



HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Peel Street, Houghton Regis, Bedfordshire, LU5 5EY

Town Mayor: **Cllr Jimmy Carroll**

Tel: 01582 708540

Town Clerk: **Clare Evans**

e-mail: info@houghtonregis.org.uk

22nd September 2023

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

To: All Town Councillors

Notice of Meeting

You are hereby summoned to the Meeting of the Houghton Regis Town Council to be held at the Council Offices, Peel Street on Monday 2nd October 2023 at 7.00pm.

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

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

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

Clare Evans
Town Clerk

**THIS MEETING MAY BE
RECORDED¹**

AGENDA

- 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
- 2. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

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

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.

¹ *Phones and other equipment may be used to film, audio record, tweet or blog from this meeting by an individual Council member or a member of the public. No part of the meeting room is exempt from public filming unless the meeting resolves to go into exempt session.*

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

3. SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

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

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

Cllr Costello has confirmed that he has a registered interest in agenda item 13. As a councillor and resident with a particular interest in this service Cllr Costello has requested a dispensation to enable him to take part in this discussion and vote thereon on Agenda Item 13.

Recommendation: To grant dispensation to Cllr Costello to enable him to take part in the discussion and vote thereon on Agenda Item 13.

4. MINUTES

Pages 7-14

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 19th June 2023.

Recommendation: To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 19th June 2023.

5. COMMITTEE AND SUB-COMMITTEE MINUTES

Pages 15-55

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

Corporate Services Committee	30 th May 2023
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minute number 12463 Officer / Member Protocol • Minute number 12464 Councillors Expenses
Community Services Committee	6 th February 2023
Environment & Leisure Committee	5 th June 2023
Planning Committee	12 th June, 3 rd July, and 14 th August 2023
Town Partnership Committee	24 th January 2023

Pages 56-60

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	15 th August 2023

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

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

- Minute number 12463 Officer / Member Protocol;
- Minute number 12464 Councillors Expenses.

6. TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

A verbal report will be provided.

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

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

Members are requested to note that the BATPC have invited member councils to nominate a representative to sit on the BATPC County Committee. HRTC's nominated representatives on the BATPC were contacted in this regard to see if they would like to be put forward for nomination. As only Cllr Jones expressed an interest in serving on the County Committee this nomination has been put forward.

8. AUDITED ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN 2022/23

Pages 61-72

To advised members of the outcomes of the external audit 2022/23.

- Recommendation:**
- 1. To approve and accept the Audited Annual Governance And Accountability Return 2022/23.**
 - 2. To note the matters raised in the Completion Letter dated 21st September 2023 and Section 3 of the Audited Annual Governance And Accountability Return 2022/23 and in future to:**
 - **Continue with arrangements put in place to ensure that the council will meet its statutory obligations in respect of public rights and answers no in the Annual Governance Statement where this has not been achieved;**
 - **Ensure that the Annual Governance and Accountability Return is accurate and complete;**
 - **Use the standard proforma provided in Mazars' guidance for the reconciliation of boxes 7 and 8 clearly showing which debtors and creditors are responsible for the difference;**
 - **Ensure the Internal Audit covers objective L.**

9. EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION POLICY

Pages 73-85

Review of this policy is to be carried out annually by Town Council and was last reviewed at the meeting held on the 19th December 2022.

Members were advised, at the meeting held on the 19th December 2022, that advice had been sought from the Town Councils HR provider as to the suitability of the Town Councils established Equality & Diversity policy. The response was that whilst that policy was still suitable the Town Council may like to consider updating the policy, by going one step further than the basic equal opportunity policy (which reflects compliance with the law) and positively encourage a more diverse workforce. Hence a new Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy was adopted, minute number 12299.

There has been no further guidance and therefore it is considered this policy remains fit for purpose.

Recommendation: To review and approve the Town Councils Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

10. NEW OFFICE PROVISION EMR

Pages 86-89

Members are advised that at the Corporate Services meeting held on the 11th September 2023, members received the attached report. At this meeting Members agreed to defer making any recommendations to Council as it was felt that Council should be consulted first, as the EMR holder.

Members are reminded that at the Town Council meeting held on the 19th June 2023 it was suggested that the use of funds from the EMR for New Office Provision be considered (minute number 12497). Members will find attached a report in order to support the use of funds from EMR Office Provision to allow the modelling of the Town Council offices.

Members are advised that it has been suggested by a councillor that this EMR be transferred to the Community Services Committee to enable this committee to use the fund to bring forward community-based projects. Members may like to consider this suggestion.

Recommendations:

- 1) **To recommend approval, retrospectively, of a sum of £1,125 for the purchase of new chairs and desks for new members of staff and for this sum to be taken from the EMR Office Provision;**
- 2) **To recommend that a further sum of up to £10,000 to be used for works to upgrade the IT cabling and electrical works and for this sum to be taken from the EMR Office Provision;**

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- 3) **To agree to a costings exercise in order to enable reconfiguration of the lobby area in order to allow for more office space;**
 - 4) **To recommend that the committee responsible for the EMR Office Provision be amended to the Corporate Services Committee.**

11. PARKSIDE RECREATION GROUND PAVILION (REMODELLING FEASIBILITY) OR PARKSIDE COMMUNITY HUB

Pages 90-96

To present to members the considerations of Community Services Committee from 17th July 2023.

12. START TIME FOR WORKING GROUP MEETINGS

At the June Town Council meeting it was requested that in relation to the Combating Crime Working Group it be investigated whether a change of start time (currently 11am) would fit in the other attendees working patterns (Bedfordshire Police and Central Bedfordshire Council Officers).

Feedback from Bedfordshire Police is that a working group finish time of after 4pm would generally fall outside of their normal working day and as such would like likely to restrict their ability to attend. Feedback from CBC advises that they will try and fit in with the group's preference for a start time.

The support of Bedfordshire Police into this meeting is crucial for the continued success of the work of this working group. As such it is not suggested that there be any change at this time to the timings of the Combating Crime Working Group.

13. CONSULTATION ON THE FUTURE OF HOUGHTON REGIS DAY CENTRE FOR OLDER PEOPLE

Pages 97-105

As members are aware CBC are running a Consultation on the future of Houghton Regis Day Centre for Older People. The consultation runs from 14th August to 6th November 2023. Details of the consultation can be found by following this link: www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/consultations

Members will find attached the consultation document.

The consultation advises that having looked at several options for the future of the day centre, CBC's preferred option at this time is to relocate the current service for existing customers to a community space at All Saints View, the new Independent Living Scheme in Houghton Regis. CBC would then close Houghton Regis Day Centre.

In considering this consultation Members are requested to consider the issues highlighted in the consultation report and whether the proposed course of action continues to support the needs of services users. Some concerns have been expressed

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 19th June 2023 at 7.00pm

Present: Councillors: J Carroll Town Mayor
N Batchelor
E Billington
E Costello
E Cooper
Y Farrell
W Henderson
M Herber
T McMahon
C Rollins
A Slough
C Slough

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

Public: 2

Apologies Councillor: P Burgess
D Jones

12485 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr Jones and Cllr Burgess.

12486 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

12487 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

None.

12488 MINUTES

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 17th May 2023.

Resolved: To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 17th May 2023 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

12489 COMMITTEE AND WORKING GROUP MINUTES

Members received the minutes of the following committees and considered any recommendations contained therein

Corporate Services Committee	27 th February 2023
Community Services Committee	None to present
Environment & Leisure Committee	14 th March 2023
Planning Committee	24 th April 2023
Town Partnership Committee	None to present

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

New Cemetery Sub-Committee None to present

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

To recommend to Town Council to adopt a revised Town Councils Leave and Other Absences Policy and to adopt a new Family Friendly Policy that covers all leave entitlements other than Annual Leave.

12490 TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Town Mayor updated members on events that had been attended, which had included Bowls Club Open Day. The Town Mayor advised members that instead of nominating individual charities for the Municipal year, he would donate to a different local charity for each Mayoral event, with Tea on the Green going to the friends of Houghton Hall Park.

12491 REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS & ON TRAINING SESSIONS ATTENDED

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

Cllr A Slough updated members on the Friends of Windsor Drive Community Open Space Group with the success of the summer activities, and encouraged promotion of these events where possible.

Cllr Jones had provided a report to be shared in his absence:

BATPC – County Committee and Finance and General Purpose meetings had been attended, members were advised the Chairman Councillor Blaine had resigned and the post had temporarily been taken on, until the AGM in October, by Councillor Russell of Biggleswade Town Council. The office move from Biggleswade to Shefford was completed at the end of April 2023, and the committee meetings were being held in the Chamber of Shefford Town Council. The draft accounts for 2022/2023 had shown a loss of £5,618, this was a larger amount than had been budgeted for but had occurred due to the under forecasting of the salary increase and costs incurred from the office move.

A Government technical consultation had been completed in relation to the infrastructure levy as part of the Government's Levelling Up and Regeneration bill which was in the process of going through Parliament. This would replace the current developer contributions through s106 funding. It was agreed to submit a response supporting the present neighbourhood share arrangements, criticising the proposed reduction in the amount of the share and urging the retention of an incentive in the rates of share in the encouragement of parishes to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan.

Three new Councillor induction sessions had been arranged primarily for newly elected councillors but were open to all.

Hospice at Home Volunteers – a meeting had been attended during May at which the draft accounts of 2022/2023 were presented showing a loss of £6,408. The Charity continued to lose money. It was suggested to the charity that a key partner grant from Houghton Regis Town Council be applied for, members were advised an application may be received.

The code of conduct policy was reviewed and was amended to incorporate new legislation and modern caring practices. The AGM was due to be held in July.

Cllr Carroll attended a meeting at CHEWS, which had proven to be informative and included discussion on their uniform grant policies, which was due to restart in December 2023 and would run for 6 months.

12492 YEAR END ACCOUNTS

Members received a report providing brief outline of the year end accounting process. Members were invited to raise any queries which related to the process.

Members received this report for information.

12493 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN 2022/2023 ANNUAL INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT 2022/2023

In accordance with Financial Regulation 2.3, Members were presented with the completed Annual Internal Audit Report and supporting paperwork as part of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return, for the year ended 31st March 2023.

Members were advised that the internal auditor completed an interim internal audit on 21st February 2023 and the year-end internal audit on 25th April 2023.

Resolved: To receive the Annual Internal Audit Report 2022/2023 and to approve the actions detailed in the annotated Observations report as attached.

12494 DATES FOR THE EXERCISE OF PUBLIC RIGHTS FOR 2022/2023

Members were requested to approve the dates for the Exercise of Public Rights in relation to the Annual Governance & Accountability Return, for the year ended 31st March 2023.

Members were advised of the following

1. Date of announcement: 22nd June 2023
2. Date of commencement: 23rd June 2023
3. End date: 3rd August 2023

Resolved: To approve the dates for the Exercise of Public Rights in relation to the Annual Governance & Accountability Return, for the year ended 31st March 2023 as follows:

- 1. Date of announcement: 22nd June 2023**
- 2. Date of commencement: 23rd June 2023**
- 3. End date: 3rd August 2023**

**12495 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN 2022/2023
SECTION 1 - ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT**

Members were advised that the Interim Internal Audit identified an issue of non-compliance with Regulation 13 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations. Members received a report which enabled consideration of the comment made during the interim internal audit as it related to Assertion 3.

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

- Resolved:**
- 1. To note that the failure to display the external auditors report by 30th September 2022 is non-compliance with Regulation 13 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations;**
 - 2. To confirm that as it has not had a significant financial effect on the ability of the council to conduct its business or manage its finances, as included in Assertion 3 of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return 2022/2023, that the council can respond positively to Assertion 3.**
 - 3. To approve and sign Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return for the year ended 31st March 2023.**

**12496 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN 2022/2023
SECTION 2 – ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS**

In accordance with Financial Regulation 2.3, Section 2 – Accounting Statements of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return and the supporting Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2023 was received for consideration, approval and signature subject to external audit.

- Resolved: To approve and sign Section 2 – Accounting Statements of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return for the year ended 31st March 2023 subject to external audit.**

12497 REVIEW OF EARMARKED RESERVE MOVEMENTS 2023/24

Members received a schedule of earmarked reserves for 2023/24 with predicted movements to and from reserves during the course of the financial year.

It was suggested that the use of funds from the EMR for New Office Provision be considered.

This report was provided for information only, ear marked reserve movements were confirmed at year end.

12498 RECEIPT OF PETITION

Members were requested to note that a petition had been submitted to the Town Council on 15th May 2023 at the Annual Town's meeting.

The wording of the petition was as follows:

Petition for the town meeting Monday 15th May 7pm St Thomas'

We, the undersigned note that, following the elections, there has been a change at Houghton Regis Town Council.

We ask our councillors to act on the following:-

Insist Grendall Lane is brought back to the full town council for further discussion.

Subsequent to this, Members were advised that a Motion was submitted on 30th May to the Town Clerk as follows:

From Cllrs; Jimmy Carroll proposer of the motion and Tracey McMahon seconder of the motion.

Motion.

To Instruct the Clerk and Chair of the Proposed New Cemetery Sub Committee of Houghton Regis Town Council to:

- 1. To open negotiations with Central Bedfordshire Council regarding land owned by Central Bedfordshire Council at Grendall Lane Houghton Regis for its suitability as a future Cemetery for the Town of Houghton Regis.*
- 2. To proceed and complete the T3 investigations at the Grendall Lane site subject to Central Bedfordshire Council as land owner. To fund the investigations of the Grendall Lane from EMR 348 and general reserves up to £20,000.*
- 3. To contact CDS cemetery consultants to inform them of the change of motion by the Proposed New Cemetery Sub Committee as to Grendall Lane and to continue with the investigations into the Grendall Lane possible cemetery site.*

At the time of preparing this report, the motion was to be debated at the Proposed New Cemetery Sub Committee meeting on 12th June.

Members were requested to note that the Committee Functions & Terms of Reference for the Proposed New Cemetery Sub Committee enabled it to consider and determine all matters relating to the development of a new cemetery.

The petition was signed by some 175 residents, although not cross checked with the electoral role, it was taken that the signatories were all residents of Houghton Regis.

There was no legislation or local policy directing how the council was to respond to the receipt of a petition. The Proposed New Cemetery Sub Committee was advised at its meeting on 12th June that a petition had been received, what it said and how many people signed it.

Additionally, the Proposed New Cemetery Sub Committee was provided with the option of referring this matter to Town Council in accordance with Standing Orders.

As the Proposed New Cemetery Sub Committee had full knowledge of the existence of the petition and it was acting within its remit, the advice was that the Town Council should note the receipt of the petition.

It was highlighted that there was no procedure for petitions and a suggestion was made that a policy was produced.

Members were advised that the Corporate Services Manager would look into procedure with intention to report at the next Corporate Services Committee meeting.

Members were reminded that the substance of this petition had been addressed at the New Cemetery Sub-Committee.

Members received this report for information.

12499 START TIME FOR WORKING GROUP MEETINGS

Members were requested to consider a suitable start time for meetings of Working Groups.

Members were reminded there were three working groups to consider:

- Allotment Working Group – current start time was 3pm, members agreed to move this to 5.30pm
- Combating Crime Working Group – current start time was 11am. It was highlighted that this working group incorporated partnership working with both Bedfordshire Police and Central Bedfordshire Council Officers. It would be investigated whether a change of time would fit in the other attendees working patterns.

Resolved: To change the start time of Allotment Working Group to 5.30pm.

12500 ASSET OF COMMUNITY VALUE NOMINATION

Members were requested to consider the suitability and desirability of nominating the land at Windsor Drive as an asset of community value.

Members highlighted the community value of open space, particularly as some of the new developments locally were flats. Members were mindful that Windsor Drive would be held on the asset list for 5 years, after this time it would be deregistered. It was requested that this be monitored to enable the listing to be renewed in due course assuming that it did become listed.

Resolved: To support the request from the Friends of Windsor Drive group to nominate the land at Windsor Drive as an Asset of Community Value.

12501 COMMITTEE, SUB-COMMITTEE & WORKING GROUP MEMBERSHIP

As members may recall at the AGM on 17th May 2023 it was agreed to defer nominating to the Town Partnership Committee until this meeting.

For information Central Bedfordshire Council appointed CBC councillors were: Cllrs C Alderman, S Goodchild, P Hamill and T McMahon to the Houghton Regis Partnership committee.

The Town Council was required to nominate 4 cllrs to sit on this committee. Several members showed an interest on sitting on this committee, Cllrs C Slough, D Jones, Y Farrell, J Carroll and M Herber.

Members were requested to vote in favour for the councillors who requested to be considered to sit on the Town Partnership Committee.

Cllr Carroll - 9 votes in favour
Cllr Farrell - 8 votes in favour
Cllr Herber - 4 votes in favour
Cllr Jones - 8 votes in favour
Cllr C Slough 9 - votes in favour

Accordingly, Cllrs J Carroll, Y Farrell, D Jones and C Slough were elected to sit on the Town Partnership Committee.

12502 REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

As members may recall at the AGM on 17th May 2023 it was agreed to defer nominating to the Houghton Hall Park Board and Houghton Hall Park Management Advisory Group until this meeting.

Houghton Hall Park Board

In accordance with the Joint Venture Agreement (JVA) the council were requested to appoint 3 members to the Board, one of whom must be from the governing body. To date the council had nominated 2 members, the Clerk had also been a member.

For information Central Bedfordshire Council had appointed CBC Cllrs Y Farrell and T McMahon to the Houghton Hall Park Board.

Cllr Jones and Cllr Batchelor expressed an interest in sitting on the Houghton Hall Park Board. It would be requested as to whether two members would be permitted in addition to the Clerk.

Houghton Hall Park Management Advisory Group

In accordance with the Joint Venture Agreement (JVA) the Group would comprise of members appointed by the Board. The Board was required to ensure that there were at least 6 group members, being 2 from each council, one from the local friends group and one or more from other interested parties.

Accordingly, the council was not required to appoint to this Group. However, should any members be interested in being a member of this Group, they were invited to contact the Clerk in due course. The MAG would continue to be supported by the Head of Environmental & Community Services.

Cllr Carroll expressed an interest in sitting on the Houghton Hall Park Management Advisory Group.

