



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

1st December 2023

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

To: All Town Councillors

Notice of Meeting

You are hereby summoned to a meeting of the Houghton Regis Town Council to be held at the Council Offices on Monday 11th December 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.

4. MINUTES

Pages 5-12

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 2nd October 2023.

Recommendation: To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 2nd October 2023.

5. COMMITTEE AND SUB-COMMITTEE MINUTES

Pages 13-43

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

Corporate Services Committee	None to present
Community Services Committee	17 th July 2023
Environment & Leisure Committee	None to present
Planning Committee	4 th September, 25 th September, 16 th October and 6 th November
Town Partnership Committee	18 th July 2023

To receive the minutes of the following sub-committees.

New Cemetery Sub-Committee	None to present
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Recommendation: To receive the Minutes detailed above.

6. TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

A verbal report will be provided.

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

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

8. INTERNAL AUDIT PLANNING, REPORTING & REVIEW POLICY AND INTERNAL AUDIT SPECIFICATION

Pages 44-50

Members will find attached a copy of the approved document. There have been no changes in legislation; therefore, it is suggested that it remains suitable and fit for purpose.

Members are asked to consider and approve the Internal Audit Planning, Reporting & Review Policy and Internal Audit Specification.

Recommendation: To approve the Internal Audit Planning, Reporting & Review Policy and Internal Audit Specification.

9. HRTC CORPORATE PLAN*Pages 51-68*

To present to members the draft HRTC Corporate Plan for review and approval.

Recommendation: To approve the HRTC Corporate Plan 2024/2028.

10. TOWN BRANDING SCHEME*Pages 69-71*

To enable members to consider the development of a town branding scheme.

Recommendation: To begin to develop a town branding scheme to develop and encourage a sense of place and community.

11. UKSPF*Pages 72-88*

To provide Members with an update on the UKSPF applications.

Recommendation: In relation to the Rural England Prosperity Fund to:

- 1) Support the application made under the Rural England Prosperity Fund; To confirm the match funding requirement and that if successful the match funding will come from General Reserves**

In relation to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund to:

- 2) Support the application made under the UK Shared Prosperity funding.**

12. MOTION RE MARKET CHARTER*Pages 89-95*

Following Motion has been received from Cllr T McMahan:

To formally request that Dunstable Town Council present a report to a Dunstable Town Council meeting to enable members to consider the negative impact of DTC exercising its rights under the Dunstable Market Charter to charge a licence fee to event organisers within a 6.25-mile radius where the event includes more than 5 commercial market stalls.

Members will find attached a report presented to Town Council in June 2022 by way of background.

Members are invited to consider the above Motion.

13. CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE

Pages 96-102

To enable consideration and approval for Houghton Regis Town Council to engage with the NALC Corporate Peer Challenge Review programme.

Recommendation: To welcome the opportunity for Houghton Regis Town Council to engage in the LGA / NALC Corporate Peer Challenge Review programme.

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

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 2nd October 2023 at 7.00pm

Present: Councillors: N Batchelor
E Billington
P Burgess
J Carroll
E Cooper
E Costello
Y Farrell
W Henderson
M Herber
D Jones
T McMahon
C Rollins
A Slough
C Slough

Officers: Clare Evans Town Clerk
Ian Haynes Head of Environmental &
Amanda Samuels Administration Services Officer

Public: 1

12561 APOLOGIES

None.

12562 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

12563 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

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

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

12564 MINUTES

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 19th June 2023. Minor amendments were requested and agreed.

Resolved: To approve the minutes as amended of the meeting held on 19th June 2023 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

12565 COMMITTEE AND SUB-COMMITTEE MINUTES

Members received the minutes of the following committees and considered 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, 24 th July and 14 th August 2023
Town Partnership Committee	24 th January 2023

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

Proposed New Cemetery Working Group	15 th August 2022
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Resolved: 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.

12566 TOWN MAYOR ANNOUNCEMENTS

Members received a verbal report on events that had been attended by the Town Mayor. Since July 62 events had been attended; of note was the Terra Croft allotment opening ceremony, the topping out ceremony at Tithe Farm and the phase one opening at All Saints View.

Cllr Cooper reported that she had attended a Morrisons charity event in aid of sick children, and a civic service in Harpenden.

It was suggested that the Mayor's Handbook needed to be updated.

12567 REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS & ON TRAINING SESSIONS ATTENDED

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

Cllr Farrell confirmed that the Memorial Hall Committee's end of year accounts had been approved and that the AGM would take place on 17th October.

Cllr A Slough reported that Windsor Drive had won the CPRE award and that the application for an Asset of Community Value had been submitted.

Cllr C Slough advised that All Saints View stakeholders would hold a meeting on 10th October, the outcomes of which he would report back at the next meeting.

Cllr Jones reported that the AGM for Hospice at Home Volunteers had taken place, the committee had been re-elected and the Chairman had given notice that this would be his final term in office. Houghton Hall Park Project Board had held a meeting in July which had been an information sharing session with the new members. It had been decided that room hire rates would increase and a motion to install a dog wash facility on the site had been approved. Cllr Jones had also attended a meeting of the BATPC and a report on model financial regulations would be put before the County Committee meeting.

Cllr Billington confirmed that SORTED Counselling service had managed to reduce their waiting times; however, they had lost their Children in Need funding and were looking to find other funding sources.

Cllr Burgess advised that the Parkside Action group had carried out a poll on a community hub in Parkside and had received positive responses.

Cllr McMahon confirmed that she had been elected Chair of the Houghton Hall Park Project Board and would represent the Council. There had been some staff changes at HHP and further details would be forthcoming at the next meeting. New toddler play equipment was being installed at the visitor centre and the old equipment repurposed. The dog agility trail was also in place and proving very popular.

12568 AUDITED ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN 2022/23

Members were advised of the outcomes of the external audit 2022/23.

There was some discussion regarding whether a response made on the Audited Annual Governance & Accountability Return should have been entered in the negative. Members were informed that this matter would be discussed with the internal auditors at a meeting in November to clarify the situation.

- Resolved:**
- 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 would 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 was 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.**

12569 EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION POLICY

Review of this policy was 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 remained suitable, the Town Council may like to consider updating the policy by going beyond the basic equal opportunity policy (which reflected compliance with the law) and positively encourage a more diverse workforce. Hence a new Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy was adopted, minute number 12299.

There had been no further guidance and therefore it was considered that this policy remained fit for purpose.

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

12570 NEW OFFICE PROVISION EMR

Members were advised that at the Corporate Services meeting held on the 11th September 2023, members received a report on the New Office EMR and some works suggested to improve the office space. At the 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 were 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 were provided with a report in order to support the use of funds from EMR New Office Provision which allowed the modelling of the Town Council offices.

Members were advised that a councillor had suggested 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 were asked to consider this suggestion.

Concerns were raised about whether the correct process had been followed in regard to the retrospective sum for new office furniture. It was suggested that when considering new projects and initiatives, including the appointment of new staff, that full consideration and budget provision be made to support all on costs.

It was proposed and seconded to accept Recommendation 1 and a recorded vote was requested. Members voted as follows:

In favour:

Cllrs: Y Farrell, A Slough, E Billington, D Jones, W Henderson, C Slough, E Cooper, E Costello, C Rollins, M Herber

Against:
Cllr: P Burgess

Abstentions:
Cllrs: J Carroll, T McMahon, N Batchelor

It was accepted that the Recommendation relating to IT and electrical works, was a health and safety matter and Members agreed unanimously to the sum of £10,000 for this purpose.

As the lobby area costing would not incur any charge, this was also agreed by the Council.

A recorded vote was requested on Recommendation 4 that the Corporate Services Committee would take on responsibility for EMR Office Provision. Members voted as follows:

In favour:
Cllrs: Y Farrell, A Slough, E Billington, D Jones, W Henderson, C Slough, E Cooper, C Rollins, N Batchelor, E Costello

Against
Cllrs: J Carroll, T McMahon, P Burgess, M Herber

- Resolved:**
- 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 New 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;**
 - 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.**
 - 5. To agree that as new projects, initiatives and staff structures were developed all on-costs were costed and budgeted for.**

12571 PARKSIDE RECREATION GROUND PAVILION (REMODELLING FEASIBILITY) OR PARKSIDE COMMUNITY HUB

Members were presented with the considerations of Community Services Committee from 17th July 2023. The following recommendations had been resolved at the July meeting (minute item 12521):

- 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.

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- 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.

A discussion followed focussing on the most effective use of funds. While the option of a community hub was met with general approval, it was agreed that a consultation process with residents and stakeholders was required; this would establish how best to meet the needs of both residents and stakeholders.

It was felt that the corporate plan should be completed prior to official consultation as this would establish long-term plans and financing. The corporate plan would be presented to Town Council at the beginning of December and the associated budget would be agreed at Town Council in January. It was suggested that Town Council report back to Community Services who could then engage with potential stakeholders in preliminary discussions to establish what facilities might be required.

- Resolved:**
- 1. To advise Community Services Committee that Town Council considered their resolution put forward from its meeting on 21st July but on balance felt that Town Council corporate plan process should be concluded and the supporting Town Council budget be considered and agreed prior to a consultation exercise being carried out with residents;**
 - 2. To encourage Community Services Committee to consider an informal approach being made to potential stakeholders to gauge their interest and support for community hubs.**

12572 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 was that a working group finish time of after 4pm would generally fall outside of their normal working day and as such would likely restrict their ability to attend. Feedback from CBC advised that they would try and fit in with the group's preference for a start time.

The support of Bedfordshire Police at this meeting remained crucial for the continued success of the work of this working group. As such it was suggested that the timings of the Combating Crime Working Group should remain the same.

- Resolved: To continue with the current start times for the Working Group.**

12573 CONSULTATION ON THE FUTURE OF HOUGHTON REGIS DAY CENTRE FOR OLDER PEOPLE

As members were aware, CBC were running a Consultation on the future of Houghton Regis Day Centre for Older People. The consultation was scheduled from 14th August to 6th November 2023. Details of the consultation could be found at the following link: www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/consultations

Members were provided with the consultation document.

The consultation advised that, having looked at several options for the future of the day centre, CBC's preferred option was to relocate the 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 appraising this consultation, Members were requested to consider the issues highlighted in the consultation report and whether the proposed course of action continued to support the needs of services users. Some concerns were expressed that the proposed new style of provision would be unable to accommodate the current number of service users and would not be able to offer lunch and other support services.

It was also highlighted to members that on the CBC website there was some detail on 'The future day offer for adults with disabilities and older people' which included reference to the Ampthill Day Centre and the Townsend Day Centre. Whilst CBC were not actively reviewing the Townsend Day Centre service at the time, an email address had been made available for ideas to be put forward for the future day offer, day.offer@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk It was suggested that if members had any ideas that they wished to put forward that they should email in directly.

- Resolved:**
- 1. To express concerns that the proposed new style of provision may not be able to accommodate the current number of service users and would not be able to offer other currently available extended services and to encourage CBC to explore options to address these concerns;**
 - 2. To encourage CBC ward Cllrs to scrutinise the current provision and the new provision to ensure they fully appreciate the operational implications prior to making a final decision**

12574 CHRISTMAS RECEPTION OPENING

Members were advised of the following Christmas reception opening hours:

Friday 22nd December 2023	Open 9am to 1pm
Monday 25th December 2023	Closed – Bank Holiday
Tuesday 26th December 2023	Closed – Bank Holiday
*Wednesday 27th December 2023	Closed
*Thursday 28th December 2023	Closed
*Friday 29th December 2023	Closed

Monday 1st January 2024

Closed – Bank Holiday

Tuesday 2nd January 2024

Normal reception hours resume

**During these times, the Council can be contacted on: 01582 708540 or by email
info@houghtonregis.org.uk*

Telephone services would remain, the grounds staff would check the play areas and pavilions on 27th December and 29th December and staff would be on call in the event of an emergency situation. Members were reminded that the town council did not provide any core front line services such as social services, housing and highways. These were provided by the principal authority

Resolved To approve the reception opening hours between Christmas and New Year.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9.32pm

Dated this 11th day of December 2023

Chairman

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL
Community Services Committee
Minutes of the meeting held on
17th July 2023 at 7.00 pm

Present:	Councillors:	Y Farrell	Chair
		N Batchelor	
		E Billington	
		P Burgess	
		D Jones	Substitute
		T McMahan	
		A Slough	
	Officers:	Ian Haynes	Head of Environmental & Community Services
		Tara Earnshaw	Community Development Officer
		Louise Senior	Head of Democratic Services
		Amanda Samuels	Administration Officer
Public:		0	
Apologies:	Councillors:	C Rollins	
Also present:	Councillors:	J Carroll	
		E Cooper	

12510 APOLOGIES & SUBSTITUTIONS

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

12511 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Item 12 – Parkside Recreation Remodelling & Feasibility.

It was suggested that the building was not suitable for remodelling as it had been built during the 1970s to an inferior standard.

It was emphasised that the suggestions in the report would provide a building on par with other wards in the town. It was suggested that the cost would be minimal and could lead to a new building, however rising costs of building materials were of concern, it was suggested that funds be taken from EMR and should not wait for a year to start construction.

12512 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

None.

12513 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

Members were invited to elect a Vice Chair for Community Services Committee for 2023/24.

Nominee: A Slough Seconded by: E Billington

Nominee: T McMahon Seconded by: P Burgess

Members were asked to vote in favour for the Vice-Chair of the Committee:

- Cllr A Slough received 4 votes
- Cllr McMahon received 3 votes

Accordingly, Cllr A Slough became the Vice-Chair of the Community Services Committee for the municipal year of 2023/2024.

12514 MINUTES

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 6th February 2023.

