve sustainable development. Wherever possible the Neighbourhood Plan should actively promote the achievement of sustainable development.

## 5. Local Planning Documents

- 5.1 Neighbourhood Plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan and plan positively to support these policies. The current Local Plan consists of the Central Bedfordshire Local Plan 2015-2035 which was adopted in July 2021. CBC have embarked on their

partial review of the Local Plan which will cover up to 2040, conducting a 'call for sites' and asking for comments on their 'Issues and Options' Consultation during 2022.

## 6. Neighbourhood Area

6.1 Central Bedfordshire Council designated the Houghton Regis Neighbourhood Area in April 2017 for the purposes of making a Neighbourhood Development Plan as outlined on the map. The area is appropriate for designation as a Neighbourhood Area because it consists of the whole of the area of the Town Council in accordance with section 61G(3)(a) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. Houghton Regis Town Council is the relevant body for the purpose of section 61G of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and is responsible for producing the Neighbourhood Plan.

Map 1: Houghton Regis Neighbourhood Area

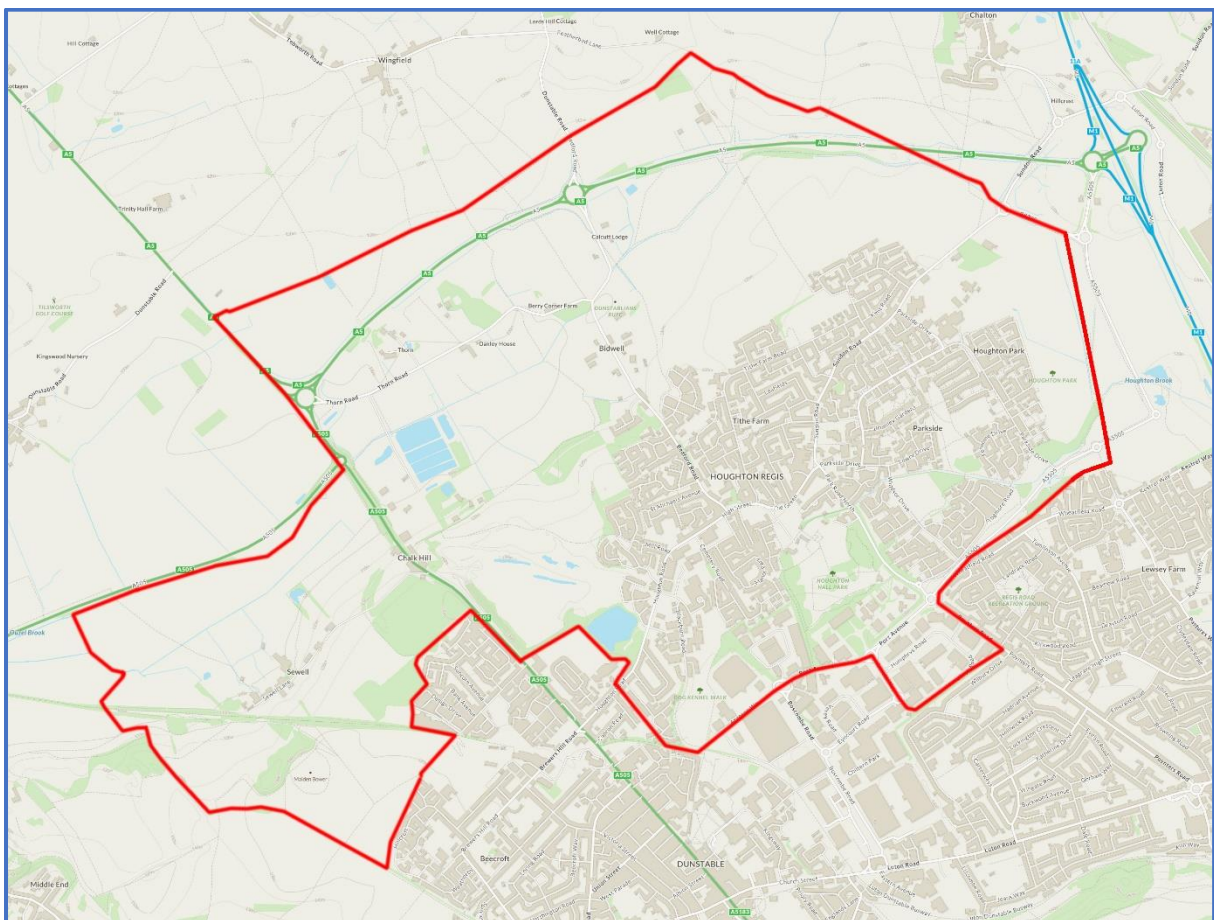




Figure 2: New housing being built in Bidwell West

## 7. Context

- 7.1 The Parish has Dunstable and Luton along its southern edge, and adjoins Totternhoe, Tilsworth, Chalgrave and Chalton parishes on the west, north and east. For much of its history the parish was much larger; part transferred to Dunstable in 1907 and part to Luton in 1939.
- 7.2 The modern parish of Houghton Regis has over 7,000 homes and a population of over 19,500 (source, Mid-year estimates (ONS) 2020). It includes the hamlets of Bidwell, Sewell, and Thorn. The town centre runs along the High Street with Bedford Square built in the 1960s providing shops and the community centre/library anchoring the eastern end, to a more recent supermarket (Morrisons) at the western end. Other facilities include the dental practice opposite Bedford Road and the GP/medical centre on Tithe Farm Road.
- 7.3 The High Street in central Houghton Regis is narrow, hemmed in by residential developments on both north and southern sides. The eastern end emerges into the major open space of The Green, at the western end the High Street turns to an area of employment uses on the site of the former cement works.
- 7.4 Since 1959, the population of Houghton Regis has continued to grow from 3,750 with great changes in the 1960s with a substantial expansion to accommodate London overspill population under the New and Expanded Towns Scheme. In the early 1960s, Tithe Farm Estate was built. It took its name from the huge tithe barn standing on what has now become Tithe Farm Road. This and Parkside estate re-housed Londoners who came to work in the car and truck factories in and around Dunstable and Luton.

- 7.5 The built-up areas of Houghton Regis, Dunstable and Luton have merged, with a population in 2010 of over 235,000 and a workforce in excess of 131,825 and the area is one of the largest manufacturing centres in the south-east outside London. Houghton Regis' main employment areas are on the southern side of the parish.
- 7.6 Recent major developments have again changed the nature of Houghton Regis.
- Houghton Regis North 1, 262 ha (which extends eastwards beyond the parish boundary) comprising up to 5,150 dwellings, up to 202,500 sq.m. gross commercial development, 2 primary schools, community and leisure facilities,
  - Houghton Regis North 2, on land west of Bidwell towards the A5, comprises up to 1,850 dwellings including affordable housing, a primary school, employment land, a local centre comprising retail and community/leisure uses, plus public open spaces including sports pitches, natural wildlife areas and all associated access routes, primary road network, associated drainage, and landscaping.
- 7.7 These two schemes have brought contributions to a new junction 11a on the M1, a strategic road link to the Woodside employment estate, and the re-direction of the A5 via the Dunstable North Bypass to the M1 at junction 11a.

### 2011 Census information

- 7.8 Compared with the rest of Central Bedfordshire the parish has:
- a younger age profile and a greater proportion of people from ethnic minority communities
  - a higher proportion of lone parent households, and fewer older households (aged 65 and over)
  - deprivation issues notably high overall proportions of children and older people living in income-deprived households
  - high unemployment and residents were more likely to be claiming out-of-work benefits
  - issues of serious acquisitive crime
  - no major differences either in overall health, or in the proportion of residents providing unpaid care



- a higher proportion of households have dependent children. A lower proportion of children achieved good GCSEs.
- less home-ownership than the national average and more socially rented households
- since 2001, an increase in private renting from 6% to 13%
- less than one fifth of residents worked within the town, while other key destinations for work were other parts of Central Bedfordshire notably Dunstable, and Luton.
- 77% of commuters travelled by car, similar to the Central Bedfordshire average.

## History

- 7.9 Houghton Regis has a long history of settlement and industry. The parish has its origins deep in pre-history evidenced by Maiden Bower and the excavations at Puddlehill. Much of the evidence of prehistoric settlement probably lies under the current town and villages but the community on Puddlehill has been excavated providing a glimpse into the lives of the farmers who lived there. The name may seem strange, but even today, in very wet periods a small lake forms in the field below the chalk slope. The name 'Houghton' is Saxon combining 'hoe' meaning the spur of a hill in this case from the Chilterns, and 'tun' a village. The manor was owned by the Crown by the time of Edward the Confessor (1042-1066), from which came the Regis part of the name. Thorn, Sewell and Bidwell all have origins dating from more than a thousand years ago. The Domesday survey listed Houghton as a royal property. With its own church, the size of the tax assessment indicates it was a prosperous village. Sewell is the only other settlement in the area listed in Domesday; smaller with just five farms or smallholders, its lord is named as Walraven of Sewell, under the overlordship of Queen Edith.
- 7.10 There are two Scheduled Ancient Monuments listed in the parish, Maiden Bower Hillfort and Thorn Spring Moated Site and Associated Woodbanks. The historian, G Worthington Smith, writing at the beginning of the twentieth century, describes many of the antiquities in the area including the earthworks and ditches of Maiden Bower Iron Age encampment, probably a retreat for the community in times of danger, its size providing a clue to how many people lived in the area. The 'camp' has five entrances suggestive of the paths and routes leading to and from it.

- 7.11 The main path in the vicinity is Watling Street, probably already in use before the Roman period. The Ickniel Way, running east-west, seems to have had several strands and modern Ordnance Survey maps still refer to Upper and Lower routes. One strand of the Ickniel Way seems to have followed Brewers Hill Road (near Maiden Bower) and Houghton Road from Dunstable, through the parish and around the northern edge of modern Luton. There are other old routes across the parish: the Green Lanes passing Maiden Bower are part of a drovers' route (possibly pre-roman) from the west going towards London. Worthington Smith shows a path from Puddlehill to the windmill at Houghton, and Dog Kennel path is shown as an old route possibly linking with old paths beyond the parish, and Sock Way from the A5 (Watling Street) towards Dunstable Downs. Before the chalk cutting straightened the Watling Street, the Old Coach Road wound its way up and down the gradient, the remains of which can still be followed.
- 7.12 The pre-development excavations for Houghton Regis North 1 have revealed more archaeological evidence for people living in the area.
- 7.13 The centre of Houghton Regis was designated a Conservation Area in 1977, the principal features of which are The Green and the buildings around it, Houghton Hall, Lodge and Court, Houghton Hall Park, and the group of 17th-19th century buildings around The Chequers public house. The Conservation Area was reviewed and extended in 1995 with a more recent appraisal carried out in 2008. This contains a detailed analysis of the Conservation Area features and listed buildings, a general history of the parish plus a management plan to guide future works and proposals in the Conservation Area and along the High Street. There are twenty-two buildings and structures which are listed buildings, (see Annex B) notable amongst them are the Church of All Saints (Grade I), and Houghton Hall (Grade II\*). All Saints' Parish Church situated next to Bedford Square was built in the 13th/14th century on the site of a Saxon church. Houghton Hall was built for Dame Alice Milard completed in 1700, currently used as offices. The Crown Inn, next to The Green on East End Road probably dates from the 1790s.
- 7.14 Under Henry I a market town was established on the edge of the old parish where the Ickniel Way crossed Watling Street. Such a market was a good source of revenue and the settlement grew to become Dunstable, where local produce was sold and many trades became established. Travel, trade and pilgrimage continued for centuries to generate business for food, goods and accommodation.
- 7.15 The parish has an industrial heritage (in part of the parish transferred to Dunstable) and in 1891 JD Forder developed a lime works exploiting the local chalk at Sewell which was sold to Blue Circle Cement in 1912. Blue

Circle also opened a large cement works by Townsend Farm on the edge of Houghton village and began to cut away the chalk from Puddlehill. The 'cutting' which carried Watling Street through the parish had already dug a deep groove through the chalk scarp. In later years, the quarry and cement works included two huge chimneys which dominated the skyline of Houghton Regis and coated nearby buildings in a fine white dust.

## 8. Consultation

### Issues Survey

- 8.1 A survey of major issues in late 2016/early 2017 produced key themes for the Plan:
- integrating new and existing communities
  - protecting the countryside and open spaces in the parish
  - working with neighbours to shape developments in adjoining areas
  - better facilities and parking for local residents
  - shaping the town centre for its future roles.

### The Neighbourhood Plan Survey 2018

- 8.2 To inform the development of the Neighbourhood Plan, local people were asked about the main issues in the parish and then more specific questions about local needs. This was done by means of a questionnaire, conducted both online and in paper form, and augmented by a physical presence at several community events. The final survey report is included in the ancillary documentation.

### *Demographics*

- 8.3 The age distribution was good, with between 14% and 22% of respondents in each age range over 25. However, there were over twice as many women as men taking the survey and the ethnic distribution was very predominately white British (87%). Just over 8% considered themselves disabled.

### *Housing*

- 8.4 60% of respondents thought that there was enough housing either currently in the town or coming in the new developments that have already been approved.
- 8.5 The feelings were very much that there are 3 types of housing that are most needed: Single person, social, and larger homes (each just over 30%). Affordable housing was mentioned very often in the comments as well, especially for younger, local people, and bungalows for older people.

### *Town Centre*

- 8.6 Almost 70% of respondents say they use Bedford Square or other amenities in the town centre at least once a week, although from the requests for new shops, etc. it does appear that many are not familiar with what is currently on offer! The reasons given for not using it (or not using it more) seemed to centre on issues of the lack of parking, safety/ anti-social behaviour, limited offerings, and the unappealing architecture.
- 8.7 When asked about what is needed the top responses were: Bank (63%), Clothing/shoes (60%), Food (57%), Cinema (42%), Specialty (37%), restaurants/take-aways (37%), and Children's shops(36%).

### *Employment*

- 8.8 87% think there needs to be greater job opportunities in and around Houghton Regis, most thinking that these should be within 5 miles of the town. There is also a great desire for more training and apprentice opportunities (60% in favour of more face-to-face training, for example).
- 8.9 14% are, or are considering being, self-employed. These people were evenly split over whether having more businesses/jobs in the area would help their business.
- 8.10 To attract more businesses to the town, the key issues seem to be: the high business rates and rents, the unattractive environment, parking, and the need for the town to better promote itself.

### *Sport and Leisure*

- 8.11 The respondents showed interest in, or currently participate in, a wide range of physical activities. The top responses were: walking (70%), cycling (49%), football (44%), and running/jogging (29%). To improve the situation, respondents would like to see: more nature trails (67%), more cycle paths (56%), additional play parks for children (53%), and a splash park (52%).