Resolved: To appoint Cllr Jones and Cllr Batchelor as representatives for the Houghton Hall Park Board and to put forward Cllr Carroll as the representative for Houghton Hall Park Management Advisory Group for 2023/24.

12503 APPROVED TOWN COUNCIL PLEDGES

As this was a newly elected council, it was suitable to advise / remind councillors of pledges / declarations made.

- Civility & Respect Pledge:
- Climate change
- Cost of Living Crisis

Members received this report for information.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.20pm

Dated this 2nd day of October 2023

Chairman

12453 MINUTES

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 27th February 2023.

Resolved: To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 27th February 2023 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

12454 TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING MEETINGS AND CONSIDER ANY RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED THEREIN

Personnel Sub-Committee: 16th January 2023

Resolved: To receive the Minutes detailed above.

12455 COMMITTEE FUNCTIONS & TERMS OF REFERENCE

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

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

Members received the extract from the approved Committee Functions & Terms of Reference which related to this committee.

Members received this report for information.

12456 FINANCIAL REPORT 2023/24

In accordance with the committee functions a review of the income and expenditure of the committee should be undertaken periodically. However, at the time of compilation of this report, financial year 2022/2023 had not been closed down.

Members were advised the budget figures were as set in January 2023.

Members received, for information, the budget report for Corporate Services Committee.

Resolved:

- 1) To approve a virement of the sum of £300 from budget heading Advertising (190-4031) to Accountancy & Software (101-4057) to enable the town council to subscribe to a platform offering an electronic signature (for example DocuSign, E-Sign or similar).
- 2) To recommend to Town Council, at the meeting to be held on the 19th June 2023, the transfer of the sum of £6000 from General Reserves to budget heading P&R Capital and Projects, Computer Costs (199-4026) for the purchase of IT equipment for new members of staff.

DJJ-

12457 BANK AND CASH RECONCILIATION STATEMENTS

Members were requested to receive the monthly bank and cash reconciliation statements for January, February and March 2023.

It was highlighted that between 28th February and 31st March £311,000 had been moved out of the LA Deposit Fund Account. It was assumed that this sum had been transferred out of the account to fund the Tith Farm project, as this project had started. A request was made that confirmation be provided to members that the funding which was due to be received, by the Town Council, to fund this project, had actually been received.

Resolved:

- 1. To approve the monthly bank and cash reconciliation statements for January and February and to note the draft bank and cash reconciliation statement for March 2023;**
- 2. For these along with the original bank statements to be signed by the Chair of Corporate Services Committee and the Council's RFO.**

12458 LIST OF CHEQUE PAYMENTS

Members received a list of payments for the period January, February and March 2023 (inclusive).

It was clarified that the payment list received by councillors had already been checked and reconciled by designated councillors.

Members received this report for information.

12459 INVESTMENT REPORT

In accordance with Committee Functions, Financial Regulation 8 and Banking Arrangements, Investment Strategy & Investment Arrangements, the Corporate Services Committee were to oversee and manage the financial obligations of the Council, including:

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

This report had been expanded to incorporate the capital value of the Property Fund as per the Internal Auditors comment from interim audit in 2022/23 (Ref E2).

Cllr Jones and Cllr Herber volunteered to engage in a review of the councils approach to risk and investment with the requisite that professional support would be offered for councillors undertaking this role.

Resolved: **To nominate Cllr Jones and Cllr Herber to engage in a review of the councils approach to risk and investment and for their findings to be reported back to Corporate Services Committee for further**

consideration.**12460 RENEWAL OF DIRECT DEBIT, STANDING ORDER, BACS AND CHAPS PAYMENTS**

Members were advised, under Financial Regulation 6.8, the approval of the use of Direct Debit, Standing Order, BACS or CHAPS would be renewed by resolution of the council every year.

Members received a list of Direct Debits and Standing Orders.

Members were informed that the town council used BACs payment for staff salaries only.

Members highlighted the top 7 items were associated with cost of living support scheme, it was acknowledged that this scheme had been extended to March 2024 in the budget.

Resolved:

1. **To approve the use of BACS method of payment.**
2. **To approve the use of Direct Debit, Standing Order and CHAPS method of payment.**

12461 PUBLIC WORKS LOAN BOARD REPAYMENTS ANNUAL REPORT

In accordance with the Committee Functions & Terms of Reference and Financial Regulations, Members are presented with an annual report to provide detail on the council's loans including current value, repayments and early settlement options as they stand as of 1st April 2023.

Resolved: **To note the Public Works Loan Board Repayments Annual Report.**

12462 INSURANCE CLAIMS

Members were advised that there had been one insurance claim since the last meeting of this committee.

Members received this report for information.

<i>Claim number</i>	<i>Details</i>	<i>Repair cost</i>	<i>Date settled</i>
27230000247	Date of incident: 8/4/23 Address of incident: Tithe farm Play Area, Tithe Farm Rd, Houghton Regis Nature of incident: Vandalism to a wooden platform forming part of a piece of play equipment. The platform was snapped in half.	1,100	17 th April 2023

DJJ

12463 OFFICER/MEMBER PROTOCOL

The Town Councils Officer/Member Protocol was last reviewed, by this committee, on the 1st June 2021.

There had been no amendments to this document and therefore it was considered fit for purpose.

Members received a copy of the Officer/Member Protocol, it was suggested that this document be presented at the first meeting of each new administration.

Resolved: To recommend to Town Council that the Officer/Member Protocol be approved.

12464 COUNCILLORS EXPENSES

Members received a copy of the Town Councils Councillor Expenses Policy.

This policy was provided for review every 4 years, following each new administration.

Resolved: To recommend to Town Council that the Councillor's Expenses Policy be approved.

12465 POLICY DOCUMENT REVIEW

Policies and procedures play an important role in governing the Town Councils responsibilities. Policies and procedures set out expectations, from both the Council and employees, and confirmed legal compliance.

This schedule was provided annually at the first Corporate Services meeting following the Town Councils Annual General Meeting.

Members received a list of suggested policy review dates that coincided with dates of the meetings for this committee for the municipal year 2023-2024.

Resolved: To consider and approve the 2023-2024 Policy Review Document

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 7.45pm

Dated this 11th day of September 2023.



Chairman

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL
Community Services Committee
Minutes of the meeting held on
6th February 2023 at 7.00pm

Present: Councillors: K Wattingham Chairman
P Burgess
Y Farrell
S Goodchild
T McMahon
A Slough
C Slough Substitute

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

Public: 5

Apologies: Councillors: C Copleston

Also present: Councillor: J Carroll

12344 APOLOGIES & SUBSTITUTIONS

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

12345 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

12346 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

None.

12347 MINUTES

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 7th November and 15th November 2022.

Resolved: To confirm the minutes of the Community Services Committee meetings held on 7th November and 15th November 2022 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

12348 TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING WORKING GROUPS AND CONSIDER ANY RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED THEREIN

Events Working Group 27th October & 1st December 2022

Combating Crime Working Group 19th October, 16th November & 21st December 2022

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

12349 INCOME AND EXPENDITURE REPORT

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

Clarification was sought regarding an overspend on resident Support Packs, it was advised that it was shown as an overspend as income is shown in a different section of the budget report.

It was highlighted that Civic Events was shown as having spent 121% of their budget, it was advised this had been due to the unpredictable increase in prices.

12350 REPORT FROM GROUNDWORK

Antony Fuller from Groundwork was in attendance at the meeting to report on the youth work Groundwork has recently completed in Houghton Regis on behalf of Central Bedfordshire Council.

Members were advised that Anthony was moving on, and the Youth Club provision would be taken over by Charley Ashley.

Members were advised the Safer Neighbourhood Team attended a session and met with young people. Siblings of a victim of a fatal knife crime attended a Knife Crime Workshop, it was hoped to offer further workshops with more collaborative working with agencies with a hope to cover ASB, relationships, sexuality and drugs.

12351 HRTC YOUTH & COMMUNITY SERVICES

Members received a report for November and December on youth and community work completed.

Members were advised that the Support Packs were very well received by the community, funding for which was received from CBC Ward Councillors. Houghton Regis Town Councillors wished to thank Ward Councillors for their financial contribution to enable the creation of the resident support packs.

Members welcomed the opening of the foodbank in Houghton Regis and requested donations and highlighted that donations could be toiletries, sanitary towels, cleaning items or other items aside from food.

Members were advised the Youth Café had been well attended although a drop in numbers had been seen whilst the weather was particularly bad. Young people see the space as a safe place and a place to learn new skills. Young people who no longer attended the provision have visited and updated staff on their progress.

Members were advised there was some intergenerational work planned with the Youth Council and the Later Living Social Group at the Coronation Event.

Members received this report for information.



12352 GRANTS

2. To give delegated authority to the Chair and Vice-Chair and for the scheme to be reviewed when 100 applications were reached.

12354 RENEWAL OF SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT WITH BEDFORDSHIRE POLICE

Members were invited to consider the Service Level Agreement with Bedfordshire Police to deliver high visibility policing in Houghton Regis under Operation Hana for 2023/24.

The current contract would run until 31st March 2023.

Members were advised that the officer hourly rates had increased. This had been taken into account during the budget setting process.

Resolved: To agree the Service Level Agreement with Bedfordshire Police to deliver high visibility policing in Houghton Regis under Operation Hana for 2023/24 and for this to be signed by the Chair of Community Services Committee.

12355 DETACHED / OUTREACH YOUTH WORK IN HOUGHTON REGIS

Members were advised £72,060 of funding for a two-year project had been received to support outreach work in Houghton Regis. This funding did not require match funding.

The Community Development Office advised members that the sessions would be open sessions.

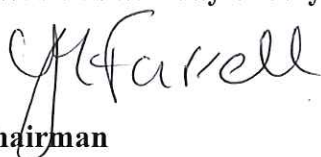
It was highlighted to members how this funding would show on the budget report as an overspend as the income would show in a different section of the report.

Members were advised this funding would enable youth provision to be offered every weekday evening.

Members were advised that it was hoped that some funding would be used for a residential visit. The value of such visits was highlighted by several members and it was felt this could prove to be an unrepeatable experience of exceptional value to the participating young people.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.26pm

Dated this 17th day of July 2023.


Chairman

Members were advised that the following Small Projects Grants had been awarded under delegated authority:

- Houghton Regis Ladies Group £200
- Houghton Regis Bowls Club £200

Small Project Grants

The following applications were received:

Members were advised that £855 remained in the Small Projects grants budget.

Members discussed the applications, it was agreed that Housing 21's request for a defibrillator was to be awarded £500, the remaining balance of £355 be awarded to BRCC for community tea dance events.

<i>Applicant</i>	<i>Amount requested</i>	<i>Amount awarded</i>	<i>Purpose</i>
Housing 21	£500	£500	Community defibrillator
BRCC	£500	£355	3 x community tea dance events

Resolved: To consider and determine the Small Project grants detailed.

12353 CORONATION BIG LUNCH - CORONATION GRANTS 2023 24

To enable members to consider the option of providing a grant to residents to enable Coronation Big Lunch events to be held in aid of the Kings Coronation.

Members were advised of the popularity and uptake of the Jubilee Grant. It was felt that a similar scheme for the Coronation should be offered.

Concerns were raised regarding the quantity of applicants and whether this could lead to funding issues. It was agreed that if 100 applicants were reached, the Chair and Vice-Chair of this committee would be consulted.

An addition to the officer recommendation was proposed by Cllr Goodchild seconded by Cllr McMahon to read:

2. To give delegated authority to the Chair and Vice-Chair and for the scheme to be reviewed when 100 applications were reached.

This addition was carried and accordingly became part of the substantive recommendations:

Resolved: 1. To offer a Coronation Big Lunch Grant to residents to be funded from the Small Capital Grants up to the value of £200.

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL
Environment & Leisure Committee
Minutes of the meeting held on
5th June 2023 at 7.00pm

Present: Councillors: A Slough Chairman
E Cooper
E Costello
Y Farrell
M Herber Substitution
W Henderson
T McMahan

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

Public: 3

Apologies: Councillors: P Burgess

12466 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Cllr Burgess (Cllr Herber substituted).

12467 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Concerns were raised over the decimation of hedgerows along Windsor Drive during maintenance work carried out. It was queried why so much vegetation was being removed and were informed by the workman that the work being carried out was on the instruction of their management team. Concerns were that this had been completed without any consideration to the wildlife occupying the hedgerows.

12468 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

12469 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

Members were invited to elect a Vice-Chair for Environment and Leisure Committee for 2023/2024.

Nomination: Cllr McMahan Nominated by: Cllr Herber
Seconded by: Cllr McMahan

Nomination: Cllr Costello Nominated by: Cllr Cooper
Seconded by: Cllr Farrell

A recoded vote was requested.

Members in favour of Cllr McMahan: Cllr Herber and Cllr McMahan
Members in favour of Cllr Costello: Cllr Cooper, Cllr Farrell, Cllr Henderson and Cllr Costello

Accordingly, Cllr Costello was duly appointed as Vice-Chair of the Environment and Leisure Committee for the municipal year of 2023/2024.

12470 MINUTES

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 14th March 2023.

Resolved: To confirm the minutes of the Environment & Leisure Committee meeting held on 14th March 2023 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

12471 COMMITTEE FUNCTIONS & TERMS OF REFERENCE

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

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

Members received the extract from the approved Committee Functions & Terms of Reference which related to this committee.

Members received this report for information.

12472 TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING WORKING GROUPS AND CONSIDER ANY RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED THEREIN

Allotments Working Group 17th January and 20th March 2023

12473 ENVIRONMENT & LEISURE COMMITTEE FINANCIAL REPORT 2023/24

In accordance with the committee functions a review of the income and expenditure of the committee should be undertaken periodically. However, at the time of compiling this report, financial year 2022/2023 had not been closed down.

Members received, for information, the budget report for Environment & Leisure Committee alongside the Budget Explanation.

Of note the following projects were anticipated during 2023/24:

- Removal of gas supply at Tithe Farm pavilion (no longer required)
- Development of all-weather sports facility at Tithe farm including 3G pitch, new pavilion and refurbished and extended car park.
- Remodelling of Parkside Pavilion – this was a complex potential project. Consultation work needed to be undertaken within the community to determine options, investigations needed to take place to determine scope of works feasible. The budget available only covers this feasibility work.

- Replacement of litter and dog bins with dual purpose bins.
- Installation of exercise equipment at Parkside recreation ground

The placement of the exercise equipment at Parkside was queried, it was advised that feasibility of placement would be looked at.

Queries were raised regarding several amounts allocated to amenities and water and whether the predicted figures were accurate given the fluctuation in costs.

Maintenance budget allocation was queried in relation to Parkside Pavilion as the allocation was less than the previous year. It was advised that the budgeted amount for the previous year was to incorporate a significant repair required.

Members were advised that costs for the Tithe Farm Pavilion would be picked up by Beds FA with the Town Council providing grass mowing, at a cost, to Beds FA. The Town Council would pick up the cost of the refurbishment of the old Pavilion.

Members were advised that when the budget was set, it was an estimate of costings based on 6 months and not at year end.

Members were advised in previous years an income had been received from Central Bedfordshire Council for grass cutting, and had been included in the budget for 23/24, however, Central Bedfordshire Council had made the decision not to continue with the uptake of this service.

Concerns were raised regarding Houghton Hall Park and it's long term financial viability. Members were advised that this was a joint venture and any financial impact would be shared between Central Bedfordshire Council at 80% and Houghton Regis Town Council at 20% of any additional financial impact.

It was highlighted to members that some items showing a deficit were offset by income which was shown in a separate area of the report.

Members received this report for information.

12474 MACHINERY RENEWALS PROGRAMME

Members received the anticipated machinery renewals programme for 2023/24.

Concerns were raised over the continued use of vehicles which used fossil fuel.

Resolved: To support the Machinery Renewals Programme for 2023/24.

12475 ROAD RUNNERS CRICKET CLUB

Members were requested to consider options for a long-term agreement for facility use by Road Runners Cricket Club.

Members were advised that this group had been using Orchard Close for many years and had proven reliable.

To amend the draft licence to state that the fee to be increased by Environment and Leisure Committee in the autumn each year.

Resolved: To approve the draft Licence subject to negotiations with the Road Runners Cricket Club.

12476 FOOTBALL FOUNDATION'S GRASS PITCH MAINTENANCE SCHEME

Members were advised of the Football Foundation's Pitch Power Scheme, the results of the pitch power assessment for Parkside and Moore Crescent recreation grounds to enable members to consider next steps.

Members were advised the assessment had been completed and some improvements had been recommended, the application of grant funding was encouraged by the FA. Members queried match funding and were advised of years one and two would require 100%, years three and four 60%.

It was suggested Houghton Regis Town Council staff could be trained to maintain the grounds.

Resolved: To support the application to the Football Foundation's Grass Pitch Maintenance Fund for the pitches at Moore Crescent and Parkside recreation grounds.

12477 WINDSOR DRIVE OPEN SPACE – GRASS CUTTING REGIME

Members were advised at the Annual Parish Meeting on 15th May 2023, a comment / question was made by the Friends of Windsor Drive Group which requested that consideration be given to enhancing the flora and fauna on the open space at Windsor Drive by adjusting the mowing regime.

The comment / question was as follows:

“Over the last couple of years the open space has been mowed within an inch of its life, i.e. way too short. This has meant it's pretty much turned to dust in the heat of Summer.

Great to see it was left later in May before mowing, however, we have had a lot of feedback from our members and residents supporting the No Mow May campaign and in addition, asking for a patch of land to be left natural or made into a wildflower patch.

We are currently working with CPRE Bedfordshire and have looked at the recommendations from Plantlife (the org which initiated No Mo May) and they recommend cutting sections of the field at different frequencies, to allow short-growing flowers to flourish alongside longer ones. Mowing twice a year will maintain a meadow. Mowing once every 4-6 weeks will maintain a shorter, re-flowering lawn where flowers like Bugle, Self-heal, Red Clover and Lady's Bedstraw can thrive.

We understand that CBC own the land and HRTC only lease it, however, would HRTC support our request for the above and work with us and volunteers to maximise the use of Windsor Drive Open Space and help the Climate at the same time?"

Members were advised under the Tenancy at Will between CBC and HRTC for the maintenance of this land, HRTC does have the authority to change its cutting regime as it saw fit. It was suggested that the Head of Environmental & Community Services / Grounds Manager contact the Friends of Windsor Drive group to discuss options going forward.

