

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Peel Street, Houghton Regis, Bedfordshire, LU5 5EY

Town Mayor: **Clir E Cooper** Town Clerk: **Clare Evans** Tel: 01582 708540 e-mail: <u>info@houghtonregis-tc.gov.uk</u>

11th March 2025

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

To:

All Town Councillors

Notice of Meeting

You are hereby summoned to the Meeting of the Houghton Regis Town Council to be held at the Council Offices, Peel Street on Monday 17th March 2025 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: <u>MEETING LINK</u>

THIS MEETING MAY BE RECORDED¹

Clare Evans Town Clerk

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.

3. SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

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

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.

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

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

4. MINUTES

Pages 6 - 10

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 20th January 2025.

Recommendation: To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 20th January 2025.

5. COMMITTEE AND SUB-COMMITTEE MINUTES

Pages 11 - 48

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

Corporate Services Committee	2 nd December 2024 Minute number 13050 – Retirement Policy To recommend to Town Council, the adoption of Houghton Regis Town Council's Retirement Policy.
	Minute number 13051 – Houghton Regis Town Council's Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) Employer Policy Statement To recommend to Town Council, the adoption of Houghton Regis Town Councils Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) Discretion Statement.
	Minute number 13053 – Flexi-time Scheme To recommend to Town Council the re-adoption of the Town Councils Flexi-Time Scheme policy.
	Minute number 13054 - Ceremonial Robes Policy To recommend to Town Council the re-adoption of the Town Councils Ceremonial Robes policy.
Community Services Committee	21 st October and 11 th November 2024
Environment & Leisure Committee	30 th September 2024
Planning Committee Town Partnership Committee	6 th and 27 th January 2025, 17 th February 2025 27 th November 2024

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

New Cemetery Sub-Committee None to present.

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

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

- 1. Minute number 13050 Retirement Policy;
- 2. Minute number 13051 Houghton Regis Town Council's Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) Employer Policy Statement;
- 3. Minute number 13053 Flexi-time Scheme;
- 4. Minute number 13054 Ceremonial Robes Policy

6. TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

A verbal report will be provided.

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

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

8. CORPORATE PLAN REVIEW & UPDATE

Pages 49 - 55

To review and update members on the Corporate Plan.

Recommendation: To note the update on the Corporate Plan.

9. CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE PROGRESS REVIEW REPORT

Pages 56 - 91

To update members on the Corporate Peer Challenge Progress Review and to present the updated Action Plan.

Recommendation: To endorse the updated Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan.

10. FINANCIAL FORECAST

Pages 92 - 103

To provide to members a 3-year budget forecast to 2029.

Recommendation: To receive the 3-year budget forecast to 2029.

11. STRATEGIC POLICIES 2025/26

Pages 104 - 177

To provide information to members to enable a review of the Town Councils strategic polices prior to them being presented at the Town Council meeting to be held on 14th May 2025.

- Standing Orders
- Financial Regulations
- Scheme of Delegation
- Committee Functions & Terms of Reference

It is highlighted to members that within the Committee Functions & Terms of Reference there are delegation arrangements provided, to date these have not been utilised. Members comments are invited.

Recommendation:	To recommend to the Annual Meeting of Town
	Council approval of the following:

- Standing Orders
- Financial Regulations
- Scheme of Delegation as amended
- Committee Functions & Terms of Reference as amended

12. COUNCIL CALENDAR 2025/26

Pages 178 - 189

Members will find attached a draft calendar of meetings and events for 2025/26.

In summary, the following meetings have been diarised:

Town Council: 16th June; 13th October; 15th December 2025, 19th January, 16th March and 13th May 2026

Corporate Services Committee: 19th June; 1st September; 1st December 2025 and 2nd March 2026

Community Services Committee: 21st July; 10th November (Grants); 24th November 2025; 23rd February and 27th April 2026

Environment and Leisure Committee: 28th July; 20th October 2025; 12th January and 21st April 2026

Planning Committee: meetings held every three weeks

Town Partnership Committee: 29th July; 21st October 2025; 27th January and 28th April 2026

Personnel Sub-Committee: 19th May; 7th July; 3rd November 2025 and 2nd February 2026

Proposed New Cemetery Sub-Committee: 8th September 2025 and 23rd March 2026.

13. ANNUAL REVIEW OF COUNCIL ASSETS

Pages 190 - 196

Members will find attached the list of council assets² held on 31st March 2025, as amended by additions and disposals during 2024/25.

This report is presented for information only.

14. UNRECOVERABLE DEBTS

Pages 197 - 198

To advise members of the current debtors' position and to request authorisation to write off debts deemed to be unrecoverable.

Recommendation: To approve the writing off of the following debts:

- Invoice number 4746
- Invoice number 5051

15. COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

Pages 199 - 202

To enable members to discuss the Community Governance Review process.

Recommendation: 1. To approve a series of public engagement events in 2025/26 to proactively promote the Community Governance Review process;

2. To nominate 3 members to work with officers on shaping a Council response to the Community Governance Review process, including liaising with any relevant neighbouring councils, for approval by Town Council in due course.

² Minute 12404: A council asset should be defined as a purchase of over £1,000 with a longevity of use of over one year.

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 20th January 2025 at 7.00pm

Present:	Councillors:	E Cooper J Carroll E Billington	Town Mayor
		E Costello Y Farrell	
		M Herber	
		W Henderson	
		D Jones	
		T McMahon	
		C Rollins	
		A Slough	
		C Slough	
		D Taylor	
	Officers:	Clare Evans Amanda Samuels	Town Clerk Administration Officer
	Public:	4	
Apologies	Councillor:	P Burgess	

13091 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr Burgess.

13092 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

A statement was made by a member of the public, urging the Town Council to continue with its efforts to secure sports hall facilities in Houghton Regis once the new leisure centre opens.

A representative from the Friends of Windsor Dirive addressed the meeting to ask when the Town Council would be reviewing its Neighbourhood Plan and whether that review would include looking at some of the aspirations contained in the Plan. For example, the provision of parking at Windsor Drive between the road and the existing shared use path.

13093 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

None.

13094 MINUTES

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 16th December 2024.

Resolved: To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 16th December 2024 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

13095 COMMITTEE AND WORKING GROUP MINUTES

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

Corporate Services Committee	None to present
Community Services Committee	None to present
Environment & Leisure Committee	None to present
Planning Committee	28 th Oct and 16 th Dec 2024
Town Partnership Committee	None to present

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

New Cemetery Sub-Committee None to present

Resolved: To receive the Minutes detailed above and to approve the recommendation contained therein.

13096 TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Town Mayor updated members on events that had been visited. These included:

17thDecember
 19th December
 21st December
 8th January
 Mayor of Harpenden's carol concert
 visit to Lady Spencer House
 festive disco at Johnson Court
 meeting with the Bishop of Bedford, buffet supper

The Deputy Mayor confirmed they had also attended the Mayor of Harpenden's carol concert and Bishop of Bedford's buffet supper, in addition to a number of other carol services in the run-up to Christmas.

13097 REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS & ON TRAINING SESSIONS ATTENDED

Due to the Christmas and New Year period no updates were presented.

13098 GENERAL RESERVES

Members were updated on the actual and predicted level of General Reserves (GR).

Members were informed that the opening GR balance was £485,804 at 1^{st} April 2024 and it was predicted to be approximately £414,898 at the end of the current financial year. In accordance with the Practitioner's Guide, HRTC should have a GR level of 3-12 months net revenue expenditure. Based on revenue expenditure in the current year, a level of 3 months net revenue expenditure was around £406,000.

Members highlighted that the suggestion from the Corporate Peer Challenge was that HRTC aim for a level of 4-5 months net revenue expenditure based on the size of the council.

Members noted that GR were not at a level that could be used to support the 2025/26 budget.

13099 2025/26 BUDGET AND PRECEPT

Town Council was presented with the draft budget for 2025/26 for consideration and was requested to approve a budget for 2025/26 and set a precept.

The Head of Environmental and Community Services addressed Members, highlighting some of the proposed increases that sat within their service areas. These were:

- The provision of a full-time lead youth worker, which would allow HRTC to build on its achievements so far.
- Enhance horticultural provision to continue what had been implemented through UKSPF.
- Maintain the enhanced community events programme to standard achieved with UKSPF funding.
- Completion of highway entrance to Tithe Farm Road Recreation Ground.

The Liberal Democrat Group Leader, Cllr Jones, made a proposal:

- that the draft budget as amended by the proposals from the Liberal Democrat Group be agreed.
- that a precept of $\pounds 1,660,722$ be requested for 2025/26.

Members were also provided with the following commentary in support of this proposal:

"The Liberal Democrat Group have examined the possible changes to the budget suggested by the Town Clerk. Unfortunately, the deficit on the draft officer budget is £248,383, while the suggested savings total only £102,595. Furthermore, the suggested savings comprise two major amounts and several small "bits and pieces". The two major items relate to the appointment of a Senior Youth Worker and associated support (possible part-time appointment) and the provision of an amount towards the completion of the works at Tithe Farm Recreation Ground. Our feeling was that the appointment of a Senior Youth Worker should be funded in full, building on the good work already undertaken through grant funding. As for the further funding for Tithe Farm, the suggestion is not really a saving at all, since if no funding is obtained, any further liability for the S278 works will have to be met out of General Reserves, which we have been advised is not a prudent thing to do this year.

All the above means that there is very little scope for reducing the deficit by any significant amount. Accordingly, of the small bits and pieces, we have adopted four suggestions in full, and proposed different (lesser) savings in two other cases. The only other adjustment which we propose relates to a transfer from Earmarked Reserves of $\pounds 1,000$ for which there is no apparent justification, and which technically should be eliminated."

		Budget Figure	Suggested Figure	Difference	Budget Balance
101-1076	Precept Received	-1,431,228	-1,660,722	229,494	-18,889
102-4008	Training Courses	1,400	1,000	400	-18,489
190-4992	Tfr from EMR 330				
	(re Professional Fees)	0	-8,000	8,000	-10,489
	CAP - New				
199-4805	Equipment (incl. IT)	3,000	0	3,000	-7,489
	Grounds				
243-4037	Maintenance	6,489	6,000	489	-7,000
291-4039	Horticultural Supplies	10,000	7,500	2,500	-4,500
299-4992	Tfr from EMRs	-1,000	0	-1,000	-5 <i>,</i> 500
304-4222	Community Events	70,000	64,500	5,500	0
	·				
		-1,341,339	-1,589,722	248,383	0

Cllr Jones outlined proposals for the 2025/26 budget as follows:

In conclusion it was stated that:

"To balance the budget, an increase in the precept is required which will lead to an increase in the Band D Council Tax Charge for 2025/26 of £31.72, or 61p per week for a Band D household (less for the majority of Houghton Regis residents)."

The Labour Group Leader, Cllr C Slough, endorsed the substance of the Liberal Democrat proposals and supported the youth worker funding. It was not felt, however, that the reduction of funding for Tithe Farm was practical. The Independent Group Leader, Cllr Herber, expressed support for funding for the youth worker position, and for the deficit of £248,383 to be accommodated within the budget for the year.

The Town Clerk highlighted that the Independents supported the Officer's Draft Budget in full, which would set a precept of £1,679,611 and give a Band D charge of £232.15. With the Liberal Democrat changes, there would be a precept of £1,660,722, which would give a Band D charge of £229.54.

It was suggested that the proposal was put forward for Members to vote upon. The Liberal Democrat representative reiterated the proposal made at the outset of the discussion and Members voted in favour.

Resolved: To approve the draft budget as amended by the proposals from the Liberal Democrat Group and that a precept of £1,660,722 be requested for 2025/26.

13100 REVIEW OF EAR MARKED RESERVES

Members were invited to review the status of the Council's Ear Marked Reserves:

- 1. partway through the current financial year (2024/25)
- 2. the predicted movements in 2025/26

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Resolved: To note the Schedule of Ear Marked Reserves 2024/25 and the predicted schedule of Ear Marked Reserves 2025/26.

13101 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN IMPLEMENTATION SUB-COMMITTEE

The purpose of the report was to enable members to discuss the details surrounding the creation of the Neighbourhood Plan Implementation Sub-Committee.

The formation of this sub-committee had initially been proposed for the purposes of monitoring the effectiveness of the Neighbourhood Plan when reviewing planning applications. The question from the representative of the Friends of Windsor Drive at the outset of the meeting suggested that the sub-committee could also monitor the delivery of aspirations and policies within the Plan. Members proposed that the sub-committee could make recommendations to the relevant Standing Committees that certain items be considered.

The Town Clerk confirmed that the Terms of Reference had not been written from the standpoint of making the sub-committee a facilitator of work within the Neighbourhood Plan. It would, however, be possible to review the Terms of Reference to encompass this role.

It was proposed that, since the sub-committee would be meeting twice a year, draft minutes should be passed to the Planning Committee to avoid significant delays.

The Town Clerk advised that the Terms of Reference could be approved and then reviewed again at the first meeting in May.

Members voted in favour of the recommendation to incorporate the Neighbourhood Plan Implementation Sub-Committee into the calendar of meetings, with the Terms of Reference to be agreed at the inaugural meeting in May.

Resolved: For meetings of the Neighbourhood Plan Implementation Sub-Committee to be incorporated into the Calendar of Meetings for 2025-26, with the intention that the first meeting be held end of May / beginning of June 2025.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 7.41pm

Dated this 17th day of March 2025

Chairman

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL Corporate Services Committee Minutes of the meeting held on 2nd December 2024 7.00pm.

Present:	Councillors:	D Jones E Billington	Chairman
		P Burgess	(Sub)
		J Carroll C Rollins	
		C Slough	(Sub)
etta - Sono Sultena etta - Sono - Stalla etta - Stalla	Officers:	Debbie Marsh Amanda Samuels	Head of Corporate Services Administration Officer
	Public:	0	
Apologies:	Councillor:	E Costello M Herber W Henderson	

13038 APOLOGIES & SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Cllr Costello, Cllr Henderson (Cllr Slough substituted) and Cllr Herber (Cllr Burgess substituted).

13039 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

13040 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

Cllr Carroll declared an interest as a recipient of the Bedfordshire Pension Plan.

13041 MINUTES

To approve the Minutes of the meetings held on 9th September 2024

Resolved: To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 9th September 2024 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

13042 INCOME AND EXPENDITURE REPORT

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

Regarding the property fund redemption, there was an objection to the internal auditor's statement 'the value of the general reserve is significantly understated', which took into account the proceeds from the disposal but not the original cost. The

internal auditor's recommendation had not included that the full value of the investments sold should be recorded in the accounts.

The advice submitted by DCK was that the redemption had been treated correctly and an adjustment would be made in the AGAR at year end.

13043 BANK AND CASH RECONCILIATION STATEMENTS

Members were requested to receive the monthly bank and cash reconciliation statements for August, September and October 2024.

Resolved: 1. To approve the monthly bank and cash reconciliation statements for August, September and October 2024;

2. For these along with the original bank statements to be signed by the Chair of Corporate Services Committee and the Council's RFO.

13044 LIST OF CHEQUE PAYMENTS

Members were provided with a list of payments for the period August to October 2024 (inclusive)

13045 INVESTMENT REPORT

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

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

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

The Chair reported that it had been suggested at the Corporate Peer Challenge Review that HRTC consider a special reserve account. Based on Monetary Policy Committee base rate predictions for 2025, it was felt HRTC had sufficient time to research investment options while the CCLA Deposit Fund continued to provide a good return. A report outlining investment options could be presented to Members at the March meeting and the Head of Corporate services was requested to carry out further research to this end.

Members suggested that the investment sum was likely to be the minimum amount of general reserves, plus the majority of the balance in the CCLA account, minus payments for the remainder of the year and that funds should be easily accessible. A sum of £500,000 was proposed.

The savings platform Flagstone had been suggested by the internal auditor but further investigation into this – and other options - was needed. It was noted that Flagstone would enable HRTC to spread investments and manage these in-house.

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It was suggested that a decision regarding investment was deferred until the next meeting when further investigations had been made.

Proposed by: Cllr Carroll Seconded by: Cllr Billington Members agreed unanimously to defer the decision until the next meeting.

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Resolved: To defer consideration of an appropriate investment opportunity for CCLA Property Fund monies until the next meeting on 3rd March 2025.

13046 WORKER PROTECTION (AMENDMENT OF EQUALITY ACT 1010) ACT 2023

Members were advised that a new Act came into effect on 26th October 2024 which introduced a new legal duty on employers to prevent sexual harassment during the course of employment.

The Town Councils HR provider informed the Head of Corporate Services that they had carried out a review of their employment policies that would be impacted by this new duty. Those policies affected would be sent to the Town Council, most notably the Bullying and Harassment Policy. This policy had been scheduled to be reviewed at this meeting; however, in light of the new duty, it was considered prudent to defer the review until a revised policy had been received. Members were advised that it was also likely that the Whistleblowing policy would be affected by the new duty. This policy was similarly scheduled to be reviewed at this meeting but would be deferred until it was ascertained whether there would be any revisions.

Furthermore, employers would also need to show that they had provided meaningful training to all staff and managers. Training opportunities on this topic, i.e. Protection from Sexual Harassment at Work, were currently being researched and it was hoped that this could also be offered out to members.

13047 REVIEW OF TOWN COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP TO OTHER BODIES

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

Membership	Period	Annual Subscription 2025/26
Society of Local Council	Clerks Annual	£480

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Society of Local Council Clerks	Annual	£480
(SLCC)		
Bedfordshire Association of	Annual	£2,295
Town & Parish Councils		
(NALC)		
Institute of Cemetery and	Annual April to March	£105
Crematorium Management		
Information Commissioners	Annual	£60
Officer (ICO)		
National Allotment Association	Annual	£58
Campaign to Protect Rural	Annual	£60
England (CPRE)	and a discovery states in the	Automation ST
LGA Associate Membership	Annual	£580
(fee paid via NALC)	the locate to a section of	

It was highlighted that the NALC rate would be increasing by 3% but it was confirmed that an increase had been incorporated into the figures.

13048 REVIEW EXISTING CONTRACTS

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

Members were provided with a report for information.

Regarding CCTV redeployable cameras, it was highlighted that an additional camera had been agreed recently and the figures would require amendment.

13049 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

Members were informed that one freedom of information request was received, 9th October 2024, and responded to within the timescale as per the Town Councils Freedom of Information Policy.

13050 RETIREMENT POLICY

Members were requested to recommend to Town Council, the adoption of the Town Council's Retirement Policy.

Members were provided with a report.

Members questioned the implications if several members of staff wanted to retire early under the new policy. The Head of Corporate Services advised members that staff have always had a right to request to flexibly retire but by adopting this revised policy there would no longer be a requirement for an employee to reduce their working hours/pay by 40% to have their request considered. In submitting a flexible working request each request would be considered individually, regardless of the persons circumstances, and the council would consider, very carefully, the impact on the business when considering such requests.

Following a request from Members, it was agreed that the policy would be reviewed after one year. Members were happy to accept the recommendation on this basis.

Resolved: To recommend to Town Council, the adoption of Houghton Regis Town Council's Retirement Policy.

13051 HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL'S LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION SCHEME (LGPS) EMPLOYER POLICY STATEMENT

The current LGPS regulations, which came into effect from 1 April 2014, required each scheme employer within the LGPS to formulate, publish and keep under review a statement which set out their policy on certain discretions which they had the power to exercise under the LGPS regulations.

Following information received from Bedfordshire Pension Fund, Members were advised that the Town Council's Discretionary Statement needed reviewing to ensure it reflected the current regulations.

Members requested the Head of Corporate Services to give a brief description of the changes proposed. It was explained that the wording would be tightened up to mitigate certain appeals and would state that consideration would be given to certain exceptions at certain times.

The Chair went through the amendments to establish Members agreement with these each point. Members accepted the proposed changes, but the following points were highlighted:

- References were made to the Leader of the Council, which no longer applied.
- References to the Chief Executive should be substituted with Town Clerk
- Pg 97 HRTC email address needed amending
- Pg 106 Amend wording to 'this rationale is further strengthened'; reference was made to the current Flexible Retirement Policy which should read Flexible Working Policy.

Members were happy to adopt the policy with the amendments noted.

Resolved: To recommend to Town Council, the adoption of Houghton Regis Town Councils Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) Discretion Statement

13052 FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

A new Model Financial Regulations template had been produced by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) for the purpose of its member councils and county associations.

Officers felt it was important to highlight to Members one new section of the updated regulations. Financial Regulation 4.8 (extract below) which was in bold text and therefore referred to a statutory obligation the council could not change.

4.8 Any member with council tax unpaid for more than two months is prohibited from voting on the budget or precept by Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and must disclose at the start of the meeting that Section 106 applies to them.

The following items were raised by the Chair for further clarification

- Pg 120 It was agreed to remove the brackets from 'Unspent funds for partially completed projects...'.
- Pg 127 Payment of Salaries It was agreed that the reference to Finance Committee be changed to Corporate Services. This item could be presented at meetings of the Corporate Services Committee under 'exclusion of the press and public'.

Members agreed to the adoption of the Financial Regulations with the above amendments.

Resolved: To recommend to Town Council, at the meeting to be held on the 16th December 2024, the adoption of Financial Regulations based on the 2024 model version as provided by NALC (National Association of Local Councils)

13053 FLEXI-TIME SCHEME

Houghton Regis Town Council operated a Flexi-Time scheme. Flexible working was one element which helped to increase employee motivation, reduce sickness absence, promote employee wellbeing and also served to promote recruitment and retention.

Members were presented with the Town Council Flexi-Time Scheme policy. This policy was last reviewed 14th September 2020. There had been no updates to this operational policy and therefore was fit for purpose.

It was highlighted that this was not a new policy but one that had been separated from the Flexible Working Policy.

Resolved: To recommend to Town Council the re-adoption of the Town Councils Flexi-Time Scheme policy.

13054 CEREMONIAL ROBES POLICY

Houghton Regis Town Council adopted a Ceremonial Robes policy at the Town Council meeting held on the 9th December 2019.

Resolved: To recommend to Town Council the re-adoption of the Town Councils Ceremonial Robes policy.

13055 TOWN COUNCIL OFFICES

At the special meeting of the Corporate Services committee, held on the 23rd July 2024, it was agreed (minute number 12923) to obtain quotes from design architects for the development of comprehensive remodelling options aimed at:

- 1. Enhancing the functionality and aesthetics of the main foyer
- 2. Expanding office and administrative spaces, including the potential relocation of the council chamber if necessary
- 3. Improving the external visibility and public presence of the council

The Head of Corporate Services informed Members that three quotes had been received. When questioned, the Head of Corporate Services confirmed that Company 'A' had been used previously and were known to carry out work to a satisfactory level. It was emphasised that this was simply a feasibility exercise to explore how the offices could be reconfigured and to provide costings. The viability of expending funds on the offices was debated; however, it was highlighted that this had already been agreed at the meeting in July and followed CPC recommendations to improve areas of the current offices.

Members were invited to move on the recommendation:Proposed by:Cllr BillingtonSeconded by:Cllr SloughIn favour:Cllr Billington, Cllr Slough, Cllr JonesAgainst:Cllr Carroll, Cllr RollinsAbstainedCllr Burgess

Members agreed by a majority to proceed with the appointment of Company 'A'.

Resolved: To appoint PCH Associates as the Town Councils design architect.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.43pm

Dated this 3rd day of March 2025

Jones.

Chairman

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL Community Services Committee Minutes of the meeting held on 21st October 2024 at 7.00 pm

Present:	Councillors:	E Costello E Cooper Y Farrell	Chair
		M Herber T McMahon C Slough	(Sub)
	Officers:	Ian Haynes	Head of Environmental & Community Services
		Amanda Samuels	Administration Officer
Also present:	Public:	6	
Apologies:	Councillor:	P Burgess A Slough	

13014 APOLOGIES & SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Cllr Burgess (Cllr Herber substituted) and Cllr A Slough.

13015 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

13016 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

Cllr Farrell declared a non-pecuniary interest in the grant for the Houghton Regis Memorial Hall as they were a Trustee for the Memorial Hall.

13017 MINUTES

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 22nd July 2024

Resolved: To confirm the minutes of the Community Services Committee meeting held on 22nd July 2024 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

13018 KEY PARTNERS - ANNUAL REVIEW OF EXISTING

Representatives from Key Partner organisations were invited to the meeting to present an annual review/update. Members received updates from South Beds Dial-A-Ride, Keech Hospice, Houghton Regis Memorial Hall and Full House Theatre.

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Members were reminded that Key Partner status had been awarded to these organisations for the financial years 2024/25, 2025/26, 2026/27 and 2027/28.