### *Heritage*

- 8.12 About 75% of respondents thought that preserving the town's heritage was important, however, an equal percentage know little, if anything, about what is currently protected. Most wanted buildings over 100 years old and/or that are historically important to be preserved.

### *Education*

- 8.13 Half of the respondents thought that there need to be more opportunities for education in the town (a quarter were unsure, a quarter thought the offering adequate). The key areas needing attention were the need for an upper school and more in the way of life skills/employment skills training (all over 50%).



### *Sundry Key Issues*

8.14 The major areas of concern were: anti-social behaviour (94%), crime (93%), travellers (90%), road safety (80%), lack of amenities (73%), and parking (60%).

### *Draft Neighbourhood Plan*

8.15 During 2021, a previous iteration of the Neighbourhood Plan was published for comment for a six-week period. Comments were received and the Town Council decided to update and significantly revise the Neighbourhood Plan to take account of the comments and changes in legislation and government planning guidance.

8.16 The revised draft Neighbourhood Plan was published for comments for an eight-week period from late January through to late March 2023 (Note: the usual 6-week period was extended when it was discovered that a map was missing from the draft plan that had been sent out). The consultation was extensively advertised on both physical signage around the town and on social media. In all, 36 responses were received via the online form, and seven via email from statutory consultees. The Steering Group reviewed all the comments received and made a few, small changes to the draft in response.

8.17 See the separate Consultation Statement for further details.



Figure 3: Music at the May Fair on the Green



Figure 4: Memorial Hall

## 9. Vision, Objectives and Aims

9.1 The Town Council adopted a vision, aims and objectives for the town in 2016. Since then, these have been updated every few years, with the latest version being adopted in 2020.

**Our Vision: Our Town (2020-2024)**

Houghton Regis Town Council is still very much committed to ensuring it is in the best position to help, support and enhance our new and growing community. Through public consultation the Council have listened to what you want and developed a further Plan to cover the next 4 years.

**Our Vision: Our Town**

The plan has identified things to improve on, what you would like to change and services and facilities that would improve where you live, play and work.

With the help and support of local organisations, strategic partners, and the community working together we can help to achieve this vision. This booklet represents our objectives and aspirations for the next 4 years.

We hope you'll be able to share our Vision and help make it a reality.

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

**Our 4 objectives are:**

1. Grow your own
2. A greener cleaner Houghton Regis
3. A safe and vibrant town
4. To focus on our community

Houghton Regis Town Council, Peel Street, Houghton Regis, LU5 5EY  
 Tel: 01582 768 540 Fax: 01582 861 102  
 Website: www.houghtonregis.org.uk

Our Vision: Our Town

9.2 The Town Council's four overarching objectives are:

**Objective 1: Grow Your Own. We want to encourage and support people to grow their own food, to eat a healthy and balanced diet and to enhance biodiversity and encourage wildlife in our town.**

**Objective 2: A Greener, Cleaner Houghton Regis. We want to reduce our use of natural resources, help improve the environment and improve fitness and wellbeing.**

**Objective 3: A Safe and Vibrant Town. We want to help everyone feel safe and confident about where they live by creating a safe and vibrant town.**

**Objective 4: Our Community. We want to look after, support and develop facilities and services for our residents.**

9.3 Neighbourhood Plans contain policies which relate to land use issues. Whilst the above aims and objectives relate to the work of the Town Council, they have been used as a basis for developing the aims of the Neighbourhood Plan. In order to decide which policies this Neighbourhood Plan should contain, a series of aims have been developed which provide focus for the key issues that Houghton Regis faces for the next 10-15 years.

9.4 The policies arising from these aims address land-use issues covering town centre issues, facilities, housing, biodiversity and green spaces, sustainable transport, leisure, employment, and heritage.

## Neighbourhood Plan Aims

<b>1</b>	To identify and support measures to develop the appearance, vitality and facilities of the town centre and local centres of Houghton Regis
<b>2</b>	To support, protect and enhance the social assets, community facilities and services (including schools and healthcare, leisure and recreation) to meet residents' needs.
<b>3</b>	To ensure that all new development is well-designed, sympathetic and sustainable and enhances the character and function of Houghton Regis.
<b>4</b>	To respond to housing needs by supporting suitable housing for people of all ages and means.
<b>5</b>	To protect the rural aspect of the countryside outside of the urban areas.
<b>6</b>	To protect, enhance and where possible add to the green and blue infrastructure of the Parish.
<b>7</b>	To preserve and enhance Houghton Regis's Green, Conservation Area and heritage assets (whether listed or not).
<b>8</b>	To support existing local businesses and encourage new small and medium-sized businesses which provide sustainable employment opportunities.
<b>9</b>	To identify and support appropriate infrastructure developments which reflect the community's needs and keep it an attractive, well-planned and safe place for everyone.
<b>10</b>	To identify and support measures to encourage walking, cycling and other sustainable forms of transport as means of fulfilling shorter journeys.
<b>11</b>	To identify and support measures which improve traffic management including parking and speed control.



## 10. Town Centre and Local Centres



Figure 5: Bedford Square

### Town Centre

- 10.1 Houghton Regis is identified as a Major Service Centre in the Central Bedfordshire Local Plan (adopted July 2021). This means that the town is considered to be a larger settlement with a highly diverse range in services and facilities, including schools, healthcare, varied retail offerings and a strong availability of public transport.
- 10.2 In addition, the town centre is listed as a Secondary Town Centre that provides a range of shops including some national multiple retailers and many independent shops, a range of services, facilities and leisure uses and is home to a number of businesses. The Local Plan also states that *“Houghton Regis town centre contains a significant higher proportion of convenience retail units than the national average (22% compared to 9%). The majority of the retail offer is at Bedford Square, although a new supermarket has recently opened on the High Street. The physical environment of the town centre has recently undergone substantial public realm improvements along the complete length of the High Street. The public transport network has also recently undergone improvements with the opening of the Luton-Dunstable Busway and the A5-M1 Link Road and the Woodside Connection should further improve the general environment, local public transport and congestion throughout the town centre.”*

- 10.3 The Local Plan also refers to the adopted Town Centre masterplan (2008) which “outlines how the town centre could be improved and how it could contribute to meeting the needs of a significantly increased local population. It is important that regard is had to Houghton Regis town centre when considering the masterplanning of the nearby urban extensions, particularly the location and scale of new local centres.”
- 10.4 Policy R1 of the Local Plan seeks to retain town centre uses within the defined town centre boundary as far as possible and states that development proposals for other town centre uses such as leisure, commercial office and community uses will be supported.
- 10.5 Houghton Regis town centre is arranged along the High Street with a notable retail presence in Bedford Square, at All Saint’s View, and the Morrisons supermarket on the southern side. Towards the west, the northern side houses and shops have mostly been converted or redeveloped to a mix of employment/office, with a car sales forecourt and the Kings Arms public house on the corner of the Town Centre and Bedford Road.
- 10.6 The majority of smaller shops and services, restaurants and takeaways are concentrated in Bedford Square. Bedford Square includes, on the ground floor, a range of stores including Poundstretchers, Post Office, a family butchers, a pharmacy, a newsagents, an Eastern European food shop, a carpet shop, a charity shop, a community shop, a convenience grocery and drinks store, an opticians, 5 restaurants or takeaways, a ladies hairdresser, a bookmakers and a cashpoint.
- 10.7 Additional business premises are located on the 1st floor of Bedford Square accessed only by steps. These include a taxi office, a ladies beauty specialist, a party specialist, and a bedding shop. Off Bedford Square is the library, health centre and community centre (this has now been identified as an education provision, however, there is still access to a limited number of rooms). A GP medical centre and the Town Council offices stand on the opposite side of Tithe Farm Road just outside the town centre. The retail offer at this end of the High Street has been expanded with the development of All Saints’ View on the former Co-op site and Red House Court, a scheme including 6 retail units on the ground floor fronting the Town Centre, hosting a coffee shop, a gentleman’s hairdressers, and a convenience store, and 168 independent-living apartments for older persons with support facilities, and associated parking and landscaping.
- 10.8 The High Street also has a dental practice, and a residential care home

(Roslyn House). Physically, the High Street/Town Centre is hemmed in by residential developments on both northern and southern sides. The Green and Memorial Hall lie just east of the town centre and at the western end, the High Street turns to another area of employment uses on the site of the former Townsend Farm and cement works. All Saints Church occupies a central and prominent position at the junction of the High Street and Bedford Road, opposite the Kings Arms public house.

- 10.9 A major study of the town centre took place in 2008 and has been the basis for shaping the area, notably with Morrisons and the development of All Saints View. The study also triggered improvements in the public realm, transport and movement. However, the High Street has lost its 'market town' feel, resulting in people from outlying villages more likely to travel to Dunstable/Luton or Leighton-Linslade for shopping or comparison purchases.
- 10.10 Currently the overall town centre frontage percentage of retail is comparable (Market Towns Study 2010) to regional/national averages for small towns by virtue of the presence of the 51,000sq. ft. Morrisons supermarket. Noticeable variations are the lower-than-average representations for Financial and Professional, Restaurants/Cafés, and Drinking Establishments. Along the High Street is a higher-than-average presence of business offices, car sales and care homes.
- 10.11 There is no regular street market in the High Street whereas other small towns have between 14 and 44 traders in a street market. The town centre is on the main bus routes through the town and from locations around it.

---

***Issues Survey***

***When opinions were sought in the Issues Survey, three non-retail uses - banks, health facilities, and entertainment/leisure topped people's responses of what is missing. The lower responses (less than 8) for food shopping, hairdressers, hotels, residential, public houses, and takeaways suggest that these facilities are already well provided for.***

- 10.12 The Houghton Regis 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'.

## Houghton Regis Town Centre Action Plan

10.13 In January 2022, the Houghton Regis Town Centre Action Plan was produced and this is a background document to the Neighbourhood Plan. It draws on information in the Benchmarking Report and various other sources and establishes a vision for the centre and ten objectives, identifies catalyst projects and a phasing plan. Importantly, it highlights the need for a new updated Town Centre Master Plan which can be used to drive new development and help determine the future of the town centre, particularly in relation to planning decisions.

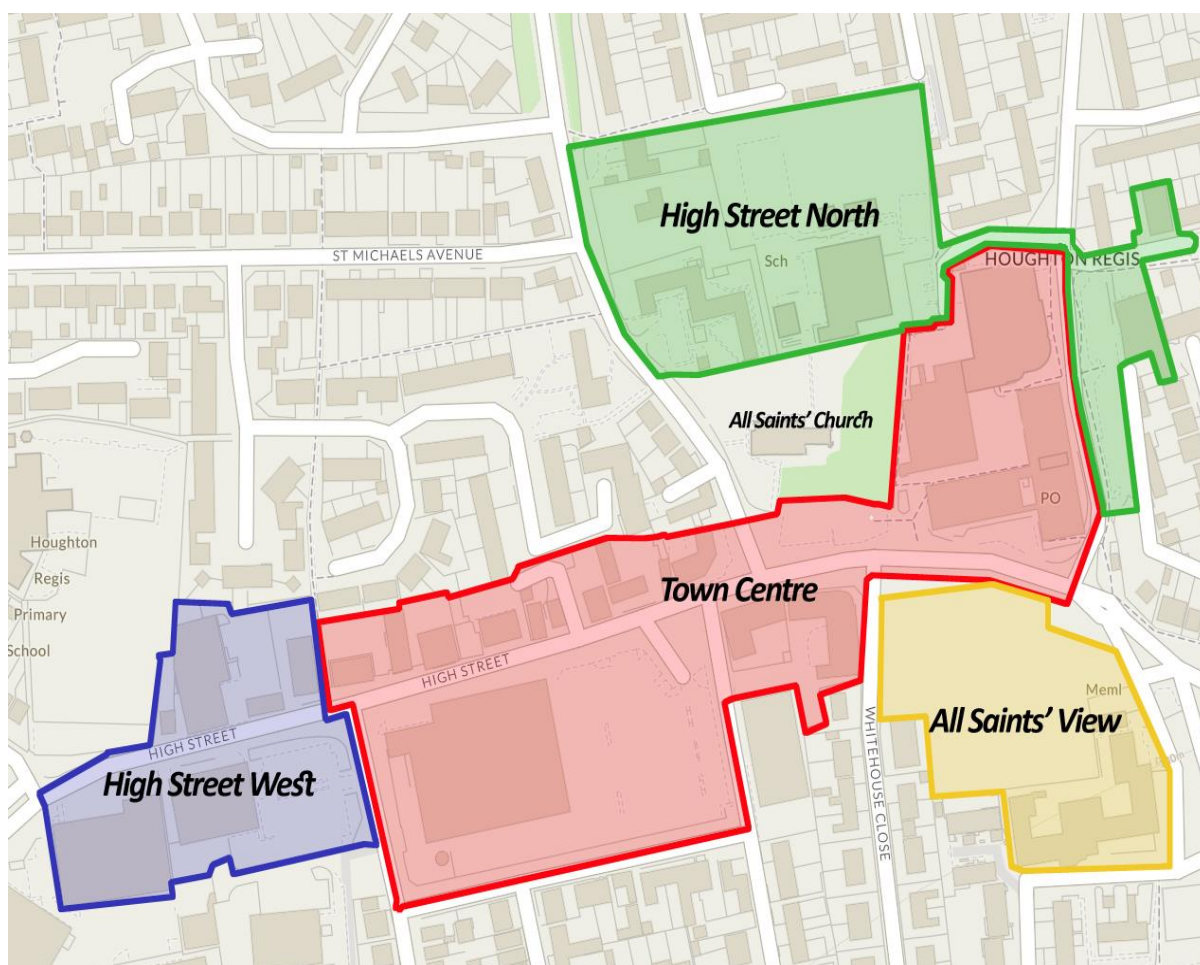
## Town Centre Boundary and Areas

10.14 The Houghton Regis Town Centre Boundary has been designated in the recently adopted Central Bedfordshire Local Plan. Three additional areas immediately adjacent to the Town Centre Boundary have been identified through the Neighbourhood Plan and are shown on Map 2. These are:

- **High Street West:** the area currently used for employment at Houghton Road/Portland Close/Townsend Farm Road
- **High Street North:** the area to the north of All Saints' Church, including the site of Thomas Whitehead School, Angel's Lane, Bedford Court, the site of the current town offices, and the medical centre and car park on Peel Street/Tithe Farm Road, and
- **All Saints' View:** the recently redeveloped area to the south of Bedford Square



Map 2: Town Centre Areas



10.15 Planning applications which result in the loss of town centre uses within the town centre itself and the adjacent three areas will not be generally supported, whilst proposals for new town centre uses and proposals encouraging an evening economy will be encouraged.