Resolved: To confirm the minutes of the Community Services Committee meetings held on 6th February 2023 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

12515 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, and noted, this report.

12516 REPORT FROM GROUNDWORK

A representative from groundwork was unable to attend this meeting to update members on the work completed on behalf of Houghton Regis Town Council. Members would receive an update at the next meeting.

12517 TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING WORKING GROUPS AND CONSIDER ANY RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED THEREIN

Events Working Group	2 nd February, 2 nd March, 30 th March, 27 th April 2023.
Combating Crime Working Group	18 th January, 15 th February, 15 th March, 19 th April and 24 th May 2023.

Resolved: To receive the Minutes detailed above.

12518 COMMUNITY SERVICES 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.

Members received, for information, the budget report for Community Services Committee alongside the Budget Explanation.

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

- Parkside Recreation Ground Pavilion (Remodelling Feasibility)
- Visitor Publication

Members received this report for information.

12519 INCOME AND EXPENDITURE REPORT

Members received the income and expenditure report, with appropriate commentary, for Community Services Committee to date.

Members were advised that there were no items of note within the report, and expenditure would be tracked throughout the financial year.

12520 YOUTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES UPDATE (JUNE) 2023.

Members were updated on the activities of the youth and community services.

Members were advised the pop-up café was going from strength to strength with new young people signing up, hearing about the facility through word of mouth with attendees coming from a diverse range of backgrounds, an art session had been run by Time2Connect with a positive level of interest.

It was hoped that there would be some contact with outside agencies and within Central Bedfordshire Council to connect with young people.

Enhanced activities had been planned for the summer which included golf and inflatable fun.

An update was requested on the progress of Youth Worker recruitment. Members were advised that the closing date for the current advertisement was Wednesday 19th July and shortlisting and interviews would take place after this date with the hope of a suitable and successful appointment. Suitable venues for outreach provision work were being sought.

Members received, and noted, this report.

Resolved: To note the report.



12521 PARKSIDE RECREATION GROUND PAVILION (REMODELLING FEASIBILITY)

Members were invited to consider options for the potential remodelling of the Parkside Recreation Ground Pavilion.

Members discussed the suitability of the available space within the current facility.

Members suggested that the £5,000 funding for the feasibility study to be spent on an extensive consultation process to determine what type of facility was suitable for all user groups of the proposed building.

A new motion, to supersede the original three officer recommendations, was proposed by Cllr Burgess seconded by Cllr Batchelor to read:

- 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.

The officer recommendations read:

- 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 (Subject to positive community consultation).*
- 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.*

Members queried how much was to be requested from EMR New Office Provision with the proposed new motion. It was confirmed that the amount to be requested was the full amount of funds held in EMR and this was to be split over three wards.

It was confirmed to members that £5,000 was available for youth provision funded by YIF was for Parkside for the winter months.

It was clarified that £50,000 suggested in the report would be for a standalone building to be hired for as long as the council chose, at a cost of approximately £50,000 per year.

Members voted in favour of the motion proposed by Cllr Burgess, seconded by Cllr Batchelor.

A further motion was proposed by Cllr A Slough, seconded by Cllr Billington

- Part or full amount of £5,000 to be spent on a consultation event with residents of Parkside.

Members voted in favour of the additional motion.

A further motion was proposed by Cllr Billington, seconded by Cllr McMahon to read:

- Both of the above motions be put forward for consideration.

Members voted in favour of the third motion:

It was requested that draft plans for a consultation event be available for the full Town Council meeting in October.

- Resolved:**
- **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.**

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.00 pm

Dated this 7th day of November 2023



Chairman

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Planning Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on

Monday 4th September 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

Public: 0

12523 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

None.

12524 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

12525 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

12526 MINUTES

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on the 14th August 2023.

Members were updated on retrospective planning application CB/23/01212/FULL, 3 Holyrood Drive. Members were reminded that this application was received as a retrospective application and had been presented to Houghton Regis Town Council Planning Committee three times. A neighbouring resident had addressed the committee and requested that this application be called in.

Members were advised that CB/23/01212/FULL was listed for hearing at the DMC meeting taking place on 20th September 2023. Members agreed for Cllr Carroll to attend the DMC to speak on behalf of Houghton Regis Town Council on this application.

It was agreed for Cllr Carroll to attend the DMC meeting on 20th September.

Resolved To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 14th August 2023 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

12527 PLANNING MATTERS

(a) The following planning applications were considered:

CRS

[CB/23/02761/REG3](#)
(click for more details)

Extension to the fence height, from 2m to 2.5m.
No 4 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.

Noted:

[CB/23/02531/DOC](#)
(click for more details)

Discharge in Part of Condition 8 Part A against planning permission CB/21/00280/OUT (erection of 4 chalet style bungalows). Part A - Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation.
Land North of Highfield House, Bedford Road, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 6JP

[CB/23/02635/DOC](#)
(click for more details)

Discharge of Conditions 8, 25 and 29 against planning permission CB/12/03613/OUT (Outline planning permission with the details of access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale reserved for later determination. Development to comprise: up to 5,150 dwellings (Use Class C3); up to 202,500 sqm gross of additional development in Use Classes: A1, A2, A3 (retail), A4 (public house), A5 (take away); B1, B2, B8 (offices, industrial and storage and distribution); C1 (hotel), C2 (care home), D1 and D2 (community and leisure); car showroom; data centre; petrol filling station; car parking; primary substation; energy centre; and for the laying out of the buildings; routes and open spaces within the development; and all associated works and operations including but not limited to: demolition; earthworks; engineering operations. All development, works and operations to be in accordance with the Development Parameters Schedule and Plans')
Houghton Regis North Site 1, Land on the northern edge of Houghton Regis

Permissions / Approvals / Consents

None at time of going to print.

Refusals:

CB/23/00876/FULL

Change of use to mixed agricultural and equestrian. Erection of stables, tack room and storage, hardstanding to apron, access and landscaping.
Land off Sewell Lane Sewell Dunstable LU6 1RP

RLS

Withdrawals:

- CB/22/03101/RM Following Outline Application CB/21/00280/OUT (Erection of 4 chalet style bungalows) Reserved matters sought for appearance, landscaping, layout and scale.
Land North of Highfield House, Bedford Road, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 6JP

- CB/22/04923/FULL Demolition of existing dwelling, garage and buildings for a residential development for 32 dwellings with access road and sewers.
Red Cow Farm House, Bedford Road, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 6JP

12528 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 7.07pm

Dated this 25th day of September 2023

Chairman

CR L Slough -

CR L S

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Planning Committee

**Minutes of the meeting held on
Monday 25th September 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:	0	
Apologies:	Councillor:	M Herber	
Also present:	Councillors:	T McMahon S Goodchild	Central Bedfordshire Council

12554 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Cllr Herber.

12555 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

12556 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

12557 MINUTES

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on the 4th September 2023

**Resolved To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 4th September 2023
and for these to be signed by the Chairman.**

12558 PLANNING MATTERS

(a) The following planning applications were considered:

<u>CB/23/01847/FULL</u> (click for more details)	Change of use of amenity land to garden land and creation of a new boundary line with a new 1.95m fence 29 Constable Close, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5ST Mr Iulian Abuzatoaiei
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CRLS

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

- **Enclosure of amenity land**
- **Restricting the openness and view to local residents**
- **Causing a visual obstruction of the view of traffic to road users**

Noted:

[CB/23/02751/DOC](#)
[\(click for more details\)](#)

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.)
Houghton Regis North Site1, Land on the Northern edge of Houghton Regis

[CB/23/02752/DOC](#)
[\(click for more details\)](#)

Discharge of Conditions part 32 and part 33 (parcels 1 & 2 of Phase 2 only) 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)
Houghton Regis North Site 1, land to the northern edge of Houghton Regis

CRS

[CB/23/02808/DOC](#)
(click for more
details)

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

[CB/23/02812/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).
Houghton Regis North Site 1, Land on the northern edge of Houghton Regis

[CB/23/02913/GPDE](#)
(click for more
details)

Prior Notification of Householder Extension: Single storey rear extension, 5 m beyond the rear wall of the original dwelling, maximum height of 3.19 m & 2.70 m to the eaves. 58 Coopers Way, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5US

[CB/23/02827/DOC](#)
(click for more
details)

Discharge in Part of Condition 25 (relating to Parcels 1 and 2 of Phase 2 only) against planning permission [CB/12/03613/OUT](#) (click for more details)
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),

CRS

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. Cond 25 Construction Environmental Plan.

Houghton Regis North Site 1, Land on the northern edge of Houghton Regis

TM4:19 PM

[CB/23/02912/DOC](#)
[\(click for more details\)](#)

Discharge of Condition 6 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 5150 dwellings (Use Class C3); up to 202500 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 6 Site Wide Design Code.

Houghton Regis North Site 1, Land on the northern edge of Houghton Regis

[CB/23/02796/DOC](#)
[\(click for more details\)](#)

Discharge of Conditions 5, 6, 13, & 17 against planning permission CB/22/00545/FULL Development of a single industrial warehouse unit for E(g)(iii), B2 and B8 use with ancillary offices, car parking, service areas and soft landscaping.

Unit 15, Humphrys Road, Dunstable, LU5 4TP

Permissions / Approvals / Consents

None received.

Refusals:

None received.

CRS

Withdrawals:

None received.

12559 CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL PUBLIC NOTICE A00409 – CHURCHFIELD ROAD ONE WAY AND WAITING RESTRICTIONS

Members were advised that Central Bedfordshire Council propose to consult on a one-way system and waiting restrictions on Churchfield Road. These proposals were considered necessary for facilitating the passage on the road and for preserving the amenity of the area. The proposal was part of a scheme to reduce traffic conflicts and improve the management of parking.

Members were provided with the public notices and plans for these schemes.

Members were advised that the Planning Committee had been granted an extension to submit their comments by 26th September 2023.

Members welcomed these proposals and were generally supportive of them, however, certain reservations about aspects of the schemes were highlighted, set out below, and members suggested that the proposals should not be implemented until necessary alternative parking was provided for residents and visitors.

A00409OW

It was noted that "the proposal was part of a scheme to reduce traffic conflicts and improve the management of parking". Houghton Regis Town Council had not been advised of the overall nature of this scheme. Before signifying its unreserved approval of these proposals, it would wish to be informed of the other elements of the scheme and the time scale envisaged for its implementation.

With the stated aims of the proposal in mind, Houghton Regis Town Council did not agree that Dellmont Road should remain two-way. It was felt that this would lead to more numerous traffic conflicts rather than reducing them. A preference was expressed for Dellmont Road to flow from West to East (i.e. exiting onto Tithe Farm Road).

It was further noted that the plan accompanying the proposal stated it was "Option 3 - Dellmont Road remains two-way". There were therefore at least two other options available. It was queried whether these alternative options treat Dellmont Road differently, if so, members requested sight of the alternatives in order that these options should also be considered.

A00409WR

It was highlighted that an amendment was required to paragraph 8 in the list of works. It should read "...extending in a south-westerly direction...", not north-westerly.

CRLS

Concerns were expressed about the treatment of the turning circle at the northern end of Churchfield Road. The turning circle was no longer needed or used for its original purpose. Currently, it was used by residents in the vicinity as an irregular parking area. It was highlighted that totally encasing the turning circle with double yellow lines would simply add to the pressure on parking in the area, provision for which was already inadequate and which was already being tightened by these proposals. Houghton Regis Town Council would like to see the turning circle re-purposed in some way to assist local residents.

The question was also raised about enforcement of these restrictions, once implemented, and whether it would be consistent, noting that the maximum pressure on parking space was during the evening and at night.

Resolved: To consider the Town Councils response to Central Bedfordshire Councils proposals to introduce a one-way system and waiting restrictions in Churchfield Road.

12560 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 6th day of November 2023

Chairman

Chris Stough

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL**Planning Committee****Minutes of the meeting held on****16th October 2023 at 7.00pm**

Present:	Councillors:	C Slough E Billington E Cooper D Jones	Chairman
	Officers:	Louise Senior Amanda Samuels	Head of Democratic Services Administrative Officer
	Public:	8	
Apologies:	Councillors:	J Carroll N Batchelor M Herber	
Also present:		S Goodchild	Central Bedfordshire Council

12575 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Cllrs J Carroll, N Batchelor and M Herber.

12576 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Concerns were raised by the owners of neighbouring properties regarding application CB/23/03042/FULL, which requested a change of use from residential to a children's carehome. Members of the Public highlighted that there were several anomalies with the application:

- A covenant, signed by residents, that precluded use of properties for business purposes included on the deeds.
- Safety issues regarding a loft conversion and the conversion of the garage that had not been inspected by the planning officer.
- Inaccuracies and discrepancies on the planning application related to:
 - Number of parking bays
 - Uncertainty as to whether permission had been granted for an additional bay
 - Number of employees expected on site and the provision of employee parking
- Trees and hedges that would need to be removed to accommodate additional parking.
- Waste provision had not been considered in the application.
- Noise and lack of privacy for residents.
- Concerns related to a lack of transparency.
- Stability of the business and suitability for vulnerable children.

CHS

- Suitability of location for vulnerable children.
- The possibility of future applications to extend the property if change of use was approved.

Members acknowledged that traffic, parking and noise were legitimate issues for consideration, and noted the concerns regarding the covenant; however, it was highlighted to residents that the remit of the Planning Committee was to comment on issues related to planning. Members stressed that the information supplied was insufficient, and further information was to be requested on:

- The covenant
- Planned alterations or extensions to the structure.
- Parking facilities
- Clarification on the number of bedrooms

Members advised Members of the Public they could request a CBC councillor call this application in to be heard by the Development Management Committee.

12577 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

12578 MINUTES

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on the 25th September 2023.