Resolved: To support an alternative grass cutting regime which encourages diversity of flora and fauna on Windsor Drive open space.

12478 TITHE FARM RECREATION GROUND SPORTS PROJECT UPDATE

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


Members were advised if grant money was received from YIF, it would enable less money to be drawn from the loan.

Members received this report for information.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.06pm

Dated this 18th day of September 2023.

Chairman



HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL**Planning Committee****Minutes of the meeting held on****12th June 2023 at 7.00pm**

Present: Councillors: C Slough Chairman
 N Batchelor
 E Billington
 J Carroll
 E Cooper
 M Herber
 D Jones

Officers: Louise Senior Head of Democratic Services

Apologies: Public: 1

Also present: Councillors: Y Farrell

12479 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

None.

12480 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

12481 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

12482 MINUTES

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on the 22nd May 2023.

Resolved To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 22nd May 2023 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

12483 PLANNING MATTERS

(a) The following planning applications were considered:

CB/23/01477/VOC

Variation of condition number 29 of planning permission CB/16/03378/FULL (Phased Construction of a new Independent Living Scheme for Older Persons comprising 168 apartments with support facilities, a Restaurant & Bar, Retail Units, Cafe, 2 Reablement Suites, the conversion and Change of Use of a Grade 2 listed building and the demolition of an existing Sheltered Housing scheme with associated parking and landscaping)

CRLS

Amendment sought: Proposed alteration to design to remove link between the Park Lounge and the Red House.

Creation of new external elevation facing the Red House, new hard landscaping with gated access between All Saints View and the Red House. Retain the Red House as a stand alone building.

Houghton Regis Centre (former Co-op site), High Street, Houghton Regis, LU5 5DT

For: Central Bedfordshire Council

Comments: Houghton Regis Town Council Councillors were unable to comment as there was a lack of supporting evidence of proposed or intended use of the Red House. It was requested further information be provided in order for comments to be submitted.

CB/23/01706/RM

Reserved Matters: following Outline Application CB/12/03613/OUT (Outline planning permission with the details of access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale reserved for later determination. Development to comprise: up to 5,150 dwellings (Use Class C3);) Reserved matters for Parcel 1 and 2 - AMP3 for 236 dwellings, access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale.

Parcels 1 & 2, Houghton Regis North 1, Sundon Road, Houghton Regis, LU5 5GX

For: Stonebond Properties (St Albans) Limited

Comments: Houghton Regis Town Council raised no objections to this application, however it was felt that the landscaping would be improved by increasing the amount of vegetation/greenery, and would like this to be encouraged by Central Bedfordshire Council.

CB/23/01486/VOC

Variation of condition number 10 of planning permission CB/16/03379/LB (Listed Building: Phased construction of a new Independent Living Scheme for older persons comprising 168 apartments with support facilities, a restaurant & bar, retail units, cafe, 2no. reablement suites, the conversion and change of use of a Grade 2 listed building and the demolition of an existing sheltered housing scheme with associated parking and landscaping) – Variation sought: proposed alteration to design to remove link between the Park Lounge and the Red House. Creation of new external elevation facing the Red House, new hard landscaping with gated access between All Saints View and the Red House. Retain the Red House as a stand alone building.

Co-Op Supermarket, High Street, Houghton Regis, Dunstable. LU5 5QT

For: Central Bedfordshire Council

Comments: Houghton Regis Town Council Councillors were unable to comment as there was a lack of supporting evidence of proposed or intended use of the Red House. It was requested further information be provided in order for comments to be submitted.

CB/22/03938/FULL

Demolition of existing barn and garage, provision of a garage to the existing Listed building, conversion of Listed barn into a dwelling and construction of eight new dwellings with associated garages and new access road.
Red Cow Farm Cottage, Bedford Road, Houghton Regis, LU5 6JP
For: J&D 2012 Ltd

For information members were reminded that raised objections to this application for the following reasons, at the meeting held on the 21st November 2022:

Comments: Houghton Regis Town Council raised objections to this application on the grounds of:

- 1) Overdevelopment.
- 2) The proposed layout does not compliment the setting of Red Cow Farm Cottage
- 3) Proposed loss of the hedgerow to allow access to Plot 1. The ongoing infill developments along Bedford Road have already had an impact to the character of Bidwell, any further loss cannot be supported.
- 4) Concern of highway safety for vehicles accessing and exiting plot 1.
- 5) Concern of pedestrian safety when crossing the access road to plot 1 due to reduced visibility.
- 6) Concerns over the loss of mature trees and the associated loss of their ecological benefit on the site. The Town Council wishes to lend its support to the Ecology Officers findings and report.
- 7) Loss of trees that would otherwise compliment the setting of Listed Buildings.
- 8) Lack of adherence to highways

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.
For: Ascona Retails Ltd

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

Noted:

CB/23/01495/DOC

Discharge of Condition 9 against planning permission CB/12/03613/OUT (Outline planning permission with the

OKLS

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

CB/23/01842/GPDE

Prior Notification of Householder Extension: Single storey rear extension, 6m beyond the rear wall of the original dwelling, maximum height of 3m & 3m to the eaves
17 Linmere Walk, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5PS

CB/23/01493/DOC

Discharge of Conditions 2,3,4,5 against planning permission CB/22/01837/LB: Listed Building: Alteration and extension to north west elevation, remodelling of 1970's section and replacement of various windows and doors
Springwell Cottage, Sewell Lane, Sewell, Dunstable, LU6 1RP

CB/23/01764/DOC

Discharge of Conditions 3, 4, 7, 11, 14 and 23 against planning permission CB/21/02467/VOC (Variation of condition 17 of planning permission CB/20/03300/REG3 (Erection of a three storey secondary school and sports hall providing 6 forms of entry (900) pupils, together with a 220 pupil sixth form, sports pitches including an all-weather pitch, Change condition from an Above Ground Level condition to a Pre-Occupation Condition.)
Kingsland Secondary School, Parkside Drive, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5TH

(b) Decision Notices

Permissions / Approvals / Consents

Refusals:

None received.

Withdrawals:

None received.

**12484 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.

Linmere – 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 7.23pm

Dated this 3rd day of July 2023.

Chairman

CRL Slough

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Planning Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on

3rd July 2023 at 7.00pm

Present: Councillors: C Slough Chairman
 N Batchelor
 J Carroll
 E Costello Substitute
 W Henderson Substitute
 M Herber
 D Jones

Officers: Louise Senior Head of Democratic Services

Public: 0

Apologies: Councillors: E Billington
 E Cooper

12504 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Cllr Billington (Cllr Henderson substituted) and Cllr Cooper (Cllr Costello substituted).

12505 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

12506 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

12507 MINUTES

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on the 12th June 2023.

Resolved To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 12th June 2023 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

12508 PLANNING MATTERS

(a) The following planning applications were considered:

[CB/23/01644/FULL](#) Provision of 2 additional bedrooms to the existing 14 bedroom C2 care home (semi independent support and accommodation for 16-21 year olds) to provide a total of 16 bedrooms including internal alterations only Hillside, Chalk Hill, Dunstable, LU6 1RT Iaspire Care Services Ltd.

CRS

Comments: Houghton Regis Town Council raised no objections to this application, however, ongoing concerns were raised over access.

[CB/23/01735/FULL](#)

Single storey side and rear extension
49 Linnere Walk, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5PS
Mr J Sullivan

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

[CB/23/01647/ADV](#)

Advertisement: Display of one totem sign and two fascia signs Linnere Farmstead, Houghton Regis North 1, Sundon Road, Houghton Regis. LU5 5GX
The Farmstead, Houghton Regis North 1, Sundon Road, Houghton Regis

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

[CB/23/01950/FULL](#)

Formation of 2 no self-service car wash bays Esso Houghton Green
7 The Green, Houghton Regis, Bedfordshire, LU5 5LB
Motor Fuel Group Ltd

Comments: Members raised concerns regarding water usage, and noted that this was not a recycled system, therefore disposal of water would be through main drains thus increasing the risk of overflow into the road during poor weather.

[CB/23/01960/FULL](#)

Single storey infill extension
Oakwell Park, Thorn Road, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 6JH
Mr Charlie McCloughlin

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

[CB/23/01961/LB](#)

Listed Building: Removal of existing car port and construction of a single infill extension
Oakwell Park, Thorn Road, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 6JH
Mr Charlie McCloughlin

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

[CB/23/01927/FULL](#)

Single storey rear extension and internal garage conversion with 2 window installation side and rear, 2 Watervale, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 6FY
Mr Khurram Ramzan

CLS

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

Noted:

[CB/23/01824/DOC](#)

Discharge of Condition 24 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 5, Phase 1, Linnere, Houghton Regis North Site 1

[CB/23/01745/DOC](#)

Discharge of Conditions 15 & 19 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)

[CB/23/02004/DOC](#)

Discharge of Conditions: 1, 2 and 3 against planning permission CB/22/04735/LB - Remedial work and recovering 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 door. Roof materials, garage door finishes, guttering, downpipes. Cond 1, 2 and 3 Materials.

1 Houghton Court, The Green, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5DY

[CB/23/01934/DOC](#)

Discharge of Conditions 5,7,18,19 and 20 against planning permission CB/18/04471/FULL (48 new residential units) Oakwell Park, Thorn Road, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 6JH

GRS

CB/23/01990/DOC Discharge of Conditions 9,12,24 against planning permission CB/21/02467/VOC (Variation of condition 17 of planning permission CB/20/03300/REG3 (Erection of a three storey secondary school and sports hall providing 6 forms of entry (900) pupils, together with a 220 pupil sixth form, sports pitches including an all-weather pitch, Change condition from an Above Ground Level condition to a Pre-Occupation Condition.)
Proposed site for Kingsland Secondary School, Parkside Drive, Houghton Regis

CB/23/01850/LDCP Lawful Development Certificate Proposed: Front porch
33 Constable Close, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5ST
Mr & Mrs Radziwillow

CB/23/01839/LDCP Lawful Development Certificate Proposed: Proposed Single storey rear extension
17 Linmere Walk, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5PS
Mr Vasile Drozd

CB/23/01900/NMA Non-material amendment to planning permission CB/20/00348/RM (Resubmission: Reserved Matters : following Outline Application CB/15/00297/OUT 'hybrid' planning application with details of main access routes, primary road network and associated drainage in detail only and layout in outline with details of landscaping, appearance and scale reserved for later determination. Development to comprise: Up to 1,850 residential (C3) dwellings (including affordable housing), 2FE Primary School (D1), employment land (Use Classes B1 [a-c], B2 & B8), local centre comprising retail (A1, A2, A3, A4 & A5) and community/leisure uses (D1 & D2), layout of public open spaces including sports pitches and changing rooms, natural wildlife areas and all associated works and operations including engineering operations and earthworks. Reserved Matters for access, appearance landscape, layout and scale for 160 dwelling on phase CA2 Upper Thorn Green.) Amendment sought to the original materials site layout & materials schedule that has been submitted. A revised materials site layout & materials schedule illustrates the revised change of Plots 39-41 from Buff Brick to Red. Land to West of Houghton Regis, Watling Street, Houghton Regis
Abbey Developments Ltd

CB/23/01709/LDCP Lawful development certificate proposed: Single storey rear extension, 100 Tithe Farm Road, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5JB
Ms Monique Houillet

Refusals:

None received.

Withdrawals:

None received.

**12509 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 24th day of July 2023

Chairman

CRK Slough

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Planning Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on

24th July 2023 at 7.00 pm

Present:	Councillors:	C Slough N Batchelor E Billington J Carroll E Cooper M Herber D Jones	Chairman
	Officers:	Louise Senior Amanda Samuels	Head of Democratic Services Administration Officer
	Public:	0	
Apologies:	Councillors:	0	

12510 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

None.

12511 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Members received a letter of objection in relation to planning application CB/23/01212/FULL, 3 Holyrood Drive, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5FW. Retrospective permission for the erection of a single storey rear extension and rear garden roof covering.

12512 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

12513 MINUTES

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on the 3rd July 2023.

Resolved To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 3rd July 2023 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

12514 PLANNING MATTERS

(a) The following planning applications were considered:

CB/23/02213/ADV
([click for more details](#))

Advertisement: Proposed vinyl stickers to windows and 5 no Advertisement poster frames
Unit 2, All Saints View, High Street, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5LQ
D Kemp

CRS

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

[CB/23/02073/FULL](#)
(click for more details)

Extend side fence height in rear garden from 2m to 2.5m (fence between numbers 2 and 3)
No 3 Caretakers Bungalow, Houghton Regis Campus, Parkside Drive, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5PX
Central Bedfordshire Council

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

[CB/23/01981/FULL](#)
(click for more details)

Erection of a single storey rear extension and reinsertion of the former front door.
2 Highfield House, Bedford Road, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 6JP
Mr Denis Carroll

Comments: Houghton Regis Town Council raised objections to this application on the grounds of:

- overdevelopment
- inappropriate parking

[CB/23/02169/FULL](#)
(click for more details)

Erection of a single storey front extension and split the bungalow into two 2 bedroom dwellings and associated works.
The Bungalow, Highfield House, Bedford Road, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 6JP
Mr Denis Carroll

Comments:
Members raised concerns regarding two outstanding issues:

- Vehicle access arrangements yet to be confirmed
- Public footpath Right of Way process to be actioned

[CB/23/02207/FULL](#)
(click for more details)

Single storey front extension
10 Gilpin Close, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5SL
Mrs Eileen Dennis

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

[CB/23/01212/FULL](#)
(click for more details)

Retrospective permission for the erection of a single storey rear extension with green roof and rear garden roof covering.
3 Holyrood Drive, Houghton Regis, LU5 5FW
For: Karol Dujczunski

Members were reminded that the Town Council objected to this application at the meeting held on the 22nd May 2023.

Members were advised that amendments to this application have been received.

Comments: Members maintained their previous objections to this development:

- **Overdevelopment**
- **Detrimental impact on the visual and light amenity of neighbouring properties**
- **Proposed development including existing extension appears disproportionate in relation to the original property footprint**
- **Proposed development appears cramped for the site and reduces the overall amenity space for the occupiers alongside the existing outbuilding**

Members observed that these objections had not been addressed and points 3 and 4 of the above objections had been exacerbated.

[CB/TCA/23/00274](#)
(click for more details)

Works to trees within a Conservation Area: Lleylandii Hedge G1 to be reduced in height by 5m and trim to tidy, trim all remaining shrubs in rear garden to tidy.
Houghton Court, The Green, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5DY

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

Noted:

[CB/23/02271/DOC](#)
(click for more details)

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.)
Lidl Regional Distribution Centre, Woodside Link Road,
Part of the Houghton Regis North Site 1, Houghton Regis,
LU5 5AY

- [CB/23/02069/DOC](#)
[\(click for more details\)](#) Discharge of Condition 13 against planning permission CB/21/01242/FULL (Development of the site for E(g)(iii), B2 and B8 Uses to include Trade Counter, including details of access, servicing, landscaping, boundary treatment and associated works)
Employment Site North of Thorn Road, Thorn Road, Houghton Regis
- [CB/23/02092/DOC](#)
[\(click for more details\)](#) Discharge of Condition 23 against planning permission CB/18/04471/FULL (48 new residential units)
Land at Oakwell Park, Thorn Road, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 6JH
- [CB/23/02172/DOC](#)
[\(click for more details\)](#) Discharge of Conditions 5, 6, 13 to reserved matters application CB/21/04768/RM following Outline Application CB/12/03613/OUT (5'150 dwellings and 202'500sqm of mixed use) development of 201 new homes, with associated highways, a LAP, drainage, utilities and car parking. Of those 201 homes, 60 are to be private units for open market sale, 14 affordable housing units for the purposes of delivering the 106 obligations for the AMP1 site and 127 additional "affordable" units. Approval for access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale
Houghton Regis North Site 1 Land on the northern edge of Houghton Regis
- [CB/23/02171/NMA](#)
[\(click for more details\)](#) Non-material amendment to planning permission CB/21/04768/RM (Reserved Matters: following Outline Application CB/12/03613/OUT (5'150 dwellings and 202'500sqm of mixed use) development of 201 new homes, with associated highways, a LAP, drainage, utilities and car parking. Of those 201 homes, 60 are to be private units for open market sale, 14 affordable housing units for the purposes of delivering the 106 obligations for the AMP1 site and 127 additional "affordable" units. Approval for access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale) amendment sought: All Flat block windows in kitchens reduced to 1050mm high due to the required cubic capacity needed; All flat block bathroom windows that look out onto the bin/bike stores have been omitted due to health and safety issues with future cleaning/replacement and maintenance; House type 4.4.1 windows omitted from end elevations so the internal layout works; House type 3.1 double French window with sidelight added instead of 2 doors to aid ventilation; and Fog Units have been omitted to achieve the cubic capacity on kitchen storage.
Parcel 4, AMP1, Houghton Regis North 1, Sundon Road, Houghton Regis

CRLS

- [CB/23/02145/NMA](#)
[\(click for more details\)](#) Non-material amendment to planning permission CB/18/04471/FULL (48 new residential units) - Amendment sought: Variation to size of some windows to house types A, B, C, D, F, & G. Variation of part of Condition 2 (external materials), change roof tile specification, glendyne slate roof tiles to a cedral riverdale composite blue black colour slate Oakwell Park, Thorn Road, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 6JH
- [CB/23/02160/NMA](#)
[\(click for more details\)](#) Non-material amendment to planning permission CB/21/05047/RM: (Reserved Matters: following Outline Application CB/15/00297/OUT (Outline 'hybrid' planning application. Development to comprise: Up to 1,850 residential (C3) dwellings (including affordable housing), 2FE Primary School (D1), employment land (Use Classes B1 [a-c], B2 & B8), local centre comprising retail (A1, A2, A3, A4 & A5) and community/leisure uses (D1 & D2), layout of public open spaces including sports pitches and changing rooms, natural wildlife areas and all associated works and operations including engineering operations and earthworks) Reserved matters for approval of the sports pavilion access, appearance and layout.) Amendment sought to site layout.
Land West of Bidwell (Houghton Regis North Site 2), Houghton Regis
- [CB/23/02176/NMA](#)
[\(click for more details\)](#) Non-material amendment to planning permission CB/20/00348/RM (Resubmission: Reserved Matters : following Outline Application CB/15/00297/OUT 'hybrid' planning application with details of main access routes, primary road network and associated drainage in detail only and layout in outline with details of landscaping, appearance and scale reserved for later determination. Development to comprise: Up to 1,850 residential (C3) dwellings (including affordable housing), 2FE Primary School (D1), employment land (Use Classes B1 [a-c], B2 & B8), local centre comprising retail (A1, A2, A3, A4 & A5) and community/leisure uses (D1 & D2), layout of public open spaces including sports pitches and changing rooms, natural wildlife areas and all associated works and operations including engineering operations and earthworks. Reserved Matters for access, appearance landscape, layout and scale for 160 dwelling on phase CA2 Upper Thorn Green.) Amendment sought to the finish used on footpath 16.
Land To West of Houghton Regis, Watling Street, Houghton Regis
- [CB/23/02165/GPDE](#)
[\(click for more details\)](#) Prior Notification of Householder Extension: Single storey rear extension, 4.10m beyond the rear wall of the original dwelling, maximum height of 3.35m & 2.40m to the eaves
17 Park Avenue, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5EA

CB/23/01940/FULL Part demolition of existing sports pavilion and conversion to
 (click for more ground staff welfare facilities with storage
 details) Tithe Farm Recreation Ground, Tithe Farm Road, Houghton
 Regis Houghton Regis Town Council

Permissions / Approvals / Consents

None at time of going to print

Refusals:

None received.