Key Partner awards were as follows:

Applicant	Amount requested
Dunstable & District CA	£2,612.50
SORTED	£1,100
Keech Hospice Care	£2,750
South Beds Dial A Ride	£1,375
Houghton Regis Memorial Hall	£2,200
Full House Theatre	£2,750
Community Link Project - Singing Ca	are £2,200
Initiatives	

Resolved: To approve the release of funding as detailed for the financial year 2025/26.

13019 PROJECT GRANT SCHEME

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Members were advised that the following applications had been received for a Project Grant.

Applicant Parkside over 50's Club	Total project cost £1023.50	Amount requested £700	Brief description A trip for participants to the theatre or similar
Houghton Regis Ladies Group	£1000	£800	An outing to a national trust location, a spring workshop for flower arranging and a Christmas craft workshop.
The Children's Society	£899	£719	Gaming Table for Youth Club
Dunstable Hunters Pickleball Club	£640	£512	New Nets for pickball will increase participation from Houghton Regis residents.
Hospice at Home	£388.02	£310.41	Local marketing to raise awareness of services

Members were advised that £3,200 remained in this budget for 2024/25

Resolved: To approve the Project Grant applications as follows: Parkside Over 50's Club - £700 Houghton Regis Ladies Group - £800 The Children's Society - £719

21st October 2024

Dunstable Hunters Pickleball Club - £512 Hospice at Home - £310.41

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13020 HRTC GRANT SCHEME

Members were invited to discuss the renewal of the HRTC grant scheme, considering that the budget-setting process had not yet commenced.

Members questioned whether a more robust method of determining grants was required and if the funding levels should be increased. The Head of Environmental and Community Services highlighted that Houghton Regis Town Council did not currently fully fund its Key Partners, but should it choose to do so, a sum above £25,000 would be required. Alternatively, Members had the option of agreeing to a lower sum, which would be used to fund more organisations.

The budget for the previous year had been £15,000, but the overall spending had increased to £15,788. With current population growth levels, it was likely that the budget would need to double to maintain the current standard. There had been some previous frustration at the inability to award projects thoroughly, and Members were invited to propose an increase to address this issue. Following the Corporate Peer Challenge Review, there was a desire to establish a five-year financial plan and the grant budget and the anticipated increase required would be figured into the process.

It was highlighted that Houghton Regis Town Council was one of the few remaining councils to award grants. Members were keen to ensure that grants were suitably allocated and in line with the Council's policies. Members agreed that it would be necessary to factor in population growth and changing needs when setting a budget.

It was acknowledged that a matrix was required against which applications could be assessed. It was suggested that requiring all applications to make reference to the Corporate Plan would be one possible means of achieving this and would allow Members to review applications before the committee. This would mean that if the current level of 50% funding were maintained, the full 50% would be awarded if all criteria were met, up to a maximum value. The maximum value will be lower if the application fails to meet all criteria.

Members had been provided with the following options for consideration:

- Require potential key partners to express interest before the budget-setting process for key partner grants.
- Implement yearly financial increments during budget-setting to align with housing growth. 52 / 71 Page 4 of 6
- Consider increasing funding limits for both project grants and small grant applications.
- Consider a new grant scheme to support initiatives that align with the Corporate Plan and promote community events, such as the carnival or Houghton in Bloom.

- Review Key Partner Funding, reassess the current practice of granting only 50% of requested funding to key partners, exploring options for increased support.
- Enhance the budgeting process to ensure sufficient grant funding is available before meetings.

It was suggested that Members propose their preferred three options for further consideration.

Members were reminded that the recommendation could be amended to instruct officers to remove it and produce a rationale matrix for a fair and transparent scheme. There would also be merit in increasing the budget to achieve more within the community. Once officers and Members had agreed on a scheme, a report would be produced and released into the public domain.

Members agreed to wording a proposed amendment as follows:

Officers should take this away and deliberate on creating a structured and robust process for consideration at a future meeting.

Amendment proposed by: Cllr McMahon Seconded by: Cllr Slough Members voted unanimously in favour of the substantive Members voted unanimously in favour of the amended recommendation.

Resolved: Officers should take this away and deliberate on creating a structured and robust process for consideration at a future meeting.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.00 pm.

Dated this 24th day of February 2025

Chairman

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HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL Community Services Committee Minutes of the meeting held on 11th November 2024 at 7.00 pm

Present:	Councillors:	C Slough P Burgess E Cooper Y Farrell	Chairman
		D Jones A Slough	(Sub)
	Officers:	Ian Haynes	Head of Environmental & Community Services
		Tara Earnshaw Amanda Samuels	Community Services Manager Administration Officer
Public:		7	
Apologies:	Councillors:	E Costello	
Absent:		T McMahon	

13028 APOLOGIES & SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Cllr Costello, and Cllr Jones substituted for him.

13029 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Members of the public were advised that any questions relating to the Houghton Regis Sports Hall could be raised during item 4 on the agenda, which related to this subject.

13030 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

None.

13031 HOUGHTON REGIS SPORTS HALL

At previous meetings, it was highlighted to Members that there was concern regarding the potential future lack of indoor sports hall access in Houghton Regis. Suggested actions were:

- Propose to Central Bedfordshire Council that HRTC manage the current facility.
- HRTC give consideration to financing a replacement.

Members were asked to consider what Houghton Regis Town Council could do to support the Houghton Regis Sports Hall users.

The Head of Environmental and Community Services felt it would assist matters if a proposal could be made at the Extraordinary Town Partnership meeting for officers to

engage with CBC officers and explore options. Efforts could be made to seek a costneutral plan, which could then be formed into a business plan for consideration by the Town Council.

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Members agreed that a resolution needed to be reached with CBC to enable continued use of the sports hall but suggested that a feasibility study to establish the costs of maintaining the site would also be merited.

Members felt that clarity was required regarding the following:

- Would it be possible for the sports hall to function independently?
- What would the costs be for an independently functioning sports hall?
- What grants would be available?
- What were the costs involved in the Community Use Agreement?
- What times were offered by the school, and what were the practicalities of the arrangements between the school sports hall and the leisure centre?

The Head of Environmental and Community Services suggested the following recommendation be made:

HRTC's Community Services Committee requests that the Town Partnership Committee instructs CBC officers to engage with Town Council officers to proactively look at the operations of the Houghton Regis Sports Hall

Members expressed a wish for the Committee to take a more active approach and proposed the following recommendations were put forward:

This Committee requests officers to conduct a feasibility study on the possibility of the sports hall remaining open when the leisure centre closes and the costs this would involve.

To request CBC officers to advise on the proposed use of the Houstone school sports leisure facilities under the Community Use Agreement.

Amended recommendations Proposed by Cllr A Slough Seconded by Y Farrell Members voted unanimously in favour

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Resolved: This Committee requests officers to conduct a feasibility study on the possibility of the sports hall remaining open when the leisure centre closes and the costs this would involve.

To request CBC officers to advise on the proposed use of the Houstone school sports leisure facilities under the Community Use Agreement.

13032 TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING WORKING GROUPS AND CONSIDER ANY RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED THEREIN

Community Engagement Sub-Committee 25th June 2024

Combating Crime Working Group	19^{th}	June	'24,	17^{th}	July	'24,	21 st
	Aug	ust '24	Ļ				

Resolved: To receive the following Minutes:

Events Working Group25th June '24Combating Crime Working19th June '24, 17th July '24, 21stGroupAugust '24

13033 CHANGES TO THE PRIDE OF HOUGHTON AWARDS WORKING GROUP

The Pride of Houghton Awards was set up by the Town Council in 2002 to honour the work of the town's unsung heroes and the work that may not always be recognised.

Members had expressed concerns about potentially knowing many, or even all, of the nominees and had raised the possibility of removing councillors from the process. It was proposed that the introduction of a panel of previous award recipients, supported by officers, to assess the awards would resolve this issue.

Members also suggested that the process would be improved if:

- Nominations were seen to be equal, containing all relevant data and submissions of similar length
- Officers provided assistance in writing nominations, thereby making the awards accessible to all.

It was agreed that Honorary Freemen could also form part of the panel in addition to previous award winners. It was suggested that the recommendation be amended to read 'previous award recipients/Honorary Freemen'.

Proposed by: E Cooper Seconded by: A Slough Members voted in favour of the substantive

The Head of Environmental and Community Services confirmed it was not necessarily the intention to remove all councillors from the panel and that the working group would remain in place; however, the changes would allow councillors to step back if they felt conflicts of interest.

There was further discussion on making the awards more anonymous, but Members agreed that the process could be reviewed again after the selection panel was introduced.

Members voted in favour of the amended recommendation.

Resolved: To consider the introduction of previous award recipients/ Honorary Freemen to the selection panel.

13034 ASSETS OF COMMUNITY VALUE

Members were reminded that parish councils and community groups with a connection to the local area could make nominations for Assets of Community Value.

In the event that Central Bedfordshire Council accepted the nomination, there would be an opportunity to develop a bid for the asset when it went up for sale.

Members were encouraged to identify suitable assets within the town for review by officers in collaboration with Central Bedfordshire Council. It was suggested that consideration be given to the following locations:

- Houghton Regis Day Centre
- Houghton Regis Library
- Bedford Square Community Centre
- St. Thomas Meeting House C of E
- St. Vincent's Centre
- Houghton Regis Sports Hall

Members agreed with the proposed list in principle but requested that the Scout Hut on Cemetery Road also be included.

A public member referred to earlier discussions regarding a feasibility study on purchasing the Houghton Regis Sports Hall: they highlighted that if the process of registering the site was started, with support from the community, CBC would be unable to sell the sports hall for the stipulated six-month period allowed for its potential purchase. Members would then have the opportunity to explore funding options.

The Head of Environmental and Community Services confirmed that Houghton Regis Sports Hall would be the first nomination. Members would be kept updated as nominations progressed, and further sites could be added to the list in the future. Expiry dates would be monitored so that the assets continued to be listed.

Resolved: To provide officers with clear guidance on proposed Assets of Community Value.

13035 INCOME AND EXPENDITURE REPORT

Members were provided with a copy of the income and expenditure report for the Community Services Committee to date for information purposes.

The period of expenditure covered was questioned, and it was confirmed that the report was correct as of 5th November.

Two items were expected to show higher expenditure

- Salaries, National Insurance and Superannuation 3924001, 3924002 and 3924003
- Other Professional Fees 3064059

It was confirmed that:

- the figure for Salaries, National Insurance and Superannuation had been corrected following an input error
- Operation Hana fees were late

Cllr Burgess left the meeting

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13036 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

• HRTC-2024-CS-12716

Resolved: In accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and press be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the item set out below on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the general interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

13037 HRTC-2024-CS-12716

Members were informed that bids had been received for the Christmas lights contract. A purchase order had been raised for the five-year contract, which was within budget and met regulations.

Members noted and approved the information.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 20.30 pm.

Dated this 24th day of February 2025

Chairman

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HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL Environment & Leisure Committee Minutes of the meeting held on 30th September 2024 at 7.00 pm

 Present:
 Councillors:
 A Slough
 Chairman

 P Burgess
 J Carroll
 Substitution

 Y Farrell
 W Henderson
 Substitution

 T McMahon
 D Taylor
 Officers:
 Ian Haynes

 Officers:
 Ian Haynes
 Head of Environmental & Community Services

Louise Senior

Head of Environmental & Community Services Head of Democratic Services

Public:

Apologies: Councillors: C Rollins

12983 APOLOGIES

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

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12984 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

12985 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

12986 MINUTES

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 29th July 2024.

Resolved: To confirm the minutes of the Environment & Leisure Committee meeting held on 29th July 2024 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

12987 TITHE FARM RECREATION GROUND SPORTS PROJECT UPDATE

Members were advised the pavilion had been completed, with the anticipated handover date set for 7th October 2024.

The S278 agreement remains outstanding pending confirmation from the Central Bedfordshire Council.

The solicitor was reviewing the lease. Bedfordshire FA would assume full responsibility for the pitch, pavilion, and associated car park for a 21-year term.

The annual sink fund would be around £32,000 to allow for replacement in around 10 years, which also fell under the Beds FA.

Members queried the potential impact of phasing out rubber crumb on the project post-completion. They were assured that the UK had not currently implemented a ban. Any future ban would likely apply only to new installations, not existing pitches. Responsibility for any necessary modifications would remain with Bedfordshire FA.

12988 INCOME AND EXPENDITURE REPORT

Members of the Environment & Leisure Services Committee had been provided with a copy of the income and expenditure report, along with relevant commentary.

It was noted that the financial year had reached its halfway point, and Members were informed that no risks had been identified at this stage.

Additionally, Members were advised that football pitch usage was at a healthy capacity, with expectations of further growth as Bidwell came on board.

12989 TERRA CROFT LEISURE GARDEN UPDATE

Members received an update on the management of the Town Council-owned allotment:

- 1. Waiting list and plot status:
 - The number of residents on the waiting list remained high.
 - Current plot occupancy:
 - 46 out of 48 plots held green status
 - 1 plot was at red status
 - 1 vacant plot had been split into two smaller plots
 - Some plot holders had implemented measures to protect their plots from high winds.
- 2. Wind protection:
 - Members inquired about methods to break or reduce wind flow.
 - While solutions existed to slow wind, their implementation was deemed cost-prohibitive.
- 3. Composting toilet:
 - It was announced that cost estimates for a composting toilet would be presented at the next Environment and Leisure Committee meeting.

12990 UKSPF APPLICATION

Members reviewed the newly acquired planters and were advised that their colour scheme had been carefully chosen to complement the aesthetic of All Saints View.

The Committee was provided with a breakdown of costs, revealing that each hanging basket had been procured at a price of approximately £35.

12991 HOUGHTON REGIS IN BLOOM

The Houghton Regis in Bloom team announced that Houghton Regis had performed well at the Anglia in Bloom Awards. The awards were as follows: Large Town – Houghton Regis (Silver-Gilt) Historic Parks and Gardens – Houghton Hall Park (Gold and Overall winner) Cemeteries – Houghton Regis Cemetery (Award of Merit) Churchyard – All Saints - Houghton Regis Parish Church (Silver award) Public Park – The Village Green (Silver award) Public Park – Parkside Recreation Ground (Silver-Gilt) Public Park – Linmere Park (Silver award) Nursing/Care Home – All Saints View Assisted Living (Silver-Gilt) Nature Conservation Area – Windsor Drive (Award of Merit) Nature Conservation Area – Dog Kennel Down (Award of Merit) Nature Conservation Area – Houghton Brook (Award of Merit)

Houghton Regis also received nominations for three Special Awards, signifying that these projects or schemes were among the finest in the Anglia region. The town's achievements extended further as it clinched victory in one category, establishing itself as the best of the best in the area.

Congratulations were extended to

- Julie at Houghton Regis Memorial Hall for her nomination in the Best Floral Display by an Individual category
- The Chiltern School for their nomination in the Best Inclusivity Garden category
- The Houghton Hall Park Team for winning the Best Grow Your Own Project Special Award

Resolved: To formally thank everyone involved in making Houghton Regis in Bloom initiative a blooming success.

12992 ANNUAL PLAY AREA INSPECTION

Members were updated on the results of the annual play area inspections.

It was advised that all play areas were deemed fit for purpose, and any required repairs had been promptly addressed.

Concerns were raised regarding the maintenance of play areas managed by Central Bedfordshire Council.

Members were advised to refer any concerns regarding the upkeep of CBC-owned play areas to either the Housing Team or the Leisure Team at Central Bedfordshire Council.

12993 ENVIRONMENT & LEISURE FEES 2025/26

Members were advised to exercise prudence in helping to set the budget for 2025/26; a review of 2024/2025 was considered helpful. Although no budget pressure existed to increase fees, it was highlighted that the annual budget-setting process was difficult.

Members received the schedule of fees for 2025/26 for reference, with annotations to show the suggested 3% increase.

A 3% increase in some fees was suggested to support local clubs while considering the council's economic pressures.

Members were requested to consider the current year's fee structure and determine a suitable increase for 2025/26.

Members requested a breakdown of how many bookings were held for the pavilions. It was advised that this would be looked into, and statistics will be provided at the next meeting.

Members were advised that the Bowls Club had successfully recruited new members, increasing their numbers.

Resolved: To set fees under the control of the Environment & Leisure Committee for 2025/2026 at a 3% increase on 2024/25 on highlighted fees.

12994 VILLAGE GREEN - CIRCUS VISIT 2025

Members were advised to consider a new request for a circus to visit the Village Green in 2025.

Circus Fantasia – The Village Green Pull on site 1st June 2025 Open 4th June till 8th June 2025 – 5 days of opening Pull off-site 8th June 2025

Due to the long-standing relationship between the usual annual requests, Members were asked for consideration to be given to the following:

- Suitability of location
- Other on-site uses such as council events, sports events
- Impact on local residents from noise
- Impact on local residents from traffic and parking
- Local events for families
- And the potential overuse of our sites.

Members expressed concerns regarding the potential overuse of the Village Green.

The exploring of alternative sites was suggested for future years to mitigate this issue. The committee requested that this feedback be conveyed to Circus Fantasia.

12995 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

- HRTC-2024-E&L- 12693 (Lot 1)
- HRTC-2024-E&L- 12693 (Lot 2)
- HRTC-2024-E&L-12693 (Lot 3)

Resolved: In accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and press be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the item set out below on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the general interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

12996 HRTC-2024-E&L- 12693 (Lot 1), HRTC-2024-E&L- 12693 (Lot 2), HRTC-2024-E&L- 12693 (Lot 3)

Members reviewed project proposals for:

HRTC-2024-E&L- 12693 (Lot 1) HRTC-2024-E&L- 12693 (Lot 2) HRTC-2024-E&L- 12693 (Lot 3)

Members were advised of costs and the breakdown of facilities included in the tenders.

Members discussed the three lots at length, considering factors such as vulnerability to vandalism, associated risks, and their locations, access points and the potential impact on surrounding areas.

It was agreed to proceed with the proposed course of action, with Lot 3 to be revisited at a future meeting of the Environment and Leisure Committee.

The Head of Environmental & Community Services contacted Central Bedfordshire Council to discuss the release of S106 funding.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.25 pm

Dated this 13th day of January 2025

Chairman

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HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL Planning Committee Minutes of the meeting held on 6th January 2025 at 7.00pm

Present:	Councillors:	D Jones E Billington E Cooper C Slough	Vice Chairman		
	Officers:	Louise Senior Amanda Samuels	Head of Democratic Services Administration Officer		
	Public:	1			
Apologies:	Councillors:	J Carroll M Herber			
Absent:	Councillors:	D Taylor			
A POLOCIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS					

13076 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Cllr Carroll and Cllr Herber.

13077 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

13078 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

13079 MINUTES

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on the 9th December 2024.

Resolved: To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 9th December 2024 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

13080 PLANNING MATTERS

(a) The following planning applications were considered:

CB/24/03459/FULL
(click for more
details)Single storey rear and two storey side and rear extension
27 Linmere Walk, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5PS
Mr G Rrapi

	Comments: Members discussed the scale of the extension, but did not feel that it constituted overdevelopment. It was noted, however, that a side window would overlook a neighbouring property and would need to be obscure glazed.
	Houghton Regis Town Council had no objection to this application subject to conditioning the window to be obscure glazed.
CB/24/03469/FULL (click for more details)	Proposed site boundary timber fencing,1350mm close board timber panel with 150mm gravel board and 450mm trellis (retrospective) 2 Arnald Way, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5UN Mr & Mrs Roche
	Comments: This application had previously been refused on the grounds that it related to amenity land. This was disputed by the owner who wished to appeal the decision.
	The Ecologist's report stated the plans ran contrary to the adopted CBC Local Plan policies regarding the enclosure of open spaces and could not be supported.
	Members were sympathetic to the owner's application and the efforts to ameliorate the fence; however, after much discussion it was agreed that it was not possible to support the application.
	Houghton Regis Town Council raised an objection to this application on the grounds of it running contrary to the Local Plan policy regarding the enclosure of amenity land.
CB/24/03544/FULL (click for more details)	Change of use from residential dwellinghouse (C3) to use as a children's home (C2). 22 Recreation Road, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5JW Mr P Makunde
	Comments: Members noted that there had been several similar 'change of use' applications over recent months relating to domestic residences.
	Members did not feel there were any issues with the proposed plans. It was noted that the area was subject to raised crime levels, but this was not thought to be grounds for objection. Safeguarding issues would be monitored and regulated by Ofsted.
	Houghton Regis Town Council raised no objection to this application.



<u>CB/24/03487/FULL</u> (click for more details)	Erection of a new front entrance porch, front and side dormers, front and rear rooflights, rear single storey infill extension with internal and external alterations. Whistlebrook Stud, Sewell Lane, Sewell, Dunstable, LU6 1RP Mr Arber
	Comments: Houghton Regis Town Council raised no objection to this application.
Noted:	
<u>CB/24/03450/NMA</u> (click for more details)	Non-material amendment to 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). Amendment sought: Pursuant to Condition 36 of the OPP; - Amending the description of development to remove the reference to a data centre; - Amending the Development Parameters text to reflect the removal of the data centre use; and - Amending the Development Parameter Plans 1 6, to remove development from the 'Island site'; and In respect of Condition 10 of the OPP, amending it to remove reference to a data centre. Houghton RegisNorth 1, Sundon Road, Houghton Regis
<u>CB/24/03441/DOC</u> (click for more details)	Discharge of Conditions 3, 4, 11, 15, 16, 20 and 21 against planning permission ref. CB/21/04007/FULL (Erection of 7 detached dwellings with associated access, parking and landscaping) Land East of Bedford Road, South of Red Cow Farm, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5ES
<u>CB/24/03498/DOC</u> (click for more details)	Discharge of Condition 2 against planning permission ref. CB/23/03551/RM (Reserved Matters: following Outline Application CB/22/04525/VOC (Outline Application for residential development for up to 100 dwellings with all matters reserved, except access.) Full details of reserved matters for 76 dwellings including appearance, landscaping, scale and layout pursuant to outline consent CB/22/04525/VOC.) Bury Spinney, Thorn Road, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 6JQ

CB/24/03508/PAD M (click for more details)	Prior Notification of proposed Demolition: Partial demolition of Unit 2 to provide a uniform frontage. Unit 2, Humphrys Road, Dunstable, LU5 4TP
<u>CB/24/03683/DOC</u> (click for more details)	Discharge of Condition 2 against planning permission CB/23/03987/RM (Reserved Matters: following Outline Application CB/12/03613/OUT (Outline planning permission with the details of access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale reserved for later determination. Development to comprise: up to 5,150 dwellings (Use Class C3); up to 202,500 sqm gross of additional development in Use Classes: A1, A2, A3 (retail), A4 (public house), A5 (take away); B1, B2, B8 (offices, industrial and storage and distribution); C1 (hotel), C2 (care home), D1 and D2 (community and leisure); car showroom; data centre; petrol filling station; car parking; primary substation; energy centre; and for the laying out of the buildings; routes and open spaces within the development; and all associated works and operations including but not limited to: demolition; earthworks; engineering operations. All development, works and operations to be in accordance with the Development Parameters Schedule and Plans.) Reserved matters approval sought for layout, scale, appearance, landscaping and access relating to Local Centre Parcel Phase 1) Local Centre Parcel Phase 1 Linmere, Waterslade Way and Lime Tree Drive, Houghton Regis, LU5 7AS
<u>CB/24/03713/DOC</u> (click for more details)	Discharge of Conditions 9, 10 against planning permission ref. CB/21/05575/REG3 (Development of a new leisure centre, incorporating landscaping and parking provisions. Demolition of the existing building and the construction of a new facility to include an eight-lane 25 metre community swimming pool, dedicated learner pool, confidence pool, fitness suite, exercise studio and two squash courts. Building to include a café, community space, creche, children's outdoor play zone and an outdoor fitness trail and public area) Houghton Regis Academy, Parkside Drive, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5PX
<u>CB/24/03711/LDCP</u> (click for more details)	Lawful Development Certificate Proposed: Loft conversion 17 Skye Gardens, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 6TD

Permissions / Approvals / Consents None received.

Refusals:

None received.

Withdrawals:

None received.



The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 7.43pm

Dated this 17th day of February 2025

Chairman

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HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL Planning Committee Minutes of the meeting held on 27th January 2025 at 7.00pm

Present:	Councillors:	E Billington J Carroll	Chairman
		E Cooper	
		D Jones	
		C Slough	
		D Taylor	

Officers: Louise Senior Head of Democratic Services Amanda Samuels Administration Officer

Public:

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Apologies: Councillors: 0

13102 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

None.

13103 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

13104 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

13105 MINUTES

It was requested that the Minutes of the meeting held on the 6th January 2025 be amended to remove Cllr Taylor from the list of attendees.

Resolved: To present the amended Minutes of the meeting held on 6th January 2025 at the next meeting of the Planning Committee on 17th February 2025.