Resolved: To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 25th September 2023 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

12579 PLANNING MATTERS

(a) The following planning applications were considered:

<u>CB/23/03042/FULL</u> (click for more details)	Change of use from residential dwelling to a children's carehome (c2 class) 49 Millers Way, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5FH Ms Shafreen Khan
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Houghton Regis Town Council raised an objection to this application on the grounds of potential traffic problems and inadequate parking provision. Members were of the opinion that the information supplied in respect of this application was insufficient to form a balanced view and requested further details of:-

CRLS

- whether there is, as alleged, a covenant on the property preventing business use
- any plans for extensions or alterations to the property
- the number of bedrooms at the property and the number of children for whom it is intended to provide care

[CB/23/02974/FULL](#)
(click for more details)

Erection of an end-of-terrace two storey 2 bedroom house.
1 The Link, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5HQ
Mr Mark Gold, Moax Ltd

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

- Overdevelopment
- Protrusion from the building line
- Non-compliance with parking standards
- Restriction of light and infringement on openness of the area

[CB/23/02966/FULL](#)
(click for more details)

Link extension and conversion of garage into a granny annexe.
72 Tennyson Avenue, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5UG
Mr & Mrs J Weatherley

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

- Overdevelopment.

[CB/23/03054/FULL](#)
(click for more details)

Conversion of garage to habitable space, part first floor side extension and single storey rear extension.
75 Fensome Drive, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5SF
Mr Marian Pavel

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

- Overdevelopment
- Garage would look incongruous
- Inappropriate for the street scene

[CB/23/03093/FULL](#)
(click for more details)

Change of use from Class E(a) (retail) to Class B8 (self-storage), external alterations and associated works to car park and landscaping
Former Site Of Morrisons, High Street, Houghton Regis
Cinch Self-Storage

Comments: Members noted that this application, after ten years lack of use, with its proposals for tidying and smartening up, improvement of the landscaping and the promise of future maintenance, is very welcome.

CRS

Members nonetheless expressed their frustration and disappointment that the aspirations for the site, suggested in the Houghton Regis Town Centre Action Plan (2022) and the Houghton Regis Neighbourhood Plan (presently under examination by the Planning Inspectorate) will not be able to be implemented.

[CB/23/02795/ADV](#)
(click for more details)

Advertisement: installation of 2 fascia signs, 1 illuminated, 1 illuminated projecting sign and 2 non illuminated vinyl signs
Unit 1 Collie Place Off Thorn Road Houghton Regis
Dunstable LU5 6TW
Mr Andy Horwood, Tesco

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

[CB/23/03152/FULL](#)
(click for more details)

Single storey rear extension
41 East Hill Road, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5EH
Mrs Mary Cook

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

[CB/23/03040/FULL](#)
(click for more details)

New front porch
14 Bridgeman Drive, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5SR
Mr Rayment

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

[CB/TRE/23/00436](#)
(click for more details)

Works to trees protected by Tree Preservation Order (TPO/05/0001/G1): T1 and T3 to be reduced in size by 50% due to location near boundary fence
Amenity ground to rear of 53, 55 and 57 Bidwell Hill, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5EP

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

- Proximity to the boundary fence was the only reason provided for these works.
- Insufficient information available for the reason for the works

Noted:

[CB/23/03027/DOC](#)
(click for more details)

Discharge in Part 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

CRLS

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 Written Scheme of Archaeological Resource Management.
Houghton Regis North Site 1, Land on the northern edge of Houghton Regis

[CB/23/02790/DOC](#)
(click for more details)

Discharge of Condition 35 against planning permission CB/12/03613/OUT Outline planning permission with the details of access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale reserved for later determination. Development to comprise: up to 5,150 dwellings (Use Class C3); up to 202,500 sqm gross of additional development in Use Classes: A1, A2, A3 (retail), A4 (public house), A5 (take away); B1, B2, B8 (offices, industrial and storage and distribution); C1 (hotel), 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.
Houghton Regis North Site1, Land on the Northern edge of Houghton Regis

[CB/23/03011/DOC](#)
(click for more details)

Discharge of Condition 4 against planning permission 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

[CB/23/03071/LDCP](#)
(click for more details)

Lawful Development Certificate Proposed: Single storey rear extension, and new porch to front elevation
7 Burford Walk, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5RX

CRLS

- [CB/23/03253/GPDE](#) [\(click for more details\)](#) Prior Notification of Householder Extension: Single storey rear extension, 4m beyond the rear wall of the original dwelling, maximum height of 3m & 3m to the eaves. 61 Fareham Way, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5RE
- [CB/23/03225/GPDE](#) [\(click for more details\)](#) 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 44 Olma Road, Dunstable, LU5 5AF
- [CB/23/03166/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)
Houghton Regis North Site 1, Land on the northern edge of Houghton Regis

Permissions / Approvals / Consents

- [CB/23/00023/FULL](#) [\(click for more details\)](#) Change of use of amenity land with the removal of the grass verge and raised kerb and replace with tarmac access and a dropped kerb
105 Grove Road, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5PE

Refusals:

None received.

Withdrawals:

None received.

CRS

**12580 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.

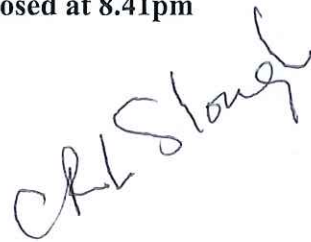
Section 106 Monies – No substantive update to report.

Resolved: To note the information

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.41pm

Dated this 6th day of November 2023

Chairman



HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Planning Committee

**Minutes of the meeting held on
6th November at 7.00pm**

Present:	Councillors:	C Slough N Batchelor E Billington J Carroll E Costello M Herber D Jones	Chairman (Substitute)
	Officers:	Louise Senior Amanda Samuels	Head of Democratic Services Administration Officer
	Public:	0	
Apologies:	Councillors:	E Cooper	
Also present:		S Goodchild	Central Bedfordshire Council

12581 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Cllr Cooper (Cllr Costello substituted).

12582 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

12583 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

12584 MINUTES

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on the 25th September and 16th October 2023.

Resolved To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 25th September and 16th October 2023 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

12585 PLANNING MATTERS

(a) The following planning applications were considered:

CB/23/03155/FULL
(click for more
details)

Change of use to flexible range of uses (within Classes E(g)(iii), B2 and / or B8), together with associated works.
Unit 10, Humphrys Road, Dunstable, LU5 4TP
Legal and General UK Property Fund and Legal and General Assurance (Pensions Management) Limited

ORLS

Comments: It was felt that flexibility of use was to be encouraged, however, it was highlighted that there concerns regarding potential issues relating to parking and cycle safety; however, these concerns would be address, if necessary, once the new use was established.

Houghton Regis Town Council raised no objections to this application.

[CB/23/03258/FULL](#)
(click for more details)

Single storey side and rear extensions.
98 Longbrooke, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5QY
Mrs Jean Bray

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

[CB/23/03279/FULL](#)
(click for more details)

Single storey detached annexe within the rear garden
38 Drury Lane, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5ED
Mr Martin Newman

Comments: After extensive discussion, Houghton Regis Town Council raised no objections to this application.

[CB/23/03335/FULL](#)
(click for more details)

Part single and part two storey rear extension and front porch
3 Blackthorn Road, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5JP
Mrs Chikondi Lawrencin

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

[CB/23/03297/FULL](#)
(click for more details)

Proposed ground floor rear extension
49 Yew Street, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5PA
Grzegorz Kozlowski

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

[CB/23/03312/FULL](#)
(click for more details)

Single storey side and rear extension and front porch
78 Tithe Farm Road, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5JB
Mr M Petriceanu

Comments: Houghton Regis Town Council raised no objections to this application, however it was noted that due to the location of the site, deliveries may cause temporary disruption, as such it was requested that consideration be given to delivery vehicles being restricted to outside of school drop off and collection times due to the close proximity to Tithe Farm Primary School.

Noted:

CR/S

[CB/23/03252/LDCP](#)
(click for more details)

Lawful Development Certificate Proposed (Proposed single storey rear extension)
61 Fareham Way, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5RE

[CB/23/03362/NMA](#)
(click for more details)

Non-material amendment to planning permission
CB/20/01172/RM (Reserved Matters: (following Outline Application CB/18/00067/OUT) Application for the appearance, layout, scale and landscaping of proposed the development for 22 dwellings.) Amendment sought to vary the wording in condition 3.
Highfield Barns, Bedford Road, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 6JP

Comments: While Houghton Regis Town Council does not have the authority to comment on non-material amendments, it was highlighted that the Council was able to comment on a variation of condition.

The original outline application was for access and had been approved. It stated that development would not begin until detailed plans of the proposed roads were approved. In addition, no building was to be occupied until the access road had been constructed. Access was still awaiting construction and there was some reluctance to amend the wording prior to this work being carried out. Houghton Regis Town Council hoped that the Planning Authority would remain firm on this point.

Permissions / Approvals / Consents

Refusals:

None received.

Withdrawals:

None received.

12586 CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL'S DRAFT PLANNING OBLIGATIONS SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT (SPD) CONSULTATION NOTIFICATION

Members were informed of a consultation on the Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) being undertaken by Central Bedfordshire Council.

The Planning Obligations SPD was a guidance document that explained the Council's approach to securing planning obligations (also known as Section 106 contributions) from new developments.

CRLS

The Planning Obligations SPD set out the different types of infrastructure the Council sought contributions towards, and the supporting evidence to justify how much was collected. It also set out the approach to site viability and the prioritisation of infrastructure.

This guidance would ensure developers understood the planning obligation requirements from an early stage in the development process and make appropriate provision. This in turn would enable the creation of sustainable communities, whereby high-quality development was supported by high-quality infrastructure.

A summary of the comments received and how they had been taken into account would be presented to Executive in the Spring 2024 alongside the final Planning Obligations SPD. Once adopted, the SPD would be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications and would be used when assessing planning applications and negotiating planning obligations for new development.

Members agreed to defer this item to the next meeting to allow members more time to read the document fully.

**12587 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 7.47pm

Dated this 27th day of November 2023

Chairman

CRL Slough

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF HOUGHTON REGIS PARTNERSHIP
COMMITTEE
HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, PEEL STREET
ON 18th July 2023**

Present: Town Cllrs: **C Slough (Vice-Chair), J Carroll, Y Farrell and D Jones**
CBC Cllrs: **T McMahon (Chair), C Alderman, S Goodchild and P Hamill**
HRTC Clare Evans, Town Clerk
Officers: Louise Senior, Head of Democratic Services

Co-opted members: D Gibbons
J Anderson
C Reagan

Also in attendance: Jemma McClean, Community Engagement Manager
HRTC Cllr M Herber

Apologies: Mrs Hughes, Community Engagement Manager, CBC

Members of the public: 1

989 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Members were invited to elect a Chairman for Houghton Regis Partnership Committee for 2023/24 in accordance with the Terms of Reference.

In accordance with the Terms of Reference this could be a member from either authority.

Nominee	T McMahon	Proposed by:	P Hamill
		Seconded by:	J Carroll

No further nominations were received.

Accordingly, Cllr McMahon was elected as Chair of the Houghton Regis Partnership Committee for the municipal year of 2023/2024.

990 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Sarah Hughes, CBC Community Engagement Manager.

991 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

992 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

None.

993 MINUTES

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

Members requested some amendments to the minutes of the 24th January 2023. The minutes were approved subject to the amendments.

Resolved: To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 24th January 2023, as amended, and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

994 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN

Members were invited to elect a Vice-Chairman for Houghton Regis Partnership Committee for 2023/24 in accordance with the Terms of Reference.

In accordance with the Terms of Reference this should be a member from the other authority to the Chairman.

Nominee	C Slough	Proposed by:	D Jones
		Seconded by:	Y Farrell

No further nominations were received.

Accordingly, Cllr C Slough was elected as Vice-Chair of the Houghton Regis Partnership Committee for the municipal year of 2023/2024.

995 CONFIRMATION OF THE SECRETARIAT

In accordance with the Terms of Reference, the Committee were required to confirm the secretariat for the Partnership Committee for 2023/2024.

It was agreed for Houghton Regis Town Council to continue to act as the secretariat for the Partnership Committee for the municipal year of 2023/2024.

996 PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE CO-OPTION

The Terms of Reference required the list of Co-opted Members to be reviewed annually, by the Town Joint Committee.

Members had received applications for co-option from:

- David Gibbons - a co-opted member during 2022/2023, confirmed would like to be co-opted again

- Jo Anderson – a co-opted member during 2022/2023, confirmed would like to be co-opted again
- Carole Regan – a co-opted member during 2022/2023

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

To support engagement with local stakeholders the Town Joint Committee could co-opt members from local representative groups, as appropriate up to a maximum of 15. Each co-opted Member would be able to engage fully in all discussions but would not have any voting rights. Co-opted members could be removed from the Town Joint Committee. Decision making around removals could 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.

Members agreed for the co-optee applicants to be co-opted onto the committee for the municipal year of 2023/2024.

The co-optees joined the meeting.

Resolved: To confirm the following co-opted members of the Houghton Regis Partnership Committee for 2023-24:

- **David Gibbons**
- **Jo Anderson**
- **Carole Regan**

997 COMMITTEE FUNCTIONS & TERMS OF REFERENCE

Members received the Terms of Reference which related to this committee.

Concerns were raised that the Town Partnership Committee's Terms of Reference were not in alignment with the way the committee operated. It was suggested that consideration of change be given either to the objectives or changes to the way the committee operated. It was highlighted that the minutes of the Partnership meeting do not get presented anywhere within Central Bedfordshire Council for action.