Withdrawals:

None received.

**12515 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 7.40pm

Dated this 14th day of August 2023.

Chairman

*CRL Slough.
 24/7/23*

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL**Planning Committee****Minutes of the meeting held on****14th August 2023 at 7.00pm**

Present:	Councillors:	C Slough N Batchelor E Billington J Carroll E Cooper D Jones	Chairman
	Officers:	Louise Senior Amanda Samuels	Head of Democratic Services Administration Officer
	Public:	4	
Apologies:	Councillor:	M Herber	
Also present:	Councillors:	T McMahan Y Farrell S Goodchild	Central Bedfordshire Council

12516 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Cllr Herber.

12517 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Concerns were raised by the owner of a neighbouring property regarding the retrospective application CB/23/01212/FULL, with the height of the extension being 600mm higher than specified in the planning application which had blocked a significant amount of light to the neighbouring property.

12518 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

12519 MINUTES

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on the 24th July 2023.

Resolved To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 24th July 2023 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

Members agreed to amend the order of business:

- Item 5 Planning application CB/23/01212/FULL
- Item 7 Former Netto Site – 2 Cemetery Road
- Continuance of agenda item 5 Planning applications as set out

12520 PLANNING MATTERS

[CB/23/01212/FULL](#)
(click for more details)

Members were advised that amendments to this application had been received.

Retrospective permission for the erection of a single storey rear extension with green roof and rear garden roof covering.

3 Holyrood Drive, Houghton Regis, LU5 5FW

For: Karol Dujczunski

Revised Proposed Floor Plans and Elevations received -

Plan No: AD-01 & Revised Block Plan received - Plan No: AD-OS

Members were reminded that the Town Council objected to this application at the meeting held on the 22nd May 2023, and reaffirmed the same objections to amendments at the meeting held on 24th July 2023.

Comments: Members maintained their previous objections to this development:

- Overdevelopment
- Detrimental impact on the visual and light amenity of neighbouring properties

Proposed development including existing extension appears disproportionate in relation to the original property footprint

- Proposed development appears cramped for the site and reduces the overall amenity space for the occupiers alongside the existing outbuilding

With an additional objection of:

- The Height of the extension has been built higher than the planning application stipulated.

Members also expressed their concerns that despite several amended documents resubmitted to planning, inaccuracies remained within the application.

12521 FORMER NETTO SITE - 2 CEMETERY ROAD

Martin Hughes, Director from Polity Communications, William Yardley, Head of Development and Jon Dingle, Planning Consultant, Jon Dingle Ltd were in attendance at the meeting to provide an update and answer members questions on emerging new proposals for the former Netto site, 2 Cemetery Road.

Members were advised of two consultation sessions, one in person at the 1st and 3rd Scout hut to be held on 16th August and the second session to be held virtually on 23rd August.

Members queried:

- Parking availability
- Disability access
- Tree felling

CRS

- Employment opportunities
- Aesthetics of the building
- Type of goods to be stored in the facility
- Operating hours

Members were advised that there would be parking available for Cinch customers, however residential parking would not be offered to the wider community.

The site would be disability friendly with single level access to the lower level and a lift to access the upper level, additionally, staff on site would be available to assist whenever needed.

Members were assured that no tree felling was planned unless the tree was diseased and required felling, the landscaping would be kept, tidied and maintained to enhance the overall look of the site.

Members were advised that 2 or 3 employees would be onsite, however the need for staffing above this level would not be necessary.

It was advised that the building would have the Cinch blue band around the building and signage denoting the company name.

Members were assured that no sensitive materials would be allowed to be kept on the site.

The planning application would include operating hours of 24hrs.

12520 PLANNING MATTERS (Continued)

Cont'd

(a) The following planning applications were considered:

[CB/23/01279/FULL](#) Existing two storey side extension to form a new one bed dwelling to include a single storey rear extension, associated car parking, fencing and refuse storage.
 1 Leaf Road, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5JG
 D Grigore

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

[CB/23/02393/FULL](#) Change of use: from B2 General Industrial Use to a flexible use of the building for Class B8 Storage and Distribution, B2 General Industrial use, and Class E (sub-paragraph g (ii) research and development (iii) light industrial) Use.
 Unit 3, Nimbus Park Houghton Hall Park, Porz Avenue, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5WZ

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

[CB/23/02392/FULL](#) Change of use from Class B8 Storage and Distribution and B2 General Industrial Use to a flexible use of the building for Class B8 Storage and Distribution, B2 General Industrial use, and Class E (sub-paragraph g (ii) research and development (iii) light industrial) Use.
 Unit 7 To 8, Nimbus Park Houghton Hall Park, Porz Avenue, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5XR

Comments: Houghton Regis Town Council raised no objections to this application, however clarification was requested as to whether this application referred to one or two units.

Noted:

[CB/23/02551/DOC](#)
(click for more details)

Discharge of Condition 20 - Archaeological Mitigation Report Land on the Northern edge of Houghton Regis Doc Ref: LP3716E-AMR-v.1.2 - 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.) Cond 20 Archaeological Mitigation Report.
 Houghton Regis North Site 1, Land on the northern edge of Houghton Regis

Permissions / Approvals / Consents

Refusals:

None received.

Withdrawals:

None received.

12522 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.

Linnmere – 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 8.07pm

Dated this 4th day of September 2023.

Chairman

Ch Slough

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF HOUGHTON REGIS PARTNERSHIP
COMMITTEE
HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, PEEL STREET
ON 24th January 2023**

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

Co-opted members: J Anderson
D Gibbons
C Regan

Also in attendance: P Burgess HRTC Councillor
James Yeomans, Head of Housing Property, Housing Services CBC
Jemma McClean, Community Engagement Manager, Beds RCC

Apologies: CBC Councillor Tracey Stock, Executive Member for Health, Wellbeing,
Communities and Leisure

Absent: HRTC Councillor T McMahon

Members of the public: 5

976 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Cllr T Stock.

977 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Members of the public asked:

- What was the latest position regarding the 'Zone of Influence' and had Central Bedfordshire Council recommenced approving planning applications?
- Feedback was requested on Central Bedfordshire Council's housing targets for the next 5 years, broken down into the different elements of new build e.g. social housing, private etc.
- Had funding been allocated to progress proposals for Windsor Drive within 2023/2024 budget?
- What steps were Central Bedfordshire Council taking to alleviate the lack of GP provision?

It was advised that this committee was unable to comment on the Zone of Influence, it was suggested that Central Bedfordshire Council be contacted directly via email for feedback.

It was advised that there had been no provision made for works at Windsor Drive in the 23/24 budget.

It was advised that the Integrated Care Board (ICB) had been contacted regarding GP provision, however, a response had yet to be received, members were assured that once received the response would be shared.

It was advised that written feedback would be given on Central Bedfordshire Council's housing targets.

978 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

None.

979 MINUTES

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 18th October 2022.

Resolved: To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 18th October 2022 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

980 PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE WORKPLAN

Members were invited to consider the Partnership Committee workplan.

As requested at the last meeting, an additional item had been added to the Partnership Workplan enabling updates to be provided on future cemetery provision in Houghton Regis. Members were advised that HRTC reports on this matter would be provided in due course in a similar way to the reports on Tithe Farm Sports Provision.

Members advised of feedback received regarding residents in Bidwell West feeling isolated. Feedback was requested on the consideration for the installation of a temporary community building to provide space for outreach work until a permanent structure was in place. It was advised that a more detailed report would be provided at the next meeting.

981 CBC UPDATE REPORT

Members received a copy of the CBC update report and verbal highlights from report were shared.

- CCTV Reports – concerns in Bedford Square
- Safer Neighbourhood Team
 - 240 patrol hours in Houghton Regis
 - Joint weapons sweep initiative with police
 - Engagement with residents
 - Pop-up session in Bedford Square
- Houghton Hall Park had been impacted by road closure
- Houghton Regis Leisure Centre had good numbers in attendance
 - SEND swim sessions had been introduced

- Houghton Hall Park –
 - Hosted a range of Christmas events
 - Gas works on Park Road North had impacted footfall
 - Warm space was offered on Tuesdays 9am – 4pm
- Fix my Street – 6 line markings and 11 signs had been addressed
- Parking enforcement – 1463 visits had been made to Houghton Regis, 135 tickets issued
- Tree planting project
- Energy Scheme – Launched Warmth Fund
- Two Bike repair stations had been set up at Houghton Hall Park and the Leisure Centre
- Ocado were locating to Houghton Regis creating 2,300 jobs
- Introduction of Multiply initiative – to improve numeracy skills across the country

It was highlighted that the number of tickets issued was concerning as had seemed low in relation to the visible number of parking infractions seen, and reported, by councillors across Houghton Regis.

It was suggested that a member of the policing team be invited to attend Town Partnership Committee meetings to provide feedback and answer any questions members may have.

Clarification was requested on the number of hours spent in Houghton Regis by the Safer Neighbourhood Team and whether the 240 hours stated in the report was team hours or individual officer hours, this would be looked into and fed back to members at the next meeting.

Concerns were raised regarding the number of non-working street-lights and it was felt the reporting system of 'Fix my Street' could benefit from improvements, as repairs had proved difficult to monitor.

Members were advised of the Central Bedfordshire Council tree planting project, open to Town and Parish Councils, community groups and schools to apply for a Tree Planting grant, the scheme was open until the end of March 2023.

Concerns were raised regarding the length of time between reporting abandoned vehicles and removal. Fly tipping had become an issue in Grendall Lane, it was suggested that the use of CCTV cameras be used to determine the culprit/s. Members were advised that Central Bedfordshire Council would look at footage and feed back their findings to the committee.

Members asked whether there had been any feedback regarding the Market Charter which had been discussed at the last meeting, it was confirmed to members that a definitive response had not been received from the Monitoring Officer.

982 IMPROVING HEALTH & WELLBEING IN HOUGHTON REGIS: TIME 2 CONNECT

Jemma McClean, Community Engagement Manager, Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity (BRCC) was in attendance at the meeting to update members and respond to any queries or comments on this project.



Members were advised that drop in sessions had increased in popularity with 15 – 20 people attending, sessions had included arts and crafts, book swap and board games. Visits from external providers Tibbs Foundation had run music memory sessions and Central Bedfordshire Council Public Health and Equality had held a health question and answer session. Joint sessions had been run with Central Bedfordshire Council with a variety of activities, which had included Storytelling, singing and chair based exercises which had proved popular.

BRCC had planned Wellbeing Walks from Houghton Hall Park with a hot drink at the end of the walk.

A Christmas Party had been held and proved enjoyable. The uptake of 1:1 sessions had remained steadily attended, offering a variety of advice, with money issues high on the priority list of discussion topics.

Members were advised that the BRCC had assisted in the distribution of Care Packages prepared by Houghton Regis Town Council and financed by Ward Councillor Grant funding.

It was suggested that a comprehensive list of Houghton Regis warm spaces be compiled to ensure residents knew what locations were available each day, with posters advertising spaces in and around the Town, including in the Warm Spaces.

Members were advised it was hoped to have a temporary Community Building in place for use by Time2Connect to enable Bidwell West residents to access their services in lieu of a permanent Community building.

983 HOUSING AND ENGAGEMENT

James Yeomans, Head of Housing Property, CBC was in attendance covering the progress of new facilities at All Saints View and The Brook.

Members were advised that all safety checks had been successfully carried out on The Brook.

All Saints View had 8 residents move in over the last week, with another hoped to move during the coming week. Members were assured that staff at All Saints View were providing activities for residents.

Members requested that a visit to the Brook be arranged for Councillors to enable an understanding of how it looks and how it would work. James assured members that he would take this suggestion back to his team for further discussion.

Members suggested that the lighting at The Brook be looked at, as it was extremely bright and could prove to be intrusive for neighbouring residents.

Members were advised that there had been no updates on the retail units. There were talks with prospective tenants but it was hoped there would be an update for the next meeting.

Concerns were raised over pedestrian safety due to vehicles parking on the footpath at All Saints View, obstructing pedestrians.

984 TITHE FARM SPORTS PROVISION UPDATE

Members received the agenda report as presented to the HRTC Environment & Leisure Committee on 14th November 2022.

Members were advised that the increased prices of construction materials had impacted the cost of the project, however confidence was high that this project could still go ahead.

985 COMMITTEE FUNCTIONS & TERMS OF REFERENCE

At the last meeting Members may recall receiving a copy of the Committee Functions & Terms of Reference. During previous discussions Members requested consideration be given to dropping the quorate to two councillors from each council rather than three, as substitution allowances for Central Bedfordshire Council Ward members on this committee were limited. It was highlighted to members that this would need to be taken through General Purposes and Council Committee to allow for changes to be made to the constitution.

Members confirmed that they wished for this item to be included on the General Purpose and Council Committee agenda with a view to dropping the quorate to two councillors from each council.

986 PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE CO-OPTION

It had been requested that potential co-option onto this committee remain on the agenda as a Standing Agenda item.

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

Co-option

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

The list of Co-opted Members should be reviewed annually, by the Town Joint Committee

987 ITEMS REQUESTING ATTENTION BY CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

Members had been advised of the CBC process to determine further consideration, at CBC committee level, of items and issues.



Members of this committee were able to use this process to forward items for CBC's attention via the CBC Joint Committee Chair or CBC Joint Committee Vice Chair.

As such members were requested to identify and confirm if there were any requested items for CBC's attention.

Members were advised Market Charters were devolved to local authorities during Central Bedfordshire Council's early life. Houghton Regis Town Council were advised that it was not for Central Bedfordshire Council to determine whether Houghton Regis had, or could apply for, a Market Charter. It was advised for the Town Council to prepare a report to take forward to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Members felt that with the proposed growth in Houghton Regis, consideration should be given to developing a Houghton Regis Market Charter.

Concerns were raised regarding GP medical provision, it was hoped that Houghton Regis Town Council could be updated on what plans were in place to address this issue. Concerns had been exacerbated since the announcement from ICB to revoke plans for proposed health hubs. Members were assured that advice would be sought and relevant officers would be addressed. It was hoped Councillor Stock would be in attendance at the next meeting to provide updated information, however, detailed updates at the next meeting may be limited as the meeting scheduled for April would fall within the pre-election period.

988 PROPOSED DATES FOR MEETINGS FOR 2023/24

- Tuesday 18th July 2023
- Tuesday 17th October 2023
- Tuesday 23rd January 2024
- Tuesday 23rd April 2024

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9.05pm

Dated this 18th day of July 2023.

Chairman



**Houghton Regis Town Council
New Cemetery Sub-Committee
Minutes of the meeting held on
15th August 2022 at 6.00pm**

Present:	Cllrs:	S Thorne J Carroll Y Farrell M Kennedy D Jones A Slough	Chairman Substitute
	Officers:	Clare Evans Louise Senior	Town Clerk Head of Democratic Services
Apologies:	Cllr:	R Morgan	
Members of the Public:		2	
Also present:		P Burgess T McMahon C Slough S Goodchild	

NC149 APOLOGIES & SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Cllr Morgan (Cllr Jones substituted).

Clarification was sought by the members of the sub-committee as what members were sat on the sub-committee as there had been a resignation at the last meeting. Members were advised that the resignation had been withdrawn shortly after the last meeting.

NC150 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

None.

NC151 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

A member of the public requested clarification to the commitment of the Town Council to keeping the cemetery in Houghton Regis as many of the other valued services in Houghton Regis had been withdrawn.

It was advised that a commitment of the stance of the council could not be confirmed.

Concerns were raised that different religious beliefs called for different processes upon death, the provision of burial plots would encourage inclusiveness for all.

NC152 MINUTES

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 18th July 2022.

Resolved: To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 18th July 2022.

NC153 MOTION FOR CONSIDERATION

In accordance with approved Standing Orders the following motion had been submitted. Members received a report giving consideration to this motion.

"From Cllr T McMahon, Cllr P Burgess, Cllr Jimmy Carroll, Cllr A Slough, Cllr Chris Slough, Cllr C Copleston.

We the above councillors seek the reversal of the Resolution made on Monday 18th July 2022 at 6pm by the New Cemetery Sub-Committee.

The Resolution being;

- 1. To recognise the significant works that are required to enable Grendall Lane to be brought into use as a cemetery and to determine at this time, these works are financially inhibitive for the Council and such further into this sit cease.*
- 2. To notify Central Bedfordshire Council as land owner of this position.*
- 3. To continue to search for alternative sites and present any options to CDS for a preliminary assessment to enable initial consideration by the Council.*

This removal request is made by invoking Houghton Regis Town Councils standing order 15, 15(a) and 15 (b) that is:

15. Previous Resolutions.

15 (a). A resolution shall not be reversed within six months except 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.

15 (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.

Also, by using standing order 11.

11(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 Councils statutory functions, powers and obligations or an issue which specifically affect the councils area or its residents.

Therefore, we move the following Special Motion to be placed on the Agenda of an extraordinary meeting of the New Cemetery Sub-Committee.