13106 PLANNING MATTERS

(a) The following planning applications were considered:

CB/25/00108/FULL
(click for more
details)Erection of a single storey rear extension with roof lantern.85 Leafields, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5LU
Mr & Mrs Hasmujaj

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



CB/25/00075/FULL (click for more details)	Erection of a single storey side extension 46 Dellmont Road, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5HU Mr Hyman
	Comments: Houghton Regis Town Council raised no objection to this application.
<u>CB/25/00079/FULL</u> (click for more details)	Erection of a single storey side and rear extension with roof lantern. Demolition of rear conservatory and addition of a side window. 74 Conway Close, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5SE Mr Hasani
	Comments: Houghton Regis Town Council raised no objection to this application.
Noted:	
<u>CB/25/00035/LDC</u> <u>P (click for more</u> <u>details)</u>	Lawful Development Certificate Proposed: Change of use of the residential home to both residential home and business use, with the kitchen to act as residential and for the baking of cookies for a made to order purpose. 31 Arnald Way, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5UN
<u>CB/25/00053/NM</u> <u>A (click for more</u> <u>details)</u>	Non-material amendment to planning permission CB/22/03938/FULL (Demolition of existing barn and garage, provision of a garage to the existing Listed building, conversion of Listed barn into a dwelling and construction of eight new dwellings with associated garages and new access road). Amendment sought: Change in the design of Plot 6 garage only, from single to double Red Cow Farm Cottage, 6 Buttermilk Close, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 6UN

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Permissions / Approvals / Consents

None received.

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Refusals:

<u>CB/24/00677/FULL</u> (click for more details)	Construction of 10 industrial units (Use Class B2) with associated parking, access, landscaping, ancillary infrastructure and upgrading of public rights of way. Land Between Arenson Centre and Foster Avenue, Arenson Way, Houghton Regis, Dunstable
CB/24/02548/FULL (click for more details)	Retain existing site boundary fencing 2 Arnald Way, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5UN

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Withdrawals:

<u>CB/24/02593/ADV</u>	Advertisement: 1no D6 (digital advertisement) screen
(click for more	Esso, Houghton Green Service Station, 7 The Green, Houghton
details)	Regis, Dunstable
<u>CB/24/03182/LB</u>	Listed Building: demolition of dwelling
(click for more	Vane Cottage, Park Road North, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5
details)	5LD

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 7.06pm

Dated this 17th day of February 2025

Chairman

Morta

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL Planning Committee Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 17th February 2025 at 7.00pm

Present:

M Herber E Billington J Carroll D Jones C Slough D Taylor Chairman

Officers:

Councillors:

Louise Senior Amanda Samuels Head of Democratic Services Administration Officer

Apologies: Councillors: E Cooper

Also Public: 0 present:

13107 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Cllr Cooper.

13108 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

13109 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

13110 MINUTES

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on the 6th January and 27th January 2025.

Resolved: To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 6th January and 27th January 2025 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

13111 PLANNING MATTERS

(a) The following planning applications were considered:

<u>CB/25/00134/FU</u>	Partial single and two storey rear extensions
LL (click for	32 Churchfield Road, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5HL
more details)	Mr Khalid Khdhir

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Comments: This application was in line with other extensions in the same area; however, Members questioned the parking availability for a four-bedroom property.

Houghton Regis Town Council raised no objection to this application.

<u>CB/25/00267/FU</u> <u>LL (click for</u> <u>more details)</u> Partial single/two storey rear extensions with rooflights and two storey side extension 27 Linmere Walk, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5PS Mr G Rrapi

Comments: Houghton Regis Town Council had not previously raised an objection to this application (Minute 13080) on the proviso that the side window be obscure glazed. CBC had subsequently refused the application on the grounds of:

- 1. The extension failed to be subservient to the main dwelling.
- 2. Privacy infringement from a side window.
- 3. Insufficient parking.

It was acknowledged that there had been some effort to address the subservience issue and that the side window had been removed. Members felt that parking still remained problematic, however.

Houghton Regis raised no objection to this application but noted that parking remained an issue.

CB/25/00206/AD V (click for more details)

Advertisement: 2 Fascia signs with illuminated letters. Unit 2C, Thorn Road, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 6TZ Mr Justin Yates

Comments: While the majority of Members had no objection to the application, there was some concern regarding the introduction of an illuminated sign in the proximity of known bat runs. Although the illumination strength fell below the maximum levels permitted, it was questioned whether, when agreeing to the signage, due consideration had been given to the bat survey of the area. An environmental report had not been presented to clarify the situation.

Houghton Regis Town Council raised no objections to the proposed illuminated signage, subject to the following conditions:

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- 1. Confirmation should be provided regarding the colour temperature of the white LEDs, which should not exceed 3500K.
- 2. All recommendations within the submitted bat survey report must be fully implemented and adhered to.

The stated illuminance level of 300 cd/m² is considered acceptable under Policy CC8 "Pollution and Land Instability."

Noted:

CB/25/00210/N
MA (click for
more details)Non-material amendment to planning permission
CB/24/00059/FULL (demolition of existing buildings and
redevelopment to provide new employment floorspace for a
flexible range of uses (within Classes E(g)(iii), B2 and/or B8)
with ancillary offices, together with the rationalisation of
accesses and provision of yard area, parking, landscaping, and all
other associated works) amendment sought proposed rewording
of conditions 12, 17, 21 and 22 to delay trigger points so as to
allow demolition works to be undertaken before they need to be
discharged
Unit 1, Humphrys Road, Dunstable, LU5 4TP

Permissions / Approvals / Consents None received.

Refusals:

None received.

Withdrawals:

None received.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 7.13pm

Dated this 10th day of March 2025

J. Jones

Chairman

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF HOUGHTON REGIS PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, PEEL STREET ON 27th November 2024

Present:	Town Cllrs: CBC Cllrs: CBC Officers: HRTC Officers: Co-opted members:	J Carroll, Y Farrell, D Jones, C Slough C Alderman, S Goodchild, T McMahon Sarah Hughes, Community Engagement Manager Ian Berry, Service Director for Assets Clare Evans, Town Clerk Amanda Samuels, Administration Officer J Anderson, D Gibbons, C Regan
Also in atte	ndance:	Cllr Burgess, Cllr Rollins
Apologies:		Cllr Hamill, D Hill, R Turner, Cllr Watkins
Members of	f the public:	6

1055 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Cllr Hamill, D Hill, R Turner and Cllr Watkins.

1056 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Members were updated as follows regarding the provision of sports hall facilities:

- Initial exploration had begun into the feasibility of the solutions suggested at previous meetings and it was thought that making the sports hall a community asset was viable.
- While it was acknowledged that due process needed to be observed, there was some frustration that when the matter escalated the same narrative would be repeated, namely that the sports hall provision at Houstone was adequate; the algorithms did not indicate the need for a sports hall; that 4 badminton courts at the sports hall would be matched by the four at Houstone School (when in fact six courts were currently available); and that demand for sports hall usage was in decline.
- Sports England data showed sports hall usage had increased nationally.
- There was no evidence in the Leisure Strategy that Houghton Regis needed to accept a deficit in leisure provision.
- Feedback from leisure providers indicated that the data capturing mechanisms did not reflect the footfall.
- It had still not been demonstrated to the community how the provision at Houstone School would operate 52 weeks of the year or provide flexible access for walk-in members of the community

• While it was believed there had been some oversight regarding the level of sports hall provision required, this should be viewed as an opportunity for HRTC and CBC to work collaboratively to deliver a positive outcome for the community.

The Head of the Academy of Central Bedfordshire also wished to put concerns on public record.

- Indoor space was essential for the academy whose pupils included those who were vulnerable and disadvantaged. The sports hall had been used for twelve years for physical activities.
- Students would have to travel in a minibus for alternative facilities. There were pupils with additional needs, disabilities or were subject to an Educational Health Care Plan. Transporting the pupils would entail additional cost, result in time lost driving between sites and would require more staff support for the lesson and return journey.
- EHCP levels would be affected.
- When the funding was procured for the leisure centre, the Academy had written a letter of support in the belief that a sports hall would be included in the design. Support for the plans would not have been given otherwise.
- There were legal implications regarding those pupils who had been banned from Houstone School.
- The Academy would be unable to meet the physical activity levels outlined in the national curriculum.

The Head of ACB expressed interested in forming a cooperative management structure for the current hall if this was pursued as an option and may be able to access Conditional Improvement Funding for this purpose.

ACB was one of only two institutions providing this type of education and pupils were able to gain meaningful qualifications to support them in adult life. It was also of note that no pupil had been arrested during the academic year for the last 6 years.

Members of the public were keen to highlight there was a likelihood the building would sit dormant for a significant amount of time, and it was questioned if there was a budget in place for its disposal. It was also noted that the plant and boiler rooms serviced the rest of the Kingsland campus and would, therefore, need to remain operational.

The Head of ACB confirmed they had written a letter of concern regarding the sports hall but had only received a verbal response. A copy of this letter would be forwarded to Cllr Alderman.

Cllr Goodchild had attended a Sustainable Communities OSC meeting on June 13^{th} and read the following resolution from the meeting –

In response the Executive Member for Health and Community Liaison confirmed that the topic had been discussed at the recent Joint Partnership Committee and welcomed engagement with the local community. Housing and population figures had been incorporated into Sports England data, so the Executive Member was keen to see the figures mentioned by the speakers in order to understand any disparity and mitigate concerns by arranging a meeting with interested parties in order to resolve it. The committee agreed that this outcome would be shared with members once it had taken place.

It was questioned and confirmed that a meeting had been arranged but had not taken place.

1057 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

Cllr McMahon declared a non-pecuniary interest as a previous Chair of the Houghton Regis Leisure Centre Action Group.

3

1058 MINUTES

Member requested the following amendments to the Minutes of the meeting held on 22nd October 2024:

- Inclusion of Cllr Hamill's comments in regard to securing the sports hall for ongoing use while options were discussed.
- Page 5, Minute 1050, alter text to 'day centre may be converted to become a community space'.

Resolved: To defer approval of the Minutes of the meeting held on 22nd October 2024 until the next meeting.

1059 SPORTS HALL PROVISION IN HOUGHTON REGIS

This meeting was arranged to enable Members to explore options for sports hall provision in Houghton Regis.

Discussions had also been held at the Houghton Regis Annual Parish Meeting on 15th April 2024, the Town Council meetings on 18th March 2024 and 14th October 2024 and at Partnership meetings on 23rd April 2024 and 22nd October 2024.

Members were invited to consider the feasibility of a dedicated community sports hall in Houghton Regis and what might be involved to make that happen.

The Community Engagement Manager acknowledged that the Houghton Regis Partnership Committee was expressing the concerns of the community and proceeded to read a response from CBC addressing the points raised.

It was felt by Executive that sports hall demand could be met by the facilities at Houstone School and the Dunstable Leisure Centre. Using the school hall on a community-use basis would make the best use of facilities and of capital funding, while having both a sports hall and the school facilities would result in over provision. CBC would support the transition to the other facilities and plans for this were being formulated.

Responses to key questions:

Was there scope for continued use of the existing sports hall?

CBC did not see a need for this facility in addition to the school. HRTC could submit an Expression of Interest and a robust business case to facilitate a transfer of the site to the community.

Are there any other possible sites for a sport hall (Day Centre, Townsend Centre)?

No other sites were being considered as it was not felt another facility was required. If there were no other service needs for the Day Centre or the Townsend Centre, an

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expression of interest could also be submitted for these sites, along with a robust business plan.

Was there scope for provision or expansion at the leisure centre to include a sports hall?

Currently no consideration was being given to expanding the new leisure centre for those reasons previously set out

Challenges to the accuracy of the data and figures that were used The Leisure Facility Strategy and the Project Feasibility Study had assessed the demand for sports facilities, which included population growth forecast. Sport England guidance had suggested a four-court sports hall provision would be adequate

Access to Houstone sports hall facilities would be secured by a Community Use Agreement which would outline the hours and facilities available. Some daytime usage would be displaced due to school activities. Dual use with schools had been established for many years, however, as a way of maximising public access whilst reducing the impact on public funding.

Questions were invited from the Town Partnership Committee. The Community Engagement Manager advised that they were unlikely to have detailed answers to individual questions but they would take the questions away for discussion with Leisure colleagues and report back.

- CBC had stated consultation had taken place between educational users and CBC, but did not appear to be the case. Could this be reconciled for the Committee?
- Who had consultations been held with and when? This might help establish why had key stakeholders had been excluded.
- There had been a public consultation as part of the statutory planning process. Had there been direct consultation with education?
- The Academy had sent supporting documentation to CBC but why had there been no follow up once the bid was won?
- Would it be possible to see the specific statistics referred to by CBC? There appeared to be a significant discrepancy between the figures quoted by CBC and those brought to Town Partnership by the public.
- It was stated that the new provision would be as good as, if not better than, the existing provision. This did not appear to be the case. Did this mean that Houghton Regis had been over provisioned in the past? This was not supported by experience.
- Had existing facilities not been considered when the new centre was designed?

The Town Clerk was invited to update Members from the Town Council perspective. Members were informed as follows:

- A conversation had taken place with the Service Director for Assets focussing on what would happen following the leisure centre closure. This had clarified the process for a Community Asset Transfer and what needed to be included in the business case, highlighting also the impact on uses in the surrounding land.
- There had been discussions with CBC leisure officers who maintained that the provision by Houstone School would be adequate and existing leisure users could be accommodated in Dunstable and the new leisure centre. CBC stated that conversations had been held with existing users which had not suggested a problem with the provision offered by Houstone School, which contradicted the presentations made at a number of HRTC committee meetings. It was thought that

a further meeting between members of the public and CBC leisure officers needed to be held.

- The Town Clerk had taken a tour of the Kingsland site and seen the plant room which was an integral part of a much larger space. It was hard to understand how the site could be redeveloped when the plant room was essential.
- A visit had been made to ACB which had highlighted the level of commitment to vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils. CBC had perhaps not fully appreciated the importance of sports hall access in relation to the academy's curriculum.

The Committee was reminded that part of the Corporate Peer Challenge Review had been to rebuild the relationship with CBC, and this provided an ideal opportunity to work together.

For clarity, members of the public sought further information from CBC officers regarding the future plans for the site and how this would be determined by the budget-setting process.

- Had the Chiltern School formed part of the consultation process? The Community Engagement Manager agreed to establish which stakeholder groups were engaged in the process.
- Following the letter of support to CBC, could CBC confirm receipt of the expression of displeasure which was made when the plans revealed a sports hall would not form part of the leisure centre?
- CBC officers were questioned whether children's services were aware of the impact of the sports hall closure on the school closure? The Community Engagement Manager would investigate this further.
- The Community Use Agreement with the school was still not complete and the Committee queried the reasons for this the delay. The Community Engagement Manager advised that discussions were still ongoing but they would try to establish a likely timescale plus any additional information available.

Members were keen to know the future plans for the Kingsland quadrant which was a hub for the community. A member/officer briefing with CBC was requested to facilitate greater understanding regarding future plans for this quadrant. The Chair confirmed they would submit a request for a briefing.

It was highlighted, once again, that accurate data reflecting usage was needed as there were significant discrepancies between the figures quoted by CBC and those of community members. It was confirmed that alternative statistics had been forwarded to CBC but that these could be sent again.

When discussing outcomes, it was agreed to look at a variety of options for presentation to the Town Council. Members submitted the following suggestions:

1. At the meeting on 30th July, Cllr Hamill had suggested the matter could be called in. The Chair Confirmed that they would be happy to take the issue forward with CBC.

- 2. HRTC could be invited to make an expression of interest and engage in the Community Asset Transfer process. This could also be an opportunity for Co-operative management by HRTC and ACB.
- 3. A community group could be formed to keep the sports hall open on a voluntary basis.

A final suggestion was that a transfer could be made direct to the ACB. This would require a feasibility study, and it was agreed the Town Clerk would be a key point of contact for the ACB while the study was compiled.

The formal outcome of the discussion was read out by the Town Clerk

Proposed by: Cllr McMahon Seconded by: Cllr Slough Members voted unanimously in favour

It was agreed that calling the matter in could be discussed at the next meeting in January 2025.

Resolved: For this committee's support to be given to HRTC for detailed consideration by HRTC to explore a way to secure the retention of the sports halls as an interim measure whilst a community asset transfer application be developed and submitted for determination by CBC

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9.15pm

Dated this 28th day of January 2025

Chairman

Mae Aldeman.



TOWN COUNCIL

Agenda Item 8

Date:17th March 2025Title:CORPORATE PLAN REVIEW & UPDATEPurpose of the Report:To review and update members on the Corporate Plan.Contact Officer:Clare Evans, Town Clerk

1. RECOMMENDATION

To note the update on the Corporate Plan.

2. BACKGROUND

In December 2023 the council approved the HRTC Corporate Plan 2024/2028. It is considered that it is now an opportune time to review the progress of the Plan. A copy of the Plan can be found here: <u>corporate-plan-2024-2028.pdf</u>

3. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Members will find attached at *Appendix A* the working document used in support of the Corporate Plan utilising the RAG status. The RAG acronym stands for Red, Amber, and Green. These colours make up the traffic light colours coding scheme for categorising project status.

These colours represent different types of required management action and are a shorthand for discussing projects that are going well or those in trouble.

A coding of Blue has been added to show when a project has been completed or closed and a purple coding added where is it suggested that the project be discarded.

The Senior Management Team will join the meeting to respond to queries or questions raised.

In terms of looking forwards it is suggested that an Annual Review is completed at the March Town Council meeting with an interim review undertaken at the October Town Council meeting so that any arising budget issues can be incorporated into the budget setting process.

R	Red	The project is likely to deliver late/over budget
А	Amber	The project has missed some targets, but overall end date/budget is not at risk
G	Green	The Project is on track
В	Blue	The Project completed or closed
D	Purple	Suggest Dismiss

Summary of Initiatives:

Red: 0 Amber: 10 Green: 71 Blue: 46 Suggested Discard: 22

Total: 149

4. HRTC CORPORATE PLAN

- 4 Management and Operations: To improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Town Council as the key local service provider
 - 4.5 Enhance the role of the council.

5. IMPLICATIONS

Corporate Implications

• The Corporate Plan is an ambitious document with significant funding implications.

Legal Implications

• There are no legal implications arising from the recommendations

Financial Implications

• The funding implications of the Corporate Plan have been incorporated into the HRTC draft Financial Forecast.

Risk Implications

• There are no additional arising risk implications.

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

An annual review of the Corporate Plan is a positive and proactive way to monitor its progress. Through Standing Committees members are encouraged to work with lead officers to support the continued delivery of the Corporate Plan.

7. APPENDICES

Appendix A: Corporate Plan Programme (a hard copy can be provided on request)