It was suggested that with new administrations in place at both councils, that the relationship between Houghton Regis Town Council and Central Bedfordshire Council may improve over the term of office.

It was requested that other towns who also had a partnership committee with Central Bedfordshire Council be contacted with a view to discussing the Partnership Committees Terms of Reference.

998 PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE WORKPLAN

Members were invited to consider the Partnership Committee workplan and were invited to discuss what items to include. Members agreed for the headings to be the same as the workplan of 2022/2023, less the items of Tithe Farm Sports Provision and future Cemetery Provision as these were ongoing projects and would be reported in the HRTC Update report going forwards.

It was requested that the work plan include reference to the future use / management of Bedford Square Community Centre. It was suggested that a report be included on the next agenda the option of moving the college (currently using Bedford Square Community Centre) to the University Technical College to enable community use again of the Centre.

Concerns were also raised regarding the condition of the centre due to the use of the facility by Central Bedfordshire College. Updates were requested on the future use of the Community Centre.

Members expressed concerns that with the growth of the town primary care and school places would need to be considered. The option of a police hub was also referred to.

Members highlighted that, as some matters were discussed at other committee meetings, there seemed to be some duplication within the workplan and felt it could be presented in a manner to avoid replication. However it was highlighted that without the feedback provided at Town Partnership Committee Meeting, the opportunity to raise any issues highlighted in other meetings of the council with Central Bedfordshire Council would be missed.

**999 IMPROVING HEALTH & WELLBEING IN HOUGHTON REGIS:
TIME 2 CONNECT*****Agenda item 13 - brought forward***

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

Members were advised that the open access sessions had been well attended and 53 1:1 sessions had been held. A tea dance project had been running in Leighton Buzzard and grant money had been awarded for to trial a similar activity in Houghton Regis.

Maths courses had been offered and arts and crafts sessions were being offered over the summer. Time2Connect had a hot desk based in Linnere, although it had been fairly quiet as the café has not been open.

Time2Connect were undergoing an evaluation by Central Bedfordshire Council to look at the impact and benefit the project has had for local residents which would influence future funding opportunities.

There had been enquiries to book additional space at All Saints View to hold Jazz up Your Life sessions, however contact had proven difficult to confirm any bookings.



1000 CBC UPDATE REPORT

Members received the Central Bedfordshire Council update report.

Members raised concerns regarding the accuracy of crime figures as stated within the report and felt that inaccurate figures showed a misrepresentation of the town and any arising issues it faces.

It was suggested that shoplifting figures were not a true representation of the issue in Houghton Regis as shopkeepers were reluctant to report incidents as they had a lack of confidence of action being taken.

Also of concern was traffic parking infringements and the lack of priority from Central Bedfordshire Council in focussing on Houghton Regis despite Traffic Enforcement Officers frequenting the town.

It was suggested that schools within Houghton Regis be encouraged to become more eco-friendly. The report highlighted that 7 schools were eco-friendly, however only 2 of these were within Houghton Regis. It was requested that through the advertising of events participants be encouraged to walk to events instead of driving.

Members were advised of the recruitment status of staff for Houghton Hall Park, and that interviews had been arranged.

Concerns were raised regarding the Primary Care in Houghton Regis and the health inequalities throughout the town.

1001 HRTC UPDATE REPORT

Members received the HRTC update report, including:

Corporate Services

- 23/24 Budget highlights
- Corporate Plan process

Environment & Leisure

- Tithe Farm
- New cemetery investigations
- VG Pavilion decoration in partnership with Morgan Sindall Community services


Community services

- Youth services
- Events

Planning

- NHP

Members received an update on some of the work the Town Council had completed, the positive work was acknowledged by members and it was highlighted that it had felt more like an equal partnership.



A member raised concerns that the land in front of The Gables in Houghton Regis was looking unkempt, it was requested of the Town Council this area be tidied up. The Town Clerk confirmed the location and extent of Common Land in Houghton Regis would be looked into and feed back to members. In some instances it was difficult to determine as historic land marks / features had changed.

A member questioned the planting of trees on the Village Green, highlighting concerns that this had taken away amenity land. There was some discussion around the definition of recreation and open space and common land.

The placement of 'No Parking' signs on the land around the entrance to The Brambles were queried, and whether these had been placed by the Town Council. This was to be investigated and fed back accordingly.

Agenda item 13 – discussed earlier in the agenda

1002 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 requested the following items be considered for Central Bedfordshire Council's attention:

- Booking and hire arrangements of All Saints View
- Challenges around the Terms of Reference for this committee
- Bedford Square Community Centre and options with the UTC.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.21pm

Dated this 14th day of November 2023

Chairman





HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Internal Audit Planning, Reporting & Review Policy

Date of Adoption:	Town Council 18 th May 2011
Date of Review:	22 nd September 2014; 15 th June 2015; 3 rd October 2016; 9 th October 2017; 5 th October 2020; 4 th October 2023
Date of Re-adoption	11 th December 2023 TBC

Background

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

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

Legislative Framework

Regulation 4 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003 requires audited bodies (which includes local authorities / parish councils) to conduct, at least annually, a review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control and to publish the results. This statement of assurance forms part of the financial statements.

The Accounts and Audit (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2006 which came into force in April 2006 clarify the 2003 Regulations and strengthen governance and accountability.

Councillors, together with the Town Clerk (the Proper Officer) are responsible to the electorate to ensure good governance within Houghton Regis Town Council. Houghton Regis Town Council is required to:

1. consider the findings of the review of systems of internal control in Regulation 4(3) of the 2003 Regulations (as amended in 2006); and
2. carry out and consider the findings of a review of the effectiveness of the system of internal audit in Regulations 6(3) and 6(4) of the 2003 Regulations (as amended in 2006);

Policy Framework

The Council's approved Standing Orders require that (*Section 18 b i*):

18 FINANCIAL CONTROLS AND PROCUREMENT

- b The council shall consider and approve financial regulations drawn up by the Responsible Financial Officer, which shall include detailed arrangements in respect of the following:
 - i. the keeping of accounting records and systems of internal controls;

The Council's approved Financial Regulations require that (*Section 2*, Accounting and Audit, as applicable to internal audit):

2. ACCOUNTING AND AUDIT (INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL)

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

Purpose of Internal Audit

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

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

Traditionally the audit has been achieved by a *mid year interim Internal Audit and* a 'year-end' internal audit, although there is provision to contact the internal auditor as necessary.

Planning

Legislation

Regulation 6 of the Regulations 2006 requires the Houghton Regis Town Council to maintain an adequate and effective system of internal audit of its accounting records and system of internal control in accordance with proper internal audit practices.

Policy

Internal control is set through Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations which encompass administrative processes with segregation of duties, supervision and delegation of duties. It includes provision for example budget monitoring, policy and procedure adherence and update, risk assessments and management and compliance with laws and regulations. The internal controls are designed to include measures to prevent and detect fraud and corruption, their effectiveness must be reviewed.

Internal Audit Specification

The internal audit specification is produced in draft by the Clerk (&RFO). Other relevant staff members are consulted on its content. The draft is presented to Council annually for approval. The approved document sets out the areas to be covered by the internal audit.

As a basis it should include:

- Legal basis
- Previous internal audit report
- Proper bookkeeping
- Council policy
- Risk management
- Budgetary controls
- Income controls
- Payroll controls
- Asset controls
- Bank reconciliation
- Year end procedures

Other issues may be added which reflect on previous audit reports or on any other areas of concern as noted by Members or staff.

The scope of audit is determined by Council, without undue influence from the internal auditor.

Reporting

The internal audit process is set out in the approved Internal Audit Specification. Once the internal audit has been completed and the report received by the Clerk (&RFO) the findings accompanied by an action plan are to be reported to Council.

Review

Policy

Council will review on an annual basis the following:

- Internal Audit Planning, Reporting And Review Policy
- Internal Audit Specification **APPENDIX A**

Reports

Council will review as soon as reasonably practicable the following reports:

- Internal audit report and action plan
- External audit report and action plan

Annual Return

The statement of internal control is included within the Annual Return. Governance should be reviewed during the year so that the declaration may be made when the accounts are completed and signed.



HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Internal Audit Specification & Terms of Reference

Purpose of Internal Audit

Internal Audit is a function of management and forms part of the Council's internal control mechanisms. By the use of an independent internal audit service assurance is gained regarding the areas examined.

Internal Audit Process

1. Internal Auditor to be appointed by Town Council;
2. The internal auditor is to be advised of;
 - the Internal Audit Specification;
 - the Internal Audit Planning, Reporting and Review Policy;
 - contact details for Town Council Members and staff.
3. Timely arrangements to be made with the appointed Internal Auditor to visit the Council offices and inspect the specified documents;
4. The Internal Auditor prepares his independent report which is to be submitted in writing to the Clerk to the Council in his own name;
5. The Internal Auditor completes and signs the statement within the Annual Return as legally required to do so.

Internal Audit Specification

The following areas are required to be reviewed / checked:

Legal basis including; Council has been acting legally and fulfilling its duties within the powers vested in it

Previous internal audit report including; review of report undertaken by Council and formulation of an action plan to address any issues raised

Proper bookkeeping including; appropriate books of account have been properly kept throughout the year, payments were supported by invoices, expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for

Council policy specifically Standing Orders and Financial Regulations including; requirements within these documents have been met, annual review undertaken

Risk management including; review of Minutes to identify any unusual activity, review of risk assessments, provision of adequate and appropriate insurance cover, systems of internal control are sufficient in terms of minimising the risk of fraud including Council policy and procedures and practice

Budgetary controls including; the annual precept requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process, progress against the budget was regularly monitored, reserves were appropriate, any significant variances from budget noted

Income controls including; petty cash controls, suitability of recording mechanisms, suitability of banking procedures, security and effectiveness of cash controls, expected income was fully received

Payroll controls including; salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with council approvals, PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied

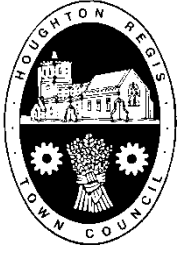
Asset controls including; asset and investment registers were complete, accurate, properly maintained and relate to the insurance schedule

Bank reconciliation including; periodic and year-end bank account reconciliations were properly carried out

Year end procedures including; year-end accounts were prepared to the correct accounting basis, agreed with cash book, were supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records, debtors and creditors were properly recorded

Terms of Reference

1. The internal audit is to cover the financial year of the council;
2. The internal audit is to be completed by a suitably qualified person who acts ethically with integrity and objectivity and is independent of the Council
3. Internal audit report to be reviewed annually by Town Council
4. Action plan to be drawn up to respond to any points raised



Date: 11th December 2023

Title: HRTC CORPORATE PLAN

Purpose of the Report: To present to members the draft HRTC corporate plan for review and approval.

Contact Officer: Clare Evans, Town Clerk

1. RECOMMENDATION

To approve the HRTC Corporate Plan 2024/2028.

2. BACKGROUND

Ove the summer and autumn the council has been working on developing a corporate plan to guide its work over the next 4 years. Members and officers have been given the opportunity to feed into the process their ideas and aspirations.

3. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Members feedback is invited on the draft plan, Appendix A.

Once approved the plan will be used to:

- Support / feed into the budget setting process for 2024/25
- Feed into the 5 year financial plan
- Establish work plans for the council's committees to support delivery of the plan

A summary of the plan, or the full plan if budget is available, will be include in the Spring / Summer Town Crier for circulation to local residents.

4. COUNCIL VISION

Aspirations

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

- A2 To effectively and proactively **represent** our community
- A3 To positively **promote** the town
- A5 To ensure the **council** is fit for purpose and efficient in its delivery of services

5. IMPLICATIONS

Corporate Implications

- Implications for other committees including Partnership Committee – committee work plans will be created to support delivery, the approved plan will be presented to the Partnership Committee
- Conformity with the emerging NHP – where relevant the Corporate Plan supports the emerging Neighbourhood Plan
- Staff implications – full delivery of the plan may have staff implications, these will be progressed as necessary through the councils structure
- Consultation including with youth council - the approved plan will be presented to the Youth Council

Legal Implications

- There are no legal implications arising from the recommendations

Financial Implications

- Budget – delivery of the plan will be dependent on the budget being made available.

Risk Implications

- Service delivery / Capacity - suitable staff provision needs to be made to ensure there isn't a risk to current services
- Reputation – there is a reputational risk should the plan be approved but the council not deliver

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. There is a statement on the last page which offers the report in an alternative format should that be required.

Climate Change Implications

- There are no climate change implications arising from the recommendations

Press Contact

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

6. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

The Corporate Plan sets out a far reaching and inclusive plan for the delivery of existing and new services and facilities for the benefit of the community of Houghton Regis. It is broad in its scope and will be used to shape the work of the council over the next 4 years. It is however somewhat reliant on the budget and resource being made available to facilitate delivery.