Motion

*To continue to pursue the possible cemetery provision at Grendall Lane Houghton Regis.
To work with CDS and the Environment Agency, to continue with CDS investigation of the site and investigation to the T3 level of the site.
To allow CDS to investigate possible cemetery designs for the site."*

Mr Darryl Kelly, CDS, was in attendance at the meeting to respond to queries.

Clarification was sought as to whether there was a statutory obligation to provide cemetery sites. It was confirmed that there were no statutory obligations to provide such sites.

It was highlighted that some religions had their own burial sites dedicated to their religious beliefs to enable their customs and traditions to be fully met.

Members were advised that an average 80% of the population choose cremation over burials, albeit with regional differences.

Mr Kelly clarified the available options:

Altering the depth of the water table, which was sitting at 0.5m below ground level at the lowest point. For single depth burial the water table requirements would need to be 1.4m and for a double burial the requirement was 3m or lower, there were also Environmental Agency requirements, with stringent constraints, particularly on 'high risk' sites. Mr Kelly advised that with the prediction of 30 burials per annum due to the growing town, this would push Houghton Regis into the high-risk category.

Cllr Farrell arrived at 6.25pm

De-watering; this would require trenches to be dug to lower the water table to a lower depth, this would generally be accepted to the Environmental Agency however, this would involve 3m trenches located fairly close together, the trenches would need to have the water pumped away by an active pumping system on the site, much like a sewage water treatment plant, as the water would need to be treated as contaminated. This option would entail significant engineering with associated costs.

Land raising; using vertical retaining walls, the site would need to be raised by 1.5 – 2m depending on whether the site would hold single or double burials, which would equate to a significant land raise. The existing land drains on the site would require decommissioning and re-routing around the burial area. This option would have some complex design implications, if the land had been significantly raised by 2m at the lowest point, this could prove vehicular access difficult to engineer from Grendall Lane as this would create a steep incline accessing the site. Cost versus engineering benefits for the construction of the slope would need to be considered.

A further option was to consider the lower sections of the site to be used for car parking, road access and focussed on remembrance, memorial garden and ash interments with the higher parts of the site to be tiered for use as burials sites.

Mr Kelly acknowledged that other towns elsewhere in the country had extremely steep cemeteries, however modern-day Health & Safety regulations would prevent the same means of construction and maintenance, thus proving impossible to replicate.

Members enquired whether some rough designs could be presented with a guide to costings, as



the development of the site maybe considered cost prohibitive, Members were advised that usually the Environmental Agency would give approval before such design work would be undertaken.

A handwritten signature in black ink, located in the bottom right corner of the page. The signature is stylized and appears to consist of several loops and a long horizontal stroke.

It was suggested that the topographical survey be carried out to provide an accurate overview of the site, which would enable a concept design of the site to be presented to the Environmental Agency.

Members were advised that to produce the evidence needed to present to the Environmental Agency would cost around £10,000. Members were advised that construction costs had risen significantly over the last few years, with the possibility of further increases.

Members discussed the recommendations as listed in detail, it was suggested that the sub-committee reconsider the alternative sites Central Bedfordshire Council had originally offered.

The motion of:

To follow advice of CDS to:

- *complete the update on the T3 assessment report, with the benefit of undertaking additional works, listed below, to provide a more meaningful assessment and remedial recommendations*
 - *Topographic survey of the site to provide detailed burial zonal plans and remedial measure assessment - £825.00*
 - *Remedial measure design work – concept designs to provide the EA with a greater understanding of the concept proposals - £2250.00*
- *provide a summary report of the works to date and provide greater detail of the proposed concept remedial solutions in a report to the EA for pre-app advice to gauge the EA's position and preference with regards to this site.*

Proposed by: Cllr Kennedy, seconded by: Cllr Carroll

A recorded vote was requested:

Members in favour: A Slough, J Carroll, M Kennedy.

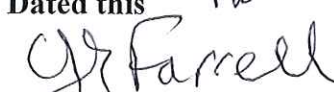
Members against: D Jones, S Thorne, Y Farrell.

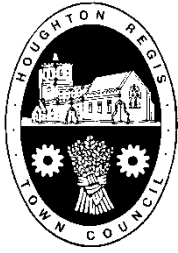
The Chair of the sub-committee used her casting vote against the motion.

The Chair requested that further consideration be given to the number of councillors who were sat on this sub-committee.

Members clarified that with the motion not carried, the resolution of the previous meeting remained as standing.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 7.12pm

Dated this 12th day of June 2023.

Chairman



Date: 2nd October 2023

Title: AUDITED ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN 2022/23

Purpose of the Report: To advised members of the outcomes of the external audit 2022/23.

Contact Officer: Clare Evans, Town Clerk

1. RECOMMENDATION

1. To approve and accept the Audited Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2022/23;
2. To note the matters raised in the Completion Letter dated 21st September 2023 and Section 3 of the Audited Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2022/23 and in future to:
 - Continue with arrangements put in place to ensure that the council will meet its statutory obligations in respect of public rights and answers no in the Annual Governance Statement where this has not been achieved;
 - ensure that the Annual Governance and Accountability Return is accurate and complete;
 - use the standard proforma provided in Mazars' guidance for the reconciliation of boxes 7 and 8 clearly showing which debtors and creditors are responsible for the difference;
 - ensure the Internal Audit covers objective L.

2. BACKGROUND

The Audited Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2022/23 was submitted for external audit on 22nd June 2023.

The external audit has to be completed by 30th September 2023. The audited return was received on 21st September 2023.

3. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Members will find attached the following:

- Completion Letter dated 21st September 2023, Appendix A
- Audited Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2022/23, Appendix B

Members will note that the external auditor has raised the following matter under Section 3 of the Return, the text in **Bold** provides a suggested response to the matters raised:

The Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 required that the 2022 period of public rights covered 30 working days and commenced no later than 1 July 2022. This requirement was not met as the period was only 29 working days as reported in our 2021/22 audit report, but the Council has answered yes to the assertion on public rights in the 2022/23 Annual Governance Statement, which covers the previous year's public rights period.

Members were advised of this irregularity at the Council meeting on 3rd October 2022. The Minutes of this meeting can be viewed here:

[1_2022-10-03_minutes.pdf \(houghtonregis.org.uk\)](#)

We also noted that Internal Audit found the 2022 completion notice was published after 30 September 2022, which again represents non-compliance with the regulations during the 2022/23 financial year.

Although the public rights period in 2023 was compliant in future, the Council needs to put in place arrangements to ensure that it can always meet its statutory obligations in respect of public rights and answers no in the Annual Governance Statement where this has not been achieved.

Members were advised of this irregularity at the Council meeting on 19th June 2023. The draft Minutes of this meeting are included under Agenda Item 4.

The following is also drawn to the attention of the council under Section 3:

We were required to return the Annual Governance and Accountability Return to enable the Council to correct the following:

An error in Box 6 of Section 2 initially caused the annual return not to add up at Box 7. Box 6 was understated by £40,003.

In future the Council should ensure that the Annual Governance and Accountability Return is accurate and complete.

This advice is noted and accepted.

The completion letter raises the following issues as *Minor scope for improvement in 2023/24*:

The document provided called the box 7 & box 8 reconciliation was actually a variance analysis and although the reconciliation could be worked out from the detailed accounts provided this was not straightforward due to the need to exclude grant receipts in advance that featured in the detailed accounts but were correctly recognised in year of receipt on the AGAR.

In future, the Council should use the standard proforma provided in our guidance for the reconciliation of boxes 7 and 8 clearly showing which debtors and creditors are responsible for the difference.

This advice is noted and accepted.

The internal control objective (L), 'the authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with

the relevant legislation" was ticked 'not covered' by the internal auditor when some legislation relating to publication is applicable. Therefore, the objective should have been covered. In future, the Council should ensure the Internal Audit covers objective L.

This advice is noted and will be raised with the Internal Auditor during the interim visit scheduled for 29th November 2023.

Accessibility Regulations

We are aware that the Accounts and Audit Regulations requirement for a physical 'wet ink' signature on the original AGAR, does not allow parish council's to fully comply with the Accessibility Regulations. The National Audit Office are aware that the two pieces of legislation are not compatible, therefore smaller authorities are advised to make it clear on their website that the document is a scan and will not be fully compliant with the Accessibility Regulations.

This advice is provided on the Council's website.

4. COUNCIL VISION

Aspirations

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

5. IMPLICATIONS

Corporate Implications

- There are no corporate implications arising from the recommendations.

Legal Implications

- There are no legal implications arising from the recommendations

Financial Implications

- There are no financial implications arising from the recommendations

Risk Implications

- There are no risk implications arising from the recommendations

Equalities Implications

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

This project / issue does not discriminate.

Climate Change Implications

- There are no climate change implications arising from the recommendations

Press Contact

There are no press implications arising from the recommendations

6. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

Members are requested to receive the external auditor's completion letter and Audited Annual Governance and Accountability Return for 2022/23.

7. APPENDICES

- Appendix A, Completion Letter dated 21st September 2023
- Appendix B, Audited Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2022/23



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NE1 1DF

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www.mazars.co.uk

Text

Mrs C Evans
Houghton Regis Town Council
Council Offices
Peel Street
Houghton Regis
Bedfordshire
LU5 5EY

Direct line: +44 (0)191 383 6348

Email: local.councils@mazars.co.uk

Date: 21 September 2023

Dear Mrs Evans

Completion of the audit for the year ended 31 March 2023

We have completed our audit for the year ended 31 March 2023 and I have pleasure in enclosing the certified Annual Governance and Accountability Return. The External Auditor's Certificate and Report is given in Section 3.

If there are any significant matters arising from the audit, they are summarised in the External Auditor's certificate in Section 3. If we have identified minor scope for improvement we have recorded this on page 2 of this letter. The Council must consider these matters and decide what action is required. In most cases this will be self-evident. In some instances we have referred to further guidance available, in particular, in the publication "*Governance and Accountability for Local Councils – A Practitioners' Guide (England) 2022*". This can be obtained via your NALC or SLCC branch, or downloaded free of charge.

Action you are required to take

The Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 set out what you must do at the conclusion of the audit. In summary, you are required to:

Publish (which must include publication on the authority's website) a statement:

- that the audit has been concluded and that the statement of accounts has been published;
- of the rights of inspection conferred on local government electors by section 25 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014; and
- the address at which, and the hours during which, those rights may be exercised.
- Keep copies of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for purchase by any person on payment of a reasonable sum.
- Ensure that the Annual Governance and Accountability Return remains available for public access for a period of not less than five years beginning with the date on which the Annual Governance and Accountability Return was first published.

Mazars LLP

Mazars LLP is the UK firm of Mazars, an integrated international advisory and accountancy organisation. Mazars LLP is a limited liability partnership registered in England and Wales with registered number OC308299 and with its registered office at 30 Old Bailey, London, EC4M 7AU. Registered to carry on audit work in the UK by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales. Details about our audit registration can be viewed at www.auditregister.org.uk under reference number C001139861. VAT number: GB 839 8356 73

The Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 do not specify the period the Completion Notice needs to be on the council's website but this period must be reasonable.

Minor scope for improvement in 2023/24

The document provided called the box 7 & box 8 reconciliation was actually a variance analysis and although the reconciliation could be worked out from the detailed accounts provided this was not straightforward due to the need to exclude grant receipts in advance that featured in the detailed accounts but were correctly recognised in year of receipt on the AGAR. In future, the Council should use the standard proforma provided in our guidance for the reconciliation of boxes 7 and 8 clearly showing which debtors and creditors are responsible for the difference.

The internal control objective (L), 'the authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation' was ticked 'not covered' by the internal auditor when some legislation relating to publication is applicable. Therefore, the objective should have been covered. In future, the Council should ensure the Internal Audit covers objective L.

Accessibility Regulations

We are aware that the Accounts and Audit Regulations requirement for a physical 'wet ink' signature on the original AGAR, does not allow parish council's to fully comply with the Accessibility Regulations. The National Audit Office are aware that the two pieces of legislation are not compatible, therefore smaller authorities are advised to make it clear on their website that the document is a scan and will not be fully compliant with the Accessibility Regulations.

Audit fee

Our fee note for the audit, which is in accordance with the audit fee scales set by SAAA, and available at <http://www.localaudits.co.uk/fees.html> will follow.

We would be grateful if you could arrange for this to be paid at the earliest opportunity.

Yours sincerely



Cameron Waddell

Partner

For and on behalf of Mazars LLP

Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2022/23 Form 3

To be completed by Local Councils, Internal Drainage Boards and other Smaller Authorities*:

- where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure exceeded £25,000 but did not exceed £6.5 million; or
- where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure was £25,000 or less but that:
 - are unable to certify themselves as exempt (fee payable); or
 - have requested a limited assurance review (fee payable)

Guidance notes on completing Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2022/23

1. Every smaller authority in England that either received gross income or incurred gross expenditure exceeding £25,000 **must** complete Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return at the end of each financial year in accordance with *Proper Practices*.
2. **The Annual Governance and Accountability Return is made up of three parts, pages 3 to 6:**
 - The **Annual Internal Audit Report** **must** be completed by the authority's internal auditor.
 - **Sections 1 and 2** **must** be completed and approved by the authority.
 - **Section 3** is completed by the external auditor and will be returned to the authority.
3. The authority **must** approve Section 1, Annual Governance Statement, before approving Section 2, Accounting Statements, and both **must** be approved and published on the authority website/webpage **before 1 July 2023**.
4. An authority with either gross income or gross expenditure exceeding £25,000 or an authority with neither income nor expenditure exceeding £25,000, but which is unable to certify itself as exempt, or is requesting a limited assurance review, **must** return to the external auditor by email or post (not both) **no later than 30 June 2023**. Reminder letters will incur a charge of £40 +VAT:
 - the Annual Governance and Accountability Return Sections 1 and 2, together with
 - a bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2023
 - an explanation of any significant year on year variances in the accounting statements
 - notification of the commencement date of the period for the exercise of public rights
 - Annual Internal Audit Report 2022/23

Unless requested, do not send any additional documents to your external auditor. Your external auditor will ask for any additional documents needed.

Once the external auditor has completed the limited assurance review and is able to give an opinion, the Annual Governance and Accountability **Section 1, Section 2 and Section 3 – External Auditor Report and Certificate** will be returned to the authority by email or post.

Publication Requirements

Under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, authorities must publish the following information on the authority website/webpage:

Before 1 July 2023 authorities **must** publish:

- Notice of the period for the exercise of public rights and a declaration that the accounting statements are as yet unaudited;
- **Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement 2022/23**, approved and signed, page 4
- **Section 2 - Accounting Statements 2022/23**, approved and signed, page 5

Not later than 30 September 2023 authorities **must** publish:

- Notice of conclusion of audit
- **Section 3 - External Auditor Report and Certificate**
- **Sections 1 and 2 of AGAR** including any amendments as a result of the limited assurance review.

It is recommended as best practice, to avoid any potential confusion by local electors and interested parties, that you also publish the Annual Internal Audit Report, page 3.

The Annual Governance and Accountability Return constitutes the annual return referred to in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. Throughout, the words 'external auditor' have the same meaning as the words 'local auditor' in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

*for a complete list of bodies that may be smaller authorities refer to schedule 2 to the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.

Guidance notes on completing Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2022/23

- The authority **must** comply with *Proper Practices* in completing Sections 1 and 2 of this AGAR. *Proper Practices* are found in the *Practitioners' Guide** which is updated from time to time and contains everything needed to prepare successfully for the financial year-end and the subsequent work by the external auditor.
- Make sure that the AGAR is complete (no highlighted boxes left empty) and is properly signed and dated. Any amendments must be approved by the authority and properly initialled.
- The authority **should** receive and note the Annual Internal Audit Report before approving the Annual Governance Statement and the accounts.
- Use the checklist provided below to review the AGAR for completeness before returning it to the external auditor by email or post (not both) no later than 30 June 2023.
- The Annual Governance Statement (Section 1) must be approved on the same day or before the Accounting Statements (Section 2) and evidenced by the agenda or minute references.
- The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) must certify the accounts (Section 2) before they are presented to the authority for approval. The authority must in this order; consider, approve and sign the accounts.
- The RFO is required to commence the public rights period as soon as practical after the date of the AGAR approval.
- **You must inform your external auditor about any change of Clerk, Responsible Financial Officer or Chairman, and provide relevant authority owned generic email addresses and telephone numbers.**
- Make sure that the copy of the bank reconciliation to be sent to your external auditor with the AGAR covers all the bank accounts. If the authority holds any short-term investments, note their value on the bank reconciliation. The external auditor must be able to agree the bank reconciliation to Box 8 on the accounting statements (Section 2, page 5). An explanation **must** be provided of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8. More help on bank reconciliation is available in the *Practitioners' Guide**.
- Explain fully significant variances in the accounting statements on page 5. Do not just send a copy of the detailed accounting records instead of this explanation. The external auditor wants to know that you understand the reasons for all variances. Include complete numerical and narrative analysis to support the full variance.
- If the bank reconciliation is incomplete or variances not **fully** explained then additional costs may be incurred.
- Make sure that the accounting statements add up and that the balance carried forward from the previous year (Box 7 of 2022) equals the balance brought forward in the current year (Box 1 of 2023).
- The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO), on behalf of the authority, **must** set the commencement date for the exercise of public rights of 30 consecutive working days which **must** include the first ten working days of July.
- The authority **must** publish on the authority website/webpage the information required by Regulation 15 (2), Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, including the period for the exercise of public rights and the name and address of the external auditor **before 1 July 2023**.

Completion checklist – 'No' answers mean you may not have met requirements		Yes	No
All sections	Have all highlighted boxes have been completed?	✓	
	Has all additional information requested, including the dates set for the period for the exercise of public rights, been provided for the external auditor?	✓	
Internal Audit Report	Have all highlighted boxes been completed by the internal auditor and explanations provided?	✓	
Section 1	For any statement to which the response is 'no', has an explanation been published?	✓	
Section 2	Has the Responsible Financial Officer signed the accounting statements before presentation to the authority for approval?	✓	
	Has the authority's approval of the accounting statements been confirmed by the signature of the Chairman of the approval meeting?	✓	
	Has an explanation of significant variations been published where required?	✓	
	Has the bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2023 been reconciled to Box 8?	✓	
	Has an explanation of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8 been provided?	✓	
Sections 1 and 2	Trust funds – have all disclosures been made if the authority as a body corporate is a sole managing trustee? NB: do not send trust accounting statements unless requested.	✓	

**Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices*, can be downloaded from www.nalc.gov.uk or from www.ada.org.uk

Annual Internal Audit Report 2022/23

Houghton Regis Town Council

<https://www.houghtonregis.org.uk/>

During the financial year ended 31 March 2023, this authority's internal auditor acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with the relevant procedures and controls in operation and obtained appropriate evidence from the authority.