10.16 All new town centre development should be compliant with the prevailing CBC Design Guide, notably that pertaining to Larger Footprint Buildings. In addition, all new town centre development will need to be supported by the improved provision of public realm features, street furniture, seating and signage.

### **Policy TC1: Town Centre**

**The loss of town centre related uses will be resisted unless the proposed replacement use would positively support the vitality of the town centre by enhancing the range of facilities on offer.**

**Acceptable development proposals within this boundary will include personal services and facilities, cafés, serviced office space, pop-up enterprises, smaller independent shops, premises supporting the evening economy and car-parking.**

**Above floor level, residential use and supported living will be supported.**

**Development proposals will seek to include direct pedestrian/cycle link(s) with the High Street to bring the commercial strands of the town centre together and support access and permeability of the site.**

### **Policy TC2: High Street West**

**Development proposals within this boundary that are for leisure, hospitality, entertainment and associated car parking will be supported.**

**Development proposals shall have sympathetic regard to the existing built form of the High Street and Houghton Road frontages.**

**Development proposals will seek to include direct pedestrian/cycle link(s) with the High Street and town centre to bring the commercial strands of the town centre together and support access and permeability of the site.**

### **Policy TC3: High Street North**

**Proposals for development within this boundary for facilities and services for the community, health, municipal, retail, and car parking will be supported.**

**Above floor level, residential use and supported living and office space will be supported.**

**Development proposals will seek to include direct pedestrian/cycle link(s) with the High Street and town centre to bring the commercial strands of the town centre together and support access and permeability of the site.**

## **Policy TC4: All Saints View**

**Proposals for shop uses at ground floor will be encouraged and active frontages will be retained. Within the Conservation Area development should positively contribute to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.**

### Houghton Regis Town Centre Master Plan

10.17 This Neighbourhood Plan (and the Town Centre Action Plan) identifies the need for a new Town Centre Masterplan to be drawn up through the auspices of the Houghton Regis Town Council in liaison with Central Bedfordshire Council to reflect the recent development, the future roles and functions of defined areas of the town centre, traffic management, parking, and public realm improvements.

10.18 The Masterplan will incorporate the following proposals:

- A 'market town' and local services offer – designed with smaller/specialist retail in mind as well as small/medium food shopping, plus a space for a regular market linked to events and attractions - focusing on Bedford Square for retail, post office, restaurants, takeaways, concentrated with the open plaza in the Square having a dual 'events/ market' function, as well as The Green for larger markets, carnivals and other occasional community activities and events (subject to other town centre parking being available),
- A new administrative, health and service centre (potentially in the High Street North area), in conjunction with the current library and community centre, with Houghton Regis Town Council, plus car parking and with the potential for new residential aimed at older/care sector,
- On the north side of the Town Centre between Carlton House and the Kings Arms - a destination for personal services - health, legal, financial, beauty, fitness, restaurants and small office businesses/services and residential accommodation serving the older (55+) sector of the local population, sheltered/semi-sheltered purpose-designed residential uses,
- Retaining the large supermarket and car parking offer on the High Street
- Accessibility and car parking for employees and visitors

- Ability of residents from Houghton Regis North to have good access to the town centre activities and 'offer' aimed at serving the new enlarged parish population.

#### **Policy TC5: Houghton Regis Masterplan**

**Development proposals should be in accordance with the principles and objectives of the Houghton Regis Masterplan (when produced), Town Centre Action Plan and Development Briefs. Development proposals elsewhere in the Parish should complement and not prejudice development proposed by the Masterplan.**

### *Aspiration TC1: Town Centre*

*The Town Council will encourage Central Bedfordshire Council to work together with them and various stakeholders on a Town Centre Masterplan.*

*The Town Council will explore options, including sourcing and negotiating funding, in conjunction with Bedford Square site owners, retail unit occupants, and the users and owners of Bedford Square Library, Health and Community complex, to regenerate the area:*

- to examine any opportunity to open it up more to the High Street.*
- to examine the desirability and feasibility of covering the pedestrian area to create an all-weather shopping area and to produce a costed way forward.*
- to retain and enhance the viability of the community centre, library and health facility.*

*The following are community aspirations to enhance the vibrancy and vitality of the town's retail areas:*

- a site for markets and events on the open space in Bedford Square, and temporary arts/ culture uses in empty shops,*
- improvements to public realm - pavements, street furniture, lighting, extend main themes to new developments, rationalise signs and improve signage/directions for visitors*
- improve the road safety, particularly for pedestrians, and parking*
- if Thomas Whitehead CE Academy were ever to relocate, add a new road with additional car parking behind the Community Centre to Bedford Road to be able to close the High Street from the Tithe Farm Road roundabout to the Bedford Road roundabout during the day and make it a pedestrian-only zone*
- include new public car parking in western end entertainment area*
- review town centre and proposals to minimise crime and anti-social behaviour*
- install secure bike parking and electric car charging points in the car park adjacent to All Saints Churchyard*
- improve pedestrian links from the High Street to The Green,*
- improve accessibility to the town centre for the enlarged Houghton Regis*

## Local Centres

10.19 Local centres provide opportunities for smaller local shops and facilities and are particularly important for residents without access to a car. They

also increase social cohesion by providing informal places for people to meet and contribute to the local community.

10.20 The outline approvals for Houghton Regis North 1 and 2 include up to 202,500 sqm. Gross of developments in Use Classes: E (retail); B2, B8 (industrial and storage and distribution); and C1 (hotel), plus a local centre comprising retail (E) and community/leisure uses (F2). Development of the commercial/employment areas within Houghton Regis North 1 and 2 will be the subject of planning applications on which the Town Council will be consulted.

10.21 In addition to the proposals for community hubs/local centres on Houghton Regis North 1 and 2, the town has two local centres plus individual local shops serving residents on Tithe Farm and Parkside with convenience shopping, pubs and takeaways.

10.22 Opportunities to improve parking at Tithe Farm and Parkside local centres will be sought. The current local centres/shops are:

LOCATION	BUSINESS
Neptune Square (Parkside)	Nisa shop Bella Calabria pub/ restaurant
Hillborough Crescent (Tithe Farm)	Nisa shop, sub-post office, plus other shops
Individual shops on Tithe Farm Road	Nike's News, Tithe Farm Stores, Tithe Farm, Chicken Take-out

- 10.23 Changes to the Use Classes Order 1987 (as amended) have meant that a new Use Class E was introduced on 1st September 2020 and covers the former use classes of A1 (shops), A2 (financial and professional), A3 (restaurants and cafes) as well as parts of D1 (non-residential institutions) and D2 (assembly and leisure) and puts them all into one new use class. Planning permission is not needed for changes to differing uses within Class E, so a shop could change into a café or estate agent without the need for planning permission. In addition, there are relaxations on the need for planning permission to change commercial units into dwellings.
- 10.24 The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to retain as many Class E uses as possible by requiring planning applications of change of use from Class E to be supported by evidence of marketing to ensure that a local centre use is not needlessly lost and by maintaining as far as possible, a balance of uses within the shopping frontages. Accordingly, unless evidence has been provided that the use is no longer viable and there are no other local facilities within 10 minutes walking, and that provision of a community facility is not possible, such applications will not be supported.

### **Policy TC6: Local Centres**

**Proposals for the change of use or re-development of shops or public houses in the neighbourhood centres, which would result in the loss of such facilities, will be resisted unless:**

- 1. There are other facilities performing the same function within easy walking distance of the community (10 minutes walking time); and/or**
- 2. The facility no longer meets the needs of the community; and**
- 3. The applicant provides sufficient and demonstrable evidence that the facility is no longer viable in its current form.**

**Where the above tests are met, the site/building must firstly be considered for alternative community infrastructure uses, in consultation with the local community, and only where an alternative community infrastructure use is demonstrated to be unviable or unsuitable, may other uses be considered acceptable**

**Any applications for new retail areas should include litter bins, dog waste bins and where appropriate, include an area for the placement of domestic recycling banks.**



# 11. Housing and Development



Figure 6: Houghton Hamlets

## Houghton Regis Town

- 11.1 The Town itself has developed over many years with the largest period of growth occurring since 1945. The oldest residential part of the town lies to the south of the High Street around Manor Park and Cemetery Lane, and Park Ave/Drury Lane opposite The Green.
- 11.2 Within the existing residential areas of the parish, the housing stock is older, St. Michael's Avenue was started in the 1930s, and Tithe Farm and Parkside, dating from the second half of the 20th century, are now well established communities. The Millers Way area of homes is more recent. The parish also includes the houses opposite the former quarry in Douglas Crescent and Northview Road.
- 11.3 Housing which meets the needs of residents who require additional support include the following:
  - Mini Group - Neptune Close, Houghton Regis – 8 bungalows
  - Mini Group – Bidwell Close, Houghton Regis – 11 bungalows mixed one and two bedrooms,
  - Johnson Court – Housing and Care 21, there are studio, 1-, 2- and 3-bedroom properties – a retirement complex of 47 apartments.
  - Roman Court, a Community Care Scheme, provides care and support for up to 16 people with a range of care needs including learning disabilities, physical disabilities, and sensory impairments.

- Treow House is a bespoke Supported Living scheme. Living Plus and Outreach Service provide individualised and proactive support where people's rights, independence and choices are actively promoted. The service provides 15 x 1 bedroom supported living flats and 7 x 1 bedroomed supported living plus flats which are built around a communal area. Support is provided to residents with learning disabilities, autism, behaviour that may be described as challenging, may be stepping down from secure settings and/or may have experienced previous placement breakdowns.
- There are 3 transitional housing settings: Puddlehill; Bedford Court; and The Brook Houghton Regis, due to be open late 2022 or early 2023. There are also residential and nursing care homes: Sharnbrook 26 bedroom consisting of 22 single and 2 double rooms; Rosalyn House, consisting of 46 single rooms; Lady Spencer House, 24 single rooms; and a brand-new care home, Thorn Springs in Bidwell West, Houghton Regis, with 66 bedrooms.

## Growth Areas

- 11.4 Houghton Regis has been subject to large scale development, mainly in the north of the Parish. Central Bedfordshire's Local Plan allocated a large swathe of land for housing and associated infrastructure known as Houghton Regis North Strategic Allocation. This was split into 2 sites, the first being Houghton Regis North Site 1 (HRN1 marketed as Linmere) comprising the area between the A5120 and the M1, for around 5,000 houses and 32 hectares of employment land (part of which lies outside the Houghton Regis Parish). The second site, (HRN2 marketed as Bidwell West) comprises the area from the A5 to the A5120 extending north to the new A5/M1 link road, providing up to 1,800 homes and 8 hectares of employment land. Both sites were subject of a masterplan and include sites and provision for education, green spaces, community and health centres and sports facilities.
- 11.5 Prior to the adoption of the Local Plan, planning permission was granted for the developments and the road extensions and work has been underway for the last few years. The development of the sites is forecast to be spread over a considerable part of the lifetime of this Neighbourhood Plan, providing a stream of new housing, including affordable housing, available to local people and others wishing to move to the parish.
- 11.6 One other notable scheme is All Saints' View, on the former Co-op site in the Town Centre opposite Bedford Square, phase one of which has now been completed. When fully finished, it will consist of 168 new independent living apartments plus retail and community facilities.

- 11.7 Completion of the planned new developments at Houghton Regis North 1 and 2 and other planned developments will see the number of dwellings in the parish grow from 7,340 (2011) to over 15,000 by 2031, more than covering local housing needs, and contributing to the Central Bedfordshire wider housing requirement. Accordingly, this Neighbourhood Plan does not seek to allocate sites for housing.
- 11.8 Integration of the new residents with the existing population is critical to ensuring a vibrant community into the future.

### *Aspiration H1: Integration of communities*

*The Town Council will aim to support the integration of existing and new communities by encouraging:*

- *Good access to new multi-use community facilities, including public and non-motorised transport options,*
- *Integration of library, recreation and Town Council functions across the parish*
- *Inter-schools and youth activities*
- *Events being held in new communities*
- *Publicity for events, facilities and services being provided across the communities*

## Hamlets

- 11.9 The hamlets of Bidwell and Thorn will be absorbed within Houghton Regis North 1 and 2. Sewell with around twenty homes, farms and businesses located in the fields on the western side of the A505 will remain separated from the rest of the urban area. The area around Sewell is particularly sensitive - both for the hamlet's residents' amenities and quality of life, and for the proximity to the heritage site at Maiden Bower. The hamlet and surrounding countryside lies within the Green Belt designation where only exceptional circumstances will allow development.

### *Issues Survey*

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

## Housing Affordability

- 11.10 Affordable homes are defined in the NPPF as housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers).
- 11.11 Locally young people find it hard to have a place of their own, often living with parents or grandparents. Housing needs identified included single-person-housing and scope to 'move on', bungalows suitable for elderly and those with limited mobility, retirement housing complexes, and single-person flats or dwellings available to key workers.
- 11.12 Affordable housing should be available and financially realistic for local people, the elderly and disabled to avoid a build-up of unmet needs and people being forced to move away from family and social support networks. The proportion of affordable housing within new developments is determined through Local Plan Policy H4 which requires that all sites of 10 or more housing units will provide 30% as affordable housing. However, the Local Plan was adopted prior to the Government's First Homes Initiative, which allows a 30% discount on new homes to first time buyers. Whilst this may not be a sufficient discount given high house prices in Houghton Regis, it is certainly an initiative which can be supported through the Neighbourhood Plan.

### **Policy H1: Affordable Housing**

**New residential development within Houghton Regis must provide a quantity of affordable housing in line with the requirements contained within the Central Bedfordshire Local Plan.**

**The provision and mix of affordable units for new development must comply with the National Planning Practice Guidance on First Homes, which requires 25% of all affordable housing to comprise of First Homes.**

**The remaining tenure of affordable units should be in accordance with Policy H4: Affordable Housing of the Central Bedfordshire Local Plan, or its successor.**

## Infill Development and Redevelopment

11.13 There may be sites within the built-up areas of Houghton Regis which could be developed or redeveloped without harm to the residential amenity of existing dwellings, unacceptable loss of open space or loss of car parking capacity. In some cases, these opportunities would aid the regeneration of areas, e.g., the redevelopment of disused garage sites on Tithe Farm and Parkside. This type of development will be subject to assessment against the High Quality Design Policies of the Local Plan (including HQ1 – High Quality Design, HQ8- Back-land Development) and Central Bedfordshire’s Design Guide. The Town Council will make comments on planning applications for such developments.