Appendix A

Pillar	Objective	Mechanism/ initiative	Туре	Delivery Year	Budget Requirement 2026/27	Budget	Budget Requirement 2027/28		Budget Requir 2028/29		Status: Red Amber Green Completed	Committee Workplan	Notes
1 Town and community	Improve integration between existing and new	Continue to provide 'Welcome Packs' for new residents at Linmere, Thorn and Bidwell.	Initiative	2024 onwards	1000	303 4029	1000	303 4029	1000	303 4029	Discard	Community	Incomplete staff team delayed provision and delivery.
Town and community	communities. Improve integration between existing and new communities.	Review pedestrian and cycle links between the town centre and the expansion areas to identify any opportunities to improve the condition and/ or connectivity of these.	Study	2024 01Walds	0	303 4028	1000	303 4028	0	303 4028	Green	Services	Anticipate to work with Linnere to create links from Tithe Farm rec. grd. Into Linnere. Availing development to commence.
3 Town and community	Improve integration between existing and new	Strengthen local centres and recreational areas around expansion areas in order to	Intervention	2024 onwards	0		0		0		Green	Environment &	Enhancement of Tithe Farm rec. grd. Local centre operational at Bidwell.
4 Town and community	communities. Improve integration between existing and new	encourace use by new residents and support interaction with existing residents. Continue to work with CBC and developers to soften the edges between new and existing	Engagement	2024 onwards	0		0		0		Green	Leisure Planning	To be considered as planning applications come through.
Town and community	communities. Support the sense of arrival and identity.	development. New, 'Welcome to Houghton Regis – historic market town' signage at important gateways			-		-		-				·
5		Into the Parish. In particular, at Sundon Road (immediately after the roundabout). Poynter's Road, Houghton Road, Watting Street and all A5 intersections. Coordination with CBC to establish the style and placement of new signage (potential use of CBC's Rural Match Funding Scheme in the expansion area/ HRN1&2).	Intervention	2026 / 27	25000	299 4059	0		0		Amber	Community Services	To be created through the CBC Rural Highways Grants Scheme. CBC not engaging / pursuing the scheme.
Town and community 6	Support the sense of arrival and identity.	Develop and implement a consistent branding scheme that establishes typical colours, fonts, logos and copy text for use on all signage, street furniture, stationary and in print and social media. These should reflect Houghton's history (royal burgh, agricultural production, etc.). sense of community and semi-rural character.	Initiative	2024 onwards	3000	291 4059	3000	291 4059	3000	291 4059	Green	Town Council	Branding scheme developed. Now being implemented / rolled forward.
7 Town and community	Create a stronger, more robust and engaging town centre offer.	Continue to work with CBC and stakeholders to develop a centre that can meet the retail, recreation and social needs of 35.000 residents.	Engagement	2024 onwards	0		0		0		Green	Partnership	Ongoing through the Partnership Committee.
8 Town and community	Create a stronger, more robust and engaging town centre offer.	Continue to work with partners to diversify the town centre offer and provide greater variety for residents without needing to travel further afield.	Engagement	2024 onwards	0		0		0		Amber	Partnership	Ongoing.
9 Town and community	Create a stronger, more robust and engaging town centre offer.	Work with partners to extend town centre activities along the historic High Street.	Engagement	2024 onwards	0		0		0		Green	Community Services	Parades between All Saints Church and All Saints View.
Town and community 10	Create a stronger, more robust and engaging town centre offer.	Work with CBC and stakeholders to create additional employment space in and around the town centre for the increasing population.	Engagement								Discard	Partnership	Suggested to discard this initiative as outside the scope of the town council.
Town and community 11	Create a stronger, more robust and engaging town centre offer.	Develop at least two key action areas that are identified in the Town Centre Action Plan (2022).	Intervention	2024 onwards	0		0		0		Green	Partnership	To be considered by the Partnership Committee, although Committee has no budget.
Town and community 12	Create a stronger, more robust and engaging town centre offer.	Work with CBC and stakeholders to improve access to the regional public transport hubs of the Busway terminal and Leagrave Station.	Engagement								Discard	Partnership	Suggested to discard this initiative as outside the scope of the town council.
Town and community	Create a stronger, more robust and engaging town centre offer.	Temporary seasonal installations at prominent civic spaces, such as the shopping centre, All Saints car park and The Green. Installations might include a summer beach, a winter ice	Event	2027 / 28	0		25000	304 4222	25000	304 4222	Green	Community Services	Anticipated to be pursued using additional resource from the UKSPF fund.
13 Town and community	Create a stronger, more robust and engaging town	rink and a harvest festival. Engage street performers (local musicians and independent entertainers) to stimulate life,	Initiative	2026 / 27	5000	304 4222	5000	304 4222	5000	304 4222	Amber	Community	Anticipated to be pursued using additional resource from the UKSPF fund but fund
14 Town and community	centre offer. Create a stronger, more robust and engaging town	activity and footfall at weekends. Continue to provide town centre wardens at peak shopping times.	Initiative								Discard	Services Community	limitations may preclude. Suggested to discard this initiative.
15 Town and community	centre offer. Create a stronger, more robust and engaging town	Promotion of outside hospitality areas to further stimulate life and activity.	Engagement								Discard	Services Community	Suggested to discard this initiative as outside the scope of the town council.
16 Town and community	centre offer. Create a stronger, more robust and engaging town	Continue to investigate solutions with CBC and stakeholders to provide a regular or	_						0			Services Community	
17	centre offer.	specialist market and explore alternatives such as external food stalls, 'pop-up' space and local produce/ craft fairs.	Engagement	2024 onwards	0		0		0		Amber	Services	Incomplete staff team delayed consideration.
Town and community	Create a stronger, more robust and engaging town centre offer.	Provision of bi-annual fair/ market-style events - possibly, a Christmas Wonderland and a Summer Fair.	Event	Link to 13	0		0		0		Green	Community Services	Continuation of annual events programme
Town and community	Create a stronger, more robust and engaging town centre offer.	Mapping of local facilities for visitors and residents, such as retail, recreation and leisure activities, foot and cycle routes, post boxes, schools, QP and health services, recycling and waste disposal facilities, bus stops and regional transport connections.	Initiative	2024 onwards	0		5000	303 4029	5000	303 4029	Green	Community Services	To be commenced.
Town and community	Create a stronger, more robust and engaging town centre offer.	Improve signage between key attractions and destinations, for instance, at Houghton Hall Park, The Green/ High Street, the Chiltern Way, Houghton Quarry, the Busway and Sewell/	Intervention	27 / 28	0		10000	291 4059	0		Amber	Environment & Leisure	To be commenced.
20 Town and community	Create a stronger, more robust and engaging town centre offer.	Maiden Bower. The Café on the Green: Develop the cricket pavilion to provide a café/ snack/ local produce take-away outlet with some outdoor seating – in addition to linking The Green and Houghton Hall Park, this could generate a revenue for HRTC and create employment opportunities.	Intervention								Discard	Environment & Leisure	Suggested to discard this initiative.
21 Town and community	Create a stronger, more robust and engaging town	Continue to promote a 'Shop Local' campaign.	Programme	2024 onwards	1000	302 4227	1000	302 4227	1000	302 4227	Green	Community	Incomplete staff team delayed re-launch.
22 Town and community 23	centre offer. Create a stronger, more robust and engaging town	Work with partners and business owners to develop a stronger, more diverse evening	Engagement								Discard	Services Partnership	Suggested to discard this initiative as outside the scope of the town council.
Town and community	centre offer. Create a stronger, more robust and engaging town	economv that can compete with the offers of neichbouring towns. Work with partners and potential operators to grow a tourism offer with some local	Engagement								Discard	Partnership	Suggested to discard this initiative as outside the scope of the town council.
24 Town and community 25	centre offer. Improve the visual appearance of the town centre - open space and planting.	allowance of overnight accommodation. Develop a town centre planting strategy to ensure a consistent and coordinated approach for the treatment of planters, verges, roundabouts and hard and soft open spaces.	Study	2024 onwards	0		0		0		Green	Environment & Leisure	To be commenced.
Town and community	Improve the visual appearance of the town centre - open space and planting.	Houghton Regis in Bloom: determine the requirements of involvement in the competition and if acceptable and of interest, develop a vision and a programme to support a bid.	Event	Ongoing							Completed	Environment & Leisure	Success in 2024. Engagement in 'In Bloom' to continue.
Town and community 27	Improve the visual appearance of the town centre - open space and planting.	Installation of planters (hanging and floor mounted) along the High Street, extended up to the Chequers roundabout and Lake View in a 'Phase 2'.	Intervention	2025 26	10000	291 4039	10000	291 4039	20000	291 4039	Green	Environment & Leisure	Display planned for 2025.
Town and community 28	Improve the visual appearance of the town centre - open space and planting.	Trim trees in front of All Saints Church to maintain views of the 13th Century, Grade I listed, Norman tower.	Intervention	2025 26	5000	291 4040	0		0		Green	Environment & Leisure	To be considered as part of annual tree works programme.
Town and community 29	Improve the visual appearance of the town centre - open space and planting.	Engagement with regional and national organisations, such as the RHS and English Heritage. to hold events at Houghton Hall Park.	Engagement	2024 onwards	500	304 4222	500	304 4222	500	304 4222	Green	Community Services	To be considered now operational management transferred to HRTC.
Town and community	Improve the visual appearance of the town centre - general.	Bedford Square: continue to engage with CBC and the owners of the shopping precinct to identify long and short term solutions to improve the High Street and Tithe Farm Road	Engagement	2025 26	0		0		0		Green	Partnership	To be commenced.
30 Town and community	Improve the visual appearance of the town centre -	elevations. Installation of sign boards to screen the current view of the bins at the back of the shopping	Intervention	Link to 30							Green	Partnership	To be considered as part of initiative above.
31 Town and community	oeneral. Improve the visual appearance of the town centre -	precinct from the High Street. Strengthen the space in front of All Saints Church and the current entrance to the shopping	Intervention										
32	general.	precinct (Action Area 4, Town Centre Action Plan) as a new civic space at a highly prominent location.	intervention								Discard	Partnership	Suggested to discard this initiative.
Town and community	Improve the visual appearance of the town centre - oeneral.	Relocate/ remove weapon bins.	Intervention								Completed	Partnership	Considered and concluded by CCWG.
Town and community	Improve the visual appearance of the town centre - oeneral.	Renew and replace redundant street furniture along the High Street and at the entrances to the shooping precinct.	Intervention								Discard	Partnership	Suggested to discard this initiative.
Town and community	Improve the visual appearance of the town centre - oeneral.	Work with partners to refresh the shopping precinct through decluttering street furniture, cleaning surfaces, renewing structural planting and covering blank facades.	Engagement								Discard	Partnership	Suggested to discard this initiative.
Town and community	Improve the visual appearance of the town centre - general.	Identify and strengthen a series of key views through the town, for example, the historic view from The Green to All Saints Church that is mentioned in the Character Area Assessment and a long view from the top of the Chalk Hills to Houghton Hall Park and All Saints (if winkho).	Study								Discard	Environment & Leisure	Suggested to discard this initiative.
Town and community	Improve the visual appearance of the town centre - oeneral.	Tourist/ heritage information banners on posts at key gateways and/ or along the High Street.	Intervention	2026 27	0		5000	303 4029	5000	303 4029	Amber	Community Services	Budget dependent
Town and community	Protection and promotion of cultural and heritage assets	Maintain the integrity of the town centre conservation area and improve this whenever nossible	Programme	2024 onwards	0		0		0		Green	Partnership	To continue to manitar
Town and community	Protection and promotion of cultural and heritage assets.	Assemble an itinerary of the type and condition of key heritage assets and review their signage and branding.	Study	Link to 19	0		0		0		Green	Community Services	To be commenced.
Town and community	Protection and promotion of cultural and heritage assets.	Improve signage between key attractions and destinations to encourage access and svnerov.	Intervention	Link to 20							Green	Environment & Leisure	To be commenced.
Town and community	Protection and promotion of cultural and heritage assets.	Continue to work with and support partners to identify the need/ opportunity for additional protection of assets and identification of potential funding streams.	Engagement	2024 onwards	0		0		0		Green	Partnership	To continue to monitor
Town and community	assets. Protection and promotion of cultural and heritage assets.	Protection of assets and identification of potential function streams. Review access to assets and the links between these to identify any opportunities for improvement	Study	Link to 20							Green	Partnership	To be commenced.
Town and community	Protection and promotion of cultural and heritage assets.	Improve access to and awareness of ancient historical sites, such as Maiden Bower, Watling Street, Houghton Quarry and the sites of Roman, Saxon and Iron Age finds across	Intervention	Link to 19	0		0		0		Green	Partnership	To be commenced.
43 Town and community	Protection and promotion of cultural and heritage assets.	the Parish. Discuss with partners at CBC, Natural England and the Chilterns the potential to develop the Chalk Hills/ Houghton Quarry as a new destination with protected habitats and sensitively	Engagement	2025 26	0		0		0		Green	Partnership	To be commenced should governance of the site enable.
44 Town and community	Protection and promotion of cultural and heritage	located oublic facilities. Prepare physical and interactive maps of heritage assets.	Initiative	Link to 19							Green	Community	To be commenced.
45	assets.	1			1 1		1 1					Services	

Town and community	Protection and promotion of cultural and heritage	Plus plague schemes: review the interest in architector in the Particle Factor data		1	I	, i	1	1		1		Community	1
Town and community	Protection and promotion of cultural and heritage assets. Protection and promotion of cultural and heritage	Blue plaque schemes: review the interest in applying for Historic England plaques on listed buildinas or. a similar local scheme using twoical Houghton colours. Continue discussions with owners and operators to provide a series of goen days and	Initiative	Link to 19							Green	Services	To be commenced.
own and community	assets.	guided tours of protected areas and listed buildings.	Engagement	2025 26	0		0		0		Green	Services	To be commenced.
,	Protection and promotion of cultural and heritage assets.	Guided (physical or virtual) tours and trails across the Parish taking in multiple sights and attractions.	Initiative	Link to 47							Green	Community Services	To be commenced.
wn and community	Protection and promotion of cultural and heritage assets.	Enhance the town's noticeboards, including the possibility of installing digital boards.	Intervention	2024 25							Green	Environment & Leisure	To be installed.
wn and community	Protection and promotion of cultural and heritage	Promote the Honorary Freeman and Freewoman award and the Pride of Houghton awards.	Programme	Ongoing							Completed	Community Services	Website and Town Crier.
own and community	Strengthen Houghton's landscape character and anricultural heritage	Strengthen foot and cycle links from the town centre to the Parish's rural areas and beyond this to the Chiltern Hills AONB	Intervention								Discard	Partnership	Suggested to discard this initiative as outside the scope of the town count
wn and community	Strengthen Houghton's landscape character and agricultural heritage.	Work with partners to strengthen the section of the Chiltern Way as it passes through the Parish and any PROWs that connect to this.	Intervention								Discard	Partnership	Suggested to discard this initiative as outside the scope of the town count
wn and community	Strengthen Houghton's landscape character and agricultural heritage.	New planting at gateways and around the town centre/ Houghton Hall Park.	Intervention	2025 26	0		0		0		Green	Environment & Leisure	Display planned for 2025.
wn and community	Strengthen Houghton's landscape character and	Review the potential for rewilding in some areas, such as at The Green, Houghton Hall	Intervention		0		0		0			Environment &	
	agricultural heritage.	Park, the source of the River Lea, along verges, 'closed' sections of the cemetery and in recreation areas.	Intervention	2025 26	0		U		U		Green	Leisure	To be commenced.
own and community	Strengthen Houghton's landscape character and agricultural heritage.	Review the potential to reintroduce native species at Houghton Hall Park and informal open spaces close to the Chilterns AONB, including new bird, bat and butterfly boxes, hedgehog	Intervention	2025 26	500	291 4039	500	291 4039	500	291 4039	Green	Environment & Leisure	To be considered now operational management transferred to HRTC.
own and community	Strengthen Houghton's landscape character and	routes and houses, bugs hotel etc. Strengthen the existing market garden at Houghton Hall Park and the space between this,	Intervention	2028 29	0		0		10000		Green	Environment &	To be considered now operational management transferred to HRTC.
Fown and community	agricultural heritage. Strengthen Houghton's landscape character and	the source of the River Lea and the cricket pavilion. Create a focal area for rewilding and habitats with some accommodation for community			0		Ŭ		10000			Leisure Environment &	
	agricultural heritage.	involvement and awareness. A section of Houghton Hall Park near to the market garden might be particularly appropriate.	Intervention	Link to 54							Green	Leisure	To be considered now operational management transferred to HRTC.
Town and community	Strengthen Houghton's landscape character and agricultural heritage.	Support local participation in the RHS 'It's Your Neighbourhood' scheme.	Initiative	2025 26	0		0		0		Green	Environment & Leisure	To be commenced.
Town and community	Strengthen Houghton's landscape character and agricultural heritage.	Continue to work with CBC and stakeholders to improve public access to the Marl Lakes and Houghton Quarry SSSI with the potential for dedicated footpaths, structural planting/ Green	Engagement	2025 26	0		0		0		Green	Partnership	To be commenced should governance of the site enable.
Town and community	Strengthen Houghton's landscape character and	Infrastructure and some low impact furniture and facilities Review opportunities for additional Green Flag Awards.										Environment &	
Town and community	acricultural heritace. Develop an annual programme of community events	Develop a diverse programme of regular events and activities that would be delivered across	Study	2025 26	0		0		0		Green	Leisure	To continue.
	across the Parish.	Develop a dresse programme or regular events and activities and would be develop actors the town as a whole to achieve community cohesion and the promotion of local heritage and identity. Suggested themes include; farmer's market, flower show, urban farm, Houghton's Got Talent, Houghton Rocks, ghost tours, medieal event, haves effectivel, garden scarecrow festival, silent disco, messy play, uniform swap, park runs and walks,	Event	Link to 13							Green	Community Services	To continue.
own and community	Develop an annual programme of community events across the Parish.	Promote a series of community action days (potentially led by rangers), with activities such as planning bulbs, cleaning street signs and furniture, trimming hedges, litter picking/ area	Event	2027 28	0		2000	291 4222	2000	291 4222	Green	Environment & Leisure	To be commenced.
Local services and facilities	Work with partners to improve the quality and accessibility of the public realm in the town centre.	Difues. Improved wheelchair and mobility impaired access within the urban area and the wider footpath network.	Intervention								Discard	Partnership	Suggested to discard this initiative.
Local services and facilities	Work with partners to improve the quality and accessibility of the public realm in the town centre.	Improved pedestrian and cycle connectivity.	Intervention								Discard	Partnership	Suggested to discard this initiative.
Local services and facilities	Work with partners to improve the quality and accessibility of the public realm in the town centre.	With CBC and stakeholders, review the potential to provide bus stops in front of All Saints Church and All Saints View, connecting to the Busway terminus and Leagrave train station.	Engagement								Discard	Partnership	Suggested to discard this initiative as outside the scope of the town counci
ocal services and facilities	Continue to work with key partners to address crime	Continue to work with Bedfordshire police to deliver Operation Hana as a high visibility	Engagement	Ongoing							Completed	Community	
ocal services and facilities	and anti-social behaviour. Continue to work with key partners to address crime	policing initiative. Continue to work with CBC to deliver a bulk waste subsidy initiative to reduce incidences of	Engagement	Ongoing							Completed	Services Community	
ocal services and facilities	and anti-social behaviour. Continue to work with key partners to address crime	flv tipping. Continue to work with CBC to manage mobile CCTV coverage.	Engagement	Ongoing							Completed	Services Community	
Local services and facilities	and anti-social behaviour. Continue to work with key partners to address crime	Continue to work with CBC to review static CCTV provision.	Engagement	Ongoing							Green	Services Community	
ocal services and facilities	and anti-social behaviour. Continue to work with key partners to address crime	Continue to work with CBC/ Groundwork in delivering youth activities.	Engagement	Ongoing							Completed	Services Community	
ocal services and facilities	and anti-social behaviour. Continue to work with key partners to address crime	Extend the public realm/ Town Ranger scheme to a 5-day per week operation.	Programme	2026 27	2000	292 4001	2000	292 4001	2000	292 4001	Green	Services Community	Within 5 year Staffing Plan.
ocal services and facilities	and anti-social behaviour. Establish a town centre hub for the delivery of	Identify potential sites for a community and services hub at a prominent location in the town	Fiogramme	2020 27	2000	232 4001	2000	252 4001	2000	282 4001	Green	Services	Within 5 year Stanning Flan.
Local services and facilities	centrally based services, such as HRTC's offices, a youth centre and a tourist information/ heritage centre Establish a town centre hub for the delivery of	centre. This could also provide tourist information and a mixed-use space for events and exhibitions. Initial suggestions include, the Red House, ASV, the cricket pavilion on The Grane AII Sante Church Reform Saure Centre Determine the space planning requirements and establish connections with potential	Study	2025 26	0		0		0		Green	Community Services	Report to be considered.
	centrally based services, such as HRTC's offices, a youth centre and a tourist information/ heritage centre	partners to explore viability.	Study	2025 26	0		0		0		Green	Community Services	Report to be considered.
Local services and facilities	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 a potential timeline for delivery and potential funding streams.	Study	2026 27	5000	399 4059					Green	Community Services	Report to be considered.
Local services and facilities	Establish a town centre hub for the delivery of centrally based services, such as HRTC's offices, a youth centre and a tourist information/ beritage	Develop preliminary plans and a schedule of costs.	Study	2026 27	5000	399 4059					Green	Community Services	Report to be considered.
Local services and facilities	centre.	Assemble an itinerary of the type, condition and use of all HRTC assets.										Environment &	
Local services and facilities	Maximise the value of HRTC assets.	Identification of opportunities to improve the use and efficiency of assets.	Study								Completed	Leisure Environment &	
ocal services and facilities	Maximise the value of HRTC assets. Maximise the value of HRTC assets.	Identification or opportunities to improve the use and efficiency or assets. Explore opportunities to remodel the HRTC office reception area to make it more accessible	Study	2025 26	0		0		0		Green	Leisure Corporate	To be commenced. This initiative is ongoing, Design architects were appointed in December 2
		and visitor friendly.	Study								Completed	Corporate Services Environment &	Remodelling options to be considered by Corporate Services.
Local services and facilities	Maintain and enhance sporting provision both at existing and soon-to-be-adopted sites.	Review the use and function of different open spaces and access to these to identify any opportunities for improvement.	Study	2025 26	0		0		0		Green	Leisure	To be commenced.
Local services and facilities	Maintain and enhance sporting provision both at existing and soon-to-be-adopted sites.	Investigate potential provision for other sports and activities, such as tennis, athletics track, outdoor ovm. cricket and netball.	Study	2025 26	0		0		0		Green	Environment & Leisure	To be commenced.
ocal services and facilities	Maintain and enhance sporting provision both at existing and soon-to-be-adopted sites.	Complete the Tithe Farm sports project.	Intervention								Completed	Environment & Leisure	
Local services and facilities	Maintain and enhance sporting provision both at existing and soon-to-be-adopted sites.	Work with partners to investigate the need/ feasibility of a second all weather pitch at Bidwell.	Engagement	2025 26	0		0		0		Completed	Environment & Leisure	To be commenced.
Local services and facilities	Maintain and enhance sporting provision both at existing and soon-to-be-adooted sites.	Work with existing local clubs to facilitate the self-management of their sporting facilities.	Engagement	2025 26	0		0		0		Green	Environment & Leisure	To be commenced.
ocal services and facilities	To continue to provide excellent play equipment and expand the range of accessible play equipment	Develop a play area replacement programme factoring in a range of accessible equipment.	Study	Ongoing							Green	Environment &	To be commenced.
ocal services and facilities	available. To continue to provide excellent play equipment and expand the range of accessible play equipment	Receive and manage new play areas in Bidwell, together with collecting any commuted sums.	Programme	2025 26	0		0		0		Green	Leisure Environment &	At final stages.
ocal services and facilities	available. To continue to provide excellent play equipment and expand the range of accessible play equipment	Review the potential to diversify play and recreation provision, such as providing a bike pump track, climbing wall and splash park.	Study	2027 28	0		200000	299 4058	0		Green	Leisure Environment & Leisure	To be commenced.
ocal services and facilities	available.	Install outdoor gym equipment at one or two sites within existing recreational areas. Potential spaces should be overlooked, accessible and ideally, with an allowance of street	Intervention								Completed	Leisure Environment & Leisure	
Local services and facilities	available. Stimulate local business development and	liahting. Work with CBC and stakeholders to realise additional employment space in and around the	Engagement								Completed		Suggested to diaming this initiative or a statistic the energy of the
	employment and training opportunities	town centre in order to cater for the increase in population.		1							Completed	Partnership	Suggested to dismiss this initiative as outside the scope of the town counc
	Stimulate local business development and	Improve signage to and at employment areas within the Parish.	Intervention.										
Local services and facilities		Improve signage to and at employment areas within the Parish. Establish a forum of local businesses with regular networking events to stimulate B2B	Intervention Programme								Completed Completed	Partnership Community	Suggested to dismiss this initiative as outside the scope of the town council. Incomplete staff team delayed provision and delivery.