The internal audit for 2022/23 has been carried out in accordance with this authority's needs and planned coverage. On the basis of the findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in this table. Set out below are the objectives of internal control and alongside are the internal audit conclusions on whether, in all significant respects, the control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of this authority.

Internal control objective	Yes No Not covered**		
	Yes	No	Not covered**
A. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.	✓		
B. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	✓		
D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	✓		
E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
F. Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.	✓		
G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	✓		
H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	✓		
I. Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.	✓		
J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	✓		
K. If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2021/22, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. (If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2021/22 AGAR tick "not covered")			✓
L. The authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation.			✓
M. In the year covered by this AGAR, the authority correctly provided for a period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations (during the 2022-23 AGAR period, were public rights in relation to the 2021-22 AGAR evidenced by a notice on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set).	✓		
N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2021/22 AGAR (see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes).	✓		
O. (For local councils only) Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.			✓

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

Date(s) internal audit undertaken

13/06/2022 21/02/2023

Name of person who carried out the internal audit

Kevin Rose - IAC Audit & Consultancy Ltd

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit



Date

07/06/2023

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

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

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2022/23

We acknowledge as the members of:

Houghton Regis Town Council

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2023, that:

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

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

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

19/06/2023

and recorded as minute reference:

12494

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

Chairman

[Signature]

Clerk

[Signature]

www.houghtonregis.org.uk

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2022/23 for

Houghton Regis Town Council

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2022 £	31 March 2023 £	
1. Balances brought forward	651,812	746,279	Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of previous year.
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	969,231	1,119,236	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.
3. (+) Total other receipts	228,169	422,331	Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.
4. (-) Staff costs	-528,469	-571,106	Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	-24,069	-24,069	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).
6. (-) All other payments	-550,395	826,644 -866,441	Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).
7. (=) Balances carried forward	746,279	826,230	Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).
8. Total value of cash and short term investments	755,015	577,485	The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – To agree with bank reconciliation.
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	3,862,735	4,196,414	The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.
10. Total borrowings	217,208	202,202	The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).

For Local Councils Only	Yes	No	N/A	
11a. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)		✓		The Council, as a body corporate, acts as sole trustee and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets.
11b. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)			✓	The figures in the accounting statements above do not include any Trust transactions.

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2023 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

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



Date

07/06/2023

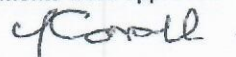
I confirm that these Accounting Statements were approved by this authority on this date:

19/06/2023

as recorded in minute reference:

12495

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



Section 3 – External Auditor’s Report and Certificate 2022/23

In respect of

Houghton Regis Town Council

1 Respective responsibilities of the auditor and the authority

Our responsibility as auditors to complete a **limited assurance review** is set out by the National Audit Office (NAO). A limited assurance review is **not a full statutory audit**, it does not constitute an audit carried out in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland) and hence it **does not** provide the same level of assurance that such an audit would. The UK Government has determined that a lower level of assurance than that provided by a full statutory audit is appropriate for those local public bodies with the lowest levels of spending.

Under a limited assurance review, the auditor is responsible for reviewing Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with NAO Auditor Guidance Note 02 (AGN 02) as issued by the NAO on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General. AGN 02 is available from the NAO website – <https://www.nao.org.uk/code-audit-practice/guidance-and-information-for-auditors/> .

This authority is responsible for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control. The authority prepares an Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with *Proper Practices* which:

- summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2023; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors.

2 External auditor’s limited assurance opinion 2022/23

Except for the matters reported below on the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

The Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 required that the 2022 period of public rights covered 30 working days and commenced no later than 1 July 2022. This requirement was not met as the period was only 29 working days as reported in our 2021/22 audit report, but the Council has answered yes to the assertion on public rights in the 2022/23 Annual Governance Statement, which covers the previous year’s public rights period. We also noted that Internal Audit found the 2022 completion notice was published after 30 September 2022, which again represents non-compliance with the regulations during the 2022/23 financial year. Although the public rights period in 2023 was compliant in future, the Council needs to put in place arrangements to ensure that it can always meet its statutory obligations in respect of public rights and answers no in the Annual Governance Statement where this has not been achieved.

Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority:

We were required to return the Annual Governance and Accountability Return to enable the Council to correct the following:

- An error in Box 6 of Section 2 initially caused the annual return not to add up at Box 7. Box 6 was understated by £40,003.

In future the Council should ensure that the Annual Governance and Accountability Return is accurate and complete.

3 External auditor certificate 2022/23

We certify that we have completed our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, and discharged our responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, for the year ended 31 March 2023.

*We do not certify completion because:

Not applicable.

External Auditor Name

Mazars LLP, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 1DF

External Auditor Signature

Mazars LLP

Date

20 September 2023



Houghton Regis Town Council
Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy

Date of Approval:	19 th December 2022
Dates of review:	2 nd October 2023 (TBC)
Dates of Re approval:	

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1 Purpose

- 1.1 We wholeheartedly support the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion throughout the recruitment and employment of our employees, as well as ensuring that it is afforded to all job applicants, councillors, residents, volunteers, contractors and suppliers.
- 1.2 Equality, diversity, and inclusion is also referred to as ED&I throughout this policy.
- 1.3 We are opposed to all forms of unfair or unlawful discrimination. We will treat all job applicants, employees, residents, volunteers, contractors and suppliers. in the same way, regardless of any protected characteristic (age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, race (including nationality, ethnic or national origin), religion or philosophical belief, sex or sexual orientation).
- 1.4 We seek to promote equality, diversity and inclusion in job adverts and recruitment, induction, employment, pay and benefits, training and career development (including promotions), terms and conditions of service, and also when managing any grievance or disciplinary issues. This policy can also apply to relationships with suppliers and contractors, as well as to potential employees.
- 1.5 The responsibility for observing the law and operating this policy lies with the Town Clerk but the policy can only work effectively with the support and commitment of all colleagues.
- 1.6 We believe that everyone has the right to be treated fairly and with dignity and respect at work, and to work without fear of discrimination, bullying or harassment. We welcome diversity amongst our staff, volunteers, and visitors, recognising that individuals from a wide range of backgrounds and experience can contribute a wealth of experience to achieving our objectives.
- 1.7 We will regularly review this policy to ensure its continuing compliance with relevant employment legislation and the continuing success of its implementation by:
 - ensuring there are no suspected practices in breach of this policy
 - ensuring that selection for promotion, training, work allocation etc. is carried out in a non-discriminatory manner
 - promoting a harmonious working environment and eliminating discrimination and This policy is not contractual but indicates the way we wish to address diversity in the workplace.

2 Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to all employees. It covers all aspects of employment including job adverts, recruitment, induction, pay and benefits, terms and conditions of service, training and development, promotion, change management, grievance and disciplinary issues and ending employment.
- 2.2 It also applies to the way we manage relationships with councillors, volunteers, residents, suppliers and contractors as well as to potential employees.

3 Principles

- 3.1 All employees have a responsibility to apply good equality, diverse and inclusivity practices across our business. All employees, irrespective of their job or seniority, should familiarise themselves with this policy, and be aware of their responsibility and role in promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion and in not discriminating unfairly or harassing colleagues, job applicants or ex-employees, nor encouraging others to do so or tolerating such behaviour.
- 3.2 Employees are also encouraged to challenge any unacceptable behaviour should they either witness or experience it directly. Disciplinary action, including dismissal, may be taken against any employee found guilty of unfair discrimination, harassment and/or victimisation.
- 3.3 Employees should be aware that not only are we, as the employer, liable for any cases of discrimination or harassment that occur, but individuals may also be held personally liable for their own acts and behaviour.
- 3.4 Managers are responsible for ensuring that all individuals within their team/department receive fair treatment throughout the course of their employment.
- 3.5 We will also obtain commitments from other persons or organisations such as consultants, sub-contractors or agencies that they will also comply with this policy in their dealings with us and our employees.
- 3.6 We fully accept our responsibilities under current legislation, but we aim to go beyond this by:
- recognising that everyone has a right to their distinctive and diverse identity
 - understanding how ED&I can improve our ability to deliver better services
 - providing all employees with the necessary training and development they need to contribute to our goals
 - Ensuring we offer a supportive, open environment for all employees so that they can use their talents fully and where they are treated fairly and with dignity and respect, in an environment free from abuse or offensive behaviour, bullying or harassment or intimidation. This is regardless of any protected characteristic held, their social background or caring responsibilities they may have, or any other individual characteristic which may unfairly affect their opportunities in life.
- 3.7 We also recognise the benefits of helping our employees to lead a healthy work life balance, and that work life balance is unique to each individual.
- 3.8 Learning to work with people's differences, visible or not, enables us to work together effectively and helps us to recruit, retain and develop the best people; to fulfil our legal commitments; and to act responsibly in the communities of which we are a part.

4 Actions

- 4.1 The actions we will take to make this policy work include:

-
- providing training and communications to raise awareness and understanding of diversity and equal opportunities issues, to show their impact on the business and individuals
 - ensuring that decisions on recruitment, access to training and promotion are based on ability only
 - regularly reviewing our employment policies to ensure that people are treated fairly, equitably, and consistently with their skills and abilities
 - developing patterns of work which are consistent with the ability to maintain an appropriate work-life balance
 - reviewing working arrangements to ensure that they do not restrict the opportunity for employment or career progression of members of disadvantaged groups
 - monitoring the composition of our workforce to provide us with robust data to evaluate the effect of our policies
 - routinely monitoring all actions under the grievance and disciplinary procedures by gender, race, disability, age, and any other criteria we deem to be appropriate
 - providing employees who believe they have been treated in any way contrary to this policy with the opportunity to raise and resolve issues.

5 Types of discrimination

5.1 Direct discrimination

5.1.1 This occurs when a person is treated less favourably because of a protected characteristic.

5.2 Indirect discrimination

5.2.1 This is where the application of a provision (policy), criterion or practice (PCP) is discriminatory in relation to a protected characteristic which an individual has, and:

- it is (or would be) applied equally to others who do not have that characteristic
- it puts (or would put) those who share the individual's characteristic at a particular disadvantage to those who do not have the characteristic
- it puts (or would put) the individual at that disadvantage
- it cannot be shown that the PCP is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

5.3 Discrimination by association

5.3.1 This is discrimination against a person because they associate with someone who possesses a protected characteristic (e.g., discrimination against an employee who is not disabled themselves, but who has a disabled child).

5.4 Discrimination by perception

5.4.1 This is discrimination against a person because the discriminator perceives the person possesses that protected characteristic, even if the perception is incorrect.

5.5 Harassment

5.5.1 This occurs when a person is subjected to unwanted conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating their dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person. Harassment can be regarded as behaviour that is offensive, frightening or in any way distressing and it is the impact on the individual that is important. It may be intentional, obvious, or violent, but it can also be unintentional or subtle and insidious.

5.5.2 Forms of harassment can include, but not limited to:

- racial slurs
- personal insults
- derogatory jokes and banter
- offensive or insensitive messages (including email)
- isolation or non-cooperation and exclusion
- ‘outing’ someone as transgender
- asking intrusive questions about someone’s gender identity or transition
- persistent and/or malicious use of the incorrect pronoun or ‘deadnaming’

5.6 Victimisation

5.6.1 Victimisation occurs when a person is treated less favourably because they have committed, or it is believed they may commit a "protected act". "Protected acts" include bringing legal proceedings related to discrimination against the employer or the perpetrator, or the giving of evidence at a disciplinary or grievance hearing or at tribunal, or making complaints about the perpetrator or the employer about their alleged discriminatory practices, etc.

6 Further guidance on unlawful discrimination

6.1 **Age** – note that this covers people of all ages and age groups, and someone’s perceived age. Age-related bands are still however permitted in the National Minimum Wage bands and when calculating statutory redundancy payments.

6.2 **Disability** - it is unlawful to treat a disabled person unfavourably because of something ‘arising in consequence of their disability’. Reasonable adjustments (see below) must be made if these would enable the disabled person to access any services or the ability to be employed, trained, or promoted to the same extent as a non-disabled person. A disabled person is defined as: *“someone who has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities”*.

- “substantial” means neither minor nor trivial
- “long term” means that the effect of the impairment has lasted or is likely to last for at least 12 months (there are special rules covering recurring or fluctuating conditions)
- “normal day-to-day activities” include everyday things like eating, washing, walking and going shopping.

People with progressive conditions, such as HIV, cancer and multiple sclerosis, are covered from the point of diagnosis rather than from the point when the condition has some adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

- 6.3 **Race** - this includes colour, nationality and ethnic origin. It is unlawful to treat a person less favourably on grounds of the colour of someone's skin, nationality or ethnic origin.
- 6.4 **Religion or belief** – this covers not only any religion, religious belief or similar philosophical belief but also the lack of any religion or belief. A philosophical or political belief is not covered unless it is similar to a religious belief.
- 6.5 **Sex** – this covers both men and women. However, in the field of employment, a Genuine Occupational Requirement (GOR) can be lawful if a person of a particular gender is specifically required for a job.
- 6.6 **Sexual orientation** – this covers any sexual orientation, including homosexual, heterosexual and bisexual.
- 6.7 **Gender reassignment** – an employee is protected from discrimination on the grounds of gender reassignment if they are proposing to undergo a process or part of a process, are currently undergoing a process or part of a process or have undergone a process or part of a process. Furthermore, employees who choose to not undergo medical procedures when transitioning will also be protected.
- 6.8 **Part-time workers** – a part-time worker is defined as someone who is 'not identifiable as a full-time worker'. Part-time workers are entitled to be treated on the same basis and are entitled to the same benefits, pro-rata, as their full-time colleagues.
- 6.9 **Fixed-term employees** - a 'fixed-term employee' is one with a contract of employment which is due to end when a specified date is reached, a specified event does or does not happen or a specified task has been completed. It is unlawful to treat a fixed-term employee less favourably than a comparable permanent employee, unless this is objectively justifiable. The use of successive fixed term contracts for any individual is limited to four years.
- 6.10 **Equal pay** - men and women should receive equal pay for work of equal value where work is the same or rated as equivalent regardless of the hours worked.
- 6.11 **Genuine Occupational Requirement (GOR)** - in very limited circumstances it will be lawful to treat people differently if it is a genuine occupational requirement that the job holder must possess a particular protected characteristic. When deciding if this applies, we will consider the nature of the work and the context in which it is carried out.

7 Responsibilities

7.1 Managers' responsibility

7.1.1 The Heads of Services have overall responsibility for ensuring the implementation of this policy.

7.1.2 As employers, we are liable for the actions of our employees and workers and therefore all our managers and supervisors are responsible for the successful implementation of this policy within their own departments and should take steps to ensure that people working for them understand and follow this policy.

7.2 Employees' responsibility

7.2.1 All our employees are required to comply with this policy, together with our associated policies.

7.2.2 Any employee who witnesses behaviour or decisions that seem to be contrary to this policy should challenge these or raise the issue with their Manager, the Town Clerk or the Corporate Services Manager.

8 The working environment

8.1 We will take all reasonable steps to ensure that our working environment does not prevent people from taking up positions for which they are suitably qualified. This may include physical adaptations or more flexible ways of working, including home working (where appropriate and practical).

9 Employment policies

9.1 Our employment policies and procedures will be continually reviewed to ensure compliance with this policy, to reflect current best practice and to remove barriers experienced by members of disadvantaged social groups in seeking employment with us and working for us.

10 Reasonable adjustments for those with a disability

10.1 All employers have a duty to consider and make reasonable adjustments to facilitate the employment of a disabled person. These may include:

- making adjustments to premises
- re-allocating some of a disabled employee's duties
- transferring a disabled employee to a role better suited to their ability
- relocating a disabled employee to a more suitable office or location
- giving a disabled employee time off work for medical treatment or rehabilitation
- providing training or mentoring for a disabled employee
- supplying or modifying equipment, instruction and training manuals for disabled employees.

10.2 We will consider and make any other reasonable adjustment to the employment arrangements or our premises if these substantially disadvantage a disabled employee or a disabled applicant. However, a number of factors will be taken into account in deciding if it is reasonable to make any changes. These include:

- the extent to which an alteration will improve the situation for the disabled employee or applicant
- how easy it is to make the change
- the cost of the measure, both financially and in terms of the disruption it will cause
- our resources
- any financial or other help that may be available.

10.3 If an employee has a disability, or becomes disabled during the course of their employment, and feels that any such adjustments are appropriate, they should discuss this with their manager in the first instance.

11 Gender reassignment

11.1.1 Transgender or ‘trans’ is an umbrella term for somebody who experiences gender incongruence, gender diversity or gender dysphoria, meaning they do not align to the sex they were assigned at birth. It includes someone who:

- intends to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone gender reassignment
- identifies that their gender is not the one assigned at birth. This is both someone who is planning, or has had medical interventions, as well as someone who does not plan or has not had medical interventions
- is non-binary, meaning they do not solely consider themselves to be male or female. They may or may not have had medical interventions to align their body with their non-binary gender identity.

11.1.2 We will support employees who inform us of their intention to transition by working with them to create their own personal transition plan. We are mindful that for someone who is transitioning, there will be many practical steps that will need considering to help them through it. We also respect that our discussions with the employee are best when they are led by the employee themselves. We support their personal choices in how they wish to manage their transition within the workplace and both the employee, and their line manager will jointly agree the support measures and practical actions that may be needed.

12 Recruitment and promotion

12.1 Our recruitment and promotion process must result in the selection of the most suitable person for the job, whether this on a full-time, part-time, casual, temporary, seasonal or contract basis. Our focus is on the skills, abilities, qualifications, aptitude, and potential of individuals to do their jobs.