## Sustainable and Secure Design and Construction



Figure 7: Solar panels on a house in Tithe Farm

### Sustainable Building

- 11.14 The UK government needs help to meet its commitments under the Climate Change Act, to reduce global warming. One of the commitments made by the Government is to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050. The reality is that the homes built today will still be in use in 2050. Therefore, to achieve the UK and CBC carbon reduction targets cost effectively, new housing built today must be built to zero carbon standards as soon as possible. However, even if all new housing were to be carbon neutral from tomorrow, this would still not be enough to achieve the carbon emission reductions, as around 70% of buildings that will be in use in the 2050s already exist. If carbon reduction targets are to be met, and if fuel poverty is to be tackled, it is essential that the energy efficiency of existing buildings, including historic and listed buildings is also improved.
- 11.15 Water resources are precious, the Anglian Water supply region is classified as an area of serious water stress. Accordingly, care needs to be taken to reduce water consumption, minimize the possibility of water contamination as well as addresses concerns such as flooding. Houghton Regis sits on a watershed, and drainage and surface water management can be an issue as can water quality in the brooks and field drains. New development will therefore be required to design in measures to address these issues.

***Issues Survey: Sustainability***

***The responses to the survey were positive about the use of solar panels, other power sources such as waste processing, car sharing/bike hire schemes, wind turbines, bio fuels and electric car-charging points, Wi-Fi and new technology/communications infrastructure.***

- 11.16 In July 2019 CBC unanimously supported a proposal to prioritise responding to climate change and in September 2020 adopted the Sustainability Plan outlining the steps they will take to become carbon neutral by 2030. Policy CC1 of the Local Plan requires development to take opportunities to integrate the principles of sustainable design, water and energy efficiency into development.
- 11.17 New development of all buildings in Houghton Regis can play a part in moving towards a more sustainable level of resource-usage. Construction methods and design of buildings are important factors in reducing the impact of climate change. The development of Houghton Regis North 1 and 2 will include many new buildings which should include new features such as low/no carbon technologies, electric car charging points and 'Smart City' improvements. (The British Standards Institute (BSI) defines the term Smart City as "the effective integration of physical, digital and human systems in the built environment to deliver sustainable, prosperous and inclusive future for its citizens")

## **Policy H2: Sustainable Development**

**The design and standard of all new development will be expected to achieve a high level of sustainable design and construction.**

**All new development will be optimised for energy efficiency, targeting net zero carbon emissions. This involves:**

- **Siting and orientation to optimise passive solar gain.**
- **The use of high quality, thermally efficient building materials.**
- **Installation of energy efficiency measures such as loft and wall insulation and double/triple glazing.**
- **The incorporation of on-site energy generation from renewable sources such as unobtrusive solar panels appropriately positioned.**

**With regard to existing buildings:**

- **The retrofit of existing buildings, including heritage properties, is encouraged to reduce energy demand and to generate renewable energy where appropriate, provided that historic characteristics are safeguarded.**
- **Alterations to all existing buildings must be designed with energy reduction in mind and comply with sustainable design and construction standards.**

**All new development will be expected to minimise the use of water, provide water storage and manage surface water, using measures such as permeable paving.**



## Safety and Security

### *Issues Survey*

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

- 11.18 The Town Council's Vision includes Objective 3- A safe and vibrant town and the Town Council wishes to reduce the fear of crime, anti-social behaviour and crime levels through the partnership with Bedfordshire Police and Central Bedfordshire Council Community Safety team, and through support and encouragement for local Neighbourhood Watch schemes.
- 11.19 Data from the Bedfordshire Police showed 209 crimes reported in February 2016, within 1 mile of central Houghton Regis. The Locations of crimes were given as Sewell 3, Chalk Hill 9, Bedford Square 27, Bidwell 1, Tithe Farm 39, Bedford Rd 10, Parkside 32, Central HR 55, east HR 17.
- 11.20 National Planning Policy Guidance states that planning policies and decisions should promote public safety and the layout and design of developments should be informed by the most up-to-date information available from the police and other agencies about the nature of potential threats and their implications.
- 11.21 'Secured By Design' is the official police security initiative that works to improve the security of buildings and their immediate surroundings to provide safe places to live, work, shop and visit. It includes specific Design Guides to help design new development such as housing which helps all new developments to include crime prevention techniques into the design of landscaping, layout and buildings at the planning stage which can reduce the incidence of later criminal activity significantly. New developments including housing and town centre improvements in Houghton Regis will be expected to take into consideration recommendations in Secure By Design.

### **Aspiration H2: Safety and Security**

*The Town Council will work towards*

- *Ensuring that appropriate safety infrastructure is installed in Town Centre and other locations to reduce the incidence of crime*
- *Reducing enviro crime through direct action to remove incidences of fly tipping and graffiti*
- *Encouraging the use of Secure By Design development and Design Guides for*

## 12. Green Spaces & Recreation



Figure 8: Orchard Close Field

12.1 The approach to green space, recreation and rights of way within this Plan is to:

- protect the main areas of existing open space, particularly those used for recreation;
- support new areas of open space;
- designate Local Green Spaces where they qualify according to NPPF criteria;
- provide and encourage the provision of leisure equipment to increase usage;
- retain and improve the network of footpaths and bridleways;
- protect the particular qualities of Houghton Hall Park and the Chalk Pit Nature Reserve.

12.2 Policies GSR1 to GSR4 seek to protect important areas of open space, ensure there are connections between the existing and proposed open and green spaces in the Parish and identify recreation facilities and spaces to be retained or provided. Achieving a co-ordinated layout of these spaces and facilities with good community access will provide their sustainable longer-term management and maintenance within an integrated and accessible framework.

## *Issues Survey*

*People regarded it as very important to protect the open spaces within the parish.*

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

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

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

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

*At Dog Kennel Down comments covered more seating, better lighting, café, picnic and BBQ areas. One comment suggested the area was dangerous.*

## Open Spaces

12.3 There is a range of existing and proposed major open spaces throughout the parish. Unless otherwise stated the following public open spaces are managed by Houghton Regis Town Council (HRTC):

- Houghton Hall Park (HRTC and CBC have a Joint Venture Agreement to manage the Park)
- The Village Green (protected by Charter)
- Houghton Hall Park (managed by Central Bedfordshire Council)
- Moore Crescent Recreation Ground
- Dog Kennel Down (County Wildlife Site)
- Orchard Close Recreation Ground (Field in Trust)
- Windsor Drive Recreation Ground (owned by CBC, leased to HRTC)
- Tithe Farm Recreation Ground (owned by CBC, leased to HRTC)
- Parkside Recreation Ground (owned by CBC, leased to HRTC)
- Houghton Regis Chalk Pit Nature Reserve (privately owned)
- Maiden Bower iron age hillfort (scheduled ancient monument) with surrounding fields

- Sewell Disused Railway (CWS)
- Sewell Cutting Nature Reserve (managed by the Wildlife Trust for Beds, Cambs and Northants)
- Barley Brow County Wildlife Site
- Suncote Pits County Wildlife Site (managed by the Wildlife Trust for Beds, Cambs and Northants)
- Grove Spinney at Grove Farm (in private ownership)
- The Baulk and Plaiters Way off Bedford Road
- Blue Waters Woodland with disabled access (managed by CBC)
- Oakwell Park (in private ownership)

## Formal Recreation Facilities

- 12.4 Houghton Regis Leisure Centre (currently being replaced/upgraded by CBC and including a shared-use sports hall with the new high school) adjoining the College off Parkside Drive, the Bowling Green and the Sports Club, are notable community facilities within the Parish. There are also a number of small play and open spaces scattered throughout the built up area providing facilities for different ages of children.
- 12.5 Central Bedfordshire Council's Sport and Leisure Strategy includes a schedule for each Parish. Houghton Regis schedule was updated in 2020. <https://centralbedfordshire.app.box.com/s/yf2mysvs8atd9tynu8ve9ffm1mem0type>
- 12.6 Generally speaking, the Parish is reasonably well served in recreation spaces and pitches, however, there is a shortfall in rugby and football pitches and there are currently no tennis courts and few allotments. Some new facilities are to be provided in the new development areas, including allotments, the first of which has now been handed over to the Town Council. There are areas of open space planned within the Houghton Regis North 1 and 2 masterplans for recreation and parks. New open spaces off Woodside Link, the 'buffer' areas between development and the A5/M1 link road, and new open spaces adjoining the Houghton Regis Chalk Pit Nature Reserve are notable among the Houghton Regis North 1 and 2 proposals. Within Houghton Regis North many of the open space, recreation areas and sports pitches are co-located with schools which has the potential to deliver combined public and schools' use.
- 12.7 Recreation facilities and green spaces will be expected to be provided alongside new developments in accordance with CBC's requirements set out in the Local Plan.

### **Policy GSR1: Play and Recreation Spaces**

**The following play and recreation spaces will be retained as such, and proposals which would result in the loss or reduction of these will not be supported unless an alternative facility is provided to a better standard and/or in a better location:**

- **The Green, (must be retained as is),**
- **Moore Crescent Bowling Club Ground,**
- **Other small recreation/playspaces throughout Houghton Regis as identified in the CBC Leisure Strategy Parish Schedule**
- **Allotments**

**The provision of new recreation spaces and improvements to existing spaces and equipment will be supported.**

***(Note: This policy seeks to retain open spaces that are not protected by Local Green Space designation through Policy GSR3)***

### **Policy GSR2: Sports facilities and Open space provision as part of new development**

**Formal sports facilities and open space should normally be provided within new development to accord with the standards set by Central Bedfordshire Council in the Local Plan and Houghton Regis North 1 & 2 Masterplans. In addition, for new open spaces, the following criteria should be met:**

- **Efforts should be made to develop green corridors between the built up areas, new open spaces and the countryside;**
- **Developments should incorporate tree and shrub planting.**

**Suitable arrangements must be incorporated for the costs of future maintenance of these spaces.**



### **Aspiration GSR1: Play and Recreation**

*Aspirations to enhance facilities in the Parish include:*

- *provision of healthy leisure facilities within the parks and recreation areas including exercise and equipment to charge mobile phones,*
- *Improvement or provision of sustainable transport options to facilities and providing benches and cycle stands where appropriate,*
- *provision of better lighting for parks, MUGAs and playgrounds to extend times of use,*
- *the provision of art installations and fitness equipment on the walking routes connecting the open spaces created as part of Houghton Regis North 1 and 2 - particularly along the eastern, northern and western margins of the new developments - and which create connections into existing open spaces/pathways in the Parish,*
- *include major leisure facilities in town centre e.g., drama, dance studios, fitness centre, available to all schools.*

*Identify body/bodies responsible to manage and maintain a) open space and green areas, b) heritage sites, c) sports facilities – and how they will be maintained sustainably.*

*Houghton Regis Town Council will investigate ways to make more use of the pavilion on The Green.*

*Houghton Regis Town Council will aim to provide, or where appropriate, to make recommendations to Central Bedfordshire Council, to provide additional facilities, play equipment, rubbish and dog excrement bins and spectator seating at appropriate open space locations, for example, additional children's play equipment at Frogmore Road.*

### ***Aspiration GSR2: Major New Recreational Facilities***

*Any proposals for the development of recreational areas within HRN1 and HRN2 per outline planning consents are recognised and supported.*

*The provision of allotment developments is generally supported throughout the parish.*

*Any proposals for the development of adult football pitches, are generally supported.*

*Any proposals for the development of up to two more cricket grounds within the parish are generally supported.*

*Any proposals for the development of additional rugby union pitches, with parking and facilities, within the parish are generally supported.*

*Any new recreational facility proposals should allow for the continuity of existing recreational facilities.*

*Improve Sewell Greenway for multiple users including walkers, cyclists and horses, safeguarded from off-road motorcycling.*

*The provision of parking at Windsor Drive between the road and the existing shared use path.*

## **Local Green Spaces**

12.8 A designation of Local Green Space (LGS) gives a very high level of protection to such open spaces. In the NPPF it is stated that in Neighbourhood Plans, local communities can identify green areas of particular importance to them for special protection and to rule out new development, other than in “very special circumstances”. The proposed designations are in accordance with the requirement in Paragraph 100 of the NPPF:

- The green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
- The area is demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife;
- The area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.

12.9 In 2022, Houghton Regis Town Council commissioned Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity (BedsRCC) to carry out an audit of green spaces in the Parish. The Local Green Space Assessment Report assessed all the relevant green spaces against the NPPF criteria, and 9 spaces fulfilled the criteria and are therefore designated as Local Green Spaces

### **Policy GSR3: Local Green Spaces**

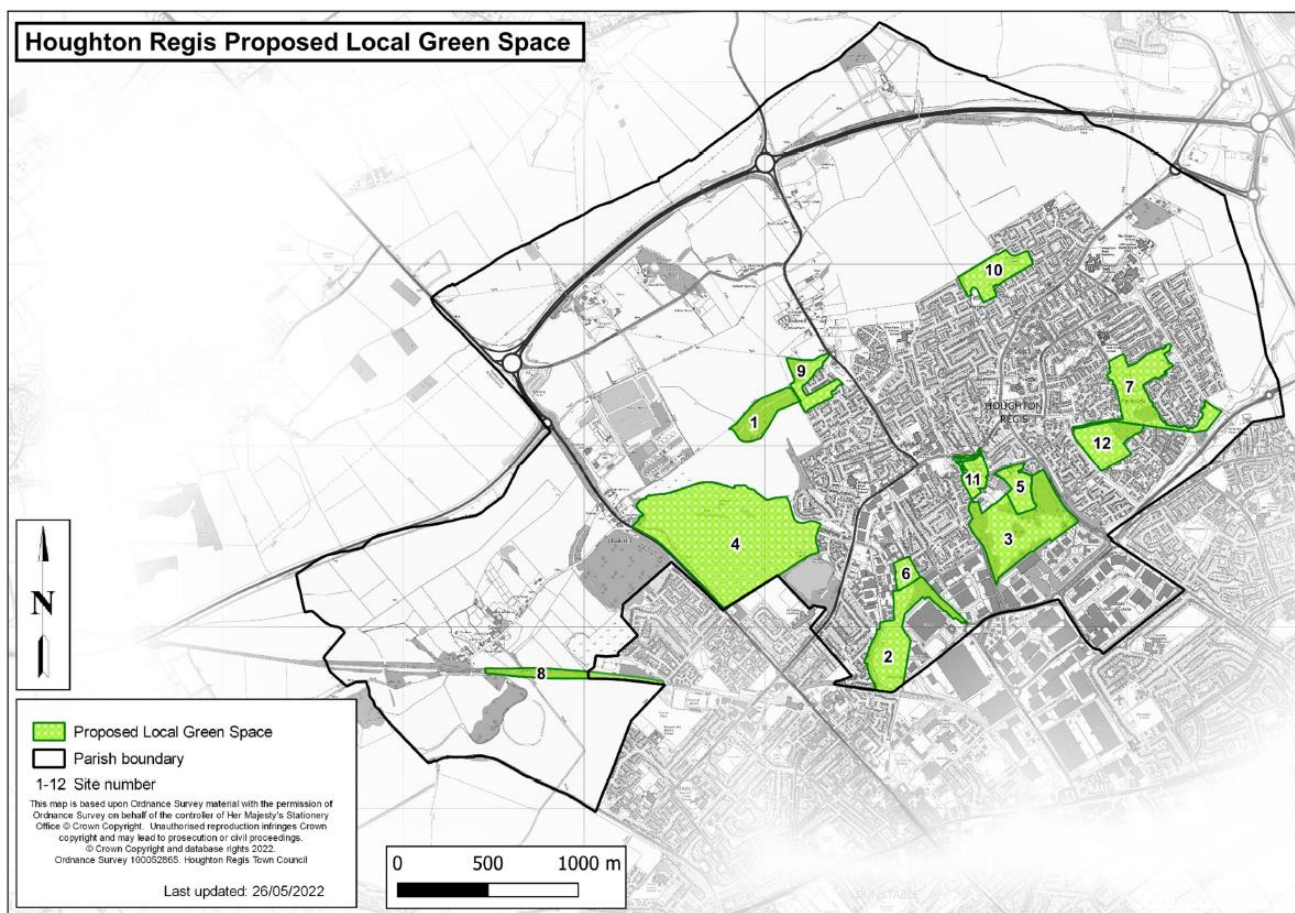
**The following areas shown on Map 3 are designated as Local Green Spaces:**