7. APPENDICES

Appendix A: HRTC Corporate Plan 2024-2028



Houghton Regis Town Council

DRAFT

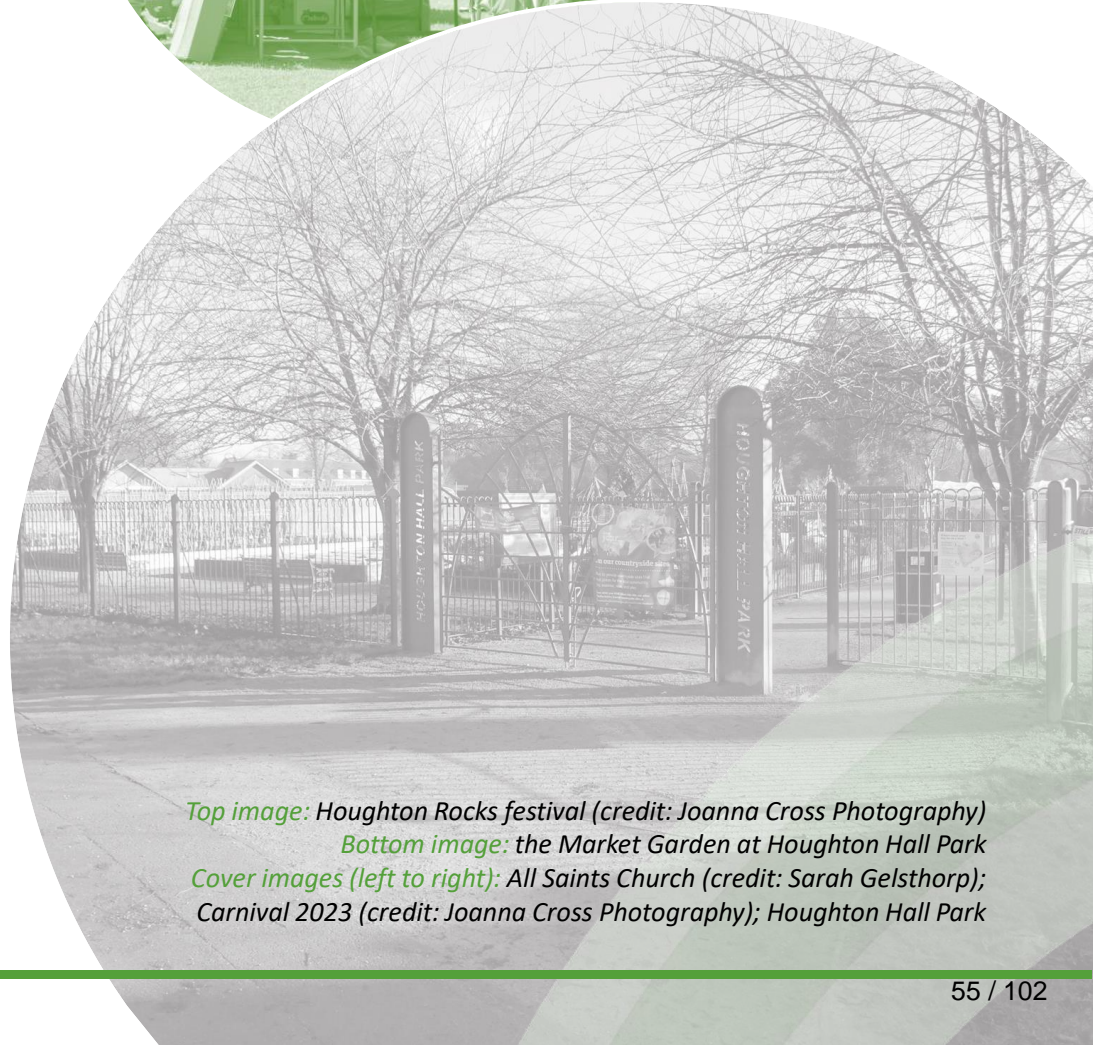


Corporate Plan 2024 - 2028

Our commitments for the next four years

Contents

1. Organisational Description
2. Our Vision
3. Our Mission
4. Action Plan
5. Next Steps



Top image: Houghton Rocks festival (credit: Joanna Cross Photography)

Bottom image: the Market Garden at Houghton Hall Park

*Cover images (left to right): All Saints Church (credit: Sarah Gelsthorp);
Carnival 2023 (credit: Joanna Cross Photography); Houghton Hall Park*

1. Organisational Description

- Houghton Regis Town Council (HRTC) is comprised of 14 councillors representing 3 wards. Town Councillors are elected every 4 years with the next elections due in May 2027. The Town Council is served by a Town Clerk, the senior officer of the Town Council, and approximately 25 other full and part time staff.
- Day-to-day management of the services delivered by the Town Council is the responsibility of the Town Clerk who works closely with Town Councillors to deliver the decisions made at the various committees. The work of the Town Council is funded through a precept on Council Taxpayers within the Houghton Regis area and from income raised through lettings, agency work, sponsorship, and hires.
- The Town Council is chaired by the Town Mayor who, together with a Deputy Mayor, is elected each year at the Annual Town Council meeting (held in May). Both the Mayor and Deputy Mayor have busy diaries visiting local community groups and organisations and representing Houghton Regis at events.
- A budget for the forthcoming financial year (starting in April) is set in January when projects are identified. These projects are likely to include refurbishment/ replacement of assets such as play equipment, improvements to Town Council facilities and possible development of new initiatives for the benefit of local people.
- The Town Council works closely with Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC), and other local partners, to ensure residents receive high quality services and facilities.



An image from the Houghton Rocks festival at Parkside Recreation Ground in 2023



Before a ceremony for the annual 'Pride of Houghton' awards

1. Organisational Description

- Houghton Regis Town Council has responsibility for and involvement with:
 - Outside services: recreation grounds, sports pitches, play areas including multi-use games areas and skate park, open space, cemetery, allotments, pavilions, noticeboards, seats, litterbins, dog waste bins.
 - Community services: youth services, community services, community events, Mayor and Deputy Mayor events and visits, fair and circus visits, information for residents (Town Crier newsletter, website, social media), town centre public toilets, community safety initiatives, community grants scheme.
 - Planning services: the town council is an active consultee on all planning applications submitted within the parish of Houghton Regis.
- The Town Council prides itself as being the first tier of local government for the parish of Houghton Regis and as such, being accessible and responsive to residents. At the time of the adoption of this Plan, the cost per elector to run the council is £81.95 per elector (2023 – 2024).
- The work that the council undertakes is aimed at protecting and improving the quality of life of its residents; we strive to address the issues under our control and to influence the matters outside of our control that are important to residents.

Picture to Follow

Houghton Regis Youth Workers at an event during National Youth Work Week



Groundbreaking event for new facilities at Tithe Farm Recreational Ground

2. Our Vision

“ Houghton Regis: a growing town with a rich history and a strong sense of community ”

- The vision statement is intended to provide a short description of the town and parish for consistency in naming and branding over the Plan period. It should be a fair representation of the current context and a positive and aspirational message to work towards over the next four years (otherwise known as, ‘the Plan period’).
- The adopted statement incorporates three main themes that are central to the objectives of the Plan;
 - **Growth:** over the next ten years, Houghton will be one of the fastest growing towns in the UK as we welcome approximately 1,000 new residents to the parish each year.
 - **History and heritage:** Saelig Hochtone, Houstone, Howghton, Kynges Houghton, Houghton Regis - there has been settlement activity within the parish since (at least) Roman and Saxon times and our heritage assets include Grade I and II listed buildings, a Scheduled Ancient Monument, a SSSI nature reserve and 42 acres of Green Flag awarded parkland.
 - **Community:** despite being one of the largest towns in the county, Houghton retains many of the positive attributes of a village - a local character, a strong identity and a close sense of community.



*A plan of the High Street and The Green in 1800
(© Houghton Regis Heritage Society)*



*VE Day celebrations at The Green in 1945
(© Houghton Regis Heritage Society)*

2. Our Mission

“ We will endeavour to unify all areas of the parish as one community and foster civic pride in our town; improve local services and facilities; enhance the quality of life of our residents and; improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Town Council as the key local service provider. ”

- The mission statement underpins the Corporate Plan. It develops the three main themes of the Vision Statement (growth, heritage and community) into clear targets - or ‘pillars’ - for the Plan period. For ease of reference, these are:
 - To unify all areas of the parish as one community and foster civic pride in our town.
 - To improve local services and facilities.
 - To enhance the quality of life of our residents.
- A fourth pillar has been added to ensure that the Town Council continues to provide an effective service for our residents, visitors and businesses.



View towards All Saint Church from Bedford Square



Woodland Walk, Houghton Hall Park

4. Action Plan

1

Town and community

To unify all areas of the parish as one community and foster civic pride in our town

2

Local services and facilities

To provide a broad range of high quality services and facilities for our residents, visitors and businesses

3

Quality of Life

To enhance the quality of life of our residents

4

Management and operations

To improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Town Council as the key local service provider

- These pillars are the basis for the Action Plan that is presented in the following section.
- To guide delivery, a series of objectives are identified under each pillar, together with different ways that these might be achieved during the Plan period.
- As objectives span interrelated social, economic, spatial and environmental considerations, there are many different mechanisms that might be initiated to bring about delivery and some possible examples are also included in the Action Plan.

1

Town and Community

We aim to ...	So, this is what we plan to do ...	And this is how it might be achieved ...
<p>Unify all areas of the parish as one community and foster civic pride in our town.</p>	<p>Improve integration between existing and new communities.</p>	<p>Continue to provide Welcome Packs to new residents; review cycle and pedestrian links; strengthen local centres and recreation grounds in existing areas that are close to the expansion area; work with CBC and developers to soften the edges between new and existing areas.</p>
	<p>Support the sense of arrival and identity.</p>	<p>‘Welcome to Houghton Regis’ signage at important gateways into the parish; consistency in branding (colours, fonts, logos and text) to present a consistent message.</p>
	<p>Create a stronger, more robust and engaging town centre offer.</p>	<p>Continue to work with stakeholders to expand and diversify the retail and hospitality offers, create additional employment space and improve public transport connectivity; strengthen (at least) two action areas from the Town Centre Action Plan; seasonal installations, fairs and events; continue to provide town centre wardens at peak shopping times; promotion of outdoor hospitality areas/ alfresco dining; new mapping (digital and physical) of local facilities; review signage between key attractions; activate the cricket pavilion; continue promoting the ‘Shop Local’ campaign; develop a tourism offer.</p>
	<p>Develop an annual programme of community events across the Parish.</p>	<p>Community action days; programme of parish-wide, regular and seasonal events, for instance, local produce/ flower show, urban farm, Houghton Rocks, historical tours, silent disco, messy play, uniform swap, park runs/ walks.</p>

1

Town and Community

We aim to ...	So, this is what we plan to do ...	And this is how it might be achieved ...
Unify all areas of the parish as one community and foster civic pride in our town.	Improve the visual appearance of the town centre.	Develop a town centre wide planting strategy; review the possibility of a 'Britain in Bloom' entry; new planters along the High Street; engagement with national institutions (RHS, English Heritage, etc.) for themed events at Houghton Hall Park; engagement with stakeholders to improve the High Street and Tithe Farm Road elevations of the shopping centre, review options for mitigating the impact of bin stores around the centre; refresh street furniture; relocate the weapons bin; strengthen key views; tourism/ heritage banners along the High Street.
	Protection and promotion of cultural and heritage assets.	Continue to preserve the town centre conservation area; assemble an itinerary of key heritage assets; improve access to and awareness of historical sites; new mapping, signage and noticeboards; engagement to provide open days and guided tours of protected areas and listed buildings; walking tours and trails, blue plaque schemes.
	Strengthen Houghton's landscape character and agricultural heritage.	Strengthen the Chiltern Way, PROWs and bridleways; new planting; rewilding and habitat creation in informal open spaces; enhance the market garden and the River Lea route; review participation in the RHS, 'It's Your Neighbourhood' scheme; engagement with stakeholders to improve access to the Marl Lakes and Houghton Quarry SSSI, review further opportunities for Green Flag awards.

2

Local Services and Facilities

We aim to ...	So, this is what we plan to do ...	And this is how it might be achieved ...
Provide a broad range of high-quality services and facilities for our residents, visitors and businesses.	Work with partners to improve the quality and accessibility of the public realm in the town centre.	Improve wheelchair and mobility impaired access; enhance existing pedestrian and cycle links and seek to develop new ones; review the potential for bus stops in front of All Saints Church; new paving on the north side of the High Street to marry with the paving at All Saints View.
	Continue to work with key partners to address crime and anti-social behavior.	Maintain engagement with Bedfordshire Police, CBC, Groundwork and other stakeholders; extend the Public Realm / Town Ranger scheme; promote Neighbourhood Watch schemes; work with partners to activate the blank façades around the shopping precinct.
	Establish a town centre hub for the delivery of centrally based services, such as HRTC's offices, a youth centre and a tourist information/ heritage centre.	Identify potential sites for a community and services hub; contact stakeholders; determine space planning requirements; prepare a viable timeline for delivery; develop feasibility plans and costs.
	Maximise the value of HRTC assets.	Assemble an itinerary of the type, condition and use of assets; identify opportunities to improve the use and efficiency of assets; explore opportunities to remodel the HRTC office reception area.
	Maintain and enhance sporting provision both at existing and soon-to-be-adopted sites.	Review the use and function of different open spaces across the parish; receive and manage new play areas in Bidwell; review the potential to diversify play and recreation provision; install outdoor gym equipment at one or two sites within existing recreational grounds.

2

Local Services and Facilities

We aim to ...	So, this is what we plan to do ...	And this is how it might be achieved ...
Provide a broad range of high-quality services and facilities for our residents, visitors and businesses.	Stimulate local business development and employment and training opportunities.	Work with CBC and stakeholders to realise additional employment space in and around the town centre; improve signage to and at existing employment areas; establish a forum of local businesses and a platform for B2B networking; engage with local business owners to identify any skills gaps or constraints for growth; review opportunities to improve Houghton's tourism offer; strengthen the nighttime economy; assist in promoting awareness to existing food and beverage outlets.
	Promote awareness of our town, its assets and opportunities for businesses and investment.	Develop a new, 'Visit Houghton' website (or an extension to the existing HRTC site); work with partners to develop the nighttime economy and tourism offers; develop a branding programme for consistency; continue to work with local businesses and institutions to promote Houghton regional and nationally; investigate the potential for 'town twinning'; identify any opportunities to harness the value of being the largest of the historic 'Regis' settlements.