	Local services and facilities	Stimulate local business development and	Engage with local business owners to identify any skills gaps or constraints to growth that	- 1	I.	1	1	T.	1					1
92	Local services and facilities	employment and training opportunities. Stimulate local business development and	At present, the nearest overnight accommodation is in Dunstable and Luton. Review	Engagement								Completed	Partnership	Suggested to dismiss this initiative as outside the scope of the town council.
	Local services and facilities	employment and training opportunities.	opportunities to improve Houghton's tourism offer through engaging with local stakeholders	Study								Completed	Partnership	Suggested to dismiss this initiative as outside the scope of the town council.
93	Local services and facilities	Stimulate local business development and	to develop an allowance of overnight accommodation in the town centre. Seek to strengthen the nighttime economy and assist in promoting awareness to existing	Engagement								Completed	Community	Incomplete staff team delayed provision and delivery.
94	Local services and facilities	employment and training opportunities. Promote awareness of our town, its assets and	food and beverage outlets. Develop a new, 'Visit Houghton' website or an extension to the existing HRTC site with	Initiative	2025 26	0				0		Green	Services Community	Incomplete staff team delayed provision and delivery.
95	Local services and facilities	opportunities for businesses and investment. Promote awareness of our town, its assets and	information about events, attractions, access and hospitality accommodation. Work with partners to develop the nighttime economy and tourism offers to compete with		2025 26	0		0		0			Services	
96	Local services and facilities	opportunities for businesses and investment. Promote awareness of our town, its assets and	those of neichbouring settlements. Develop a branding programme for consistency in the image of Houghton that is projected	Engagement								Discard	Partnership Community	Suggested to discard this initiative as outside the scope of the town council.
97	Local services and facilities	opportunities for businesses and investment.	on physical installations and print and social media. Continue to work with local businesses and institutions to promote Houghton regional and	Initiative	Ongoing							Green	Services	To be rolled forward.
98		Promote awareness of our town, its assets and opportunities for businesses and investment.	nationally.	Programme	Ongoing							Completed	Town Council	Attendance at ICCM conference, NALC Star Council Awards,
99	Local services and facilities	Promote awareness of our town, its assets and opportunities for businesses and investment.	Investigate the potential for 'town twinning' with an accessible European location and the opportunities for svnerov this presents.	Initiative	2027 28	0		10000	303 4059	0		Completed	Community Services	Incomplete staff team delayed provision and delivery.
100	Local services and facilities	Promote awareness of our town, its assets and opportunities for businesses and investment.	Investigate the potential to develop synergy with other Regis towns and villages, potentially seeking an official Roval involvement in some capacity.	Initiative	2025 26	0		0		0		Completed	Community Services	To be commenced.
101	Quality of Life	Improve environmental quality and sustainability.	Work with partners to strengthen existing cycle routes through the Parish and where possible, develop additional routes.	Engagement	Link to 2							Amber	Environment & Leisure	To be commenced.
	Quality of Life	Improve environmental quality and sustainability.	Strengthen a primary cycling route across the Parish, connecting to the Town Centre (including the Green and Houghton Hall Park)	Initiative	Link to 2							Discard	Environment & Leisure	Suggested to discard this initiative.
	Quality of Life	Improve environmental quality and sustainability.	Provide new bike stands at key sites - in front of All Saints Church, The Green/ Houghton	Intervention	Link to 2							Amber	Environment &	Budget dependent
	Quality of Life	Improve environmental quality and sustainability.	Hall. the Buswav and in recreational areas. Promote and encourage cycling with information events related to cycle proficiency, security										Leisure Environment &	
104			(locks), safety (helmets, bells, lights, Highway Code) and cycle repair and upkeep.	Programme	Link to 2							Green	Leisure	Work underway with CBC to facilitate a Dr Bike centre.
105	Quality of Life	Improve environmental quality and sustainability.	Promote initiatives to encourage walking and cycling to school, such as 'walking buses', school crossing patrols and cycle proficiency events.	Programme	Link to 2							Green	Community Services	To be commenced.
106	Quality of Life	Improve environmental quality and sustainability.	Work with CBC and operators to explore opportunities to improve local and regional public transport links.	Engagement								Discard	Environment & Leisure	Suggested to discard this initiative.
	Quality of Life	Improve environmental quality and sustainability.	Deliver an air quality awareness campaign (re: Marlborough TC work incl. media campaign, cut idling, posters, social media GIE, short video)	Programme	2025 26	0		0		0		Green	Community Services	Incomplete staff team delayed provision and delivery.
	Quality of Life	Encourage a healthier lifestyle through healthier	Organise monthly park runs and walks, starting at The Green and extending into Houghton										Environment &	
108		eating, smoking & vaping cessation and improved activity levels.	Hall Park.	Event								Completed	Leisure	
	Quality of Life	Encourage a healthier lifestyle through healthier eating, smoking & vaping cessation and improved	Work with partners to deliver a second allotment site.	Engagement	2026 27	0		0		0		Green	Environment &	Developer dependent.
109	Quality of Life	activity levels. Encourage a healthier lifestyle through healthier	Develop the kitchen garden at Houghton Hall Park.										Environment &	
110		eating, smoking & vaping cessation and improved		Intervention	Ongoing							Green	Leisure	To be considered now operational management transferred to HRTC.
	Quality of Life	Encourage a healthier lifestyle through healthier eating, smoking & vaping cessation and improved	Programme of events to promote awareness of healthy eating, active travel and smoking/ vaping cessation.	Programme	2028.29					0		Green	Community	Incomplete staff team delayed provision and delivery
111	Quality of Life	activity lavels Encourage a healthier lifestyle through healthier		rigitannic	2020/20					Ū		Creen .	Services	noompete stan team team teaglet provision and demory.
		eating, smoking & vaping cessation and improved	Work with partners to provide support for school meals/ breakfast clubs, including identifying potential funding schemes and initiatives.	Engagement	2025 26	6000	305 4235	6000	305 4235	6000	305 4235	Amber	Environment & Leisure	Budget dependent
112	Quality of Life	activity levels. Encourage a healthier lifestyle through healthier	Improve awareness of existing community leisure facilities and events.										Community	
113		eating, smoking & vaping cessation and improved activity levels.		Programme	Link to 19							Green	Services	To be commenced.
	Quality of Life	Improve access to services and support through the provision of a network of Parish-wide community	Services for families, young people, older people, health, community, drop-in, advice, support/ signposting, safe space/ warm space.	Programme	Link to 72							Completed	Community Services	Family events, Later Living group, Youth services. Services can be further enhanced should budget become available.
114	Quality of Life	hubs. Improve access to services and support through the	Look for SMART locations in TF, PS, town centre, OC, Bidwell and Linmere.	-									Services	snouid budget become available.
115		provision of a network of Parish-wide community hubs.		Study	Link to 72							Completed	Services	To be commenced.
	Quality of Life		Facilitate an annual or bi-annual community conference/ networking event.	Event	2025 26	0		0		0		Green	Community	Incomplete staff team delayed provision and delivery.
116	Quality of Life	hubs Improve existing and develop new opportunities for	Youth outreach/ detached work.		2020 20	Ū		Ŭ		Ū		Green	Services Community	noompete stan team team teaglet provision and demory.
117		vound people across the Parish.		Programme	Ongoing							Completed	Services	
118		Improve existing and develop new opportunities for vound people across the Parish.	Youth centre/ youth groups.	Programme	Ongoing							Completed	Community Services	
119	Quality of Life	Improve existing and develop new opportunities for young people across the Parish.	Use of proposed community hubs for town wide delivery.	Engagement	Ongoing							Completed	Community Services	
120	Quality of Life	Improve existing and develop new opportunities for vound becole across the Parish.	Conduct engagement with school leavers and young adults to identify what they would want to see in the future.	Engagement	Ongoing							Completed	Community Services	Incomplete staff team delayed provision and delivery.
121	Quality of Life	Improve existing and develop new opportunities for young people across the Parish.	Consultation with local businesses to encourage awareness of training schemes and apprenticeships.	Engagement								Discard	Community Services	Suggested to discard this initiative as outside the scope of the town council.
	Quality of Life	Improve existing and develop new opportunities for young people across the Parish.	Work with stakeholders to deliver advice and information about careers and training opportunities for school-leavers, including events by representatives of Cranfield University.										Community	
122		young people across the Parish.	the University of Bedfordshire and local technical/ Higher Education colleges to promote and	Programme								Discard	Services	Suggested to discard this initiative as outside the scope of the town council.
	Quality of Life	Continue to explore options for a new cernetery.	encourage local enrolment Complete Grendall Lane investigations and determine the 'next steps'.	Study								Completed	Environment &	
	Quality of Life	Continue to explore options for a new cemetery.	Explore further options for sites and initiate discussions with CBC and other stakeholders.	Study	Ongoing							Completed	Leisure Environment &	In progress
124	Quality of Life	Continue to provide a Town Council Community	Through Cost of Living Support Grants to partner organisations.										Leisure Community	in progress
125	Management and operations	Grant Scheme. Develop a 5-year financial & staffing plan.	Create a 10-year planned maintenance programme for HRTC-owned assets to inform the	Engagement	Ongoing							Completed	Services	
126			financial planning process. These include pavilions, recreation grounds, play areas, street furniture and signage, vehicles and equipment	Study	Link to 77							Green	Corporate Services	Consultants assessment completed, being considered by SMT.
	Management and operations	Develop a 5-year financial & staffing plan.	Develop a 5-year financial plan, factoring in the delivery of the Town Council Corporate Plan.	Study	2024 25							Green	Corporate Services	Partial. Committee to confirm which initiatives they wish to support and then budget for
12/	Management and operations	Develop a 5-year financial & staffing plan.	Develop a supporting staffing plan (possibly including expanding the grounds team, the										Corporate	Completed for the medium term. Suggest TC establish a Staffing Committee (to replace Personnel Sub-Committee) to allow all standing committees to consider
128			ranger service, project officer, youth workers, community / events officer, administration assistant).	Study	2024 25							Green	Corporate Services	replace Personnel Sub-Committee) to allow all standing committees to consider their own service delivery staff commitments and to feed into the budget setting
		Develop a 5-year financial & staffing plan.	Improve access to training and career development for staff and members.											process. Completed. Staff and members constantly reminded of training available and
				Programme								Completed	Corporate Services	provided opportunities. Career development identified and steps have been taken to progress. Member training budget reduced in 25/26 budget to reflect low take up.
129	Management and operations	Develop a 5-year financial & staffing plan.	Organise a series of bi-annual visits to other towns and councils within the wider region to										Corporate	Progress. Member training budget reduced in 25/26 budget to reflect low take up. Part completed. First Advice, Guidance & Networking Event 13th March 2025
130			expand connections and awareness of 'best practices' - physically, socially and environmentally	Programme								Completed	Services	(HRTC, DTC,LLTC, SLCC)
	Management and operations	Develop a 5-year financial & staffing plan.	Organise a series of quarterly CPD events for staff and members based around a particular theme, for instance, community cohesion, engagement, tourism growth, urban design,	Programme	Ongoing							Completed	Corporate	To be commenced.
131	Management and operations	Develop a 5-year financial & staffing plan.	biodiversity. Undertake a succession planning exercise.	-									Services Corporate	
132				Study								Completed	Corporate Services Corporate	
133		Develop a 5-year financial & staffing plan.	Investigate options to create a social value budget, factoring in volunteer input, non- cash items, payments in kind, environmental savinos, etc.	Study	2025 26							Green	Services	To be commenced.
134	Management and operations	Identify external/ partnership funding sources for council projects.	Continue to monitor traditional funding streams - Government/ CBC grants, S106 and commuted sums.	Study	Ongoing							Completed	Corporate Services	To be continued.
	Management and operations	Identify external/ partnership funding sources for council projects.	Explore additional revenue generation opportunities, such as the delivery of commissioned services, corporate services, community fundraising, crowd funding etc.	Study	Ongoing							Completed	Corporate Services	To be commenced.
135	Management and operations	Identify external/ partnership funding sources for	Review the potential for revenue creation through community cafes at Houghton Hall, the										Community	
136		council projects.	cricket pavilion and potentially, at a new destination at Maiden Bower or Houghton Quarry.	Study								Discard	Services	Suggested to discard this initiative as cost prohibitive.
137	Management and operations	Extend IT infrastructure and software to better support the council.	Improve IT cabling at the council offices.	Initiative								Completed	Corporate Services	Completed 2024
			'											'

138	Management and operations	Extend IT infrastructure and software to better support the council	Move to Cloud based services for future proofing, increased security, hybrid working.	Initiative			1		1	Completed	Corporate Services	Completed 2024	1
139	Management and operations	Extend IT infrastructure and software to better support the council	Extend Rialtas software to incorporate other useful modules.	Initiative						Completed	Commente	Completed 2024	1
135	Management and operations	Work with CBC and other stakeholders to explore	Recreation grounds, the Red House, shopping precinct, Bidwell and any other areas of public open space.	Study						Green		To be continued. CAT declined for Sports Hall.	
141	Management and operations	Work with CBC and other stakeholders to explore opportunities for the transfer of community assets.	Explore the cost/ benefits/ opportunities for a freehold depot.	Study						Completed	Environment & Leisure	Suggested to discard this initiative as cost prohibitive to source land and develope.	
142	Management and operations	Work with CBC and other stakeholders to explore opportunities for the transfer of community assets.	Engagement with CBC to return the Community Centre at Bedford Square for community activities.	Study	Link to 72					Green	Town Council	To be considered by Members.	
143	Management and operations	Enhance the role of the council.	'Local Council Award Scheme' and 'Investors in People' accreditations.	Initiative	2025 26					Green		Local Council award accreditation to be applied for in 2025. Budget provision agreed for this, Investors in People costs are prohibitive.	1
144		Enhance the role of the council.	Review membership of outside organisations and consider additional membership such as Locality and LGA.	Initiative						Completed	Corporate Services	Joined LGA April 2024 Not perceived that there are additional benefits of joining Locality in addition to LGA.	1
145	Management and operations	Enhance the role of the council.	Promote the daily efforts of the town council and the services offered to local residents and businesses	Initiative						Completed	Community Services	Ongoing through social media	1
146	Management and operations	Enhance the role of the council.	Clearly define the responsibilities of HRTC and if the nature of an enquiry is outside of this, ensure that residents are redirected to the appropriate service.	Initiative						Completed	Community Services	Website and Town Crier.	1
147	Management and operations	Enhance the role of the council.	Develop a mechanism for residents to provide feedback on HRTC enquiries.	Initiative	2025 26					Green	Community Services		
148	Management and operations	Enhance the role of the council.	Conduct targeted engagement to develop a greater understanding of what residents want from their town and council in the future. For instance, school leavers, job seekers, town centre shoppers, new residents to the expansion area, school children, etc.	Study	2026 27	20000	303 4059			Green	Community Services		
140	Management and operations	Enhance the role of the council.	Improve public accessibility to the existing council offices and continue to provide a regular presence at community events.	Intervention	Link to 72					Completed		Ongoing	l l
150	Management and operations	To actively consider and weight the impact of new and existing initiatives and services.	In terms of environmental impact, dementia friendly aspects, inclusivity and branding.	Study						Completed		Through agenda reports.	
									I				



TOWN COUNCIL

Agenda Item 9

Date:	17 th March 2025
Title:	CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE PROGRESS REVIEW REPORT
Purpose of the Report:	To update members on the Corporate Peer Challenge Progress Review and to present the updated Action Plan.
Contact Officer:	Clare Evans, Town Clerk

1. RECOMMENDATION

To endorse the updated Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan.

2. BACKGROUND

In August 2023 the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) promoted a new round of the Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) programme. HRTC considered and supported engagement in the process and a CPC Review was completed in March 2024.

As part of this process a Progress review is conducted within 12 months of the primary Review. For HRTC this was carried out in December 2024.

3. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

CPC Requirements

Members are reminded of the following requirements arising from the Corporate Peer Challenge process:

- publish the final agreed CPC report within 3 months of the last day of the onsite visit; by Friday 28 June 2024. Completed 24th May 2024. LGA
 <u>Corporate Peer Challenge Final Report (houghtonregis-tc.gov.uk)</u>
- publish its CPC action plan, to address the report's findings, within 5 months of the last day of the onsite visit; by Wednesday 28 August 2024. Completed 16th July 2024.

- have a progress review within 10 months of the last day of onsite visit; by Tuesday 28 January 2025, to explore progress implementing its CPC action plan. Undertaken 3rd December 2024.
- publish the final report from that review no later than 12 months after the CPC's last onsite visit day; by Friday 28 March 2025. Published alongside the 17th March Town Council agenda.

The Progress Review Report has been published on the Town Council website and is also attached at *Appendix A*.

The Action Plan has been updated reflecting on work undertaken and on the Progress Review report, and is attached at Appendix B.

The Progress Review report continues to encourage HRTC to address the recommendations included in the substantive report.

The Action Plan has been adjusted as follows:

Actions have been updated using the RAG status where progress has been made. Of note are the following areas of progress:

- The revised model Financial Regs have been considered and approved (CPC Ref 3.2)
- The council considered a Futures Committee but ultimately decided to examine agenda items of Standing Committees to consider such matters (CPC Ref 3.3)
- Page 13 Staffing benefits. Officers considered the current breadth of staff benefits offered to employees including annual leave entitlement, pensions, flexible working, cycle to work scheme. Other possible benefits of a less substantive nature were explored but ultimately discarded on basis of cost / benefit.
- Page 13 Skills audit and succession planning. Having explored options using consultancy support it was felt that progress could be made through the established appraisal scheme for the time being.

Additional actions are shown with a green highlight and include:

- CPC Ref 3.2
 - Through the Committee functions & Terms of Reference to establish a Staffing Committee to consider strategic objectives relating to staffing matters and through the Scheme of Delegation to delegate decisions on operational staffing matters to the Town Clerk
 - Review the current political governance model and committee structure, and consider other possible models which may be better placed to support HRTC in developing and progressing its strategic agenda, including extending the term of its committee chair and vice-chair
 - Establish short term working / task and finish groups to address single issues in defined timescales
- Page 16 & 17
 - Small scale adjustments for clarification have been included.

In terms of looking forwards it is suggested that an Annual Review is completed on the CPC Action Plan at the March Town Council meeting with an interim review undertaken

at the October Town Council meeting so that any arising budget issues can be incorporated into the budget setting process.

4. HRTC CORPORATE PLAN

- 4 Management and Operations: To improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Town Council as the key local service provider
 - 4.5 Enhance the role of the council.

5. IMPLICATIONS

Corporate Implications

• There are no additional arising corporate implications.

Legal Implications

• There are no legal implications arising from the recommendations

Financial Implications

• There are no additional arising financial implications.

Risk Implications

• There are no additional arising risk implications.

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 CPC process has been beneficial in providing guidance to support the council going forwards. It highlights many areas of work which the council undertakes well and it provides useful and constructive feedback from partners.

The updated Action Plan reaffirms the recommendations of the Report and the Progress Review in a positive and proactive way.

7. APPENDICES

Appendix A:	Progress Review Report
Appendix B :	Updated CPC Action Plan







LGA Corporate Peer Challenge – Progress Review

Houghton Regis Town Council

Tuesday 3 December 2024

Feedback



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Chief Executive: Joanna Killian

President: Baroness Grey-Thompson

1. Introduction

Houghton Regis Town Council (Houghton Regis) undertook a Local Government Association (LGA) Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) Tuesday 26 to Thursday 28 March 2024 and promptly published the full report and an action plan.

Progress Review is an integral part of the CPC process. Taking place approximately 10 months after the CPC, it provides space for the council's senior leadership to:

- receive peer team feedback on the council's early progress against the CPC main recommendations and the council's RAG (red, amber, green) rated action plan
- consider peers' reflections on any new opportunities, challenges and support needs that may have arisen since the peer team was onsite for the CPC
- discuss any early impact or learning from the progress made to date.

The LGA would like to thank the council for its commitment to sector led improvement. This Progress Review was the next step in this ongoing, open and close relationship the council has with LGA sector support.

2. Summary of the approach

Houghton Regis's Progress Review took place onsite on Tuesday 3 December 2024. The review focussed on each of the CPC's main recommendations:

- 1. set formal annual committee and staff objectives to progress your corporate plan, including the setting of measurable, annual targets
- 2. delegate committee and senior management team (SMT) operational decisionmaking and activities to your staff so your senior politicians and management team can focus on strategic issues
- improve the quality of your decision-making by focusing on strategic issues at your council meetings – ensure your agendas give necessary weight to those issues
- 4. develop long-term financial planning, eg a lifecycle plan of assets maintenance and their refurbishment, at least a three-year budget, and a reserves strategy that

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allocates funding to long-term projects and long-term maintenance

- 5. reset your relationship with Central Bedfordshire Council (Central Bedfordshire) at strategic level to agree and prioritise shared objectives, for example regarding the Houghton Regis town centre action plan and the devolvement of assets, and make further use of your existing relationships with other local partners
- develop a plan to further improve and/or move your offices, including immediately making the reception area more welcoming and informative, so they are fit for future purpose
- improve your communications strategy so you do not just promote your own services but also those throughout the whole of Houghton Regis, including those delivered by community groups, via for example your Town Crier magazine, website, leaflets and phone
- 8. develop a plan to create your community centres in the town centre and in all your estates
- 9. create an implementation group to ensure you deliver your neighbourhood plan, and set a renewal date to review and rewrite.

For this Progress Review, the following original CPC team members were involved:

- Member Peer Cllr Ian Davis, Chair, Newton & Biggin Parish Council and Warwickshire Association of Local Councils
- Town Clerk Peer Shar Roselman, Town Clerk, Newport Pagnell Town Council
- LGA Peer Challenge Manager Vicki Goddard
- (LGA Project Support Officer Onyekachi Abajingin (offsite)).

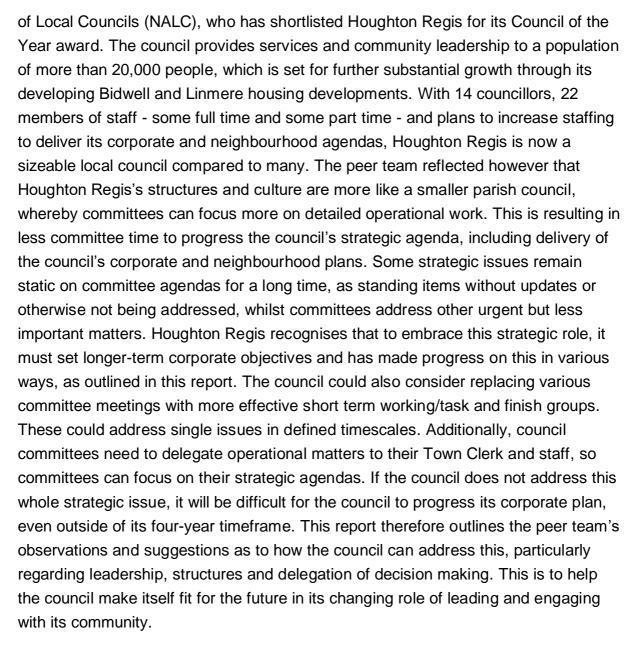
3. Progress Review - Feedback

Of the CPC's main recommendations, the council's RAG rated action plan reports that 100 per cent of actions are completed/progressed.

Overall comments

Houghton Regis is already a 'super council', as defined by the National Association

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The peer team nevertheless remained impressed with the council's work since its original CPC. Much of the council's work continues to be around the new, expansive Bidwell and Linmere housing developments. Houghton Regis's work will need to grow as the developments do, alongside related work of its principal council Central Bedfordshire and other partners, to support the needs of the new as well as existing populations. Houghton Regis will need to more strategic in addressing these

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President: Baroness Grey-Thompson



increasing needs, and this report includes the peer team's observations on this issue and suggestions as to how the council could do this. Houghton Regis's overall positive situation however gives the council opportunity to show its further potential and take ever more bolder decisions, as its strategic experience and agenda grows.

As with this original CPC, the peer team was also impressed with the council's ongoing open and learning approach towards the CPC process. The council recognises that this process will help it further improve, particularly as its challenging but exciting work programme continues to develop.

<u>Recommendation 1</u> - set formal annual committee and staff objectives to progress your corporate plan, including setting of measurable, annual targets

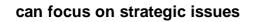
Houghton Regis has set and allocated initial, specific and measurable corporate and CPC action plan objectives to its staff via the staff appraisal process. It is not clear though if the council has set measurable objectives for committees to achieve. There are action plans for committees but these are not measurable objectives, which are needed to ensure committees as well as staff deliver accordingly. In addition to clarity over specific objectives for committees, it will now be important for **the council to continually and annually monitor and progress these objectives. It should also develop new objectives and action plans as required** to ensure committees and staff deliver their corporate plan.

The council has also undertaken a staff review, enabling a five-year staffing forecast and plan. Houghton Regis's senior management team uses this plan to help deliver its corporate plan, for example through new staff, or training and development for existing staff. It is positive that council committees are involved in the strategy and planning of staffing. The peer team heard however of examples where the committees are becoming too involved in operational detail of specific staffing issues. This is taking time and focus away from more strategic matters they should focus on, which is also raised under Recommendation 2. Having agreed its budget, the **council should delegate decisions on operational staffing matters and levels to the Town Clerk.**

<u>Recommendation 2</u> - delegate committee and SMT operational decision-making and activities to your staff so your senior politicians and management team

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President: Baroness Grey-Thompson



Houghton Regis reviewed and relaunched its latest Scheme of Delegation in May 2024, which has been working well since. The Town Clerk delegates more operational work to her staff, which is giving her more time to work on strategic matters. This is positive progress.

The peer team heard how council committees are also positively delegating more operational matters to staff, for example through its planning and finance work.

Houghton Regis's committees still however focus too much on operational matters, such as the staffing matters mentioned earlier, which they could delegate to staff. This is taking time and focus away from strategic matters and political decisions they could be better engaged in to make the most of their roles.

A related point that came out of this progress review is that whilst council committees are responsible for their own strategic agendas, Houghton Regis does not have, on reflection, a real comprehensive overview of its whole strategic agenda. This 'overall overview' is however vital for Houghton Regis, particularly regarding its work to support the expanding population of the Bidwell and Linmere housing developments. Houghton Regis should therefore review its current political governance model and whole committee structure, and consider other possible models, for example a leader and cabinet (comprising committee chairs), whilst retaining its civic leader role. Ideally, should the council choose such a model, it should choose its council leader (as opposed to the Mayor/civic leader) to serve the longest time possible within a four-year election schedule. Any new model the council adopts may require new officer support to help it develop and settle. There is not a statutory power for town councils to have such a leader and cabinet model, as there is for principal authorities, but NALC is aware of local councils that have done this. The council should also consider extending the term of its committee chair and vice-chairships. Additionally, the council should offer its councillors further training and development, for example through NALC and the Bedfordshire Association of Town and Parish Councils, to progress their strategic and **political skills.** All these developments, and the further committee delegations to

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Chief Executive: Joanna Killian



officers suggested above, would give Houghton Regis more political overview, drive, management, time and continuity to deliver its longer-term strategic plans.

The peer team was pleased to hear about examples of stronger cross-party working across the council. This includes at least two of Houghton Regis's political groups' having agreements to work better together and putting those into practice. Such positive work is helping to reduce political infighting raised in Houghton Regis's previous CPC report, and indeed enhancing these relationships positively. The council acknowledged however through its discussions with the peer team through this progress review that some tensions are still playing out between its political groups, especially on social media and via council meetings.

Houghton Regis councillors and staff raised several instances for example with the peer team, whereby not all councillors remember the corporate, neighbourhood and CPC action plans they previously agreed to. This most notably becomes an issue at council meetings, when councillors are perceived to have voted politically against certain decisions that would progress agendas they had previously voted for.

Resulting political disagreements, a lack of shared, corporate focus and direction, are hindering Houghton Regis's ability to best prioritise and allocate resources in timely ways to deliver previously agreed corporate plans. These are other reasons why the peer team suggests the council review its current political governance model and committee structure in light of other possible models, as a new approach could help identify and address political and strategic issues like these.

<u>Recommendation 3</u> - improve the quality of your decision-making by focusing on strategic issues at your council meetings – ensure your agendas give necessary weight to those issues

Council committee agendas have not substantially changed since the CPC to become more strategic. There were standing items for strategic updates, but these updates were rarely presented, as various sets of committee agendas and minutes show, in phrases like "No substantive update to report". These items have therefore been removed from committee agendas. Houghton Regis recognises however that its committees need to own and drive the council's strategic agenda, given the scale and importance of it.

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The Town Council is therefore considering, as part of its December 2024 meeting, establishing two new committees in May 2025:

- a futures committee or sub-committee to give the council time and space to focus on and drive its overall strategic vision, agenda and budgets for the whole Houghton Regis area
- a neighbourhood plan implementation sub-committee, which is further commented on under Recommendation 9, to similarly give the council specific time and space to focus on this.

This would give existing council committees more time to focus on their respective strategic agenda, for example communities and the environment. These committees could however use this extra time to continue focusing on more operational matters. Further consideration of these committees would also need to feature in any review of the council's current political governance model.

The terms of reference and agenda for any new and existing committees will therefore be key to clarify the purpose, focus and work of each, and avoid overlaps, duplication and any confusion between their remits.

Membership will also be key to ensure councillors devote the required time and have specific focus for any new or existing committee they are members of.

Additionally, the peer team heard how some Houghton Regis councillors are starting to give up on, and are wary of, raising various issues and jointly working with their principal authority, Central Bedfordshire. This is because they regularly feel Central Bedfordshire ignores them, or responds too slowly to the issues they raise. **The peer team however encourages Houghton Regis to continue working with Central Bedfordshire to raise, explore and address such issues**. Both the town and principal councils serve the same Houghton Regis populations and therefore need to work effectively together to best do so. Recommendation 5 explores this further.

<u>Recommendation 4</u> - develop long-term financial planning, eg a lifecycle plan of assets maintenance and their refurbishment, at least a three-year budget, and a reserves strategy that allocates funding to long-term projects and longterm maintenance

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As part of addressing this recommendation, the Town Clerk has developed an initial three-year financial forecast for 2026/29. This is based on available capital and revenue expenditure figures, and other intelligence including the council's corporate, CPC and neighbourhood action plans. Houghton Regis's developing asset renewal and maintenance plan will further inform the forecast whilst ensuring the best use and longevity of the council's assets.