- **Blue Waters Woodland, 1**
- **Dog Kennel Down, 2**
- **Moore Crescent Recreation Ground, 5**
- **Orchard Close Recreation Ground, 6**
- **Parkside Recreation Ground, 7**
- **Sewell Cutting Nature Reserve, 8**
- **The Baulk and Plaiters Way, 9**
- **Tithe Farm Recreation Ground, 10**
- **Windsor Drive Recreation Ground, 12**

**Development within the Local Green Spaces will not be supported except in very special circumstances.**



## Map 3: Local Green Spaces



Key to Map 3		
Number	Name	Designated LGS
1	Blue Waters Woodland	Yes
2	Dog Kennel Down	Yes
3	Houghton Hall Park	No
4	Houghton Regis Chalk Pit Nature Reserve	No
5	Moore Crescent Recreation Ground	Yes
6	Orchard Close Recreation Ground	Yes
7	Parkside Recreation Ground	Yes
8	Sewell Cutting Nature Reserve	Yes
9	The Baulk and Plaiters Way	Yes
10	Tithe Farm Recreation Ground	Yes
11	Village Green	No
12	Windsor Drive Recreation Ground	Yes

### Houghton Hall Park

12.10 Houghton Hall Park is set among 42 acres of parkland/woodland within Houghton Regis. The Park was originally part of the Hall's estate parkland owned by the Brandreth family dating back to 1652. In more recent years it was transformed by "The Renaissance and Renewal Project" (a £2.2

million funding grant from the Heritage and Lottery Funds “Parks for People” grant). As part of this work, a new visitor centre with café was built. Childrens play equipment, additional parking, landscaping and new pathways with signage were also added allowing people to explore both the parkland and woodland areas of the park. Historic formal kitchen gardens (that once served the Hall) were recreated and regular events and family activities occur at HHP. Houghton Hall Park Parkrun is a running club that organises runs around the park every week and the area is well used for walking, dog walking, cyclists and joggers. There are also many special events (e.g. Easter Egg Hunts) that take place throughout the year. During Covid, the Park was a vital area where local people could go to take in fresh air and exercise. In short, HHP is the most used and important recreational space in Houghton Regis.

12.11 HRTC and CBC have a Joint Venture Agreement to manage the park. Significant capital investment has been made to the park including a Parks for People grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund. As a result, the facilities have been much improved, and the park now has a much-extended offer to the community including a wide and varied events programme.



Figure 9: Entry sign at Houghton Hall Park





Figure 10: The Chalk Pit

## Chalk Pit Nature Reserve

12.12 The Houghton Regis Chalk Pit Nature Reserve is the area of former chalk extraction south of Houghton Regis North 2 which for many years served the cement works before closure in the 1970s. The nature reserve, approx. 50ha in area, comprises a SSSI and County Wildlife Site with three main areas:

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

12.13 In 1988 the Marl Lakes Site of Special Scientific Interest was notified. In 1990 the whole reserve was surveyed and recognized as a County Wildlife Site which is protected to a degree under the NPPF paragraphs 180 and 181.

12.14 The Chalk Pit is a large area of colonising calcareous grassland in the northern part supporting typical chalk flora including one of the best Chiltern Gentian populations in the area, and a significant population of chalk hill blue butterflies (a NERC Act 2006 Section 41 priority species). (Natural Environment and Rural Communities)

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

12.16 The Icknield Way footpath runs close to the Reserve from Watling Street in the west to Blue Waters Woodland in the east, and a range of informal paths have emerged around and through the site. Due to its designation as an important site for wildlife, and being very vulnerable to disturbances, access to the Chalk Pit via existing footpaths is for general walking and enjoyment of nature only. Access on foot at the southern end will remain as at present.

12.17 The completion of the A5 link means that the reserve is more accessible and is within a short drive time for a considerable number of people in the wider area/region. Coupled with the expected increase in local population, the Nature Reserve with its rare habitats will be put under increased pressure. Consequently, activities will need to be carefully managed in the Nature Reserve.

Map 4: Chalk Pit Nature Reserve



12.18 At the Nature Reserve and in conjunction with new open space provision arising from Houghton Regis North 2, the proposal is to provide access to the nature reserve and provide car parking serving a new visitor centre/café. Existing paths will be signed as nature trails and a visitor

centre is proposed to help communicate the reserve's importance to visitors. The visitor centre will be located on or near the northern rim of the Chalk Pit with access from the HRN2 road network. A small car park is proposed including space for two minibuses, disabled parking spaces and bicycle stands. The building for the visitor centre will be designed with up-to-date 'green' technologies and will incorporate an office for reserve and community engagement staff; space for volunteer work parties; a room for educational use where up to 30 visitors of all ages can learn about the reserve; a café and toilets, and a storage area to keep machinery and other equipment needed to manage the reserve.

#### **Policy GSR4: Chalk Pit Nature Reserve**

**All development proposals which could affect the function and special qualities of the Chalk Pit Nature Reserve will be required to ensure that the biodiversity, recreational and landscape values of the Reserve are preserved and enhanced.**

#### ***Aspiration GSR3: Protecting and Enhancing the Houghton Regis Chalk Pit Nature Reserve***

*A Masterplan will be prepared by the Wildlife Trust BCN which anticipates resuming management by agreement with CBC and the owners in the near future. The Masterplan will seek to protect and improve the fragile ecology while keeping access on foot open to the public for enjoyment of the flora and fauna in this highly valued outdoor space.*

*To facilitate the management of the site, a visitor centre with office, storage, cycle parking and parking will be built on or near the northern rim of the Chalk Pit, accessed from the HRN2 road network. To enhance the visitor experience, this building will also house an education room, café and toilets for public use.*

*In addition, funding for essential infrastructure, such as protective barriers to keep out motorcycles, and signposts and information boards to guide walkers, will be sourced.*

## Rights of Way

12.19 There is a network of rights of way (footpaths, cycle paths, shared-use paths, bridleways, and National Cycle Network Route 6) running through the parish. These are available to view on the CBC website here [https://my.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/?ms=CentralBeds/AllMaps&layers=cbc\\_boundary\\_only,row\\_legal\\_network&starteastng=512647.49908447&startnorthing=238829.50027466&startzoom=1995](https://my.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/?ms=CentralBeds/AllMaps&layers=cbc_boundary_only,row_legal_network&starteastng=512647.49908447&startnorthing=238829.50027466&startzoom=1995). These rights of way make connections possible from built up areas into the countryside, or between built up areas including;

- Dog Kennel Path links southwards into the heart of Dunstable,
- Rabbit Lane links the Village Green with Woodside Industrial Estate,
- a path follows Ouzel Brook to the west through Houghton Regis North 1 and Houghton Regis North 2 towards the A505.
- The Icknield Way Trail/Chiltern Way path skirts the northern rim of the Chalk Pit and crosses the A505 to Sewell and Maiden Bower.
- From Bidwell the Icknield Trail runs north-west through Houghton Regis North 2 to cross the A5 by a footbridge and continue on to Wingfield, while the Chiltern Way continues towards Chalton.
- The NCN6 traverses the parish from Luton in the east to Sewell in the west and beyond to Stanbridge and Leighton Buzzard.
- Houghton Regis Parish boundary with Chalton runs briefly along the By-way Open to All Traffic (BOAT 29) running along the ridge between Chalton and Chalgrave, which is a heritage trail also known as Theedway.
- There are a number of bridleways through the north of the parish
- BW35 runs past Sewell and Maiden Bower
- BW49 starts at Chalk Hill Farm on Watling Street and continues through Houghton Regis North 2 with a new Pegasus crossing on Thorn Road. Sewell Lane links BW49 with Sewell and BW35.
- BW15 is a short section of the proposed Boundary Trail running north-east towards a Pegasus crossing on Lord's Hill (with access to BW44 outside the parish to Wingfield). A connection then links it with:
- BW46 to Grove Farm (also part of the proposed Boundary Trail)

- BW22 runs from Grove Farm in both directions, north to meet BOAT29 and south across the A5 by a bridge and through Houghton Regis North 1 to the Tithe Farm Recreation Ground
- BW44 runs east along Ouzel Brook to Sundon Road.

12.20 On the western boundary of the parish the Green Lanes, part of an old drovers' route from Wales and the west towards London, passes Sewell and Maiden Bower, much-used by walkers. Farmland in the west of the parish is open countryside with public footpaths which allow magnificent views from Sewell Lane and Sewell Greenway.

12.21 There is an aspiration to create a 'Green Wheel' for Houghton Regis which is a managed network of rights of way and permissive routes forming a route around the parish, with 'spokes' giving access to built up areas. The route of the proposed boundary trail incorporates the proposed paths in the Houghton Regis North developments with existing paths, plus minor additions to form connections.

#### **Policy GSR5: Rights of Way**

**The rights of way network will be retained and new links around the Parish and to the wider countryside will be encouraged.**

***Aspiration GSR4: Aiming for a Green Wheel around the parish***

*The Town Council supports the use and development of existing footpaths and bridleways to create a network of walking/running/jogging/family cycling routes that also highlights the history of the parish.*

*It is recognised that not all routes would ever be suitable for all these different active user groups. The route will be varied in places, for example, a route more favourable to walkers than to cyclists.*

*The ideal aim would be to complete a Wheel of Paths consisting of 'spokes' leading out from neighbourhood 'hubs', all connected by an outer 'rim' around the parish perimeter.*

*A complete feasible 'spoke' and 'rim' adult walking and jogging route can already be made that:*

- closely follows the entire parish boundary;*
- utilises existing rights of way;*
- links to or includes the majority of the parish's major open spaces.*

*In addition, a network of safe cycle paths throughout the parish is envisaged, extending through HRN1 and HRN2, especially accessing schools and those that help to integrate older and newer parts of the parish.*

*Houghton Regis Town Council will organise support from residents and identify other interested parties, including CBC, to traverse the suggested rim and spoke routes.*

*Houghton Regis Town Council will consult with local residents, landowners, and other stakeholders before implementing sections of the route.*

*Houghton Regis Town Council will aim to identify places along the route where improvements may be required. Improvements would aim to make the route more suitable to wider sections of the community including mobility scooters and pushchairs. Funding may be sought to implement schemes.*



## 13. Biodiversity and Natural Features



Figure 11: Orchids on Dog Kennel Down

### Biodiversity

- 13.1 The Environment Act 2021 is the UK Government's key piece of environmental legislation in recent years. The Act will require new development to deliver a minimum 10% biodiversity net gain. Provisions for the act will be made through secondary legislation. This means that developers will be required to calculate how much their proposed development will degrade biodiversity (by removal of habitat, vegetation etc) and compensate for that loss and add features which provide increased biodiversity on the site. This can be achieved in a number of ways such as providing planting schemes, green roofs, protecting and enhancing existing hedgerows etc. Landscaping schemes will be required to use native species for planting schemes, particularly those found locally.
- 13.2 In addition to providing Biodiversity Net Gain, all proposals for new development will be required to demonstrate how the design has taken into account its potential impact on existing local habitats and species. Developers will be required to ensure that appropriate measures are put in place to protect wildlife and take every available opportunity to link adjoining wildlife corridors and natural features to enhance biodiversity and important habitats.
- 13.3 Houghton Regis falls within the area of the Chiltern Beechwoods Special Conservation Area (SAC) & Zone of Influence. Central Bedfordshire

Council have published a Mitigation Strategy.

[https://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/info/44/planning/1144/important\\_information\\_regarding\\_current\\_and\\_proposed\\_residential\\_proposals\\_in\\_southern\\_central\\_bedfordshire](https://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/info/44/planning/1144/important_information_regarding_current_and_proposed_residential_proposals_in_southern_central_bedfordshire)

## Natural Features

- 13.4 Houghton Regis Parish sits astride the Chilterns lower chalk bench and the underlying gault clay producing an undulating landscape with springs flowing north and south. The 'spring-line' where the chalk water-table meets the clay is revealed in the local place names – Bidwell, Sewell, and Puddlehill. The springs that rise on the chalk dip slope can be impermanent features by nature of the chalk's porosity and varying water-table level. There are a significant number of springs from land within the parish: the source of Houghton Brook on the Green which flows into the River Lea in Luton (improvements completed in 2020); four or five springs in or near Sewell Hamlet flow into Ouzel Brook; Thorn Spring Moated Site on private land at Oakwell Park which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument and CWS surrounded by marshy grassland and semi-natural broad-leaved woodland; and the source of Ouzel Brook itself, near Sundon Road, which is hidden because it depends on the change in the water table where it starts flowing (it is now integrated with the landscaping of Linmere). Numerous other ditches link to these streams, which only flow intermittently, and are important channels for wildlife to safely traverse the landscape hidden from predators, as well as being vital for land drainage.
- 13.5 This Plan seeks to ensure that in future springs are not built over or channelled underground but left as natural features of chalk landscape to be celebrated, notably
- The source of the Ouzel Brook in Linmere Park, HRN1.
  - Kingsland spring.