3

Quality of Life

We aim to ...	So, this is what we plan to do ...	And this is how it might be achieved ...
Enhance the quality of life of our residents	Improve environmental quality and sustainability.	Promote and encourage cycling; strengthen existing cycle routes and encourage new routes; provide new cycle stands at key sites; promote walk/ cycle to school initiatives; deliver an air quality awareness campaign.
	Encourage a healthier lifestyle through healthy eating, smoking & vaping cessation and improved activity levels.	Monthly park runs and walks; second allotment site; develop the kitchen garden; healthy eating awareness; improve awareness of existing community and leisure facilities; work with partners to support school meals/ breakfast clubs; Houghton 'Men in Sheds' initiative.
	Improve access to services and support through the provision of a network of Parish-wide community hubs.	Identify locations for SMART hubs across the parish; continue to support a range of community services for all residents; facilitate quarterly community conferences/ networking events.
	Improve existing and develop new opportunities for young people across the parish.	Youth outreach/ detached work; undertake engagement to identify needs and interests; increase awareness of training schemes and apprenticeships for local businesses; increase awareness of career and training opportunities for school-leavers.
	Continue to explore options for a new cemetery.	Complete Grendall Lane investigations; explore further options for sites; engage with relevant stakeholders.
	Continue to provide a Town Council Community Grant Scheme.	Through Cost-of-Living Support Grants to partner organisations.

4

Management and Operations

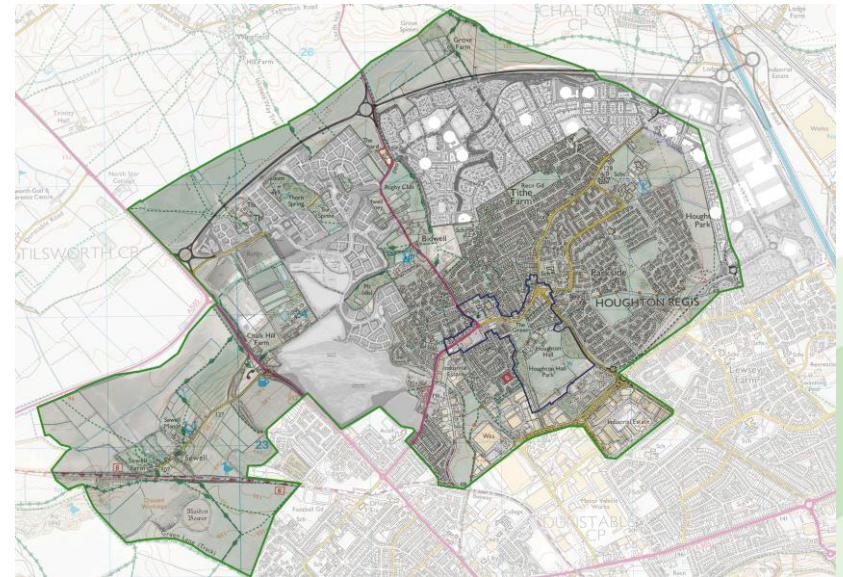
We aim to ...	So, this is what we plan to do ...	And this is how it might be achieved ...
<p>Improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Town Council as the key local service provider.</p>	<p>Develop a 5-year financial & staffing plan.</p>	<p>10-year planned maintenance programme for community assets; develop a supporting staffing plan; staff training and career development; organised 'study visits' to other towns; foster synergy with other town councils; succession planning; investigate options for a 'social value' budget.</p>
	<p>Identify external/ partnership funding sources for council projects.</p>	<p>Continue to monitor traditional funding streams; explore opportunities for additional revenue creation through operating/ leasing council assets; explore opportunities to attract additional investors to the town centre.</p>
	<p>Extend IT infrastructure and software to better support the council.</p>	<p>Improve IT cabling in the council's offices; review, update and optimise IT systems and software.</p>
	<p>Work with CBC and other stakeholders to explore opportunities for the adoption of additional community assets by the Town Council.</p>	<p>For instance, recreation grounds, the Red House, community centre; town centre public realm and other formal and informal areas of public open space; explore the cost/ benefits/ opportunities for a freehold depot.</p>
	<p>Enhance the role of the council.</p>	<p>Local Council Award Scheme and 'Investors in People' accreditations; increase promotion of council services; encourage visitors to the council offices; review potential for a greater town centre presence; review the way that queries are raised and managed; community engagement;</p>
	<p>To actively consider and weight the impact of new and existing initiatives and services.</p>	<p>Environmental impact/ carbon-neutral; inclusivity; diversity; value for money/ cost of living.</p>

5. Next Steps

- Having formulated this Corporate Plan, the Town Council will work hard over the coming four years to deliver the vision and objectives that are outlined within it.
- Much of the work will be delivered in partnership with local organisations and stakeholders and of course, with our residents and businesses.
- We are looking forward to progressing these plans and seeing a stronger, unified and better served Houghton Regis in the future.
- If you have any comments on the components of Plan or suggestions for a programme or initiative that would help to realise a particular objective, please contact us through any of the ways that are listed on the following page.
- We are conveniently located in the town centre, on Peel Street, adjacent to car park and the library and welcome visitors to the office in person, whether this is regarding the Corporate Plan or another matter.



The Town Council funds a variety of community events throughout the year and the Town Crier circular

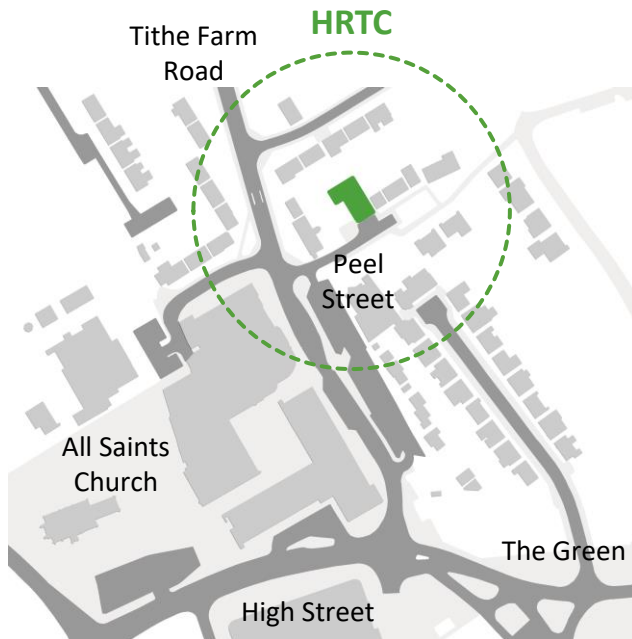


Parish boundary



Houghton Regis Town Council

Corporate Plan 2024 - 2028



Council Offices

Peel Street
Houghton Regis
Bedfordshire
LU5 5EY

Tel. 01582 708540

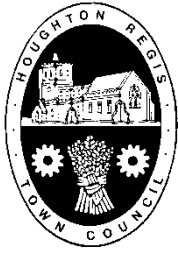
Email info@houghtonregis.org.uk

Web www.houghtonregis.org.uk

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Date:	11th December 2023
Title:	TOWN BRANDING SCHEME
Purpose of the Report:	To enable members to consider the development of a town branding scheme.
Contact Officer:	Clare Evans, Town Clerk

1. RECOMMENDATION

To begin to develop a town branding scheme to develop and encourage a sense of place and community.

2. BACKGROUND

To support the Corporate Plan and other projects coming forward imminently such as the new Tithe Farm sports project, the UKSPF and the Bidwell West play areas and sports facilities, it is requested the members give some consideration to establishing a town branding scheme. This will help to develop and encourage a sense of place and community.

3. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

It is highlighted that this is not a Town Council branding scheme but a town branding scheme. It will relate to visual assets within community spaces. Whilst many of these assets will be owned and managed by the town council it is hoped that other agencies and organisations may also support the branding style.

Typically a branding scheme considers the following:

Logo

A logo can help to create and support a sense of place. A simple logo can more easily be incorporated into / not assets. It is suggested that some in-house design work be undertaken using the theme of a rich history and a strong sense of community as a basis.

Colour palette

By creating a colour palette a consistent visual identity is also created. Ideally, it should include all the brand colours that will be used, covering physical assets, promotional materials, website and social media, and publications. The palette should be representative of the image being portrayed.

Brand typography

Typography refers to the overall appearance of text. It includes font type, text size, and text placement.

Brand style guide

A Brand Style Guide can be thought of as a comprehensive manual used to define the brand and promote consistent communication. Once a basic brand identity is in place, a style guide can be created by adding photography guidelines, rules for logo usage, and details to help employees achieve the right tone when developing material. A comprehensive style guide would also include rules for grammar, formatting, and word choice.

The branding scheme will be used to support the following:

- Physical Assets – bins, benches, signage, noticeboards, public realm, town entrances, bollards, fencing/barriers
- Website and social media
- Printed publications

4. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

This work can be completed in-house or an external consultancy can be used to help the council develop its ideas. It is estimated that external support may cost in the region of £10,000. This has not been budgeted for in 2023/24.

It is suggested that some work is completed in-house and shared informally with members for preliminary feedback. If the preliminary work is considered acceptable, it can be enhanced further and presented for formal approval.

5. COUNCIL VISION

Aspirations

- A1 To develop and enhance **partnerships** between HRTC, stakeholders, partners, community groups and residents
- A3 To positively **promote** the town

6. IMPLICATIONS

Corporate Implications

- Staff implications – staff resource is required to complete this.

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

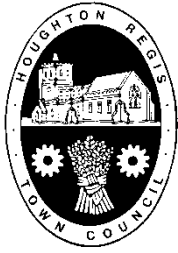
- There are no press implications arising from the recommendations

7. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

To support the development of a sense of place and community it is suggested that the development of a town branding scheme be considered.

8. APPENDICES

None



Date: 11th December 2023

Title: UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND (UKSPF)

Purpose of the Report: To provide Members with an update on the UKSPF applications.

Contact Officer: Ian Haynes, Head of Environmental and Community Services

1. RECOMMENDATION

In relation to the Rural England Prosperity Fund to:

- 1) **Support the application made under the Rural England Prosperity Fund; To confirm the match funding requirement and that if successful the match funding will come from General Reserves**

In relation to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund to:

- 2) **Support the application made under the UK Shared Prosperity funding.**

2. BACKGROUND

The UK government has launched the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) nationally.

Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) has been working on a plan to deliver funding opportunities for the Town and Parish sector through the UKSPF. This includes capital funding of £91,000 for town centre initiatives and £30,000 for cultural activities for Houghton Regis. Other Towns receiving the same funding are Dunstable, Leighton Buzzard, Biggleswade and Flitwick.

Some parts of Houghton Regis, Biggleswade, and Flitwick can also access REPF.

Our competitive application under the REPF has been submitted, and our draft application under the UKSPF has also been submitted. CBC asked for applications to be completed by the end of November 2023 for the UKSPF, with delivery between April 2024 to March 2025. Our REPF application was submitted before the 3rd

November deadline, and funding needs to be spent by 31st March 2024. Details of the draft REPF were shared with members via email on 20th October, this email outlined the parameters of the scheme including the funding requirements. Member feedback was invited. Positive responses were received.

Officers at both councils have had meetings and corresponded over the last few weeks to consider possible ideas for proactively using the funds. These ideas have informal support from CBC colleagues. The following material has been reviewed as the basis for the preparation of the UKSPF funding application:

- CBC Local Plan 2015 - 2035
- Central Bedfordshire Design Guide, CBC, 2014
- Local Area Transport Plan (LTP) Baseline Report - Dunstable & Houghton Regis (CBC, 2011)
- CBC Local Plan (2015-2035) – Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report (Oct. 2016)
- Levelling Up Fund Application Form, CBC, 2021
- CBC Community Plan (July 2017)
- Houghton Regis Conservation Area Statement, CBC, 2008
- Our Vision: Our Town, HRTC, 2020 - 2024
- Draft Houghton Regis Neighbourhood Plan, HRTC, 2020 – 2035, which will shortly be presented to CBC for review and, hopefully, adoption as a statutory document.
- Town Benchmarking Report, People and Places, 2021
- Houghton Regis Town Centre Action Plan, 2022

The results of the Community Plan (2017) and the Town Centre Benchmarking Report (2021), which indicates current market forces, social trends, and, significantly, the aspirations of residents, have been of particular interest.

The Houghton Regis Town Centre Action Plan (2022) sets out the Town Council's vision. It recognises the need for the town centre to become a 'heart' that will unify new and existing communities, 'attracting people from across the Parish and beyond'.

It also identifies opportunities and supports the Houghton Regis Neighbourhood Plan to provide a particular focus on placemaking in the town centre.

3. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

The UKSPT is a non-competitive funding application, and the REPF is competitive. The UKSPF is a levelling-up initiative from the UK Government. It is crucial to comprehend that Houghton Regis town centre faces far more significant concerns than the other towns in receipt of similar funding, and therefore, £91,000 will not in any way address these. It will at least inject lots of positivity into the town centre.

4. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

Timescales for submission of the funding application are tight for the UKSPF and will not allow for a further formal discussion at Council. It is therefore recommended that the Council endorses the draft application.

5. COUNCIL VISION

Aspirations

- A1 To develop and enhance **partnerships** between HRTC, stakeholders, partners, community groups and residents
- A3 To positively **promote** the town

6. IMPLICATIONS

Corporate Implications

- Staff implications –All elements of the bid will be delivered by the current staffing structure and will be led by the Head of Environmental and Community Services.

Legal Implications

- There are no legal implications arising from the recommendations. However, the Town Council must accept the funding conditions which may be by means of a grant agreement, the details of which will only be known in due course

Financial Implications

- There are no financial implications arising from the recommendations.
- There are revenue implications post award period in terms of maintaining the planters etc

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

- The UKSPF focuses on environmentally friendly solutions and improvements, which will be considered when proposing our proposals.