Houghton Regis has also developed a reserves policy in relation to this recommendation, including its desired general reserves levels and intention not to use them for revenue expenditure. The council is additionally drafting a reserves strategy to establish how to allocate its reserves to long-term projects, including its asset renewal and maintenance plan.

In preparing its 2025/26 budget however, Houghton Regis has identified a potential deficit of approximately £250,000 unless it can find ways to mitigate it, such as service cuts and/or increased council tax. The reasons for this potential deficit include: increased costs for any new staff, teams and delivery of their work, training and development, national insurance contributions further to the Autumn Budget 2024, and staff review outcomes including spinal pay increases.

To help tackle this deficit, and manage the council's finances more generally, Houghton Regis's councillors need to have a good understanding of the council's finances. The peer team heard from councillors and staff through this progress review however that councillors receive a lot of financial information but do not always understand it. This could impede the council's ability to best budget for and deliver its services for its residents and businesses. The Corporate Service Committee undertakes much of this work but it is ultimately the Town Council that needs to approve its budget via a full council meeting. **Houghton Regis should therefore offer all its councillors further finance training and development as soon as possible, again possibly through NALC and the Bedfordshire Association of Town and Parish Councils. Council officers should also present key financial facts and context clearly and succinctly to their councillors.** This will help inform councillors so they can influence and approve the council's budgets as effectively as possible.

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<u>Recommendation 5</u> - reset your relationship with Central Bedfordshire at strategic level to agree and prioritise shared objectives, for example regarding the Houghton Regis town centre action plan and the devolvement of assets, and make further use of your existing relationships with other local partners

Since its original CPC, the council has worked hard, including via the Town Clerk's actions, to strengthen engagement and ways of working with Central Bedfordshire. This includes productive relationship building between the Town Clerk and Central Bedfordshire's Chief Executive. Following an initial positive first meeting between the two, with its clear, jointly agreed agenda, they have agreed to meet every six months to discuss and progress shared strategic issues, which is positive progress.

The peer team heard that there have been some challenges with the Houghton Regis Partnership Committee including the principal authority's reduced attendance. Houghton Regis should engage with the principal authority to establish and address the cause of this reduced attendance so enhanced attendance can benefit the committee's work.

To assist this, the council recognises it should build on recent positive partnership meetings, such as those that have positively considered the transfer of the sports centre.

Forging better relationships and work between the two councils through these meetings could lead to further opportunities. They could for example set up one-to-one meetings between Houghton Regis and Central Bedfordshire councillors with the same portfolios, twin hatters (whereby councillors represent both councils) and/or between councillors at both councils who represent the same ward. Joint meetings like this could lead to more beneficial, mutual work on sports hall provision, and community centres as particularly relevant to Recommendation 8 of this report.

<u>Recommendation 6</u> - develop a plan to further improve and/or move your offices, including immediately making the reception area more welcoming and informative, so they are fit for future purpose

After extensive research and consideration of potential sites to move to, Houghton Regis has decided to remain at its existing location. A key reason for this is the council already owning its offices. This avoids: additional costs in setting up and

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residing in new premises, and a likely negative view of the council spending on itself rather than the communities it serves. The council has also appointed architectural consultants to review and improve its current offices as per this CPC recommendation. Houghton Regis should allow the architectural consultants to innovatively consider all possible options for its offices and not rule anything out, to make the most of this opportunity.

<u>Recommendation 7</u> - improve your communications strategy so you do not just promote your own services but also those throughout the whole of Houghton Regis, including those delivered by community groups, via for example your Town Crier magazine, website, leaflets and phone

Houghton Regis has increased its drive and made significant improvements in communicating with its residents. This includes: reviewing and improving the council's website; plans for new physical and digital noticeboards to promote local stakeholders' events, services and other opportunities; and reviewing, rebranding and reintroducing the town's previous mascot Regis the lion.

The council has also notably improved its communications and engagement with wider stakeholders, especially its Bidwell and Linmere housing developers and residents. Houghton Regis specifically invites Linmere and Bidwell housing development representatives to attend the council's Community Engagement Sub Committee, and these meetings are open to the public. Developers are transferring allotments and could potentially transfer other assets and the management of them and related funding to the council, for local community use. Work like this is increasing stakeholders' understanding of what the council does, and how they can better work together. Additionally, this will help current and future boundary review discussions, for example as more local residents and other stakeholders see how they identify with and belong to the existing, expanding Houghton Regis area. Work with these new housing developments should not be to the detriment of other Houghton Regis residents, many of whom have lived in the more established town and area for a long time. **The council must therefore continue to engage with all its communities, not just its newest ones.**

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Additionally, Houghton Regis has commissioned external advisory support from December 2024 to February 2025 to review and improve the council's overall communications strategy. This will bring together and review the effectiveness all Houghton Regis' communications work, including that outlined above, into one comprehensive approach that the council can develop further. Houghton Regis will then be able to most effectively promote its work and services to local residents, businesses and visitors, ensuring they recognise the opportunities available, how to use them, and how to engage with the council as needed.

<u>Recommendation 8</u> - develop a plan to create your community centres – in the town centre and in all your estates

In starting this work, the council went right back to basics. This included exploring and defining for itself what a community centre is, for example a community space for hire, or a space that hosts managed services, from libraries to cafés. The council is using its definition to comprehensively list and map all possible, existing community centres within the Houghton Regis area. Once the council has completed this, it will review each existing centre's owner, location, current and future use and demand, viability, issues and gaps to identify its maximum potential. Houghton Regis will then use this analysis to consider, develop and agree its best options as a crucial part of delivering its corporate plan. Council officers will present this analysis and options appraisal to the Town Council in the new year for agreement of next steps.

As part of this work, the peer team strongly suggests that Houghton Regis:

- establishes which Central Bedfordshire councillor leads on/has portfolio responsibility for the devolvement of such centre/asset ownership and/or management – and builds a good relationship with them to progress this agenda
- prioritises the identification of centres/assets with community designation that is
 to say those for community use. This is so for example any stakeholder acquiring
 these assets can own, share or run them for the longest time at the most
 affordable rates as required for the benefit of local communities. Centres'/assets'
 owners could otherwise refurbish and sell them for maximum commercial or other
 gain, which could mean much shorter lifespans as community spaces, if the
 owners were able to sell them at all on this basis

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- talks to owners of centres/assets the council wants to prioritise about transferring those centres/assets to, or sharing them with Houghton Regis via agreed contracts of specified lengths. The council must negotiate and agree such contracts on a community designation basis at the lowest possible cost for the reasons outlined in the previous bullet
- registers its interest with relevant/priority community centres/assets such as local colleges to secure the future of as many as possible, whether that is by purchasing, sharing or otherwise engaging with or having a say on them.

Houghton Regis recognises the importance of this area of work to deliver various aspects of its corporate plan. It also recognises that Central Bedfordshire has a key role and circumstances in this, for example as the current owner of various community centres/assets in the area. The council must therefore progress this agenda with Central Bedfordshire as much and as soon as it can, to make the most of currently existing opportunities, especially relating to the latter's ownership of existing community centres/assets.

<u>Recommendation 9</u> - create an implementation group to ensure you deliver your neighbourhood plan, and set a renewal date to review and rewrite it

As mentioned under Recommendation 3, the council at its meeting this month will consider establishing a new neighbourhood plan implementation sub-committee. This follows the council's neighbourhood plan referendum in 2024, whereby 86 per cent of approximately 2000 respondents (about 10 per cent of its population) voted in favour of the plan. It also follows the council's subsequent consideration and work through its planning committee in response to this CPC recommendation.

Houghton Regis is also considering extending its planning committee's remit to drive delivery of the plan. The council will need to ensure any such extended planning committee remit complements and aligns with that of any new neighbourhood plan implementation sub-committee and futures committee. This will avoid potential duplication, overlap and confusion between these committees.

Once all of these potential new committees have been established as agreed, **they will together need to agree a renewal date to review and rewrite the neighbourhood plan.** This will ensure the plan takes on board any key new

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emerging issues and continually responds to its neighbourhoods' latest needs.

4. Final thoughts and next steps

The LGA would like to thank Houghton Regis for undertaking this Progress Review.

We appreciate that senior managerial and political leadership will want to reflect on these findings and suggestions to determine how the council wishes to progress.

In the meantime, the council can discuss other support it requires with NALC by emailing Anders Hanson at <u>anders.hanson@nalc.gov.uk</u>, or by contacting the Bedfordshire Association of Town and Parish Councils. Alternatively Rachel Litherland, the LGA's Principal Adviser for the East of England at <u>rachel.litherland@local.gov.uk</u> may also be able to discuss further support.

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Chair: Councillor Louise Gittins

Chief Executive: Joanna Killian

President: Baroness Grey-Thompson

What is an Action Plan?

The purpose of an action plan is to serve as a roadmap or guide for achieving a specific goal or set of objectives. An action plan outlines the steps, tasks, resources, and timelines required to accomplish something. It helps to:

- 1. Break down a large goal into manageable steps or action items.
- 2. Assign responsibilities for who will do what and by when.
- 3. Allocate resources (money, people, materials) needed.
- 4. Set deadlines and milestones to track progress.
- 5. Identify potential obstacles or risks and ways to mitigate them.
- 6. Establish accountability by clearly defining roles.
- 7. Provide a framework to monitor and evaluate the implementation.

A practical action plan, developed collaboratively, provides clarity, direction, and focus. It helps coordinate efforts across teams or individuals working towards a common objective, ensuring everyone is working towards the council's goals. An actionable plan increases the chances of successfully executing a strategy, project or change initiative within the desired timeframe and budget.

What is the Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan?

Houghton Regis Town Council (HRTC¹) completed a Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) in March 2024. This process is a highly valued improvement and assurance tool delivered by the sector for the sector. The CPC Team (senior local government councillors and officers) undertook a comprehensive review of key finance, performance and governance to provide robust, strategic and credible challenge and support in the form of a report.

This Action Plan, designed to build on the council's strengths and identify areas for improvement, is a direct response to the recommendations and suggestions made in the Corporate Peer Challenge report. It provides a clear roadmap for the council's future actions.

This Action Plan, driven by the council, provides clarity, direction and focus to coordinate efforts across the council to initiate positive change for the community of Houghton Regis through its locally elected council.

The Action Plan pulls from the CPC report recommendations and suggestions under the six reviewed themes:

- 1. Local priorities and outcomes: Are the council's priorities clear and informed by the local context? Is the council delivering its priorities effectively and achieving improved outcomes for all its communities?
- 2. **Organisational and place leadership**: Does the council provide effective local leadership? Are there good relationships with partner organisations and local communities?
- 3. Governance and culture: Are there clear and robust governance arrangements? Is there a culture of respect, challenge and scrutiny?
- 4. **Financial planning and management**: Does the council clearly understand its current financial position? Does the council have a clear strategy and plan to address its financial challenges?
- 5. **Capacity for improvement**: Can the organisation support the delivery of local priorities? Does the council have the capacity to improve?
- 6. **Regeneration Growth** and whether the council is sufficiently resourced and prepared for this, especially regarding its staffing, budgets and governance, to accommodate the significant housing, community, infrastructure and other growth planned for Houghton Regis.

¹ A list of acronyms and abbreviations can be found at the end of this document.

What HRTC currently does well

- ✤ Notable recent achievements, including its recently completed artificial football pitch, management of open spaces, and activity programmes for its younger and older communities. There is a commitment to build on these.
- * A committed team of councillors and staff greatly helps HRTC address key opportunities and challenges.
- Pioneering ambitious and impressive plans, including the HRTC Corporate Plan, the Houghton Regis Neighbourhood Plan and the Houghton Regis Town Centre Action Plan, with a wide focus and good understanding of specific issues.
- An impressive Youth Council and Later Living Group, who organise local events & activities, champion advocacy, and promote support.
- * A high-quality services and assets provider in the town centre and wider Houghton Regis area.
- * A friendly, positive, supportive and productive culture with good relationships aiding the effective delivery of the work of the council.
- Effective and collaborative relationships with the principal authority, with HRTC described as a "partner of choice", and with local partners and community groups.
- * Strongly committed staff and councillors to deliver the best services to residents, visitors and businesses.
- * An employer of choice, resulting in high staff retention and satisfaction.
- * Highly successful in acquiring project funding.

CPC Report Recommendations²

The Action Plan has been assessed using a RAG status. The RAG acronym stands for Red, Amber, and Green. These colours make up the traffic light colours coding scheme for categorising project status.

These colours represent different types of required management action and are a shorthand for discussing projects that are going well or those in trouble.

A coding of Blue has been added to show when a project has been completed or closed.

R	Red	The project is likely to deliver late/over budget
A	Amber	The project has missed some targets, but overall end date/budget is not at risk
G	Green	The Project is on track
В	Blue	The Project completed or closed

² Pages 5-7 of the CPC Report

CPC	CPC Recommendations	Action / Response	Risks &	Budget	Timeline	Monitoring	Accountability
Ref :	CFC Recommendations	Action / Response		required ³	Timetine	&	Accountability
Rel :			mitigation	required			
2.1				<u> </u>	9	Evaluation	
3.1	Set formal annual committee	Allocate work from the Corporate Plan	Staff	£0	Summer	Town	Clerk & SMT
	and staff objectives to progress	to committees.	resource		2024	Council	
	your corporate plan, including	Committees will consider tasks and	Staff	£0	Summer	Committees	SMT
	setting measurable annual	formulate SMART action plans for	resource		2024		
	targets.	delivery and for this to become an annual					
		process.					
		Objectives linked to the Corporate Plan	Staff	£0	Autumn	Town	Clerk & SMT
		are to be included in staff appraisals.	resource		2024	Council	
			•				
3.2	Delegate committee and SMT	Review and update Scheme of	Staff	£0	May	Town	Clerk
	operational decision-making and	Delegation.	resource		2024	Council	
	activities to your staff so your	Implement a newly approved Scheme of	Staff	£0	Summer	Clerk	SMT
	senior politicians and	Delegation.	resource		2024		
	management team can focus on	Active review of committee reports in	Staff	£0	Summer	Clerk	SMT
	strategic issues	light of the new scheme of delegation	resource		2024		
	C	and removal of standard reports which					
		come under the Scheme of Delegation or					
		where they are expressly covered by the					
		approved Committee Functions & Terms					
		of Reference.					
		Review newly released model Financial	Staff	£0	Summer	Clerk	Head of Corp
		•		20		CICIK	-
		Regulations.	resource		2024		Serv

³ The budget indicated is to deliver the specific action, depending on the outcome further costs may be involved. This is especially highlighted for larger projects such as Council Offices and Community Centres

CPC Ref:	CPC Recommendations	Action / Response	Risks & mitigation	Budget required ³	Timeline	Monitoring & Evaluation	Accountability
		Consider and approve new Financial Regulations, ensuring that they provide delegation by the Scheme of Delegation.	Staff resource	£0	Summer 2024	Town Council	RFO
		Consider a delegation scheme to enable policies to be reviewed and approved at the officer level when in accordance with legislation or when there is no significant change.	Staff resource	£0	Autumn 2024	Corporate Services Committee	Head of Corp Serv
		Through the Committee functions & Terms of Reference to establish a Staffing Committee to consider strategic objectives relating to staffing matters and through the Scheme of Delegation to delegate decisions on operational staffing matters to the Town Clerk	Staff resource	£0	Spring 2025	Town Council	SMT
		Review the current political governance model and committee structure, and consider other possible models which may be better placed to support HRTC in developing and progressing its strategic agenda, including extending the term of its committee chair and vice-chair	Staff resource	£0	Autumn 2025	Town Council	SMT
		Establish short term working / task and finish groups to address single issues in defined timescales	Staff resource	£0	Spring 2025	Town Council	SMT

CPC Ref:	CPC Recommendations	Action / Response	Risks & mitigation	Budget required ³	Timeline	Monitoring & Evaluation	Accountability
3.3	Improve the quality of your decision-making by focusing on	See 3.2	Staff resource	£0	Summer 2024	Clerk	SMT
	strategic issues at your council meetings – ensure your agendas	Ensure agenda items are presented in order of strategic importance.	Staff resource	£0	Summer 2024	Clerk	SMT
	give necessary weight to those issues.	Consider establishing a Futures committee to discuss and consider high- level strategic issues impacting Houghton Regis.	Staff resource	£0	Winter 2024	Town Council	Clerk
3.4	Develop a long-term financial plan.	Consider external support to assess maintenance and refurbishment requirements for key assets	Budget availability	£2,000	Spring 2025	E&L Committee	Head of E&C
		Develop a lifecycle plan of asset maintenance and refurbishment and ensure that it is aligned with earmarked reserves.	Staff resource	£0	Summer 2025	E&L Committee	Head of E&C
		Develop a three-year rolling financial budget as required by the Corporate Governance and Accountability Practitioners Guide and ensure that it incorporates the HRTC Corporate Plan Objectives, the CPC Action Plan responses and the asset lifecycle plan.	Staff resource	£0	Spring 2025	Town Council	RFO
		Develop and approve a reserves policy which:	Staff resource	£0	Autumn 2024	Town Council	RFO / Head of Corporate Services

CPC Ref:	CPC Recommendations	Action / Response	Risks & mitigation	Budget required ³	Timeline	Monitoring & Evaluation	Accountability
		 confirms the desired level of general reserves. steers the council away from using reserves to fund revenue costs. Develop and approve a reserves strategy which: allocates funding to long-term projects. allocates funding for long-term maintenance and refurbishment (linking to the asset lifecycle plan). 	Staff resource	£0	Spring / Summer 2025	Town Council	RFO / Head of Corporate Services

3.5	Reset your relationship with	Seek to meet/link in regularly with	Staff	£0	Summer	Town	Clerk
	Central Bedfordshire Council at	CBC's Chief Executive and SMT.	resource		2024	Council	
	a strategic level to agree and	Seek to meet/link in regularly with	Staff	£0	Summer	Town	Clerk
	prioritise shared objectives	CBC's senior cllrs.	resource		2024	Council	
		Seek to meet regularly with CBC's	Staff	£0	Summer	Town	Clerk
		Communications Manager, especially in	resource		2024	Council	
		shaping the Partnership Agenda.					
					-		
3.6	Develop a plan to improve	Consider options for new/refurbished	Budget	Option	March	Corporate	Head of
	further and/or move your	office space.	Staff	dependent	2025	Services	Corporate
	offices, including immediately		resource			Committee	Services
	making the reception area more						

CPC Ref:	CPC Recommendations	Action / Response	Risks & mitigation	Budget required ³	Timeline	Monitoring & Evaluation	Accountability
	welcoming and informative so it is fit for future use. ⁴						
3.7	Improve the HRTC communications strategy.	Consider an external support to assess council's communications strategy to promote the work and services of the council	Budget availability	£3000	March 2024	Community Services Committee	Head of E&C
		Review and update the council's communications strategy to promote the work and services of the council using various digital, physical and face-to-face options.	Staff resource	£0	March 2025	Community Services Committee	Head of E&C
		Seek to meet/link in regularly with local partners and stakeholders.	Staff resource	£0	Autumn 2024	Clerk	SMT
		Support local partners and stakeholders by promoting their work and services/facilities.	Staff resource	£0	March 2025	Head of E&C	Communications Administrator
		Provide communications to residents to promote the variety of available services, retail, leisure, heritage, parks, and wider countryside opportunities.	Budget Staff resource	£5000	March 2026	Community Services Committee	Head of E&C
		Development and promotion of the Town Branding Scheme.	Budget Staff resource	£5000	March 2025	E&L and Community Services Committees	Head of E&C

⁴ This Recommendation has the potential to be high cost.

CPC Ref:	CPC Recommendations	Action / Response	Risks & mitigation	Budget required ³	Timeline	Monitoring & Evaluation	Accountability
		Options for branded merchandise.	Budget	£1000	March 2026	Community Services Committee	Head of E&C
3.8	Develop a plan to create your community centres – in the town centre and all your estates 5	Consider external support to assess the current use and availability of existing community centres, and options for the future	Budget availability	£3000	March 2025	Community Services Committee	Head of E&C
		Liaise with CBC and other local partners to identify options, including new premises and refurbishment options to make more fit for purpose.	Staff resource	£0	March 2025	Community Services Committees	Head of E&C
		Liaise with partners to assess the need for additional community space and any associated specifics.	Staff resource	£0	March 2025	Community Services Committees	Head of E&C
3.9	Create an implementation group to ensure the delivery of your neighbourhood plan and set a renewal date for reviewing and revising it.	Consider an external support to support the implementation of the NHP	Budget availability	£3000	March 2025	Planning Committee	Head of Democratic Services
	0	Create an implementation group to agree on and ensure the plan's delivery and renewal date.	Staff resource	£0	March 2025	Planning Committee	Head of Democratic Services

⁵ This Recommendation has the potential to be high cost.

CPC Ref:	CPC Recommendations	Action / Response	Risks & mitigation	Budget required ³	Timeline	Monitoring &	Accountability
			0	1		Evaluation	
		Review the planning committee's terms	Staff	£0	March	Planning	Head of
		of reference to support the NHP's	resource		2025	Committee	Democratic
		implementation and renewal.					Services

CPC Report Suggestions⁶

CPC Report Section 5 Feedback	Action / Response	Risks & mitigation	Budget required	Timeline	Monitoring and evaluation	Accountability
Proactive participation in the CBC community governance review due in 2025.	Understand the community governance review process and timeline.	Staff resource	£0	Autumn 2024	Clerk	Head of Corporate Services
	Consider the engagement of consultants to support community and town council engagement in this process	Budget availability in 2025/26	£10,000	March 2025	Corporate Services Committee	Head of Corporate Services
	Preliminary/informal consideration by the council.	Staff resource	£0	Autumn 2024	Corporate Services Committee	Head of Corporate Services
	Regular liaison with CBC.	Staff resource	£0	Autumn / Winter 2024	Clerk	Head of Corporate Services
	Engagement with residents.	Staff resource	£0	Spring 2025	Head of Corporate Services	Communications Administrator
	Formal consideration/response/engagement by the council.	Staff resource	£0	Spring 2025	Town Council	Head of Corporate Services

⁶ Taken from the body of the CPC report, Section 5 Feedback, pages 9-23

CPC Report Section 5 Feedback	Action / Response	Risks & mitigation	Budget required	Timeline	Monitoring and evaluation	Accountability
Increase the council's staffing levels to deliver their corporate plan objectives	Formulate a five-year rolling staffing plan and review it on an annual basis.	Staff resource	£0	Summer 2024	Corporate Services Committee	Head of Corporate Services
	To ensure budget provision for the delivery of the staffing plan.	Staff resource	£ dependent on the staffing plan	Autumn / Winter 2024	Town Council	Clerk
	To establish an enhanced set of ancillary staffing benefits to enable the council to offer an attractive employment package.	Staff resource	£0	Autumn 2024	Corporate Services Committee	Head of Corporate Services
Ensure that the council fully utilises the talents and skills of current members of staff	Consider the engagement of external support to undertake a skills audit of staff, to identify any skills gaps and develop a training and development strategy	Budget availability	£2000	Autumn 2024	Corporate Services Committee	Head of Corporate Services
	Undertake a skills audit of staff and use it as a basis to identify any skills gaps and develop a training and development strategy.	Staff resource	£0	Autumn 2024	Corporate Services Committee	Head of Corporate Services
	Use the adopted appraisal process to explore with staff areas in which they feel they could bring added benefit, through their skills and talents, to the delivery of the work of the council.	Staff resource	£0	Autumn 2024	Corporate Services Committee	Head of Corporate Services

CPC Report Section 5 Feedback	Action / Response	Risks & mitigation	Budget required	Timeline	Monitoring and evaluation	Accountability
	To consider separating its Responsible Financial Officer and Town Clerk roles.	Staff resource	£0	Autumn 2025	Corporate Services Committee	Head of Corporate Services
Ensure that staff undertake decisions and delivery at an operational level to enable the council to focus on its strategic direction.	See 3.2	1	1	1	L	1
	Support the Clerk and SMT in engaging with peer councils, officers and colleagues.	Staff resource	£0	Autumn 2024	Clerk	SMT
	Encourage councillors to engage with peer councillors and colleagues.	Cllr resource	£0	Autumn 2024	Corporate Services Committee	Head of Corporate Services
Improve relationships between political groups	Political groups, perhaps through their group leaders, discuss opportunities for improved ways of working. This could comprise regular informal meetings, team-building sessions, etc.	Cllr resource	£0	Autumn 2024	Group Leaders	Cllrs
Clarify the differences between council policies and council plans so that the community understands the differences in purpose and use.	Review and update the council's website to ensure clarity on council policies and council plans is provided. Use other means of communication in support.	Staff resource	£0	Autumn 2024	Clerk	SMT