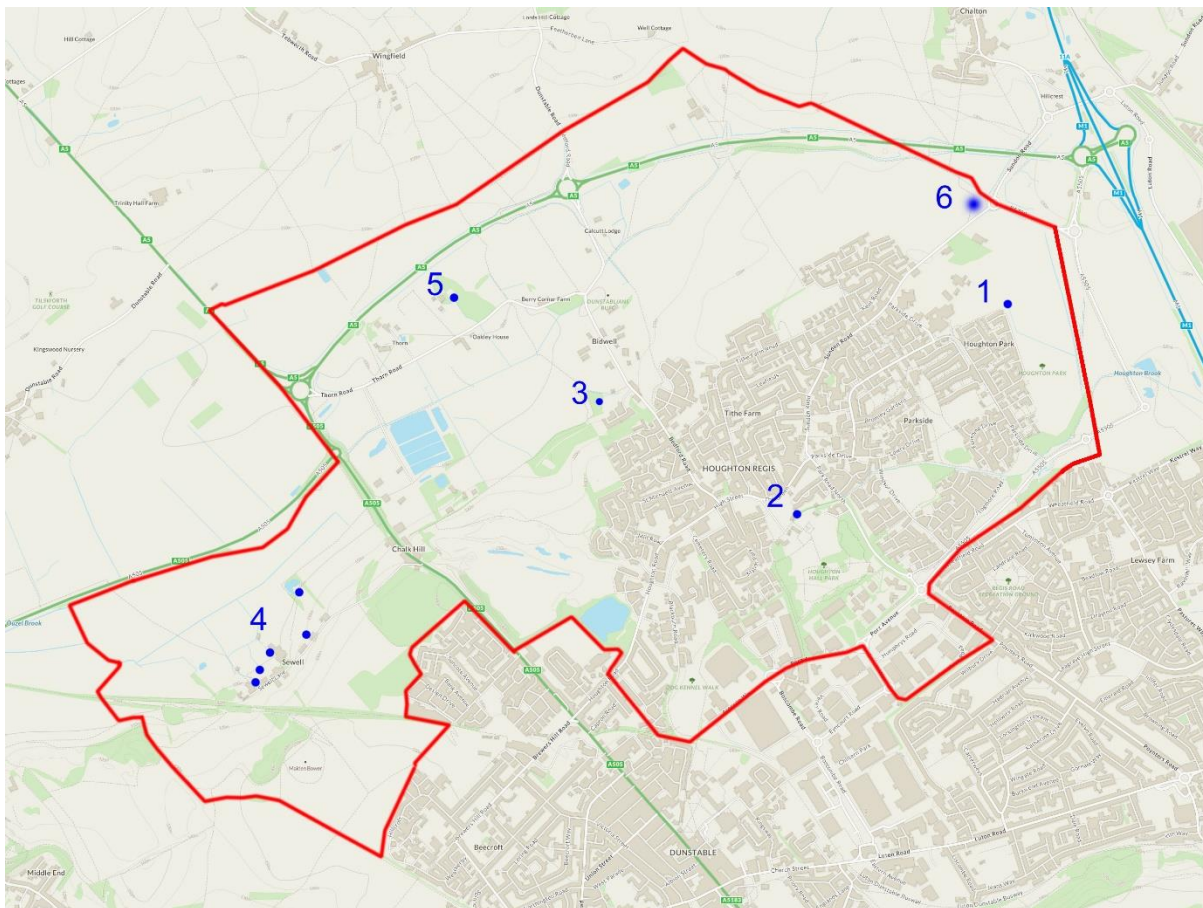
## Hilltops and Viewpoints

- 13.6 A feature of the Houghton Regis landscape are the hilltops on the chalk escarpment with magnificent views of the surrounding countryside: Maiden Bower at 155m is the highest spot in the Parish, Chalkhill on the west side of the Watling Street cutting, Dog Kennel Down, the northern rim of the Chalk Pit and the northern boundary of the Parish is on the BOAT (133m).
- 13.7 Looking from the north, Dunstable almost disappears in the folds of the land, and the most prominent features are Chalkhill on the eastern edge

of the Chalk Pit and Blows Down behind. The warehouses built in Houghton Regis North 2 are masking the view of Chalkhill from the A5 and the start of Thorn Road. A number of these views as shown on the Policies Map at Annexe 1 merit preserving by protecting natural features on skylines from developments that change it and limiting building heights in significant views of those features:

- a viewpoint at Maiden Bower
- rim of the Chalk Pit
- Dog Kennel Down which affords great views of the Chalk Hill and is also a rare chalk grassland habitat.

### Map 5: Protected Springs



Note: All sites are approximate as changing water table levels can cause them to move.



## **Policy BNF1: Biodiversity and Protecting Natural Features**

**New development will be required to protect and enhance existing natural features of sites and provide at least 10% net gain in biodiversity.**

**Provision of appropriate species-related measures will be required in new buildings, including extensions, for example, swift bricks, bat and owl boxes, hedgehog highways.**

**Opportunities should also be taken by developers and landowners to link sustainable drainage solutions in new development to complement nature conservation objectives.**

**Any proposal to develop areas considered important natural features of the chalk landscape, especially those that are a prominent part of the parish's character, must be protected and preserved, notably:**

**The springs at:**

- **Kingsland (Map 5, no.1),**
- **The Green (Map 5, no.2),**
- **Bidwell (Map 5, no.3),**
- **Sewell (Map 5, no.4),**
- **Thorn (Map 5, no.5),**
- **the source of the Ouzel Brook (Map 5, no.6),**

**The natural hilltops and viewpoints over the landscape as shown on the Policies Map**

- **of and from Maiden Bower,**
- **of and from the rim of the Houghton Regis Chalk Pit Nature Reserve,**
- **Dog Kennel Down.**

## 14. Heritage



Figure 12: Houghton Hall

- 14.1 Houghton Regis has a long history of settlement and industry, with a pre-historic (3500BC) hillfort at Maiden Bower and settlement at Puddlehill. Watling Street, now the route of the A505, was constructed during the Roman period and passed near to the area Houghton Regis now occupies. A Roman settlement was constructed on Watling Street in the area now occupied by Dunstable and was known as Durocobrivae. Following the departure of the Romans, roadside settlements were frequently attacked, and it is thought that many communities moved away from the roads and into the hills. It is likely that this was the time when the earliest settlement of Houghton Regis was established. The name 'Houghton' is Saxon combining 'hoe' meaning the spur of a hill, in this case from the Chilterns, and 'tun' a village.
- 14.2 The medieval manor was owned by the Crown and Thorn, Sewell and Bidwell all have origins dating from more than a thousand years ago. The parish has a long farming heritage and a cottage industry, straw plaiting which served the Luton hat industry, and an industrial heritage, notably the large cement works by Townsend Farm on the edge of Houghton village and the Quarry dug to supply it with chalk.
- 14.3 The recent pre-development excavations for Houghton Regis North 1 have revealed more archaeological evidence of the area's history.
- 14.4 The centre of Houghton Regis was designated a Conservation Area in 1977, the principal features of which are The Green and the buildings around it, Houghton Hall, Lodge and Court, Houghton Hall Park, and the group of 17th-19th century buildings around The Chequers public house. The 2008 Conservation Area Statement and Management Plan is available

on the Central Bedfordshire Council website.  
[https://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/migrated\\_images/houghton-regis\\_tcm3-12959.pdf](https://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/migrated_images/houghton-regis_tcm3-12959.pdf).

***Issues Survey***

***90% of respondents told us that the town's history was important to them, and yet 50% told us they did not know about what is currently protected. Additionally, 80% of respondents thought that more of the town's buildings should be preserved.***

- 14.5 The Houghton Regis Conservation Area Statement and Management Plan divides the Conservation Area into 3 zones, Zone 1 – East End/Woodlands Avenue; Zone 2 – The Green/Houghton Hall Park and Zone 3 – The High Street Setting. A set of suggested improvements and enhancements are set out in the Statement and should be taken into account when assessing proposals for new development in the Conservation Area.
- 14.6 The hamlet of Sewell was designated as a Conservation Area in 1995 because of its long history. Very different in nature from Houghton Regis, the homes and farm buildings at Sewell are spread out and the openness and mature trees are a key feature of the local character. There is no Conservation Area appraisal currently, the map is available on the CBC website.  
<https://centralbedfordshire.app.box.com/s/dge1wp95hy69bsenaxxtowpbkgga10s>
- 14.7 There are twenty-three buildings and structures which are listed buildings, ie on the list of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest, drawn up by Historic England (see Annex 3) notable amongst them are the Church of All Saints, Grade I, and Houghton Hall, Grade II\*, including the recent addition of Oakwell Park as a Grade II listed building in 2018. The Memorial Hall is an important building in the current town centre, typical of the architectural characteristics of the 1950s. The Red House is the only remaining building of its type in Houghton Regis, dating from the early 17th century, possibly earlier - suggestion has been made that the brickworks could be as old, and of the same type, as those used in the construction of Someries Castle in Luton.
- 14.8 The parish's heritage is important to the appearance of the area, the sense of history for local people, and providing unique 'landmarks' in the setting of the town centre.

- 14.9 The Town Council will encourage CBC to prepare a Conservation Area review and updated Management Plan for Houghton Regis Conservation Area. It is expected that any new buildings in the Conservation Area will need to be designed so as to respect the bulk, massing, height and orientation of buildings in close proximity to the site and should be designed in such a manner as to add to the particular character area of the Conservation Area. Similarly, new development in the Sewell Conservation Area will be expected to contribute to the character of the hamlet, without detracting from its historic importance.
- 14.10 There is a strong presumption against any development which would prejudice the site, integrity, setting or appearance of the heritage sites, ancient monuments, the Conservation Areas and listed buildings within the parish.

### **Policy HE1: Heritage**

**All development proposals affecting designated and non-designated heritage assets will be required to take into account the significance of affected assets; as well as the contribution made by the setting. Development should take into account local styles, materials and architectural detailing which contribute to local distinctiveness. The total loss of, or substantial harm to, a designated heritage asset will be resisted unless substantial public benefits can be demonstrated. Archaeological evaluation should be undertaken where development proposals have the potential to affect heritage assets with archaeological interest. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.**

**Development in the Houghton Regis Conservation Area should take into account the principles and potential enhancements set out in the Conservation Area Statement and Management Plan.**

**Applicants must explain, in a Design and Access Statement and/or Heritage Statement, how the proposal will address these criteria.**

### ***Aspiration HE1: Heritage***

*The Town Council will:*

- *Liaise with CBC to update the Houghton Regis Conservation Area Statement and Management Plan: Re-survey buildings and update archaeological information*
- *Ensure that archaeological evidence and other heritage materials from Houghton Regis North 1 and 2 and the M1-A5 link are recorded as part of the town's history and provide information boards at the locations*
- *Explore potential of providing a museum to house items e.g. old Houghton Regis Gaol House door held by Luton Culture and the Houghton Regis Heritage Society's collection of oral history.*
- *Improve local knowledge about Houghton's heritage, including the heritage sites/finds on Houghton Regis North – and erect markers, information boards on those sites*
- *Use the website to describe Houghton Heritage with all the sites and their information*
- *Prepare exercise maps – walks to heritage places, combine with green/exercise paths*
- *Develop a history of local chalk quarrying and cement production – pictures, records, oral history/Living Archive - display in Chalk Pit Nature Reserve Visitor Centre*
- *Develop a history of Houghton Regis people – people who moved to Houghton Regis in the 20th century, or whose families have lived locally for generations - pictures, records, oral history/Living Archive, then build into stories of people who are moving to Houghton Regis now*
- *Create and provide information panels and signs (linked to a heritage website) which describe and explain the historical importance of key sites around the parish*
- *Deliver improvements to the public realm to enhance the setting of key heritage sites.*



## 15. Business, Employment and Education



Figure 13: A business in the Townsend Farm Road area

- 15.1 Houghton Regis is part of an important economic growth area in the Oxford, Milton Keynes, Cambridge Arc where public resources will be invested to generate business and employment growth. Crossed by a mix of major transport and communications, Central Bedfordshire is adopting a supportive enabling approach to driving business investment, delivering jobs growth with ambitious plans for a further 24,000–30,000 new jobs by 2035. Key growth sectors include high-performance technologies research and development, visitor economy, transport and logistics, and agrifood. The transport infrastructure means that distribution is a major feature of the local economic picture.
- 15.2 In total, less than a fifth of Houghton Regis residents worked within the town (according to data from Central Bedfordshire Council, 2011): 570 residents (7%) worked from home, and 900 residents (11%) travelled to work within Houghton Regis. 1,900 residents (23%) worked elsewhere in Central Bedfordshire, with 1,160 (14%) travelling to Dunstable. Outside of Central Bedfordshire, the main destinations were Luton: 1,730 people (21%), and London: 540 people (7%).

### *Issues Survey*

*The most suitable jobs were viewed as manufacturing, technology, warehousing, and office work.*

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

- the High Street (retail, offices, services, care homes, car sales and servicing, fuel) and Bedford Square (retail, restaurant, takeaways)
- the Woodside Estate/Porz Avenue (Industry/distribution/warehousing with offices) - part of a more extensive employment area extending south into Dunstable either side of Boscombe Road
- Houghton Hall Business Park (mainly offices)
- Townsend Farm Road/Portland Close/Westbury Close/Blackburn Rd (Light industrial, storage, and services with some commercial recreation e.g. soft play), the area of the former cement works off Houghton Road,
- local centre shops on Tithe Farm and Parkside, public houses and restaurants spread across the parish: The Crown, The Kings Arms, The Chequers, The Old Red Lion, Harvest Home, Bella Calabria, and The White Lion at Sewell
- the range of education, social and 'public service' employment in schools etc.
- farming and rural enterprises in the rural parts of the parish.

15.4 In addition, there are small/self-employed enterprises which operate from domestic properties or have no premises, and offices.

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

15.6 Education is a significant employer in Houghton Regis. Currently there are 6 Primary Schools. On the Kingsland campus off Parkside Drive is located Chiltern School (special education needs), Houghton Regis Leisure Centre (planned to be redeveloped), Bedfordshire Education and Skills service and, Houghton Secondary School which is open and will relocate to its new facility in 2023 and the Academy of Central Bedfordshire.

15.7 All Saints Academy, a secondary school with sixth form in Dunstable but which abuts Houghton Regis, includes part of the parish in its catchment area.