Press Contact

- There are no press implications arising from the recommendations

7. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

Houghton Regis is one of the fastest-growing towns in the country, and the Town Council must take up as many opportunities for funding as possible; working in partnership with CBC, the UKSPF funding will not deal with all of the complications currently faced by our much-loved town centre. However, it will positively affect and

meet some of the objectives in the Houghton Regis Town Centre Action Plan (2022) and the emerging Corporate Plan.

8. APPENDICES

Appendix A - Draft UKSPF application form.

UKSPF Houghton Regis Town Centre Investment Plan Template

19th October 2023, V1

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1. Introduction

The aim of this project is to work with Houghton Regis Town Council to develop a **Town Centre Investment Plan** for circa £91,000 capital investment in the town centre.

The **Town Centre Investment Plan** will also include the cultural strategy intervention of making circa £30k revenue grant available to Town Councils for cultural events, engagement and town promotion.

This document should be read in conjunction with the **UK Shared Prosperity and Rural England Prosperity Funds (UKSPF & REPF) Town Centre Improvements Framework**.

This forms part of the UKSPF Communities and Place Objective:

- Strengthening our social fabric and fostering a sense of local pride and belonging, through investment in activities that enhance physical, cultural and social ties and access to amenities, such as community infrastructure and local green space, and community-led projects.
- Building resilient, healthy and safe neighbourhoods, through investment in quality places that people want to live, work, play and learn in, through targeted improvements to the built and natural environment innovative approaches to crime prevention.

These funds must be spent and delivered by **31 March 2025**

2. Background

Please identify the key local challenges you face within your town centre – this should include the built environment, green spaces and the economic, health, wellbeing issues.

(500 words)

At present, it is too easy to pass through the town centre without realising. The view from The Village Green to the High Street and the tower of All Saints Church was a characteristic of historic Houghton. Unfortunately, this view is now occupied by the back of the shopping centre and a landscape of commercial bins, roller shutters, blank facades and parking. These present a series of 'red flags' for visitors and a negative impression of Houghton Regis from the outset.

Houghton Regis has the highest proportion of deprivation within Central Bedfordshire with Tithe Farm and Parkside wards having the highest concentrated areas. Houghton Regis Town Council recognises the need to work more extensively to support emotional, social and physical wellbeing.

Over the next ten-year period, Houghton's population will grow by a whopping 62% - or 6.1% per year. Making Houghton Regis one of the fastest-growing towns in the UK!

A number of actions have been identified across the town centre to strategically improve prominent intersections and focal points, which are hoped to increase footfall and the positive visual impact of our much-loved town.



During the 1950s and 1970s, Houghton Regis was tasked with accommodating significant growth and expansion. According to the Conservation Area Statement (2008), the extent of this 'threatened its position and identity as a rural village'. This undoubtedly had an impact on the social and physical fabric of Houghton Regis.

<p>Please set out the strategic background and evidence need/demand</p>	<p>The following material has been reviewed as the basis for the preparation of this funding application:</p>
<p>Do include what plans/appraisals already exist for town centre improvements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CBC Local Plan 2015 - 2035 • Central Bedfordshire Design Guide, CBC, 2014 • Local Area Transport Plan (LTP) Baseline Report - Dunstable & Houghton Regis (CBC, 2011)
<p>Do summarise existing plans/data/surveys and benchmarking reports (500 words)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CBC Local Plan (2015-2035) – Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report (Oct. 2016) • Levelling Up Fund Application Form, CBC, 2021 • CBC Community Plan (July 2017) • Houghton Regis Conservation Area Statement, CBC, 2008 • Our Vision: Our Town, HRTC, 2020 - 2024 • Draft Houghton Regis Neighbourhood Plan, HRTC, 2020 – 2035, which will shortly be presented to CBC for review and hopefully, adoption as a statutory document. • Town Benchmarking Report, People and Places, 2021 • Houghton Regis Town Centre Action Plan, 2022 <p>Of particular interest have been the results of the Community Plan (2017) and the Town Centre Benchmarking Report (2021), which provide an indication of current market forces, social trends and significantly, the aspirations of local residents.</p> <p>The Houghton Regis Town Centre Action Plan(2022), sets out the Town Council’s vision and recognises the need for the town centre to become a ‘heart’ that will unify new and existing communities, ‘attracting people from across the Parish and beyond’. It identifies opportunities and supports the Houghton Regis Neighbourhood Plan to provide a particular focus on placemaking in the town centre.</p>

3. Proposal for capital funding of £91,000 from Central Bedfordshire Council in 2024/25 from UKSPF/REPF

<p>Please identify the key problems/issues to be addressed that would be addressed with</p>	<p>The Town Council wishes to promote and enhance the town centre to ensure that the urban extension looks to the town centre for its services and needs. And will draw all sectors of the community into delivering health and wellbeing outcomes. This project will be used to support both</p>
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<p>your proposal(s). This may be one key project or several projects. If there is match funding this project may be larger than £91,000.</p>	<p>the young and older people in Houghton Regis by providing a bright and colourful space which will enhance mental, social and physical wellbeing and increase levels of physical activity through volunteering.</p> <p>The creation of Houghton Regis in Bloom will have the following positive impacts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased visitor numbers and a stronger local economy • A stronger sense of pride of place, contributing to reductions in crime and anti-social behaviour • A cleaner and greener place to live and visit, with higher environmental awareness • New partnerships between local authorities, businesses and community groups • More funding opportunities to support specific activities • Higher volunteer numbers, enabling groups to have a bigger impact • It will create a sense of pride in our beautiful town and make such a difference in our quality of life.
<p>What are the options considered to address this issue? How could this change be made? Have you considered different ways of tackling this? Does this demonstrate the best value of public money.</p>	<p>The Houghton Regis Town Centre Action Plan (2022) intends to support the aspirations of the Houghton Regis Neighbourhood Plan and provide a particular focus on placemaking in the town centre. Or conversely, how the overall offer can be improved by harnessing the value of Houghton’s assets, maximising opportunities and minimising constraints.</p> <p>Houghton’s past is brimming with significant events and occurrences that provide an impression of daily life throughout the history of Britain.</p> <p>The Benchmarking Report (People and Places, 2021) provides a good health check of the current retail and commercial offer. From this, the town centre would appear to be under-performing in relation to the scale of opportunity that exists. For instance, although 70% of town centre users shop locally (26% higher than the national average) and 67% visit regularly, only 34% of all visitors stay for longer than an hour. Also, although over half of all shops are independently owned, there are no ‘key attractors’.</p> <p>Combined, these statistics indicate a demand for a more diverse, stimulating and engaging offer while there appears to be something that is currently deterring attractor outlets from investing in Houghton. According to the report, this could be owing to the perception of safety and visual</p>

	<p>appearance, which are both considered to be particular concerns for residents. Worryingly, 68% of residents would not currently recommend a visit to the town centre – 40% higher than the national average.</p>
<p>What is the preferred option(s)?</p>	<p>Houghton Regis Town Council would like to self-deliver the programme of improvements. We have a strong supply chain and skilled and experienced officers who will deliver the programme within budget and within the timescales provided.</p>
<p>What is the cost of this proposal(s)? Please include the prices and any background information.</p>	<p>We propose to spend the £91,000 capital funding on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12x Giant Precinct Planter in three different colours (Cotswold, Dark Sandstone and Millstone grit) - https://amberol.co.uk/planters/large-floor-standing-planters/giant-precinct-planter (Unit price £585.90 + VAT Total price £7,030.80 + VAT) – To be placed around All Saints View/library.  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 60 x Full Barrier Basket in three different colours (Cotswold, Dark Sandstone and Millstone grit) - https://amberol.co.uk/planters/barrier-baskets-and-window-boxes/full-barrier-basket (Unit price £132.30 + VAT Total price £7,938.00 + VAT) - To be placed on railings around Bedford Square and Chequers Roundabout.  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100 x Cup & Saucer Hanging Basket in three different colours (Cotswold, Dark Sandstone and Millstone grit) - https://amberol.co.uk/planters/hanging-baskets/cup-saucer-hanging-basket (Unit price £51.45 + VAT Total price £5,145.00) – To be placed within the town centre.



- 3 x Low level, high kerbside planting pits 4m x 2m (Unit price £10,000.00+ VAT Total price £30,000.00 + VAT) - To be installed in front of All Saints View.



The example shown is from Dunstable Town Centre.

- Enhancement of the Chequers Roundabout and creation of a drought garden at the junction of Parkside Drive and Park Road North (Project price £10,000.00 +VAT)
- Expansion of the annual Christmas Lights display with the addition of 20 new Christmas lights and the installation of 20 new ip44 16 amp sockets (Unit price £500 per light plus £350.00 per ip44 socket. Total Price £17,000 + VAT)
- 1 x Water Bowser <https://www.directwatertanks.co.uk/2000-litres-highway-flower-watering-bowser> (Unit price £5,054.60)
- The remaining £8,831.60 is planned to be spent on sundries such as the brackets needed to support the barrier and hanging baskets and soil, trees and plants if these can be classed as capital items.


Total £91,000

4. Proposal for revenue funding of £30,000 from Central Bedfordshire Council in 2024/25 from UKSPF/REPF

<p>Please identify the key problems/issues to be addressed. These may be addressed one key project or several projects. If there is match funding this project may be larger than £30,000.</p>	<p>Houghton Regis is currently a medium-sized town of approximately 17,280 residents and around 7,300 properties. The town is divided into two CBC wards: Houghton Regis East and Houghton Regis West. Houghton Regis includes the hamlets of Bidwell, Thorn, and Sewell. In the 1960s and 1970s, when the housing estates of Tithe Farm and Parkside were built, the town changed beyond recognition going from a rural village into a small town in a short space of time.</p> <p>The town faces a similar challenge as we are again on the brink of a period of extensive growth as the Town is set to double in size by 2030. The development will be widespread across the northern boundary and will incorporate housing, employment, retail, industry, education, community facilities and open space and recreation provision. Under the Framework Plan, the Houghton Regis Development Consortium is planning for 5,150 homes, employment, retail, infrastructure, community, facilities and leisure on cultivated farmland north of Tithe Farm estate and to the east of Parkside estate. This larger site is known as Linmere and reaches from Toddington Rd to the M1.</p> <p>The Bidwell West Consortium Group plan includes an urban extension of Houghton Regis known as Bidwell West, situated north of Houghton Regis Chalk Quarry, west of Bedford Road, east of the A5, and south of the A5-M1 link road. It will provide up to 1850 new homes, a primary school, employment land and a local centre.</p> <p>In the last couple of years, some of this development has come forward on the north and north-western side of the town centre. As a result, the town has the distinct possibility of losing its rich history and semi-rural character.</p> <p>The town council endeavours to unify all areas of the Parish as one community and foster civic pride in our town, improve local services and facilities, and enhance the quality of life of our residents.</p>
<p>What are the options considered to address this issue? How could this change be made? Have you considered different ways of tackling this? Does this demonstrate the best value of public money.</p>	<p>The Benchmarking Report (People and Places, 2021) identifies concerns regarding footfall, which has dropped by 1/3 on pre-pandemic levels and a potential surplus of parking provision. Conversely, 60-70% of visitors wish to see better public spaces and more community events.</p> <p>The town centre presents a number of exciting opportunities to improve and extend the current offer.</p>
<p>What is the preferred option(s)?</p>	<p>Houghton Regis Town Council would like to self-deliver the programme of improvements. We have a strong supply chain and skilled and experienced</p>

	officers who will deliver the programme within budget and within the timescales provided.
What is the cost of this proposal(s)? Please include the prices and any background information.	<p>We propose to spend the £30,000 revenue funding on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The production and distribution of leaflet/pamphlet on the history of Houghton Regis which will be distributed to all homes via Royal Mail Door-to-Door – (Project price – Production £1,000.00 Delivery £1045.26, Print costs £2500 (recyclable paper, 8500 copies Total price £4,545.26) • Enhanced community events programme - £8,000.00 • Historical interpretation boards both physical and online versions - £6000.00 • Mapping of local facilities for visitors and residents, such as retail, recreation and leisure activities, foot and cycle routes, post boxes, schools, GP and health services, recycling and waste disposal facilities, bus stops and regional transport connections. - £1,999.74 • Blue plaque schemes: review the interest in applying for Historic England plaques on listed buildings or, a similar local scheme using typical Houghton colours. https://www.signsofthetimes.co.uk/blue-plaques/ - Plaque price £545.40 each, installation £400 Total £945.40 Total price for up to 10 plaques - £9,455.00 <p><u>Total £30,000</u></p>
Please set out a clear timeline for delivery and key risks for the delivery.	<p>The project tracker in section 4 will be developed upon feedback received from CBC about our draft plans.</p> <p>This is to be considered a live document.</p> <p>There are limited risks to the delivery of these projects. As most of the proposals are physical, the only notable risk would be a failure in the supply chain. However, the town Council is proposing that they use well-established UK based companies.</p>

4. Deliverability for capital project(s)

Please outline the proposed project plan	 <p>HRTC (UKSPF) Project-Tracking-Ter</p> <p>It is our intention to populate and use this tracker.</p>
--	---

What are the key risks identified?	There are limited risks to the delivery of these projects. As most of the proposals are physical, the only notable risk would be a failure in the supply chain.
What is the budget for each element? Please set out any match funding required and in place	It should be emphasised that after decades of contraction, the regeneration of the town centre will require long-term commitment. Houghton Regis Town Council will continue to maintain all of the green infrastructure for many years to come. Leaving a true legacy of the funding.
Please indicate proposals to commission projects with relevant CBC services if required and any conversations about this.	<p>Our proposals are both physical and spatial in nature and are likely to involve collaboration with multiple stakeholders to deliver. In particular, this will involve engagement with the various technical teams at Central Bedfordshire Council, the two main:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CBC Highways • CBC Housing • CBC Assets <p>Early conversations with colleagues at CBC have taken place with all parties happy with the projects highlighted.</p>

5. Monitoring

<p>CBC will be reporting to government on a range of outputs and outcomes achieved from the funding- see table below. Please set out how your capital and revenue projects set out above will contribute to these output and outcome numbers.</p> <p>Please set out how you will be monitoring delivery of capital infrastructure?</p>	<p>Houghton Regis Town Council will take a pragmatic and proportionate approach to determining the appropriate outputs and outcomes for the funding. Creating a colourful and vibrant town centre will increase the footfall.</p> <p>Houghton Regis Town Council will work with CBC on the potential for using mobile phone data to achieve proof of footfall increases.</p>
What are your proposals for evaluation of the impact of the project?	Houghton Regis being awarded a Gold in Anglia in Bloom. Anglia in Bloom forms part of the RHS (Royal Horticultural Society's) Britain in Bloom competition.