CPC Report Section 5 Feedback	Action / Response	Risks & mitigation	Budget required	Timeline	Monitoring and evaluation	Accountability
Engage more widely with Houghton Regis communities	Use demographic data (e.g. national census, CBC Local Insight and Oxford Consultants for Social Inclusion) to better understand the community to shape an effective and proactive Communication Strategy (see 3.7).	Staff resource	£0	Autumn / Winter 2024	Community Services Committee	SMT
	Extend the functionality of the council website to enable email updates to be sent out when a page is updated.	Budget Staff resource	£300	Autumn 2024	Community Services Committee	Head of E&C
	Develop a programme for increased community engagement activities & events (changing location for full council mtgs, joint cllr surgeries, small scale competitions).	Budget Staff resource	Up to £1000	Autumn 2024	Head of Democratic Services and Head of E&C	Administration Assistant and Community Services Manager
	Develop a programme to increase the visibility of the town council in the new housing areas of Bidwell West and Linmere.	S106 Land and facility transfers Staff resource	£60,000	Autumn 2024	E&L Committee	Head of E&C
Strengthen the council's relationship with CBC at a strategic level, especially through the Houghton Regis Partnership Committee.	To discuss new and improved ways of working with CBC through meetings with senior officers and Cllrs to agree on and prioritise shared objectives, including.	CBC engagement Staff resource	£0	Autumn / Winter 2024	Clerk	SMT

CPC Report Section 5 Feedback	Action / Response	Risks & mitigation	Budget required	Timeline	Monitoring and evaluation	Accountability
	Review the terms of reference for the Partnership Committee.	CBC engagement Staff resource	£0	Autumn / Winter 2024	Partnership Committee	Clerk
	Ensure that the Partnership agenda has a strategic focus and is attended by relevant officers and members.	CBC engagement Staff resource	£0	Autumn / Winter 2024	Partnership Committee	Clerk
Ensure the lease with the Beds FA for the Tithe Farm sports project is robust and comprehensive.	 Review the draft lease to ensure that it covers the following: timing of the Football Association's obligations to refurbish pitches. clarity on related finances and responsibilities of both partners. length of lease, review periods and scope for extension of the lease. 	Staff resource	£0	Autumn 2024	Head of Corporate Services	Head of E&C
Provide, support and encourage engagement for councillor training and development.	Re-shape / Extend the Member Open Sessions to provide an annual training and support programme.	Staff resource	£0	Autumn 2024	Town Council	Clerk & SMT
	Continue to promote external cllr training opportunities, especially those opportunities relating to training around finance.	Staff resource	£0	Summer 2024	Clerk	Head of Democratic Services

CPC Report Section 5 Feedback	Action / Response	Risks & mitigation	Budget required	Timeline	Monitoring and evaluation	Accountability
	Understand and address any barriers to member training	Staff resource	£0	Summer 2025	Clerk	Head of Democratic Services
Ensure that the council thoroughly assesses and mitigates against potential strategic risks.	Continue to review the council's risk management strategy & schedule annually.	Staff resource	£0	Autumn 2024	Town Council	Clerk & SMT
	To undertake an external succession planning exercise.	Budget Staff resource	£5,000	Summer 2025	Corporate Services Committee	Head of Corporate Services
Review committee structures against corporate plan objectives and financial plans.	Continue to review on an annual basis the council's committee structure to ensure it is effective and efficient.	Staff resource	£0	Spring 2025	Town Council	Clerk & SMT

Acronyms

CBC	Central Bedfordshire Council
Cllr	Councillor
CPC	Corporate Peer Challenge
E&L	Environment & Leisure Committee
HEAD OF E&C	Head of Environmental & Community Services
HRTC	Houghton Regis Town Council
NHP	Neighbourhood Plan
SMT	Senior Management Team



TOWN COUNCIL

Agenda Item 10

Date:17th March 2025Title:FINANCIAL FORECASTPurpose of the Report:To provide to members a 3-year budget forecast to 2029.Contact Officer:Clare Evans, Town Clerk

1. RECOMMENDATION

To receive the 3-year financial forecast to 2029.

2. BACKGROUND

The rationale for developing a medium-term financial forecast comes from the following:

JPAG¹ in Section 5 (Supporting information for Officers) advises: For larger authorities, it is prudent to develop a multi-year medium-term financial plan as well as the basic precept budget. This should include consideration of projected reserve levels, particularly of the general reserve.

Financial Regulations Section 3, para 3.1:

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

The development of a financial and staffing plan is also incorporated in the **Corporate Plan**, within this document it looks for this to cover a 5 year period.

The **CPC Action Plan** (CPC Ref 3.4) also supports the development of a 3 year rolling financial budget as required by the Accountability and Governance Practitioners Guide

¹ Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance Practitioners Guide, March 2024

As this is the first year for this council to consider a financial forecast it is being presented to Town Council in the first instance. The appropriate extract from this forecast will then be presented to each Standing Committee not later than November each year to enable each committee to consider its budget requirements for the following year. the financial forecast which will be presented in the autumn to each committee may be adjusted to reflect changes which may take place in the interim.

This represents a shift in how HRTC has previously considered and set its budget by using its committees more extensively in the budget setting process. It is hoped that this will enable more focused and earlier consideration of the draft budget, although it is highlighted that the tax base information is normally received from CBC early November.

3. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Members will find attached at *Appendix A* a financial forecast to March 2030 as the software facilitates this extra year.

Members are requested to note the following:

- 1. On standard items of expenditure such as utility costs, maintenance costs etc a 3% inflation increase has been applied
- 2. A 3% increase has been applied to the Precept
- 3. The Financial Forecast reflects the following approved documents:
 - HRTC Corporate Plan
 - CPC Action Plan
 - 5-year staffing forecast (Corporate Services Committee Minute 12955 and updated)
- 4. It would be desirable for the Financial Forecast to factor in outcomes of the asset management review, as this has only just been completed officers are yet to analysis and present the results to the Environment & Leisure Committee for consideration. However, the forecast continues to include £50,000 in 299 4871 for Pavilion Renovations.
- 5. In 2027/28 a sum of £200,000 has been included to fund an enhancement to play provision as included in the Corporate Plan. At the time members may choose to fund this project using borrowing instead of funding upfront. This would be a decision of Coucnil at that point in time.

The column headings in *Appendix A* are applied as follows:

Next year - 2025/26 Year 2 - 2026/27 Year 3 - 2027/28 Year 4 - 2028/29 Year 5 - 2029-30

The Financial Forecast does not commit the council, it is a tool to support the council in medium term financial planning as follows:

- 1. Strategic Planning and Decision Making
- Helps identify future funding gaps and financial pressures
- Enables proactive rather than reactive financial management

- Supports informed decisions about service delivery and resource allocation
- Allows time to develop and implement necessary savings plans
- 2. Risk Management
- Identifies potential financial risks and challenges before they become critical
- Enables the development of contingency plans
- Helps ensure financial sustainability over multiple years
- Provides early warning of potential issues with reserves or debt levels
- 3. Budget Setting
- Creates a framework for annual budget decisions
- Helps align financial resources with strategic priorities
- Enables more effective planning of capital investments
- 4. Stakeholder Confidence
- Demonstrates good financial management to auditors and stakeholders
- Provides transparency to residents and stakeholders
- Helps build confidence in the council's financial stability
- Supports better engagement with partners and funding bodies

The Forecast shows a deficit budget year on year (the predicted increase in precept from Band D increases does not cover additional expenditure). When setting the Corporate Plan, Members were very aware, and this was reinforced through the CPC process, that it was an ambitious plan, and the delivery challenge would be around funding. It should be noted however that for some capital projects' opportunities may arise to apply for capital funding to assist. It is unlikely that there will be an opportunity to apply for funding to support revenue services. Additional income sources have not been included. Members may also decide to reduce services in other areas to enable efficiency savings to be made to offset additional items of expenditure. No efficiency savings have been factored into the forecast.

4. HRTC CORPORATE PLAN

- 4 Management and Operations: To improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Town Council as the key local service provider
 - 4.5 Enhance the role of the council.

5. IMPLICATIONS

Corporate Implications

• There are no additional arising corporate implications.

Legal Implications

• There are no legal implications arising from the recommendations

Financial Implications

• There are no additional arising financial implications.

Risk Implications

• There are no additional arising risk implications.

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 financial forecast is a useful document to help the council plan for the future. It takes account of the ambitious Corporate Plan which seeks to improve services and facilities for residents of Houghton Regis.

7. APPENDICES

Appendix A: Financial Forecast

Houghton Regis Town Council Current Year

Page 1

Forward Budget Detail - By Centre

		Current Year Budget	Next Year Budget	Year 2 Budget	Year 3 Budget	Year 4 Budget	Year 5 Budget
101	Corporate Management						
1076	Precept received	1,363,800	1,660,722	1,710,544	1,761,860	1,814,716	1,869,157
1096	Interest & Dividends Received	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000
	Total Income	1,413,800	1,710,722	1,760,544	1,811,860	1,864,716	1,919,157
4051	BANK & LOAN CHARGES	1,000	1,000	1,030	1,061	1,093	1,126
4056	AUDIT FEES	3,200	3,200	3,296	3,395	3,497	3,602
4057	ACCOUNTANCY &	7,250	8,500	8,755	9,018	9,289	9,568
4061	Financial Management Fees	4,000	0	0	0	0	0
	Total Overhead Expenditure	15,450	12,700	13,081	13,474	13,879	14,296
	Net Income over Expenditure	1,398,350	1,698,022	1,747,463	1,798,386	1,850,837	1,904,861
102	Democratic Rep'n & Mgmt						
4008	TRAINING/COURSES	1,100	1,000	1,030	1,061	1,093	1,126
4009	TRAVEL	350	350	361	372	383	394
4020	MISC. ESTABLISH.COST	400	400	412	424	437	450
4024	SUBSCRIPTIONS	3,600	3,503	3,608	3,716	3,827	3,942
4059	OTHER PROFESSIONAL	1,000	0	0	0	0	0
4104	HOSPITALITY ALLNCE	250	250	258	266	274	282
4131	ELECTION COSTS	6,000	6,000	6,180	15,000	6,556	6,753
	Total Overhead Expenditure	12,700	11,503	11,849	20,839	12,570	12,947
	Net Income over Expenditure	(12,700)	(11,503)	(11,849)	(20,839)	(12,570)	(12,947)
190	Central Services						
1091	Income Miscellaneous	130	0	0	0	0	0
	Total Income	130	0	0	0	0	0
4007	CONFERENCE COSTS	1,300	1,300	1,339	1,379	1,420	1,463
4008	TRAINING/COURSES	5,000	3,400	3,502	3,607	3,715	3,826
4009	TRAVEL	350	350	361	372	383	394
4011	RATES	7,800	8,950	9,219	9,496	9,781	10,074
4012	WATER RATES	500	1,144	1,178	1,213	1,249	1,286
4014	ELECTRICITY	2,000	2,080	2,142	2,206	2,272	2,340
4015	GAS	900	728	750	773	796	820
4017	HEALTH & SAFETY	1,000	500	515	530	546	562
4020	MISC. ESTABLISH.COST	300	750	773	796	820	845
4021	COMMUNICATIONS COSTS	11,700	10,000	10,300	10,609	10,927	11,255
4022	POSTAGE	1,000	1,500	1,545	1,591	1,639	1,688
4023	STATIONERY	700	400	412	424	437	450
4025	INSURANCE	17,000	17,000	17,510	18,035	18,576	19,133
4026	COMPUTER COSTS	8,000	8,500	8,755	9,018	9,289	9,568
4027	PHOTOCOPIER CHARGES	1,600	1,600	1,648	1,697	1,748	1,800
4031	ADVERTISING	500	500	, 515	530	546	562
4036	PROPERTY MAINTENANCE	1,000	1,000	1,030	1,061	1,093	1,126
4038	MAINTENANCE CONTRACTS	600	700	721	743	765	788
4042	Equipment Repairs	1,000	500	515	530	546	562
4059	OTHER PROFESSIONAL	15,000	13,250	13,648	14,057	14,479	14,913
4992	Trs from Earmarked Reserve	0	(8,000)	0	0	0	0

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Houghton Regis Town Council Current Year

		Current Year Budget	Next Year Budget	Year 2 Budget	Year 3 Budget	Year 4 Budget	Year 5 Budget
	Total Overhead Expenditure	77,250	66,152	76,378	78,667	81,027	83,455
	Net Income over Expenditure	(77,120)	(66,152)	(76,378)	(78,667)	(81,027)	(83,455)
192	Corp Serv Staff Costs						
4001	STAFF SALARIES	262,000	252,000	290,000	298,700	307,661	316,891
4002	EMPLOYERS N.I	36,000	30,240	34,800	35,844	36,920	38,026
4003	EMPLOYERS SUPERANN.	70,000	67,536	77,720	80,052	82,453	84,926
4005	STAFF OVERTIME	3,000	2,500	2,575	2,652	2,732	2,814
4059	OTHER PROFESSIONAL	7,400	7,500	7,725	7,957	8,196	8,442
	Total Overhead Expenditure	378,400	359,776	412,820	425,205	437,962	451,099
	Net Income over Expenditure	(378,400)	(359,776)	(412,820)	(425,205)	(437,962)	(451,099)
201	Village Green Rec Gd						
1082	INC-LETTINGS	2,869	2,869	2,955	3,044	3,135	3,229
	Total Income	2,869	2,869	2,955	3,044	3,135	3,229
4037	GROUNDS MAINTENANCE	7,000	2,500	2,575	2,652	2,732	2,814
	Total Overhead Expenditure	7,000	2,500	2,575	2,652	2,732	2,814
	Net Income over Expenditure	(4,131)	369	380	392	403	415
202	Village Green Pavilion						
1082	INC-LETTINGS	150	150	155	160	165	170
	Total Income	150	150	155	160	165	170
4011	RATES	2,800	2,800	2,884	2,971	3,060	3,152
4012	WATER RATES	1,500	1,500	1,545	1,591	1,639	1,688
4014	ELECTRICITY	1,500	1,500	1,545	1,591	1,639	1,688
4036	PROPERTY MAINTENANCE	1,000	2,000	2,060	2,122	2,186	2,252
4038	MAINTENANCE CONTRACTS	250	943	971	1,000	1,030	1,061
	Total Overhead Expenditure	7,050	8,743	9,005	9,275	9,554	9,841
	Net Income over Expenditure	(6,900)	(8,593)	(8,850)	(9,115)	(9,389)	(9,671)
211	Parkside Rec Gd						
1082	INC-LETTINGS	3,000	3,000	3,090	3,183	3,278	3,376
	Total Income	3,000	3,000	3,090	3,183	3,278	3,376
4013	RENT	50	50	50	50	50	50
4037	GROUNDS MAINTENANCE	1,500	1,500	1,545	1,591	1,639	1,688
	Total Overhead Expenditure	1,550	1,550	1,595	1,641	1,689	1,738
	Net Income over Expenditure	1,450	1,450	1,495	1,542	1,589	1,638
212	Parkside Pavilion						
4012	WATER RATES	300	300	309	318	328	338

Houghton Regis Town Council Current Year

		Current Year Budget	Next Year Budget	Year 2 Budget	Year 3 Budget	Year 4 Budget	Year 5 Budget
4015	GAS	150	150	155	160	165	170
4036		1,000	1,000	1,030	1,061	1,093	1,126
	Total Overhead Expenditure	2,050	2,050	2,112	2,176	2,242	2,310
	Net Income over Expenditure	(2,050)	(2,050)	(2,112)	(2,176)	(2,242)	(2,310)
221	Tithe Farm Rec Grd						
1082	INC-LETTINGS	1,400	2,115	2,178	2,243	2,310	2,379
	Total Income	1,400	2,115	2,178	2,243	2,310	2,379
4013	RENT	5	5	5	5	5	5
4037	GROUNDS MAINTENANCE	1,000	1,000	1,030	1,061	1,093	1,126
	Total Overhead Expenditure	1,005	1,005	1,035	1,066	1,098	1,131
	Net Income over Expenditure	395	1,110	1,143	1,177	1,212	1,248
222	Tithe Farm Store						
4012	WATER RATES	200	200	206	212	218	225
4014	ELECTRICITY	600	800	824	849	874	900
4036	PROPERTY MAINTENANCE	500	1,000	1,030	1,061	1,093	1,126
	Total Overhead Expenditure	1,300	2,000	2,060	2,122	2,185	2,251
	Net Income over Expenditure	(1,300)	(2,000)	(2,060)	(2,122)	(2,185)	(2,251)
231	Orchard Close Rec Grd						
1082	INC-LETTINGS	1,800	1,800	1,854	1,910	1,967	2,026
	Total Income	1,800	1,800	1,854	1,910	1,967	2,026
4037	GROUNDS MAINTENANCE	1,000	1,000	1,030	1,061	1,093	1,126
	Total Overhead Expenditure	1,000	1,000	1,030	1,061	1,093	1,126
	Net Income over Expenditure	800	800	824	849	874	900
232	Orchard Close Pavilion						
4012	WATER RATES	400	500	515	530	546	562
4014	ELECTRICITY	450	800	824	849	874	900
4036	PROPERTY MAINTENANCE	1,000	1,000	1,030	1,061	1,093	1,126
	Total Overhead Expenditure	1,850	2,300	2,369	2,440	2,513	2,588
	Net Income over Expenditure	(1,850)	(2,300)	(2,369)	(2,440)	(2,513)	(2,588)
241	Moore Crescent Rec Grd						
1082	INC-LETTINGS	2,600	2,115	2,178	2,243	2,310	2,379
	Total Income	2,600	2,115	2,178	2,243	2,310	2,379
		1,100	1,100	1,133	1,167	1,202	1,238
4037	GROUNDS MAINTENANCE	1.100	1,100	1,100	1,107	1,202	1.200

Houghton Regis Town Council Current Year

		Current Year Budget	Next Year Budget	Year 2 Budget	Year 3 Budget	Year 4 Budget	Year 5 Budget
	Net Income over Expenditure	1,500	1,015	1,045	1,076	1,108	1,141
242	Moore Crescent Pavilion						
1082	INC-LETTINGS	200	200	206	212	218	225
	Total Income	200	200	206	212	218	225
4011	RATES	4,700	4,700	4,841	4,986	5,136	5,290
4012	WATER RATES	2,700	2,700	2,781	2,864	2,950	3,039
4014	ELECTRICITY	2,200	2,200	2,266	2,334	2,404	2,476
4015	GAS	1,400	1,400	1,442	1,485	1,530	1,576
4036	PROPERTY MAINTENANCE	1,500	2,000	2,060	2,122	2,186	2,252
4038	MAINTENANCE CONTRACTS	650	1,000	1,030	1,061	1,093	1,126
	Total Overhead Expenditure	13,150	14,000	14,420	14,852	15,299	15,759
	Net Income over Expenditure	(12,950)	(13,800)	(14,214)	(14,640)	(15,081)	(15,534)
243	Moore Crescent Bowling Gn						
1082	INC-LETTINGS	6,300	6,489	6,684	6,885	7,092	7,305
	Total Income	6,300	6,489	6,684	6,885	7,092	7,305
4037	GROUNDS MAINTENANCE	6,300	6,000	6,180	6,365	6,556	6,753
	Total Overhead Expenditure	6,300	6,000	6,180	6,365	6,556	6,753
	Net Income over Expenditure	0	489	504	520	536	552
261	Bidwell Rec Grd & Countryside	÷					
1082	INC-LETTINGS	3,000	2,215	2,281	2,349	2,419	2,492
	Total Income	3,000	2,215	2,281	2,349	2,419	2,492
4037	GROUNDS MAINTENANCE	2,000	1,100	1,133	1,167	1,202	1,238
	Total Overhead Expenditure	2,000	1,100	1,133	1,167	1,202	1,238
	Net Income over Expenditure	1,000	1,115	1,148	1,182	1,217	1,254
262	Bidwell Pavilion						
4012	WATER RATES	400	400	412	424	437	450
4014	ELECTRICITY	400	400	412	424	437	450
4015	GAS	1,000	1,000	1,030	1,061	1,093	1,126
4036	PROPERTY MAINTENANCE	1,000	1,000	1,030	1,061	1,093	1,126
4038	MAINTENANCE CONTRACTS	500	500	515	530	546	562
	Total Overhead Expenditure	3,300	3,300	3,399	3,500	3,606	3,714
	Net Income over Expenditure	(3,300)	(3,300)	(3,399)	(3,500)	(3,606)	(3,714)
263	Houghton Hall Park						
4001	STAFF SALARIES	10,000	0	0	0	0	0
4002	EMPLOYERS N.I	1,500	0	0	0	0	0
		-				-	-
4003	EMPLOYERS SUPERANN.	2,680	0	0	0	0	0

Houghton Regis Town Council Current Year

		Current Year Budget	Next Year Budget	Year 2 Budget	Year 3 Budget	Year 4 Budget	Year 5 Budget
4029	Promotional Material	5,000	0	0	0	0	0
4034	WEBSITE COSTS	3,000	0	0	0	0	0
4037	GROUNDS MAINTENANCE	7,000	0	0	0	0	0
4039	HORTICULTURAL SUPPLIES	5,000	0	0	0	0	0
4217	HHP Project Contribution	29,000	29,000	29,870	30,766	31,689	32,640
4222	COMMUNITY EVENTS	6,500	0	0	0	0	0
	Total Overhead Expenditure	71,787	29,000	29,870	30,766	31,689	32,640
	Net Income over Expenditure	(71,787)	(29,000)	(29,870)	(30,766)	(31,689)	(32,640)
271	Houghton Regis Cemetery						
1084	Income Burial Fees	20,000	20,000	20,600	21,218	21,855	22,511
	Total Income	20,000	20,000	20,600	21,218	21,855	22,511
4011	RATES	1,200	1,200	1,236	1,273	1,311	1,350
4012	WATER RATES	200	300	309	318	328	338
	Total Overhead Expenditure	1,400	1,500	1,545	1,591	1,639	1,688
	Net Income over Expenditure	18,600	18,500	19,055	19,627	20,216	20,823
273	Allotments						
1082	INC-LETTINGS	3,700	3,700	3,811	3,925	4,043	4,164
	Total Income	3,700	3,700	3,811	3,925	4,043	4,164
4012	WATER RATES	700	700	721	743	765	788
4037	GROUNDS MAINTENANCE	1,000	1,000	1,030	1,061	1,093	1,126
	Total Overhead Expenditure	1,700	1,700	1,751	1,804	1,858	1,914
	Net Income over Expenditure	2,000	2,000	2,060	2,121	2,185	2,250
281	Public Open Spaces						
4037	GROUNDS MAINTENANCE	500	500	515	530	546	562
4992	Trs from Earmarked Reserve	(3,000)	(7,163)	0	0	0	0
	Total Overhead Expenditure	(2,500)	(6,663)	515	530	546	562
	Net Income over Expenditure	2,500	6,663	(515)	(530)	(546)	(562)
282	Play Areas (all)						
4037	GROUNDS MAINTENANCE	1,900	2,000	2,060	2,122	2,186	2,252
4042	Equipment Repairs	12,000	12,000	12,360	12,731	13,113	13,506
	Total Overhead Expenditure	13,900	14,000	14,420	14,853	15,299	15,758
	Net Income over Expenditure	(13,900)	(14,000)	(14,420)	(14,853)	(15,299)	(15,758)
000	Otroot Eurriture						
283	Street Furniture						
4036	PROPERTY MAINTENANCE	1,000	1,000	1,030	1,061	1,093	1,126
	Total Overhead Expenditure	1,000	1,000	1,030	1,061	1,093	1,126