- 15.8 Three new schools and 2 school enlargements are included in the Houghton Regis North schemes. There are no details of training or higher education facilities proposed at this stage for the new developments.
- 15.9 Planning permissions for HRN1 and HRN2 include up to 202,500 sqm gross of additional floorspace comprising offices, industrial and storage and distribution, a hotel, a care home, and schools. The precise scale and layout of these employment areas are yet to be determined. Also, the developments include a key infrastructure improvement; the Woodside link road connects that area directly to the new M1 motorway junction 11A. The new East-West transport infrastructure linking M40/Aylesbury/A5/M1/Luton North/A1 will create an axis of movement between Oxford and Cambridge likely to have a strong national focus in future supporting the growth of new, high-tech commercial developments.
- 15.10 In anticipation that the proposed commercial developments within Houghton Regis North will provide sufficient scope for employment, this Plan does not allocate further land for employment/ commercial purposes. Development of the commercial and employment areas within HRN1 and HRN2 will be undertaken in accordance with the outline planning permissions and Central Bedfordshire Local Plan.
- 15.11 Home working is also seen as a means of encouraging business and creating a sustainable community with less commuting and a more sustainable lifestyle, saving individuals the cost of travel and increasing their leisure time. The proportion of people working from home is likely to have risen as a result of the recent changes to working practices resulting from the pandemic.
- 15.12 The expansion of local businesses – whether currently existing or potentially new enterprises - must carefully consider the impact on existing residential properties and local traffic flow, including businesses which currently or may in the future employ the frequent use of large industrial or agricultural vehicles.

### **Policy BE1: Employment**

**In order to ensure the local economic and employment potential of the area is retained, proposals for change of use away from employment uses will not be supported in the following employment areas as shown on Map 2:**

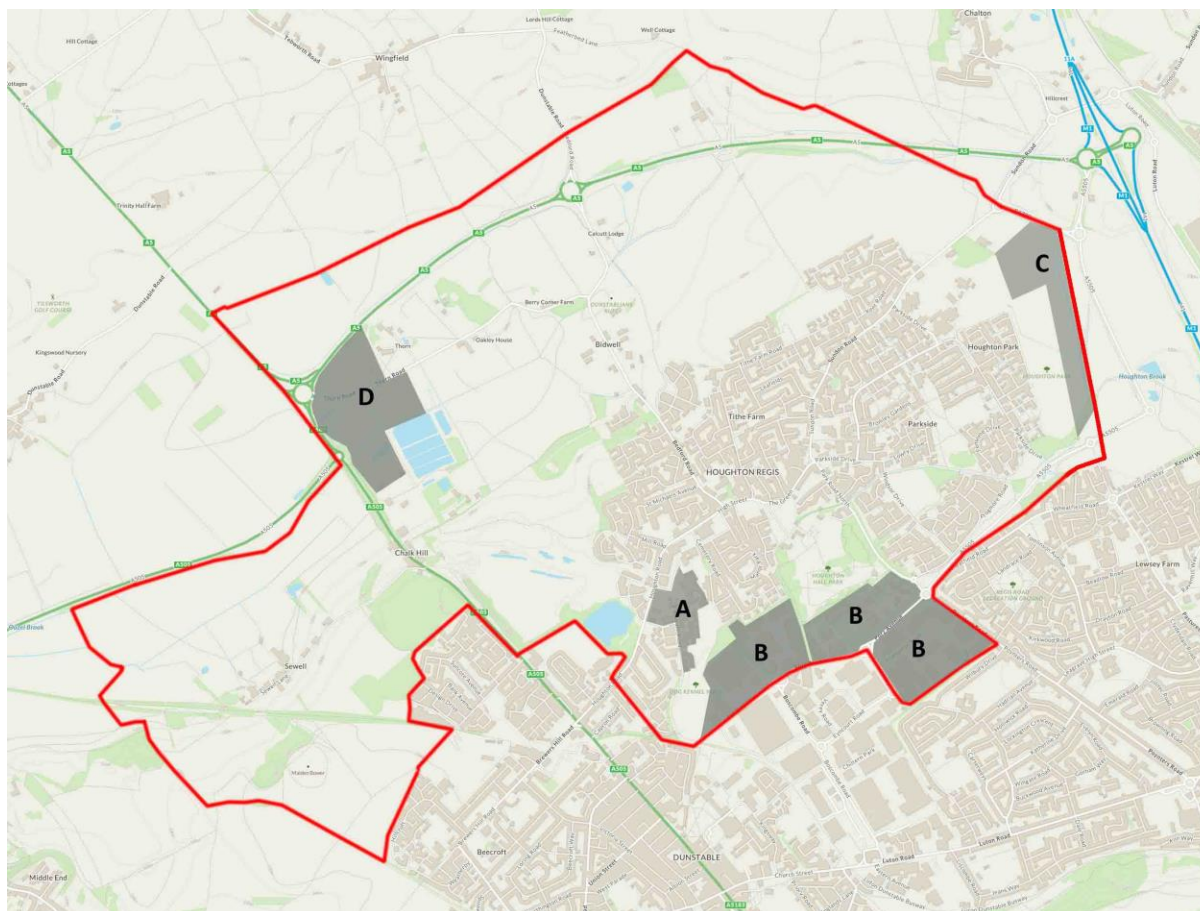
- A. Townsend Farm Road/Portland Close/Westbury Close/Blackburn Rd**
- B. those parts of Porz Ave/Woodside Estate/ Houghton Hall within the Houghton Regis parish boundary,**
- C. the area of Houghton Regis North 1/Woodside link within the Houghton Regis parish boundary,**
- D. Houghton Regis North 2 West**

**Proposals for the development of new small businesses and for the expansion or diversification of existing businesses, will be encouraged, providing that:**

- it can be demonstrated that there will be no significant adverse impact from increased traffic, noise, lighting or other emissions or activities arising from the proposed development;**
- where relevant, opportunities are taken to secure the re-use of vacant or redundant historic buildings as part of the development.**

**Applications for extensions or part change of use of dwellings to enable flexible or home working will be supported, subject to there being appropriate parking and that the residential amenity of neighbouring properties is maintained.**

## Map 6: Employment Areas



KEY	
A.	Townsend Farm Road/Portland Close/Westbury Close/Blackburn Rd
B.	Parts of Porz Ave/Woodside Estate/ Houghton Hall
C.	Houghton Regis North 1/Woodside Link (Note: area shown reflects the original site-wide masterplan. Exact location(s) likely to change)
D.	Houghton Regis North 2 West

### **Aspiration BE1: A new Employment Strategy for Houghton Regis**

*The Town Council may produce a new Employment Strategy which should link locations for business and skills/vocational training and build on existing strengths with linked training/apprenticeships - planned logistics, local building firms – to create a skilled labour pool and greater job diversity using range of skills and leading to higher income jobs and high value IT work for all age groups.*

*In developing the strategy, the Town Council should work with Education and other professional bodies in the Parish to build aspirations among local schools towards good quality jobs and remuneration reflecting local opportunities.*



## 16. Transport, Connectivity and Parking



Figure 14: Z Bus on Parkside Drive

- 16.1 Much of the parish's forms of transport are integrated within the Houghton Regis/Dunstable/Luton conurbation. Of particular importance is the need to connect new development at HRN1 & HRN2 with the existing centre and facilities available at Houghton Regis, both by car and other means of transport, both motorised and unmotorised.
- 16.2 Central Bedfordshire's Local Transport Plan (LTP3) sets out a long term framework for investment in transport across Central Bedfordshire to 2026. The fourth iteration is currently being produced by CBC.

### *Issues Survey*

*The responses showed strong support for better local roads, links between the new areas and existing parts of Houghton Regis, more parking, and improved walking and footpaths. Improved cycling, reduced commuting, and low carbon transport were the least important in the survey results.*

## Roads

16.3 In the 2011 Census, nearly 80% of residents had access to a car or van. The parish is well served by roads connecting to the rural areas to the north and into Dunstable to the south, the B5120 runs from Toddington, A505 Watling Street passes through the western part of the parish (although now de-trunked through Dunstable), the A505 runs along the northern edge of the parish at Sewell connecting the A5 westwards towards Leighton Buzzard and Aylesbury, and the M1 runs beyond the eastern boundary of the parish with a new junction 11A with the A5. The A5-M1 link and the Woodside Connection were opened in 2017.

16.4 The main road connections are:

ROAD	CONNECTING AREAS
B5120	Runs from Toddington, through Bidwell to Houghton Regis town centre. It acts as a main distributor connecting with the A5 at and island on the A5-M1 link (Dunstable Northern Bypass), with the A505 at Dunstable High Street North and eastwards to Parkside (residential) and Woodside (employment) areas.
A505 WatlingStreet	A505 Watling Street passes through the western part of the parish providing connections northwards to Hockliffe and Milton Keynes.
A505	Runs along the northern edge of the parish at Sewell connecting the A505 westwards towards Leighton Buzzard and Aylesbury.
M1	Runs beyond the eastern boundary of the parish, bridged by the Sundon Road which connects with the B579 between Chalton and Luton.
A5	At Thorn, the A5 becomes dual-carriageway and, crossing the B5120, links with the M1 junction 11A at Sundon (beyond the parish boundary).

## Public Transport

16.5 Houghton Regis, which does not have its own railway station, is located between two main rail lines. The West Coast mainline, with trains running from Scotland down to London Euston including branches to Birmingham and Manchester, runs to the west of the town, with the closest station being Leighton Buzzard. There are trains 3-4 times per hour into London. On the eastern side of town is the Midland Mainline with Thameslink trains running from London's St Pancras station to Bedford, and East Midlands services which run as far north as Corby. The trains run every 10 minutes or so into London with links to the Elizabeth tube line at Farringdon. Trains also run to south west and south east London and beyond to Brighton. The closest stations on this line are at Legrave and then Harlington, with a larger combined train and bus station in central Luton.



- 16.6 Buses are fairly frequent throughout Houghton Regis which has 8 bus routes which serve 56 bus stops, the most notable being the Busway - a route which includes a guided busway partly following the former railway lines providing a fast, regular transport link as part of the response to the area's congestion problems. The Busway opened in 2013 with connections between Houghton Regis, Dunstable and Luton and will continue to be a major factor in access and connectivity for residents of Houghton Regis. As of August 2022, on a typical week day there are 332 buses from Luton towards Dunstable. The services are: A from Luton Airport running 24 hours a day, B to Downside in Dunstable, C to Beecroft in Dunstable, CX to the Amazon warehouse on Boscombe Road, E to Toddington, F70 and F77 via Leighton Buzzard to Central Milton Keynes shopping centre, G to the Langdale area of Dunstable, Hi to Thorn, and Z via Houghton Regis. There is a similar service pattern towards Luton. School services also run locally. A new service from Houghton Regis to Leagrave train station would be a very welcome addition.
- 16.7 Luton Airport is around 8 miles south east of Houghton Regis and easily accessible to residents of Houghton Regis either via the Busway or by driving to the airport.



*Figure 15: All Saint's View from Dog Kennel Down*

## Non-motorised transport

- 16.8 The provision of facilities to encourage walking, cycling, and the use of public transport is of high importance in reducing the impact of cars on the area and the environment in general. Just over 20% of residents in the 2011 Census had no access to a car or van. They are therefore dependant on walking or public transport to get where they need to go. Connectivity via footpaths and pavements is mixed through the Parish.
- 16.9 Central Bedfordshire Council is currently consulting on Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plans to identify and create routes within areas such as Houghton Regis.

## Cycle Routes

- 16.10 The main cycle route through the parish is the Sustrans (National Cycle Network) Route 6 from Luton and Leagrave, through Parkside and past Houghton Hall Park, along Dog Kennel Path to Dunstable then along Sewell Greenway, towards Stanbridge and Leighton Buzzard.
- 16.11 More dedicated cycle routes (and footpaths) are to be provided throughout HRN1 and 2 to encourage sustainable forms of transport.
- 16.12 Many of the pavements and other footpaths are shared use, i.e, marked with the blue circle and pedestrian and bicycle sign, e.g. Houghton Road, Porz Avenue and Route 6. However, improvements need to be made to both signposts and markings on the surfaces to improve clarity for users.

### **Policy TCP1: Access and Connectivity**

**New development proposals should be well connected to services and facilities and demonstrate how walking, cycling and public transport will be prioritised.**

**The planned extension of public transport links through HRN1 and connections to the town centres of Houghton Regis, Dunstable and Luton is supported.**

### ***Aspiration TCP1: Improving foot and cycle connections***

*The Town Council will work in partnership with landowners, Central Bedfordshire Council, and others fund and implement the improvements in Houghton Regis identified in the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) once it has been developed.*

*This will include, but not be limited to:*

- *extending an existing cycle/footpath parallel to Park Road North.*
- *making up a casual footpath to a cycle/footpath between Balmoral Road and Kingsland Close.*

## Parking

16.13 There are around 600 parking spaces spread across the Parish, a combination of public spaces supporting the High Street and local centres, private parking areas for commercial premises and schools, plus visitor parking. The trend over the past few years has been to provide differentiated parking for short and long term visitors during the day, which provides space for employees to park all day at the sites further from the town centre and shorter- term parking near the town centre. Among these spaces approximately 50 are allocated for disabled drivers.

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

- Old Red Lion, Bedford Rd
- Bella Calabria Restaurant has two car parks for customers
- Parkside Recreation Ground car park.

16.15 It is important to retain public parking spaces where possible to ensure that residents can continue to access facilities and services.

16.16 Residential parking can be an issue, particularly in parts of the area where houses were built prior to private ownership of cars e.g. Manor Park which was constructed in the 1950's. There are currently no residents parking schemes in the Parish and on-street parking is available in many places. Poor parking behaviour is not a matter which the Neighbourhood Plan can provide policies to control. Central Bedfordshire Council have produced an 'On-Street Parking Management Strategy' which looks at the reasons why the demand for on-street parking has become so high, and the effect this

has on other road users. The strategy looks to give practical advice of how to consistently manage the most common issues that Central Bedfordshire Council faces with on-street parking.

16.17 For new housing and commercial development, adherence to CBC's parking standards will reflect local factors and ensure that new development does not add to current levels of congestion. Where appropriate, new parking should provide a degree of permeability to reduce the risk of surface water flooding.

16.18 Electric vehicles are a broadly sustainable mode of travel that is increasing market penetration. Central Bedfordshire Council adopted 'Electric Vehicle charging: guidance for new developments Supplementary Planning Document' in December 2022. Building Regulations now require that one new charging point per new home is provided and all new non-residential buildings with more than 10 parking spaces must have a minimum of one charge point and cable routes for one in five (20%) of the total number of spaces. The provision of electric charging points in public car parks is encouraged.