This is a campaign set up to help get the best out of the village, town or city in which we all live, both environmentally and florally.

The Britain in Bloom campaign is organised by The Royal Horticultural. The aim of the competition is to encourage the improvement of our surroundings through the imaginative use of trees, shrubs, flowers and landscaping.

It also aims to achieve a litter-free and sustainable environment. This links directly to the four key aims of the Royal Horticultural Society which are:

- Horticultural Excellence
- Community Involvement
- Environmental Friendliness
- Sustainability

2024 will be the first year Houghton Regis Town Council enters Anglia in Bloom and we believe that the improvements provided by this funding will mean we will achieve a gold award within three years.

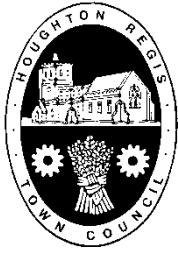
UKSPF Outputs and Outcomes

Each proposal should aim to achieve one or more outcome and one or more output.

	Levels before funding	Target after funding
Increase in footfall (number of people)		
Number of vacant units filled		
Improved perceived/experienced accessibility		
	Levels before funding	Target after funding
Commercial buildings created or improved		

Amount of public realm created or improved (M2)		

**Central
Bedfordshire
in contact**



Date: 20th June 2022

Title: Dunstable Market Charter

Purpose of the Report: To provide members will information in regard to Dunstable Town Councils Market Charter and associated implications for Houghton Regis Town Council when holding events

Contact Officer: Clare Evans, Town Clerk

1. RECOMMENDATION

To note the report.

2. BACKGROUND

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

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

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

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

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

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

3. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

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

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

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

4. COUNCIL VISION

Aspirations

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

Objective 4: Our community

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

5. IMPLICATIONS

Corporate Implications

- There are no corporate implications arising from the recommendations.

Legal Implications

- Breach of Charter

Financial Implications

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

Risk Implications

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

Equalities Implications

Houghton Regis Town Council has a duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and foster good relations in respect of nine protected characteristics; age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage

and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

This project / issue does not discriminate.

Press Contact

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

6. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

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

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

7. APPENDICES

Appendix 'A' – Dunstable Town Councils Market Rights Policy

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL MARKET RIGHTS POLICY

Background & Introduction

Dunstable Town Council manages Dunstable Market.

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

Managing Market Rights

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

Licensing Events

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Application Process

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

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

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

Market Rights Licence Payments

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

Administration Payment

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

Licence Payment

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

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

Returned Payments

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

Payment Refunds

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

Type of Market or Fair

Car Boot and Tabletop Sales

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

Charity and Community Markets

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

All Other Markets

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

Permanent Markets and Attractions

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

Non-compliance with this Policy

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

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

Comments, compliments and complaints

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

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

Contact

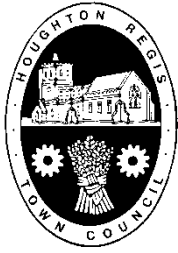
Dunstable Town Council, Grove House, 76 High Street North, Dunstable, Bedfordshire.

LU6 1NF

Telephone: 01582 513000

Email: info@dunstable.gov.uk

Website: www.dunstable.gov.uk



Date: 11th December 2023

Title: CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE

Purpose of the Report: To enable consideration and approval for Houghton Regis Town Council to engage with the NALC Corporate Peer Challenge Review programme.

Contact Officer: Clare Evans, Town Clerk

1. RECOMMENDATION

To welcome the opportunity for Houghton Regis Town Council to engage in the LGA / NALC Corporate Peer Challenge Review programme.

2. BACKGROUND

In August 2023 the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) promoted a new round of the Corporate Peer Challenge programme.

This is a partnership programme being delivered by the Local Government Association (LGA) and NALC. It offers the largest councils the opportunity to engage with this improvement programme.

The corporate peer challenge is part of the LGAs and NALCs improvement work and allows local councils to benchmark themselves against similar councils, to look at what they do well or what they could do better, and to receive advice from experienced peers from other areas.

NALC advised that corporate peer challenges are open to super councils which are those with an annual precept of over £1m or an annual turnover of over £1.5m.

Further details can be found by following this link: [NACL CPC](#) The link advises the following:

The LGA works with the council over several months to pull together a set of documents that explains where the council is at present, which is shared with a small group of peers, made up of a councillor and clerk from a similar council and

representatives of NALC and LGA. At the heart of the corporate peer challenge is a two-day visit from this group of peers to meet its councillors, staff, partner organisations and principal authorities. It will see them getting a complete understanding of how the council works before presenting the council with recommendations at the end of the visit and a more detailed report within a few months. This report is then published by the council and used as a basis to develop its action plan. The process is designed around the council's needs, and they choose the areas to focus on. It is not simply an inspection.

NALC and the LGA have already worked on four corporate peer challenges in Falmouth, Chippenham, Cirencester and Morecambe, and the councils involved found the process invaluable in helping them to develop further.

The following links take you to the Peer Review reports for these councils:

Falmouth Town Council	To follow
Chippenham Town Council	Chippenham Town Council is an ambitious and progressive council. • Chippenham Town Council
Cirencester Town Council	To follow
Morecambe Town Council	LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Report – Morecambe Town Council

Members will find attached at Appendix A more details on the scheme.

3. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

The precept in 2023/24 of nearly £1.2m means that the Town Council is eligible for this programme.

This programme has been considered by the Senior Officer Team who feel that they would welcome the opportunities this programme offers for organisational reflection and improvement. It has also been informally introduced to the political groups leaders through the Leaders Briefings.

Members are requested to consider the opportunities that this programme offers for development and improvement. Given that Houghton Regis is part of a strategic growth area, the town council will undoubtedly be growing and developing as a local council in the years to come and any learning and future proofing that can be done presently will put the council in good stead for the future.

4. COUNCIL VISION

Aspirations

- A1 To develop and enhance **partnerships** between HRTC, stakeholders, partners, community groups and residents
- A2 To effectively and proactively **represent** our community
- A5 To ensure the **council** is fit for purpose and efficient in its delivery of services

5. IMPLICATIONS

Corporate Implications

- Implications for other committees including Partnership Committee – the results of the CPC will be feed back to the Council for an Action Plan to be developed
- Staff implications – staff time in preparing and conducting the CPR will be required
- Cllr implications – cllr time and input will be invited and encouraged

Legal Implications

- There are no legal implications arising from the recommendations

Financial Implications

- There are no financial implications arising from the recommendations

Risk Implications

- Service delivery – an independent review of the councils performance and processes will assist the council in developing in the future
- Reputation - an independent review of the councils performance and processes will enable the council to be better placed to develop and enhanced services and facilities

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

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

6. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

The opportunity for Houghton Regis Town Council to be involved in this programme is welcomed. It will enable an independent review to be completed which the council can use to shape an action plan for growth and improvement, helping to ensure that the council is in the best place possible to support our community as it grows and develops.

7. APPENDICES

Appendix A: What it is all about – Corporate Peer Challenge Review



Corporate Peer Challenge: what's it all about?

Introduction

The LGA, in partnership with the National Association of Local Councils (NALC), is able to offer the opportunity for larger parish and town councilsⁱ to benefit from a corporate peer challengeⁱⁱ (CPC).

By bringing together political and managerial leadership, through the use of member and officer peers, a peer challenge provides robust, strategic and credible challenge and support to councils. The LGA's CPC offer is effective and well regarded by the sector. A recent survey found that every council that had received a corporate peer challenge was very or fairly satisfied.

To date, the LGA and NALC have worked together to deliver Corporate Peer Challenges at Chippenham Town Council in Wiltshire, Falmouth Town Council in Cornwall, Cirencester Town Council in Gloucestershire and, more recently, Morecambe Town Council in Lancashire.

You may find at this stage that you have a number of questions about the CPC process and what to expect. The purpose of this document is to help prepare you for the next stages of the process by providing a 'Who?', 'What?', 'When?' and 'How?' of the CPC.

Who?

The CPC will be conducted by a team of peers - both councillors and officers from the parish and town council sector. This team will typically include representatives from NALC and representatives from parish and town councils e.g., an experienced/senior town councillor and a town clerk. An LGA Peer Challenge Manager will manage the CPC and form part of the team.

An integral part of the CPC offer is that it is bespoke to the needs and priorities of your town council, and you will be invited to give your input as to the skills and experience required of those who make up the peer team.

During the CPC the peer team will engage with a broad range of councillors, officers, key partners and stakeholders across your town council area.

The CPC itself is organised and conducted by the Local Government Association (LGA) - the national membership body for local authorities, working closely with NALC – the national membership body representing the interests of local (parish and town) councils.

What?

The [Corporate Peer Challenge](#) is a cornerstone of the LGA's sector support programme. It involves peers from the town council sector spending time with your town council to provide challenge and share learning. It aims to highlight areas of good practice, as well as identify areas for improvement and ongoing support.

The focus of a CPC revolves around the following five themes. Importantly though, through on-going engagement with your town council, we will scope and shape these themes to ensure they meet the specific requirements of your town council. This will include an agreement about any areas of specific focus that your town council would welcome.

1. **Understanding of the local place and priority setting:** Does the town council understand its local context and place and use that to inform a clear vision and set of priorities?
2. **Leadership of Place:** Does the town council provide effective leadership of place through its elected members, officers and constructive relationships and partnerships with key stakeholders?
3. **Financial planning and viability:** Do the town council have a financial plan in place to ensure long term viability and is there evidence that it is being implemented successfully?
4. **Organisational leadership and governance:** Are there effective political and officer leadership supported by good governance and decision-making arrangements that respond to key challenges and enable change and transformation to be implemented?
5. **Capacity to deliver:** Is organisational capacity aligned with priorities and does the town council influence, enable and leverage external capacity to focus on agreed outcomes?

When?

Ahead of the peer challenge, you will meet with your LGA Peer Challenge Manager and NALC to discuss these themes and your council's particular areas of focus. These will then be reflected in the approach of the CPC. There is usually a three-to-six-month lead in time from this scoping meeting to the actual on-site delivery of the CPC (to allow for preparation and planning).

Following the scoping meeting, a follow up 'scoping document' will be shared with you which will outline the agreed scope and focus of the CPC. The LGA will also share a more detailed guidance note with you which will help you prepare for the CPC.

The on-site Corporate Peer Challenge will usually take place over **2 – 3 days** on-site – depending upon the scope of the peer challenge.

How?

You will be required to share some background documentation ahead of the CPC and this will be informed by the finalised agreed scope and focus.

This will include a Position Statement structured around the themes of the CPC, which should be used to provide a steer to the peer team on the local context.

The town council will also need to arrange a timetable of activity organised for the peer team in advance. Meetings should provide an opportunity for discussion which explores issues and ideas as much as evidence gathering.

At the end of the final day, the peer team will share initial feedback (verbally), followed by a comprehensive written report (shared within three weeks of the CPC) highlighting the town council's areas of strength and areas of potential improvement. In the spirit of openness and transparency, the LGA require you to publish this report, alongside an action plan, on your website no later than three months of the original CPC. The LGA will also publish the report on their website. If you do not publish the action plan as the same time as the report, we do require you to publish an action plan within five months of the original CPC.

Eight to ten months later, you will also undergo a Progress Review, whereby members of the CPC peer team will meet with you to discuss the progress that you

have made in relation to the Action Plan and identify any areas requiring support e.g., through NALC. Again, it is expected that you publish the follow up progress review report no later than twelve months after your Corporate Peer Challenge.

FAQ

Is this an inspection?

- No, CPCs are not inspections, and the Peer Team is here on the invitation of your town council. The Peer Challenge process exists solely to support you in your on-going improvement.

Is this conducted by central government?

- No, Peer Challenges are conducted by the local government sector, for the local government sector. Though, central government is highly supportive of the Peer Challenge model and sector-led improvement more widely.

Will this cost the Council?

- Corporate Peer Challenges are offered at no charge to councils. Peer Challenges and wider sector-led improvement is funded by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. The LGA will also cover any logistical cost to Peers over the course of the Challenge.

Next Steps

If your council would like to be considered for a Corporate Peer Challenge then please contact:

Cindy Lowthian, Senior Regional Adviser

Email: cindy.lowthian@local.gov.uk and

Anders Hanson, Member Services Manager at NALC

Email: Anders.hanson@nalc.gov.uk

ⁱ E.g. super (town) councils with an annual precept of c£1m or an annual turnover of c£1.5m.

ⁱⁱ The LGA and NALC are looking to deliver up to 5 CPCs for larger parish and town councils (April 2023 to March 2024).