-
- 12.2 Our recruitment procedures are kept under review and are developed as necessary so that we can continue to encourage applications from, and the employment of people from a range of backgrounds.
- 12.3 We aim to ensure that our recruitment practices are free from unlawful discriminatory criteria. Questions relating to a protected characteristic (age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, race (including nationality, ethnic or national origin), religion or philosophical belief, sex or sexual orientation), but also current or future family responsibilities, or unrelated criminal convictions will not form part of our selection process.
- 12.4 Job descriptions will properly reflect the responsibilities of the jobholder and person specifications will include only requirements that are necessary and justifiable for the effective performance of the job.
- 12.5 All adverts will be carefully worded to ensure that no intent of either direct or indirect discrimination is interpreted nor is there indication of stereotyping of roles. They will normally state "We are an equal opportunity employer and value diversity and inclusion". When advertising a position which has traditionally been done by one sex, adverts should specify they are open to both sexes.
- 12.6 We will ensure that our job adverts encourage applications from all suitably qualified and experienced people, through either internal and/or external advertising.
- 12.7 We will provide full and fair consideration for all job applicants, based on merit and ability. All managers involved in recruitment will be trained appropriately.
- 12.8 Selection criteria and procedures are intended to ensure that individuals are selected, promoted, and treated based on their individual relevant merit, ability, and suitability for the post. Membership of an under-represented group will not influence the appointment. Shortlisting and interviewing will normally be carried out by more than one person, to minimise the risk of conscious or unconscious bias.
- 12.9 The selection process will be carried out consistently for all jobs at all levels and will be fair and non-discriminatory. Interviews will be undertaken with an unbiased approach towards candidates and only questions which relate to the job, and which are non-discriminatory will be asked. Questions about marriage plans; family intentions; religious or political commitments; caring responsibilities intention to join our pension scheme or to opt out; or about any other issues which may give rise to suspicions of unlawful discrimination should not be asked.
- 12.10 Procedures for testing or assessment will be reviewed so as not to disadvantage any applicant and will be specifically related to the job and measure an individual's actual, or inherent, ability to do or train for the job.

12.11 We will ensure that other opportunities such as work experience and apprenticeships that we may offer, are open to people from a wide range of backgrounds and we will work to create good education/industrial links to encourage a broad range of applicants.

13 Terms and conditions of employment

13.1 We will ensure that all our employment policies associated with terms and conditions of employment, are formulated, and applied in such a way as to remove/minimise any discrimination on the grounds of a protected characteristic or indeed any other characteristic unrelated to the performance of the job.

13.2 These will be reviewed regularly to ensure there is no discrimination.

13.3 Employees will not be subjected to any detriment if they wish to join our pension scheme, nor will they be offered any inducement not to do so.

14 Training and diversity awareness

14.1 We are committed to ensuring equality of opportunity in terms of access to training to increase employees' knowledge and skills and to provide them with opportunities to develop their potential.

14.2 All employees are encouraged to discuss their career prospects and training needs with their manager on a regular basis. Opportunities for promotion and training will be communicated and made available to everyone on a fair and equal basis.

14.3 The provision of training will be reviewed to ensure that part-time workers, shift or remote workers or those returning to work following a break are able to benefit from training.

14.4 It is our policy not to unfairly discriminate in the provision of training. No age limits apply for entry to training or development schemes - these are open to all employees.

14.5 We will ensure that this aim is implemented through:

- continuous review and updating of training courses and literature
- ensuring training materials are free from bias and do not discriminate, e.g., by showing minority groups or disabled people in lower skilled roles only
- ensuring promotion and transfer criteria are justifiable
- ensuring assessment criteria is transparent and unbiased
- ensuring staff conducting appraisal interviews are aware of their obligations to carry these out fairly and consistently in line with this policy.

14.6 Appropriate training will be provided to enable staff to perform their jobs effectively.

14.7 Induction training will be tailored to individual needs but will in all cases include awareness of our Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion policy and how it applies to individuals. We will then continue to take specific steps to raise awareness of ED&I throughout employment and within the council's business.

15 Career development, training, and redeployment

15.1 We will take all appropriate steps to ensure that all employees receive fair consideration of their training and development needs and promotion opportunities to enable them to develop their full potential within our employment.

15.2 Any employees whose circumstances change whilst employed by us (for example, who become disabled, who take family leave, or who face new caring responsibilities) will be given full support to maintain or return to a job appropriate to their experience and abilities.

16 Flexible and hybrid working

16.1 We will consider any requests for flexible and hybrid working in a way which aims to balance the needs of the individual and the council's business.

17 Retirement

17.1 We have no fixed retirement age and anyone who wishes to work beyond State Pension Age may choose to do so.

18 References

18.1 We will not discriminate against individuals who have left our organisation, either by failing to provide references that are based on accurate, factual information or by failing to provide a reference when we would normally do so.

19 Involvement

19.1 We encourage the participation of all employees to ensure that, wherever possible, our employment practices recognise and meet their needs and will involve our staff in determining what can be done to make sure they develop and use their abilities at work.

20 Complaints

20.1 Harassment, discrimination, and bullying will not be tolerated. We recognise that making a complaint can be embarrassing and stressful. Sometimes the complainant simply wants the conduct or behaviour to stop and sometimes they want stronger action to be taken and therefore to take account of this we offer various routes of action.

20.2 When dealing with general disciplinary matters, care is to be taken that employees or workers who have, are perceived to have, or are associated with someone who has, a protected characteristic, are not dismissed or disciplined for performance or behaviour which could be overlooked or condoned in other employees or workers.

20.3 Employees who believe they have either been discriminated against or have witnessed discrimination, should bring this to our attention as soon as possible, either informally or formally in accordance with our grievance procedure or bullying and harassment policy and procedure. An employee who, in good faith, brings a complaint of discrimination must not be victimised or less favourably treated as a result. (However, false allegations that are found to have been made in bad faith will be dealt with under our disciplinary procedure.)

21 Monitoring performance

21.1 We will monitor our progress towards diversity by:

- monitoring applicants for jobs, training and development, grievances, disciplinary hearings, dismissals and other reasons for leaving

22 Breach of this policy

22.1 Any employee who feels they have been treated in a manner contrary to this policy should raise this either formally through the grievance procedure, or informally with a senior manager.

22.2 Any breaches of this policy by employees will be fully investigated and may lead to disciplinary action.

23 Related policies and documents

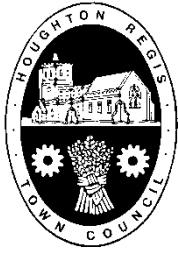
- Bullying and harassment policy
- Flexible working policy

The above list is not exhaustive.

24 Further information

Any queries or comments about this policy should be addressed to the Corporate Services Manager. Policy owner.

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CORPORATE SERVICES

Agenda Item 10

Date:	11th September 2023
Title:	New Office Provision EMR
Purpose of the Report:	To provide information to members in order to support the use of funds from EMR Office Provision to allow the modelling of the Town Council offices.
Contact Officer:	Debbie Marsh, Head of Corporate Services

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) To recommend to Town Council the approval, retrospectively, of a sum of £1,125 for the purchase of new chairs and desks for new members of staff and for this sum to be taken from the EMR Office Provision.**
- 2) To recommend to Town Council that a further sum of up to £10,000 to be used for works to upgrade the IT cabling and electrical works and for this sum to be taken from the EMR Office Provision.**
- 3) To agree to a costings exercise in order to enable reconfiguration of the lobby area in order to allow for more office space.**
- 4) To recommend to Town Council that the committee responsible for the EMR Office Provision be amended to the Corporate Services Committee.**

2. INFORMATION

As members are aware the Town Council has gone through a recruitment process and now has a full complement of staff, as detailed within the recent staff structure.

Although the Town Council allows for a hybrid working arrangement this does not exclude officers from attending the office, should they find themselves needing to or wishing to.

Currently there is insufficient desk space for existing staff, should they all attend the office at once.

The Town Clerk along with the Head of Corporate Services has considered this shortfall alongside future office capacity, IT needs and electricity supplies.

An extract of this committees Committee Functions are below:

- 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.

3. PROPOSALS

In order to create more desk space in the main office and to create office space in the small meeting room the following proposals are being presented:

- 1) To re-configure the small meeting room to accommodate 2 desks for the Civic and Events Manager & the Community Services Manager. Works include installing IT cabling and upgrading the lighting.
- 2) To consider a re-configuration of the lobby area to further increase office space and thereby accommodate additional staff members in the future. It will also offer the opportunity to visually enhance the reception for visitors. A free of charge costing exercise can be undertaken, with the outcome and feasibility being reported back to this committee.

4. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Whilst investigating the IT requirements for the proposed change of office, it has been communicated that the Town Council has data cabling that is just about adequate for current data handling, however, should members be minded to recommend the approval of the costs, an upgrade to the data cabling would be most appropriate.

Cost: To supply materials, labour and network equipment = £5,000

What has become even more pressing is the lack of power connections for the increase of the IT devices in the main office. Domestic extension cables are being used to connect to power sockets (4 floor boxes). This is not a suitable solution.

Cost: Small meeting room lighting requirements £1,250

Cost: Electrical works as detailed above £2,500

Members are advised that a conversation is yet to be had between the electrical contractor and the Town Councils IT provider to discuss both types of cabling works to ensure that there is no duplication in works and in the hope that costs can be saved by undertaking all work at the same time. This would also save on disruption to staff if all work is completed in one go.

At the Town Council meeting held on the 19th June 2023 members were presented with a list of the Town Councils EMR alongside the responsible committee. EMR Office Provision is the responsibility of the Town Council.

5. EMR BUDGET

Members are reminded that there is a budget of £130k in EMR Office Provision.

Members are advised that at the Community Services meeting held on the 17th July 2023 the committee resolved to consider and recommend to Town Council that the expenditure for the Parkside Recreation Ground Pavilion remodelling project be taken

from EMR for New Office Provision, to enable the project to start as soon as the use of the EMR has been approved. This resolution will be presented to Town Council at its October meeting.

6. COUNCIL VISION

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

7. IMPLICATIONS

Corporate Implications

- There are no corporate implications arising from the recommendations.

Legal Implications

- There are no legal implications arising from the recommendations.

Financial Implications

- There is no budget provision within the 2023/2024 approved budget for these works. There is budget provision within the EMR Office Provision budget to cover these costs.

Risk Implications

- Risk to service delivery due to the lack of adequate data cabling.
- Health and safety risk.

Equalities Implications

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

This issue does not discriminate.

Climate Change Implications

- There are no climate change implications arising from the recommendations

Press Contact

- There are no press implications arising from the recommendations

8. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

By upgrading the IT cabling and allowing for further office space to be utilised this will provide suitable workspace for current staff and future staff. There is also the possibility of re-modelling the lobby area, again to provide more office space, subject to costs and feasibility, and to improve the visual appearance of the reception area. Supporting these recommendations will allow the Town Council to continue to grow with a minimum amount of impact to the Town Council budgets.

The most pressing issue is the lack of power points under the desks in the main office. Electrical works should commence as soon as possible. There is a budget of £1,000 for 190-4042 Equipment Repairs and Maintenance however, the cost for the works proposed far exceeds this budget provision.

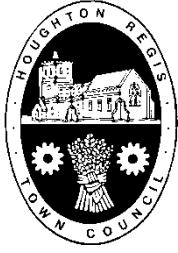
The responsibility of the suitability of the current office provision and the requirements of future office provision lies with this committee however, the budget to support this does not. It is therefore proposed that this committee requests Town Council to allow the responsibility of the EMR Office Provision to sit within this committee.

A sum of £11,125 is being requested. £1,125 for the purchase of new furniture and up to £10,000 to be used to improve office provision and IT cabling, which also includes a slight contingency fund.

Due to the pressing nature of electrical works required in the main office, it is recommended that the request for the use of the EMR's be presented to Town Council at the meeting to be held on the 2nd October 2023.

9. APPENDICES

None



Date: 2nd October 2023

Title: PARKSIDE RECREATION GROUND PAVILION
(REMODELLING FEASIBILITY) OR PARKSIDE
COMMUNITY HUB

Purpose of the Report: To present to members the considerations of Community Services Committee from 17th July 2023.

Contact Officer: Clare Evans, Town Clerk

1. RECOMMENDATION

This report is provided to enable Council to debate the Resolution from Community Services Committee.

2. BACKGROUND

On 17th July 2023 members of the Community Services Committee considered a report on the feasibility of remodelling the Parkside pavilion. The agenda report is attached for reference, Appendix A.

After debate the following resolution was passed:

- **To consider and recommend that the expenditure for delivery of this project is taken from EMR for New Office Provision, therefore the project and delivery can start as soon as the EMR has been approved at full Town Council.**
- **To use part or full amount of £5,000 to be spent on a consultation event with residents of Parkside.**
- **Both of the above motions be put forward for consideration.**

3. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

As requested by the Community Services Committee, Members are requested to consider the following:

- Use of EMR Office Provision

- Community Consultation

5. COUNCIL VISION

Aspirations

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

6. IMPLICATIONS

Corporate Implications

- There are no corporate implications arising from the recommendations.

Legal Implications

- There are no legal implications arising from the recommendations

Financial Implications

- There are no financial implications arising from the recommendations

Risk Implications

- There are no risk implications arising from the recommendations

Equalities Implications

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

This project / issue does not discriminate.

Climate Change Implications

- There are no climate change implications arising from the recommendations

Press Contact

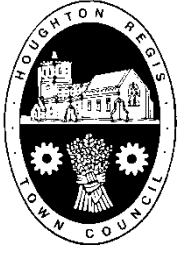
- There are no press implications arising from the recommendations

7. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

Members are requested to consider the Resolution from Community Services Committee.

8. APPENDICES

Appendix A: Agenda Item 12, Community Services Committee 17th July 2023



COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE
Agenda Item 12

Date:	17th July 2023
Title:	Parkside Recreation Ground Pavilion (Remodelling Feasibility).
Purpose of the Report:	To provide members with the initial thought on the feasibility of remodelling the Parkside Recreation Ground Pavilion.
Contact Officer:	Ian Haynes, Head of Environment and Community Services

1. RECOMMENDATION

- 1) To consider that the allocated funds of £5,000 for the feasibility of remodelling the Parkside Recreation Ground Pavilion be used for alternative projects agreed by the appropriate committee.
- 2) To consider and recommend to Council that monies be allocated within the emerging 2024/2025 Budget to hire a stand-alone building temporarily.
- 3) To recommend to the Leisure and Environment Services Committee that they consider the development of a ten-year planned maintenance plan, including an estimated life expectancy and possible replacement costs, to aid in long-term financial planning.

2. BACKGROUND

It has been suggested that the council could consider remodelling of Parkside Recreation Ground Pavilion to enable a community space / café to be provided. Included within the 2023/2024 budget is £5,000.00, which would allow for the engagement of professional services to support utilising the current store area, some community consultation and preliminary plans to be drawn up.

The store area houses the infrastructure used to run the pavilion. Officers could explore grant opportunities to assist with this project, although options may be limited as it is exploratory work.

3. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

The size of the space within the storeroom/garage areas is 15ft wide x 16ft long = 240 sq. ft (4.57m x 4.88m = 22.30 m²).

The current utilities, i.e., Gas, Electric, and Water, would need to be relocated within the building to maximise the available space Officers believe that the costs of this would be in the region of £15,000 - £20,000 (estimated), and the installation of a false wall around these but would require access to all of them at all times in case of any emergencies, this would also make the space in the room smaller. There is no loft space. See the pictures attached in Appendix A of the Fuse Board, Gas Boiler, and Water Tank.

Consideration could be given to extending the existing building. However, the building is a circa 1970s constructed from a double-breeze blocked walled single-story structure with zero insulation. Concern for the life expectancy of the building has been raised, and a long-term approach (Circa ten years) should be given for replacing the current structure with the possibility of increased community use incorporated into a future design. The costs for demolishing the existing building and creating a new modern building would be in the region of £1.1-1.2m.

Therefore, Officers believe that spending £5,000.00 on a professional feasibility report for this project are not required, as the space is not fit for purpose and will not meet the need of the local community.

As a possible alternative, Officers have asked for a budget quote for the long-term hire of a 23 m x 7 m temporary structure comprising a community room, storage, small kitchen, office space and toilets, as per the attached drawing.

Estimated costings for the potential temporary structure are as follows:

- 260 weeks: approximately £550-600 per week
- Delivery of Buildings £7,700
- Installation £24,500 (Excluding Principal contractor)
- Groundworks TBC

For optional Building services, please consider the following estimated percentage on top of the £550-600 weekly hire rate.

10% Access (steps & ramps)

20% Protecta (fire alarm, fire extinguishers, intruder alarm, emergency lights)

25% AirCare (heat and cooling system, acoustic panels, heat recovery ventilation)

Please note: building comes with Heaters throughout the building as standard

With this budget quote, costs are estimated. If the committee agrees, the next step will be to arrange a site visit with the supplier's project team to provide a full quote. If Members are minded to support this project, consideration should be given to including circa £50,000 in the emerging 2024/2025 budget going forward.

4. COUNCIL VISION

Aspirations

A1 To develop and enhance partnerships between HRTC, stakeholders, partners, community groups and residents.

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

6. IMPLICATIONS

Corporate Implications

- There are no corporate implications arising from this report

Legal Implications

- Planning permission will be required if this proceeds.

Financial Implications

- This project is not fully costed, and the associated expenditure isn't included in the budget. If Members are minded to proceed with this project expenditure, it should be included in the emerging 2024/2025 budget.

Risk Implications

- There are no risk implications arising from this report

Equalities Implications

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

This project/issue does not discriminate.

Press Contact

There are no press implications arising from this report.