## **Policy TCP2: Parking**

**Proposals for new housing and commercial developments will provide parking in accordance with CBC's parking standards and have adequate on-site parking to meet current and future needs, unless alternative and accessible car parking arrangements can be made which do not add to on-street congestion.**

**New development should not result in the loss of publicly accessible off-street car parking. Developments which propose to remove off-road parking spaces will only be supported where the need for the spaces is no longer justified, or alternative provision is made which increases or maintains the number of accessible parking spaces available on or within the immediate vicinity of the site.**

**Where appropriate, new car parking and hard-standings will be constructed using permeable materials or surfacing to allow natural drainage and reduce the risk of surface water flooding.**

**Where existing car parks are renovated, new car parks proposed, or extensions made to existing car parks, an appropriate number of charging points must be provided to the level set out in Central Bedfordshire Council's Electric vehicle charging: guidance for new developments - Supplementary Planning Document. Further provision of appropriate charging facilities in existing relevant locations will be encouraged.**

### ***Aspiration TCP2: Improving connections***

*To improve connectivity within and between the existing and proposed new parts of the Houghton Regis community, the Town Council will work with Central Bedfordshire Council and operators to look for ways to:*

- *connect the busway to link Houghton Regis North 1 and 2 with Houghton Regis Town Centre as principal routes,*
- *link the new open spaces within Houghton Regis North 1 and 2 link with an integrated network of paths and leisure routes,*
- *expand the network of paths and cycleways where possible and ensure that routes will be clearly marked with good directional and information signage e.g. about the location and walk/cycle time to specific locations,*
- *see that improved bicycle facilities will be created including safe routes and secure parking/storage in the town centre to encourage greater use of cycling,*
- *improve road safety on Tithe Farm Road, Parkside Drive and Bedford Road with more speed restrictions and pedestrian and cycle crossings, and greater use of CCTV,*
- *conduct a review of parking layouts (e.g. High Street), bay marking in residential parking ‘hotspots’ and parking for facilities to help meet the needs of residents, visitors and business users,*
- *Consider further improvements to public transport in general e.g. to Leagrave Station.*

## 17. Infrastructure Provision

- 17.1 Development can bring significant benefits to the community including new homes and jobs. However, it can also have a negative impact, for example where additional demand is placed on facilities and services which already may be near capacity such as GP surgeries. Additional infrastructure needs arising from new development must be addressed at the earliest opportunity and provided in a timely manner whether that be roads, road improvements, medical facilities, school infrastructure, public transport etc. Development that comes forward should also provide for future needs such as maintenance of open spaces.
- 17.2 Planning obligations can be used to secure infrastructure or funding from a developer although there are strict regulations controlling the circumstances in which such contributions can be sought and spent. The money raised can be used to help fund infrastructure which will meet the needs of the community and improvements include roads, schools, parks and playgrounds.
- 17.3 The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a charge per square metre on new developments and applies to new dwellings of any size and any development where the internal area of new build floorspace or extension exceeds 100 square metres. CBC does not currently have a CIL charge in place.
- 17.4 The majority of the funding will be spent by CBC on strategic infrastructure. Developer contributions that are able to be locally determined may be directed to any of the following priorities:
- Improvements to the centre of the town
  - Parks and recreational facilities
  - Footpaths, Cycleways
  - Public Transport
  - Community facilities



- 17.5 Developers are encouraged to engage with the Town Council prior to the preparation of any planning application to ensure that where appropriate and viable, facilities proposed are in line with the local priorities.

#### **Policy I1: Infrastructure for new development**

- **Development proposals must, through Section 106 agreements, Community Infrastructure Levy or other mechanisms, provide for timely delivery of essential infrastructure needs arising from the scheme which may include: Community facilities, health and education facilities,**
- **site access and any additional road capacity, car parking and public transport provision,**
- **new infrastructure to ensure the development is accessible by foot, cycle and people with mobility impairment and connections to link with existing walking and cycling routes,**
- **provision of convenient access to the middle of the town by foot,**
- **any additional capacity in local services in particular health and schools,**
- **formal sports facilities, recreational open space and amenity open space,**
- **future maintenance of open spaces, hard and soft landscaping and other public areas and facilities,**
- **appropriate and adequate lighting; and**
- **suitable capacity in local infrastructure including power supply, sewerage and drainage.**

## 18. Implementation

18.1 This section outlines the approach to the implementation of the Houghton Regis Neighbourhood Plan, including: working in partnership, funding mechanisms, priority projects and monitoring/review. The approach will be that new development should be supported by the timely delivery of infrastructure, services and facilities necessary to provide a balanced, self-sufficient community.

### Working in partnership

18.2 Houghton Regis Town Council is committed to Localism and locally informed influence over planning decisions, and it will be the key organisation in the implementation, monitoring and review of the Neighbourhood Plan. The Council will build upon its excellent track record in engaging in planning decisions (reactively through consultation and proactively through promoting the policies of this plan) and by delivering related projects for the local community. However, it is recognised that partnership working is needed for the potential of the plan to be realised. Partnership and joint working will be key elements in the successful implementation of the plan. The main organisations and the roles that they can play are summarised below.

- **Central Bedfordshire Council** - Planning Policy, Development Control, Housing Management and Improvement, Economic Development, Open Spaces, Recreation and Community Facilities, Highways and Transport, Education, Landscape and Social Services.
- **Adjoining Parish Councils** – Assessing impact of cross boundary planning applications.
- **Environment Agency** The planning, design and delivery of development, taking account of: Flood risk management; Water quality and water resources, Waste management, Land contamination & soil and Environmental permits and other regulation.
- **Site owners and developers** will need to liaise with the Town Council as well as the other relevant agencies involved in development.

### Funding and Implementation

18.3 Financial contributions will be sought from developers through Section 106 agreements and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) or Infrastructure Levy which provides a legal framework to raise funds to provide the infrastructure needed to cope with new developments.

18.4 The Neighbourhood Planning Regulations of the 2011 Localism Act enable areas with a Neighbourhood Plan in place to receive at least 25% of the

CIL (25% uncapped, paid to the Town Council) raised in their area to direct to their own local infrastructure priorities. However, Central Bedfordshire Council does not have CIL in place, although the emerging Government proposals for an Infrastructure Levy may change the way in which contributions can be sought from developments.

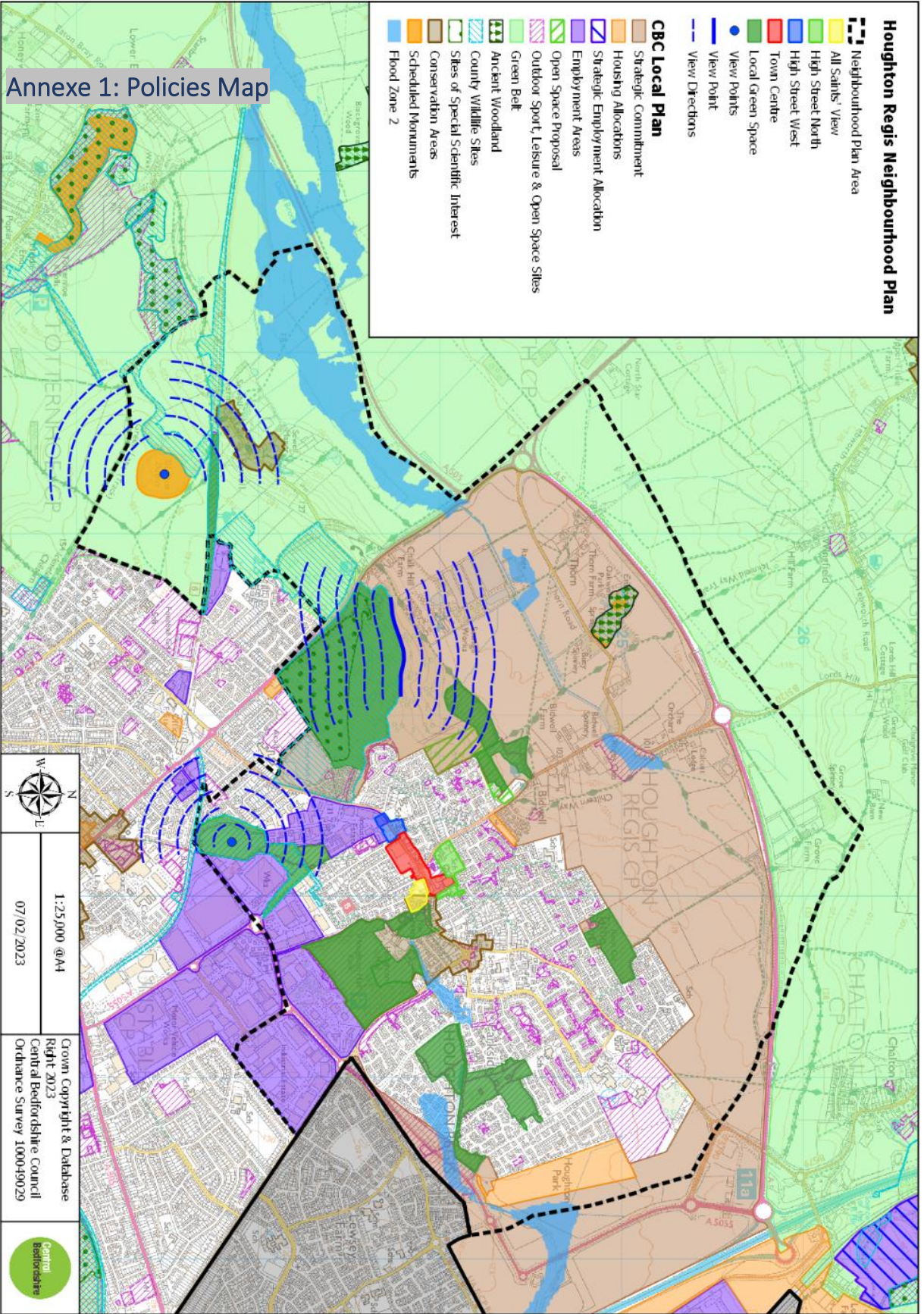
- 18.5 In addition, the Town Council will seek to influence annual and other budget decisions by CBC on housing, open space and recreation, economic development, community facilities and transport, through the Local Plan, Local Transport Plan and other policies and strategies.
- 18.6 The Town Council will also work with the appropriate agencies and organisations to develop funding bids to help to achieve Neighbourhood Plan policies and objectives. This might include, but not be limited to: The National Lottery; UK Government programmes; land fill tax credits, EU Funds and LEP funding.
- 18.7 The Plan will be used by the Town Council to:
- guide comments on planning applications
  - negotiate with landowners and developers to achieve the best possible outcomes from new development
  - direct financial resources to the village in a structured way
  - bring together groups or working parties to improve the village environment
  - lobby local authorities to support the parishioners wishes and aspirations

## 19. Monitoring and Review

- 19.1 It is important to check that progress is made towards meeting the objectives and policies of the Plan. The Town Council will report on the implementation of the Plan at least every 5 years and consider:
- if progress is being made to achieve the vision and the objectives of the Plan
  - if progress is being made towards the implementation of the policies in the Plan
  - if financial contributions available to the community arising from development is being targeted towards the identified plans and projects
  - if the Plan remains based on the most up-to-date information
  - if the Plan is being taken into account by CBC when determining planning applications
- 19.2 It will then conclude whether a review is required. If so, it will secure opinions of residents and stakeholders to update the Plan.



# Annexe 1: Policies Map



## Annexe 2: Listed Buildings and Structures

There are 23 buildings and structures which are listed buildings, i.e. on the list of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest, drawn up by Historic England, plus there are two scheduled monuments in the town:

- Church of All Saints, Grade I,
- Houghton Hall, Grade II\*,
- C17 Range of Outbuildings to Northwest of Houghton Hall, Grade II\*,
- Houghton Court, Grade II,
- Lodge to Houghton Hall, Grade II,
- Wall and Gate Piers to Houghton Hall, Grade II,
- 104 and 106, High Street, Grade II, High Street,
- Red Cow Farm Cottage, Grade II, Bedford Road,
- The Crown Public House, Grade II, The Green,
- The Red House, Grade II, The Green,
- The Red Lion Public House, Grade II, Bedford Road,
- Vane Cottage, Grade II, Park Road North,
- 21,22 and 23, East End, Grade II, Crossways,
- Barn to Northeast of Springwell Cottage, Grade II, Sewell Lane,
- Bodger's Barn and Barn to Rear, Grade II, Sewell Lane,
- Lane Farmhouse, Grade II, Sewell Lane,
- Manor Farmhouse, Grade II, Sewell Lane,
- Sewell Farmhouse, Grade II, Sewell Lane,
- Springwell Cottage, Grade II, Sewell Lane,
- Sundial Cottage, Grade II, Sewell Lane
- Dene Hollow, Grade II, Sundon Road,
- Easthill Farmhouse, Grade II, Sundon Road, (Townsend Farmhouse, delisted)
- Oakwell Park, Grade II, Oakwell Park, Thorn,
  
- Thorn Spring moated site and associated woodbanks (Scheduled Monument)
- Maiden Bower hillfort (Scheduled Monument)

Grade I buildings are of exceptional interest.

Grade II\* buildings are particularly important buildings of more than special interest.

Grade II buildings are of special interest.

### Annexe 3: Table of Aims and Policies

Neighbourhood Plan Aims		Policies	Aspirations
1	To identify and support measures to develop the appearance, vitality and facilities of the town centre and local centres of Houghton Regis	TC1, TC2, TC3, TC4, TC5, TC6	Aspiration TC1
2	To support, protect and enhance the social assets, community facilities and services (including schools and healthcare, leisure and recreation) to meet residents' needs.	TC5, TC6, GSR1, GSR3	Aspiration TC1 Aspiration H1 Aspiration GSR2
3	To ensure that all new development is well-designed, sympathetic and sustainable and enhances the character and function of Houghton Regis.	H2,	Aspiration H1 Aspiration H2
4	To respond to housing needs by supporting suitable housing for people of all ages and means.	H1	Aspiration H1
5	To protect the rural aspect of the countryside outside of the urban areas.	GSR4, BNF1	
6	To protect, enhance and where possible add to the green and blue infrastructure of the Parish.	GSR1, GSR2, GSR3, GSR4, BNF1	Aspiration GSR3 Aspiration GSR4
7	To preserve and enhance Houghton Regis's Green, Conservation Area and heritage assets (whether listed or not).	HE1	Aspiration HE1
8	To support existing local businesses and encourage new small and medium-sized businesses which provide sustainable employment opportunities.	BE1	Aspiration BE1
9	To identify and support measures to encourage walking, cycling and other sustainable forms of transport as means of fulfilling shorter journeys.	GSR5, TCP1	Aspiration GSR4 Aspiration TCP1
10	To identify and support measures which improve traffic management including parking and speed control.	TCP2	Aspiration TCP1 Aspiration TCP2
11	To identify and support appropriate infrastructure developments which reflect the community's needs and keep it an attractive, well-planned and safe place for everyone.	I1	