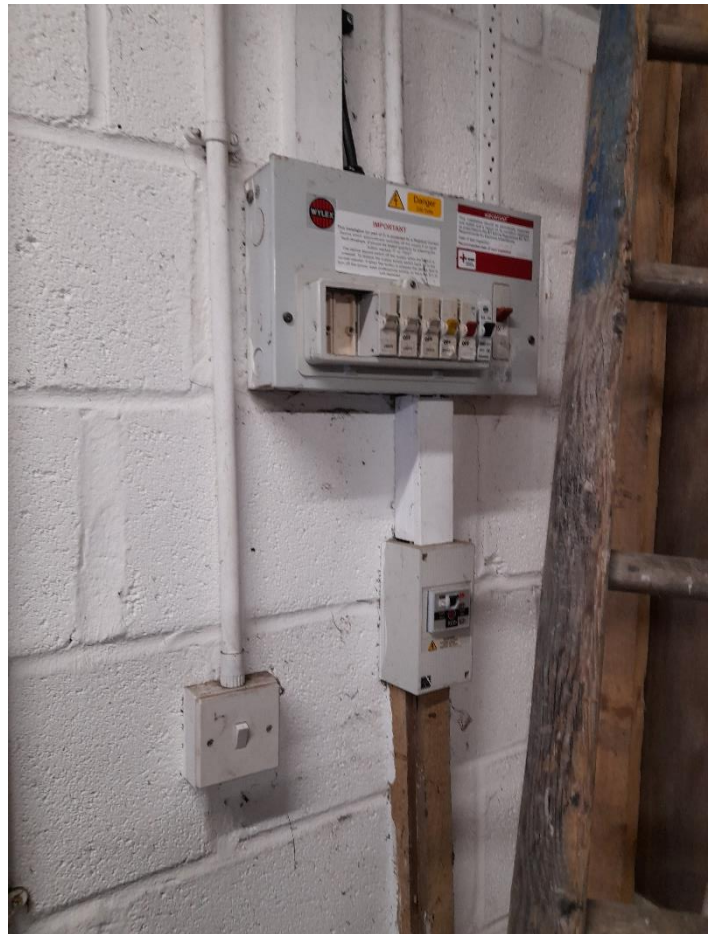
6. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

If Members are minded to agree that the £5,000.00 allocated for a professional feasibility report for this project is not required, as the space is not fit for purpose, and Officers give consideration to the alternative proposal.

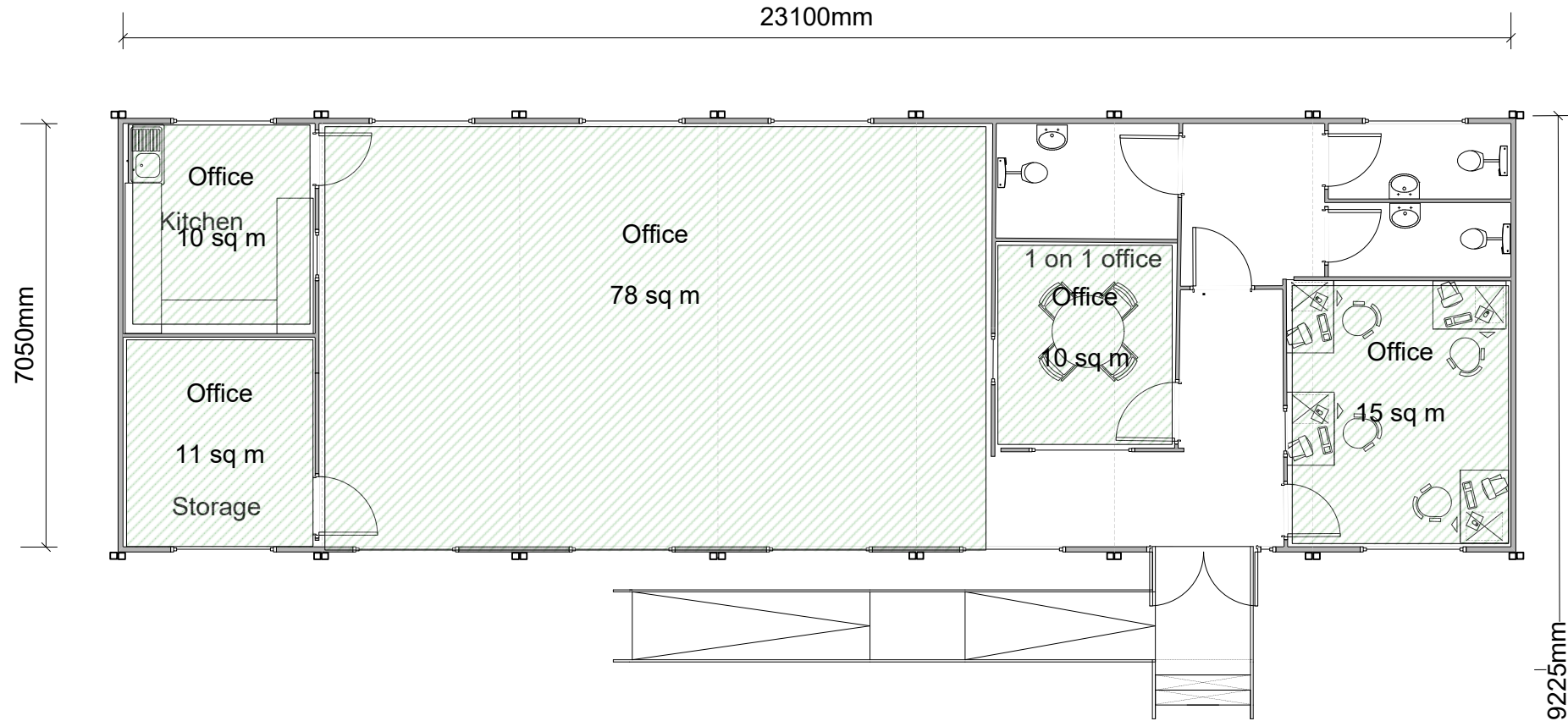
7. APPENDICES

Appendix A: Parkside Recreation Ground Pavilion (Utilities) Photos
Appendix B: Potential Community Space

Appendix A – Parkside Recreation Ground Pavilion (Utilities)



7 x UK073 Ultima Modules
Scale 1:100 @ A4
 (Scale is for Design Purposes Only)



Title:- Community Centre		Client:- Houghton Regis Town Council		Drawing Provided By :- St Albans Hire and Visitors Centre		 <small>© Portakabin Limited This document and the information it contains is the property of Portakabin Limited. Its contents are confidential and must not be copied, reproduced or divulged to anyone without the written permission of Portakabin Limited.</small>
Date:- 26/06/23	Scale:- NTS	Drawn By:- Fernando Fest		DO NOT SCALE OFF THIS DRAWING		
Revision:- 1	Drawing Number:- XXXXXXXX	Unit Number:- 123456789				



have
your
say...

...on the Future of Houghton Regis Day Centre for Older People

Find out more about the consultation process and how you can have your say on the future of Houghton Regis Day Centre for Older People

Find Central Bedfordshire Council online at



www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/consultations

**Central
Bedfordshire**

1. What are we consulting on?

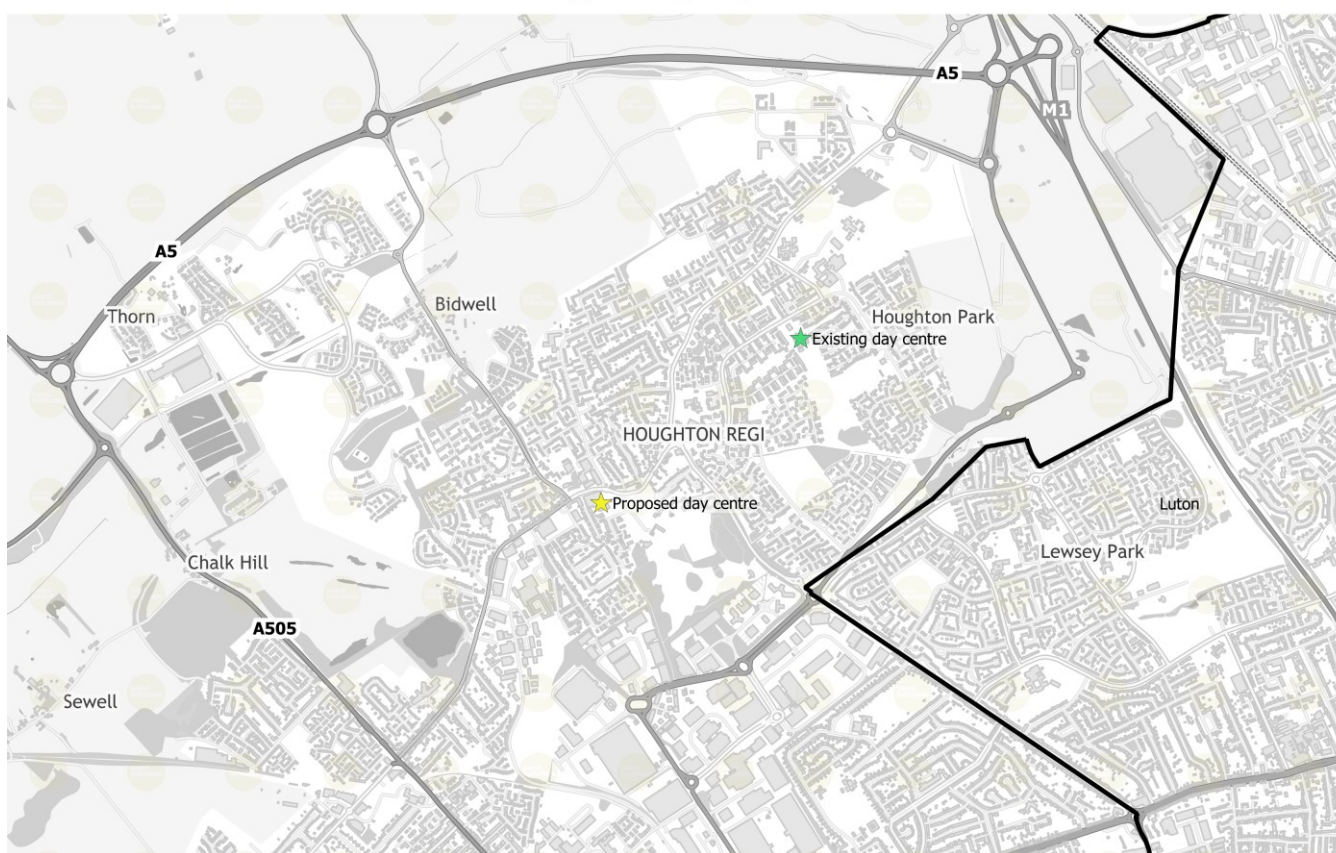
Central Bedfordshire Council wants the best possible quality of life for all its residents and is committed to developing and enhancing day services for older people and adults with disabilities. The Council owns and operates seven day services, four of which are for older people and the remaining three for adults with disabilities.

In early 2016 the Council began the process of developing the future day offer for older people and adults with disabilities. This is a two-stage process and stage one involved agreeing key components and principles which was a joint vision between the Council and those that use the service to outline what the future day offer should deliver.

Stage one of this project is now complete, and the Council is now at stage two which involves looking at each of the services individually. The Council is in the process of reviewing Houghton Regis Day Centre for Older People. The Council believes it can offer better opportunities to Houghton Regis Day Centre customers and is therefore consulting on the future of the day centre.

Having looked at several options for the future of the, the Council's preferred option at this time is to relocate the current service for existing customers to a community space at All Saints View, the new Independent Living Scheme in Houghton Regis. The Council would then close Houghton Regis Day Centre.

Houghton Regis day centre



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If you would like to take part in this consultation or would like more information about what we are proposing please see the information at www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/consultations or contact us using the details at the end of this document.

Consultation Timetable	
Key date	Activity
Monday 14 th August 2023	Consultation opens
Monday 6 th November 2023	Consultation ends
Monday 15 th January 2024	Report to Social Care, Health and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee for recommendations
Tuesday 6 th February 2024	Report to Executive Committee for decision on the future of Houghton Regis Day Centre for Older People

2. Why do we consult?

Councillors are responsible for making decisions for the Council. Holding a consultation gives those directly affected by a proposal the opportunity to have their say and influence the decision that is made. Those directly affected, community organisations and the general public are encouraged to review the proposals and feedback their opinions and ideas to the Council.

During the consultation process you can request further information, ask questions and request that the Council look into alternative options that have not been identified.

All comments made during the consultation process are recorded. The Council will publish its response to these comments and this information will be considered by Councillors so they can make an informed decision.

3. How will we consult?

Everyone can respond to the consultation by reading this document, which has a summary of the proposals, and by then completing the consultation questionnaire. There is more information in the document called 'Options Considered for the Future of The Houghton Regis Day Centre for Older People' which we encourage people to read before responding.

If you have any questions about the options, need more information or would like the Council to consider other ideas these would be welcome. The ways you can contact the Council are explained at the end of this document.

For those people who are most directly affected by the proposal – those who currently attend Houghton Regis Day Centre for Older People, their relatives/carers/representatives and the staff who work there – we will organise meetings to enable everyone who wants to take part in the consultation to participate.

We will take special care to ensure that the people who attend the centre are consulted, without causing distress especially to those who may have difficulty understanding what is happening. We will discuss this with the people who know the customers best such as their relatives and the staff in the centre.

For those customers who may need help, we will offer support through advocates provided by an independent organisation, who will assist them to ensure that they can express their views.

The consultation activities with customers and relatives will be tailored to individual requirements and the options that will be offered include:

- Meetings held at the day centre for customers, relatives/carers/representatives and staff - either in small groups or on an individual basis.
- Meetings held in areas local to relatives for those who find it difficult to get to the centre.
- Communications via post or email to customers, relatives/carers/representatives and staff to inform them of activities and the progress of the consultation.

In addition, members of the consultation team are available to meet with other individuals and organisations who would like to hear more about the proposals. Our contact details are at the end of this document.

4. What are the proposals trying to achieve?

A number of options in relation to the future of Houghton Regis Day Centre have been considered and evaluated against four important questions. These are:

- Improved quality of facilities/services – would the option improve the facilities and activities customers are able to access?
- Value for money – would the option represent good value for money– both in the short and longer term?
- Minimal disruption – what degree of disruption to the lives of current customers would result from the option in question and what will the impact of this be on their health and wellbeing?
- Key components and principles of the enhanced offer – would the option meet the key components and principles agreed in 2017, summarised below?

Key components:

These have been identified as important outcomes that should be achieved through day services for both customers and their relatives/representatives.

- Meet customer outcomes for social interaction and physical and mental stimulation.
- Meet carer outcomes for respite and peace of mind.
- Meet care and support needs.

Key principles:

These have been developed based on the outcomes identified within the key components and provide an overarching set of principles through which the day services should be delivered.

- Promote and maintain independence in a way which is personalised, flexible and responsive.
- Promote learning in a stimulating and supportive environment.
- Deliver greater integration and partnership with local communities.
- Maximise the use of community facilities that can be accessed by older people and adults with disabilities.

5. The options we have considered

The Council has considered the following options for the future of Houghton Regis Day Centre for Older People:

- Do nothing – continue to run Houghton Regis Day Centre in its present form.
- Refurbish Houghton Regis Day Centre so it meets modern standards.
- Create a new centre for customers attending Houghton Regis Day Centre within All Saints View the new independent living scheme in Houghton Regis and close Houghton Regis Day Centre.
- Move customers to other Central Bedfordshire Council day centres and close Houghton Regis Day Centre.
- Commission an independent service and close Houghton Regis Day Centre.

These options are set out in more detail in the document ‘Options Considered for the Future of Houghton Regis Day Centre for Older People’.

In the table below, we have summarised how these options have been evaluated.

Outcomes	Options				
	Do nothing	Refurbish current centre	Move service to All Saints View	Move customers to other CBC day centres	Commission new provider
Improved quality of facilities/services	x	✓	✓	✓	?
Minimal disruption for existing customers	✓	x	✓	x	?
Value for money	x	x	✓	✓	?
Meets key components and principles	x	✓	✓	x	?

6. Preferred option

Having considered these options for the future of Houghton Regis Day Centre for Older People, the Council’s preferred option at this stage is to move the existing customers to a space at All Saints View. The Council would then close Houghton Regis Day Centre. This is the preferred option because:

Improved quality of facilities/services: it would enable existing customers to access more personalised facilities whilst still meeting their care and support needs. Facilities would be integrated within the independent living scheme thereby encouraging growth of personal friendship networks and helping prevent isolation.

Minimal disruption for existing customers: any change in day services would mean some disruption for customers, however the whole customer group would be able to stay together, and we hope they would be supported by the same staff that they are now.

Value for money: moving to a community space at All Saints View and closing Houghton Regis Day Centre would mean the running costs of the building would be reduced. By co-locating both the Independent Living Scheme and the day centre, it is anticipated that both services can run more efficiently and effectively. This would represent better value for money to the Council and council taxpayers in Central Bedfordshire than the existing arrangements.

Key components and principles of the enhanced day offer: the new centre will offer an improved setting in which to meet current and future care and support needs of our customers. It provides opportunity to integrate with the community and make use of facilities within the town. It opens the opportunity to maintain friendships and increase levels of social interaction and physical and mental wellbeing of customers involved and their relatives/representatives

7. Have your say

Although relocating the service to space at All Saints View and then closing Houghton Regis Day Centre is currently the Council's preferred option, we want to hear your views before the Councillors make a decision about the future of the centre. Your feedback will help inform the decision Councillors make.

A copy of this document and a more detailed briefing document - 'Options Considered for the Future of Houghton Regis Day Centre for Older People' is available on the Council's website and paper copies will be available on request.

You can ask us any questions or tell us your views through the methods on the next page. We are particularly keen to get your answers to the following questions:

- What are your views on the Council's preferred option?
- Do you think all options have been correctly evaluated?
- Are there any options listed that you think the Council should investigate in more detail?
- Are there any other options that you think the Council should consider that are not in the document?
- What could the Council do to minimise the impact of any changes on the existing customers at Houghton Regis Day Centre and their relatives/representatives?
- Do you have any other comments about the proposals?

For more information

- Visit our website for more information and complete our online questionnaire:
www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/consultations
- Email us at: day.offer@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk
- Write to us at: FREEPOST RSJS GBBZ SRZT (you do not need a stamp)
MANOP Team
Houghton Regis Day Centre Consultation
Central Bedfordshire Council
Priory House, Monks Walk
Chicksands, Shefford
SG17 5TQ

The consultation is open until **Monday 6th November 2023**

If you require a paper copy of the consultation documents or need information in alternative formats or languages...

Email: day.offer@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Telephone: 0300 300 4840

Website: www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/consultations

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Central Bedfordshire in contact

Contact us...

by telephone: 0300 300 8000

by email: customer.services@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

on the web: www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Write to Central Bedfordshire Council, Priory House,
Monks Walk, Chicksands, Shefford, Bedfordshire SG17 5TQ