Houghton Regis Town Council Current Year

Forward Budget Detail - By Centre

		Current Year Budget	Next Year Budget	Year 2 Budget	Year 3 Budget	Year 4 Budget	Year 5 Budget
	Net Income over Expenditure	(1,000)	(1,000)	(1,030)	(1,061)	(1,093)	(1,126)
291	Outside Services						
1091	Income Miscellaneous	3,800	3,800	3,914	4,031	4,152	4,277
	Total Income	3,800	3,800	3,914	4,031	4,152	4,277
4006	PROTECTIVE CLOTHING	1,500	1,500	1,545	1,591	1,639	1,688
4008	TRAINING/COURSES	3,000	3,000	3,090	3,183	3,278	3,376
4011	RATES	11,000	12,553	12,930	13,318	13,718	14,130
4012	WATER RATES	800	800	824	849	874	900
4013	RENT	15,500	15,500	15,500	15,965	16,444	16,937
4014	ELECTRICITY	2,200	2,500	2,575	2,652	2,732	2,814
4015	GAS	2,200	2,000	2,070	2,002	2,732	2,014
4013	HEALTH & SAFETY	1,000	1,000	1,030	1,061	1,093	1,126
4018	REFUSE DISPOSAL	24,000	28,000	28,840	29,705	30,596	31,514
4010	MISC. ESTABLISH.COST	24,000 600	20,000	20,040 618	637	656	676
4020	PROPERTY MAINTENANCE	1,000	1,400	1,442		1,530	1,576
4030	MAINTENANCE CONTRACTS	850	850	876	1,485 902	929	957
4038	HORTICULTURAL SUPPLIES	5,000	7,500	18,225	902 18,772	929 19,335	
4039	Tree maintenance	5,000 6,000	7,500 6,000	-	-		19,915
				11,180	11,515	11,860	12,216
4042	Equipment Repairs	9,000	10,000	10,300	10,609	10,927	11,255
4044	VEHICLE FUEL	12,000	12,500	12,875	13,261	13,659	14,069
4045	VEHICLE TAX & INSURANCE	1,200	1,200	1,236	1,273	1,311	1,350
4059	OTHER PROFESSIONAL	2,200	2,200	5,266	5,424	5,587	5,755
4222		0	0	0	2,000	2,060	2,122
	Total Overhead Expenditure	97,050	107,303	128,558	134,414	138,446	142,601
	Net Income over Expenditure	(93,250)	(103,503)	(124,644)	(130,383)	(134,294)	(138,324)
292	E&L Staff Costs						
4001	STAFF SALARIES	275,594	283,795	327,000	336,810	346,914	357,321
4002	EMPLOYERS N.I	39,220	34,055	39,240	40,417	41,629	42,878
4003	EMPLOYERS SUPERANN.	76,167	76,057	87,636	90,265	92,973	95,762
4005	STAFF OVERTIME	2,000	2,000	2,060	2,122	2,186	2,252
	Total Overhead Expenditure	392,981	395,907	455,936	469,614	483,702	498,213
	Net Income over Expenditure	(392,981)	(395,907)	(455,936)	(469,614)	(483,702)	(498,213)
				(400,500)	(403,014)		(430,210)
299	E&L Capital & Projects						
4053	Loan payments- Moore Cres.	24,069	24,069	24,069	24,069	24,069	24,069
4059	OTHER PROFESSIONAL	0	0	25,000	25,750	26,523	27,319
4066	Loan payments - Tithe Farm	32,791	32,792	32,792	32,792	32,792	32,792
4851	CAP-Machinery Renewals	20,000	20,000	20,600	21,218	21,855	22,511
4856	CAP - Street Furniture	9,749	1,000	1,030	1,061	1,093	1,126
4858	CAP - PLAY AREAS & EQPT	15,000	15,000	15,450	215,914	16,391	16,883
4871	CAP - Pavilion Renovations	0	50,000	51,500	53,045	54,636	56,275
	Total Overhead Expenditure	101,609	142,861	170,441	373,849	177,359	180,975
	Net Income over Expenditure	(101,609)	(142,861)	(170,441)	(373,849)	(177,359)	(180,975)

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Houghton Regis Town Council Current Year

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Forward Budget Detail - By Centre

		Current Year Budget	Next Year Budget	Year 2 Budget	Year 3 Budget	Year 4 Budget	Year 5 Budget
302	Community Services						
1091	Income Miscellaneous	2,500	2,500	2,575	2,652	2,732	2,814
	Total Income	2,500	2,500	2,575	2,652	2,732	2,814
4221	SUMMER PLAYSCHEME	6,000	6,000	6,180	6,365	6,556	6,753
4226	Youth services	5,500	28,500	29,355	30,236	31,143	32,077
4227	Community Services	6,000	6,000	6,180	6,365	6,556	6,753
4230	Public Toilets	22,000	22,000	22,660	23,340	24,040	24,761
4232	Christmas Lights	13,000	13,000	13,390	13,792	14,206	14,632
	Total Overhead Expenditure	52,500	75,500	77,765	80,098	82,501	84,976
	Net Income over Expenditure	(50,000)	(73,000)	(75,190)	(77,446)	(79,769)	(82,162)
303	Communications						
4029	Promotional Material	5,000	5,000	5,150	15,305	15,764	16,237
4033	NEWSLETTER	7,000	7,000	7,210	7,426	7,649	7,878
4059	OTHER PROFESSIONAL	0	0	20,000	10,000	0	0
	Total Overhead Expenditure	12,000	12,000	32,360	32,731	23,413	24,115
	Net Income over Expenditure	(12,000)	(12,000)	(32,360)	(32,731)	(23,413)	(24,115)
304	Events						
1094	Income from Sponsors	500	1,000	1,030	1,061	1,093	1,126
1097	Income - Council Events	3,500	4,000	4,120	4,244	4,371	4,502
	Total Income	4,000	5,000	5,150	5,305	5,464	5,628
4222	COMMUNITY EVENTS	56,000	64,500	71,435	98,578	101,535	104,581
	Total Overhead Expenditure	56,000	64,500	71,435	98,578	101,535	104,581
	Net Income over Expenditure	(52,000)	(59,500)	(66,285)	(93,273)	(96,071)	(98,953)
305	Community Grants						
4203	MAYORS CHRISTMAS	5,500	5,500	5,665	5,835	6,010	6,190
4218	Grants (WB) Project Scheme	4,000	4,000	4,120	4,244	4,371	4,502
4220	Grants (WB) Key Partners	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,450	15,914	16,391
4235	Cost Of Living Crisis Donation	7,200	7,200	13,416	13,818	14,233	14,660
	Total Overhead Expenditure	31,700	31,700	38,201	39,347	40,528	41,743
	Net Income over Expenditure	(31,700)	(31,700)	(38,201)	(39,347)	(40,528)	(41,743)
306	Community Safety						
4046	Enviro - Crime	9,500	10,000	10,300	10,609	10,927	11,255
4059	OTHER PROFESSIONAL	40,000	40,000	41,200	42,436	43,709	45,020
	Total Overhead Expenditure	49,500	50,000	51,500	53,045	54,636	56,275
		,	,	,	,	-	

307 Civic Services

Houghton Regis Town Council Current Year

		Current Year Budget	Next Year Budget	Year 2 Budget	Year 3 Budget	Year 4 Budget	Year 5 Budget
4101	MAYORS ALLOWANCE	3,850	4,500	4,635	4,774	4,917	5,065
4106	Mayors Civic Events	3,250	4,000	4,120	4,244	4,371	4,502
4121	CIVIC REGALIA	1,400	1,400	1,442	1,485	1,530	1,576
4122	Civic Fund Expenses	200	200	206	212	218	225
	Total Overhead Expenditure	8,700	10,100	10,403	10,715	11,036	11,368
	Net Income over Expenditure	(8,700)	(10,100)	(10,403)	(10,715)	(11,036)	(11,368)
392	Comm Serv Staff Costs						
1071	YIF Grant	57,648	0	0	0	0	0
1087	External Grant - CBC Youth	5,000	0	0	0	0	0
	Total Income	62,648	0	0	0	0	0
4001	STAFF SALARIES	140,113	226,000	232,780	239,763	246,956	254,365
4002	EMPLOYERS N.I	19,336	27,120	27,934	28,772	29,635	30,524
4003	EMPLOYERS SUPERANN.	37,550	60,568	62,385	64,257	66,185	68,171
4005	STAFF OVERTIME	10,000	10,000	10,300	10,609	10,927	11,255
	Total Overhead Expenditure	206,999	323,688	333,399	343,401	353,703	364,315
	Net Income over Expenditure	(144,351)	(323,688)	(333,399)	(343,401)	(353,703)	(364,315)
399	Community Capital & Projects						
4034	WEBSITE COSTS	0	1,000	1,030	1,061	1,093	1,126
4059	OTHER PROFESSIONAL	0	0	10,000	0	0	0
4228	Community Facilities	6,800	6,800	7,004	7,214	7,430	7,653
4804	CAP-New Christmas Lights	6,000	6,000	6,180	6,365	6,556	6,753
	Total Overhead Expenditure	12,800	13,800	24,214	14,640	15,079	15,532
	Net Income over Expenditure	(12,800)	(13,800)	(24,214)	(14,640)	(15,079)	(15,532)
401	Growth Area						
4059	OTHER PROFESSIONAL	1,000	1,000	1,030	1,061	1,093	1,126
4062	Neighbourhood Plan	0	1,000	1,030	1,061	1,093	1,126
	Total Overhead Expenditure	1,000	2,000	2,060	2,122	2,186	2,252
	Net Income over Expenditure	(1,000)	(2,000)	(2,060)	(2,122)	(2,186)	(2,252)
	Total Budget Income	1,531,897	1,766,675	1,818,175	1,871,220	1,925,856	1,982,132
	Expenditure	1,642,581	1,766,675	2,007,577	2,290,828	2,132,657	2,194,932
	-						
М	ovement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(110,684)	0	(189,402)	(419,608)	(206,801)	(212,800)



ТС	WN	COL	JNCIL
		000	

Agenda Item 11

Date:	17 th March 2025
Title:	STRATEGIC POLICIES 2025-2026
Purpose of the Report:	To advise members of any updates or changes to the Town Councils Strategic Policies for 2025-2026
Contact Officer:	Clare Evans, Town Clerk

1. **RECOMMENDATION**

To recommend to the Annual Meeting of Town Council approval of the following:

- Standing Orders
- Financial Regulations
- Scheme of Delegation as amended
- Committee Functions & Terms of Reference as amended

2. BACKGROUND

In accordance with Standing Order 4.j – following the election of the Chairman of the Council and Vice-Chairman of the Council at the annual meeting, the business shall include:

- Standing order 4.j.iii, the review of delegation arrangements to committees, sub-committees and staff
- Standing order 4.j.vii, the review and adopt appropriate standing orders and financial regulations.

Members are being provided with this report to enable a review of the Town Councils strategic polices to take place prior to them being presented at the Town Councils Annual meeting to be held on 14th May 2025.

3. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Standing Orders (Appendix A)

Standing orders were adopted by Town Council at the Annual Meeting held on the 15th May 2024. There have been no amendments or updates since this time.

Financial Regulations (Appendix B)

Members are reminded that this policy was revised, based on the 2024 model version as provided by NALC (National Association of Local Councils), and was adopted by Town Council on the 16th December 2024. There have been no other revisions since then.

Scheme of Delegation (Appendix C)

Members are provided with a revised Scheme of Delegation. This Scheme of Delegation sets out how the Council delegates some of its powers and duties to Officers of the Council. These delegations are necessary for the effective day to day running of the Council and to prevent operational decisions having to come to a Committee/Council meeting for consideration. Members will find the track changed document attached.

Committee Functions and Terms of Reference (Appendix D)

Planning Committee

- Members are being requested to initiate the use of the listed Delegated Powers to Officers, as detailed in the Terms of Reference.
- Removal of reference to the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group
- Addition of the Neighbourhood Plan Implementation Sub-Committee.

Personnel Sub-Committee

 Members are being requested to consider the removal of this subcommittee and to consider the establishment of a Staffing Committee. The proposed Staffing Committee would be a standing committee and report to Town Council.

Staffing Committee

 Members are being requested to consider the establishment of a Staffing Committee. The functions of this Committee would exercise overall consideration of all staffing matters including the previous functions of the Personnel Sub Committee.

4. HRTC CORPORATE PLAN

- 4 Management and Operations: To improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Town Council as the key local service provider
 - 4.5 Enhance the role of the council.

5. IMPLICATIONS

Corporate Implications

• Committee Functions and Terms of Reference outlines the committees purpose, objectives, scope, membership, and responsibilities and clarifies the committees role and authority within the town council's overall governance structure.

Legal Implications

• Standing Orders provide a comprehensive framework of procedural rules for local councils in England. Standing orders are essential for regulating the conduct of council meetings, ensuring orderly and efficient governance. They include mandatory legal requirements and optional guidelines that councils can adopt or

modify to suit their specific needs. By adhering to these standing orders, councils can ensure transparency, accountability, and consistency in their operations.

Financial Implications

• There are no financial implications arising from the recommendation

Risk Implications

• Financial regulations provide a framework for financial governance, helping councils maintain transparency, accountability, and efficiency in their financial operations. They are crucial for safeguarding public funds and promoting good governance practices.

Equalities Implications

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

This project / issue does not discriminate.

Climate Change Implications

• There are no climate change implications arising from the recommendation

Press Contact

• There are no press implications arising from this report.

6. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

By presenting the polices now allows the opportunity to discuss amendments to the key council policies, prior to these polices being presented at the councils AGM.

7. APPENDICES

Appendix A: Standing Orders Appendix B: Financial Regulations Appendix C: Scheme of Delegation Appendix D: Committee Functions & Terms of Reference



Houghton Regis Town Council

Standing Orders

Date of Approval:	Town Council 22 nd June 2015
Date of Review:	18 th May 2016; 18 th July 2017; 3 rd July 2018; 8 th October 2018
	(following advice from NALC); 15 th May 2019; 18 th May 2022; 17 th
	May 2023; 15 th May 2024; 14 th May 2025

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

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- 2. Proper Officer
- 3. Responsible Financial Officer
- 4. Ordinary Council Meetings
- 5. Disorderly Conduct at Meetings
- 6. Committees & Sub-Committees
- 7. Presence of Non-Members of Committees at Committee Meetings
- 8. Working Groups
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- 27. Restrictions on Councillor Activities
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- 31. Responsibilities under Data Protection Legislation

- 32. Standing Orders Generally33. Virtual attendance

Appendix A – Procedure for Recording Meetings

PREFACE

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

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

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

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

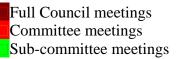
The Chairman of a Town Council is entitled to use the title "Town Mayor". The title confers no additional powers on the chairman, and, in particular, has no implications for his conduct in meetings.

Notes:

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

STANDING ORDERS

1. MEETINGS



Smoking is not permitted at any meeting of the Council.

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

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

- b The minimum three clear days for notice of a meeting does not include the day on which notice was issued, the day of the meeting, a Sunday, a day of the Christmas break, a day of the Easter break or of a bank holiday or a day appointed for public thanksgiving or mourning.
- c The minimum three clear days' public notice for a meeting does not include the day on which the notice was issued or the day of the meeting unless the meeting is convened at shorter notice
- d Meetings shall be open to the public unless their presence is prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for other special reasons. The public's exclusion from part or all of a meeting shall be by a resolution which shall give reasons for the public's exclusion.
- e Members of the public may make representations, ask questions and give evidence at a meeting which they are entitled to attend in respect of the business on the agenda.
- f The period of time designated for public participation at a meeting in accordance with standing order 1(e) above shall not exceed 15 minutes unless directed by the chairman of the meeting.
- g Subject to standing order 1(f) above, a member of the public shall not speak for more than 3 minutes.
- h In accordance with standing order 1(e) above, a question shall not require a response at the meeting nor start a debate on the question. The chairman of the meeting may direct that a written or oral response be given.
- i A person shall raise his hand when requesting to speak.
- j A person who speaks at a meeting shall direct his comments to the chairman of the meeting.
- k Only one person is permitted to speak at a time. If more than one person wants to speak, the chairman of the meeting shall direct the order of speaking.

1 Subject to standing order 1(m), a person who attends a meeting is permitted to report on the meeting whilst the meeting is open to the public. To "report" means to film, photograph, make an audio recording of meeting procedures, use any other means for enabling persons not present to see or hear the meeting as it takes place or later or to report or to provide oral or written commentary about the meeting so that the report or commentary is available as the meeting takes place or later to persons not present. See Appendix A for the Procedure for Recording Meetings

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

See standing orders 4(h) and (i) for the different rules that apply in the election of the Chairman of the Council at the annual meeting of the council.

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

voting rights;

- iv. the grant of dispensations (if any) to councillors and non-councillors with voting rights;
- v. whether a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights left the meeting when matters that they held interests in were being considered;
- vi. if there was a public participation session; and
- vii. the resolutions made.
- u A councillor or a non-councillor with voting rights who has a disclosable pecuniary interest or another interest as set out in the Council's code of conduct in a matter being considered at a meeting is subject to statutory limitations or restrictions under the code on his right to participate and vote on that matter.
 - v No business may be transacted at a meeting unless at least one-third of the whole number of members of the council are present and in no case shall the quorum of a meeting be less than three.

See standing order 6d(vii) for the quorum of a committee or sub-committee meeting.

- W
- If a meeting is or becomes inquorate no business shall be transacted and the meeting shall be closed. The business on the agenda for the meeting shall be adjourned to another meeting.
- x A meeting shall not normally exceed a period of 2.5 hours unless by agreement of those Members present.

2 **PROPER OFFICER**

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

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

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

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

scheme; and

- xvii. retain custody of the seal of the council (if any) which shall not be used without a resolution to that effect.See also standing order 20.
- *c*. The Proper Officer or other staff member(s) nominated by the Council shall be present at every meeting of the council, committee or sub committee.

3 RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER

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

4 ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETINGS

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

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

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

5 DISORDERLY CONDUCT AT MEETINGS

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

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

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

6 COMMITTEES & SUB-COMMITTEES

- a Unless the council determines otherwise, a committee may appoint a subcommittee whose terms of reference and members shall be determined by the committee.
- b The members of a committee may include non-councillors unless it is a committee which regulates and controls the finances of the council.
- c Unless the council determines otherwise, all the members of an advisory committee and a sub-committee of the advisory committee may be non-councillors.
- d The council may appoint standing committees or other committees as may be necessary, and:
 - i. shall determine their terms of reference;
 - ii. shall determine the number and time of the ordinary meetings of a standing committee up until the date of the next annual meeting of full council;
 - iii. shall permit a committee, other than in respect of the ordinary meetings of a committee, to determine the number and time of its meetings;
 - iv. shall, subject to standing orders 6(b) and (c), appoint and determine the terms of office of members of such a committee;
 - v. shall, after it has appointed the members of a standing committee, appoint the chairman of the standing committee;
 - vi. shall permit a committee other than a standing committee, to appoint its own chairman and vice chairman at the first meeting of the committee;
 - vii. shall determine the place, notice requirements and quorum for a meeting of a committee and a sub-committee which shall be no less than three;
 - viii. shall determine if the public may participate at a meeting of a committee;
 - ix. shall determine if the public and press are permitted to attend the meetings of a sub-committee and also the advance public notice requirements, if any, required for the meetings of a sub-committee;

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

7 PRESENCE OF NON-MEMBERS OF COMMITTEES AT COMMITTEE MEETINGS

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

8 WORKING GROUPS

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

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

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

10 QUESTIONS

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

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

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

typographical errors in the wording of the motion.

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

12 MOTIONS NOT REQUIRING WRITTEN NOTICE

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

xvii. to close a meeting.

13 RULES OF DEBATE AT MEETINGS

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

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

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

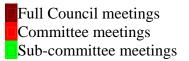
14 RULES OF DEBATE – RESOLUTIONS

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

15 PREVIOUS RESOLUTIONS

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

16 DRAFT MINUTES



a If the draft minutes of a preceding meeting have been served on councillors with the agenda to attend the meeting at which they are due to be approved for accuracy, they shall be taken as read.

- b There shall be no discussion about the draft minutes of a preceding meeting except in relation to their accuracy. A motion to correct an inaccuracy in the draft minutes shall be moved in accordance with standing order 12(a)(i).
- c The accuracy of draft minutes, including any amendment(s) made to them, shall be confirmed by resolution and shall be signed by the chairman of the meeting and stand as an accurate record of the meeting to which the minutes relate.
- d If the chairman of the meeting does not consider the minutes to be an accurate record of the meeting to which they relate, he shall sign the minutes and include a paragraph in the following terms or to the same effect:

"The chairman of this meeting does not believe that the minutes of the meeting of the () held on [date] in respect of () were a correct record but his view was not upheld by the meeting and the minutes are confirmed as an accurate record of the proceedings."

- e If the Council's gross annual income and expenditure (whichever is higher) does not exceed £25,000, it shall publish draft minutes on a website which is publicly accessible and free of charge not later than one month after the meeting has taken place.
- f Subject to the publication of draft minutes in accordance with standing order 16(e) and standing order 30(a) and following a resolution which confirms the accuracy of the minutes of a meeting, the draft minutes or recordings of the meeting for which approved minutes exist shall be destroyed.

17. ACCOUNTS AND ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS

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

ii the committee's aggregate income and expenditure for the year to date;

iii the balances held which includes a comparison with the budget for the financial year and highlights any actual or potential overspends.

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

18 FINANCIAL CONTROLS AND PROCUREMENT

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

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

19 ESTIMATES / PRECEPTS

a. The Council shall approve written estimates for the coming financial year at its meeting before the end of January. Once the Estimates have been accepted they

shall be known as the Budget.

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

20 EXECUTION AND SEALING OF LEGAL DEEDS

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

21 MANAGEMENT OF INFORMATION

See also standing order 31.

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

22 HANDLING STAFF MATTERS

a Any persons responsible for all or part of the management of staff shall treat as confidential the written records of all meetings relating to their performance, capabilities, grievance or disciplinary matters.

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

23 VOTING ON APPOINTMENTS

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

24 CANVASSING OF AND RECOMMENDATIONS BY COUNCILLORS

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

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

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

25 CODE OF CONDUCT AND DISPENSATIONS

See also standing order 1(u).

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

committee for which the dispensation is required.

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

26 CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINTS

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

27 RESTRICTIONS ON COUNCILLOR ACTIVITIES

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

28 COMMUNICATING WITH DISTRICT AND COUNTY OR UNITARY COUNCILLORS

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

29 RELATIONS WITH THE PRESS/MEDIA

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

30 RESPONSIBILITIES TO PROVIDE INFORMATION

See also standing order 31.

- a In accordance with freedom of information legislation, the Council shall publish information in accordance with its publication scheme and respond to requests for information held by the Council.
- b The Council shall publish information in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government (Transparency Requirements) (England) Regulations 2015.
- **31. RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER DATA PROTECTION LEGISLATION** (Below is not an exhaustive list). See also standing order 21
- a The Council may appoint a Data Protection Officer.
- b. The Council shall have policies and procedures in place to respond to an individual exercising statutory rights concerning his personal data.
- c. The Council shall have a written policy in place for responding to and managing a personal date breach.
- d. The Council shall keep a record of all personal data breaches comprising the facts relating to the personal data breach, its effects and the remedial

action taken.

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

32 STANDING ORDERS GENERALLY

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

33. VIRTUAL ATTENDANCE

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

APPENDIX A

Procedure for recording meetings

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

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

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

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



Houghton Regis Town Council

Financial Regulations

Date of Approval:	16 th December 2024; 14 th May 2025(TBC)
Date of Review:	2 nd December 2024; 17th March 2025

Based on NALC Financial Regulations 2024

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1. General

- 1.1 These Financial Regulations govern the financial management of the council and may only be amended or varied by resolution of the council. They are one of the council's governing documents and shall be observed in conjunction with the council's Standing Orders.
- 1.2 Councillors are expected to follow these regulations and not to entice employees to breach them. Failure to follow these regulations brings the office of councillor into disrepute.
- 1.3 Wilful breach of these regulations by an employee may result in disciplinary proceedings.
- 1.4 In these Financial Regulations:
 - 'Accounts and Audit Regulations' means the regulations issued under Sections 32, 43(2) and 46 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, or any superseding legislation, and then in force, unless otherwise specified.
 - "Approve" refers to an online action, allowing an electronic transaction to take place.
 - "Authorise" refers to a decision by the council, or a committee or an officer, to allow something to happen.
 - 'Proper practices' means those set out in The Practitioners' Guide
 - Practitioners' Guide refers to the guide issued by the Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance (JPAG) and published by NALC in England or Governance and Accountability for Local Councils in Wales
 A Practitioners Guide jointly published by One Voice Wales and the Society of Local Council Clerks in Wales.
 - 'Must' and **bold text** refer to a statutory obligation the council cannot change.
 - 'Shall' refers to a non-statutory instruction by the council to its members and staff.
- 1.5 The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) holds a statutory office, appointed by the council. The Clerk has been appointed as RFO and these regulations apply accordingly. The RFO;
 - acts under the policy direction of the council;
 - administers the council's financial affairs in accordance with all Acts, Regulations and proper practices;
 - determines on behalf of the council its accounting records and control systems;
 - ensures the accounting control systems are observed;
 - ensures the accounting records are kept up to date;

- seeks economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of council resources; and
- produces financial management information as required by the council.

1.6 **The council must not delegate any decision regarding:**

- setting the final budget or the precept (council tax requirement);
- the outcome of a review of the effectiveness of its internal controls
- approving accounting statements;
- approving an annual governance statement;
- borrowing;
- declaring eligibility for the General Power of Competence; and
- addressing recommendations from the internal or external auditors
- 1.7 In addition, the council shall:
 - determine and regularly review the bank mandate for all council bank accounts;
 - authorise any grant or single commitment in excess of the revenue budget provided.

2. Risk management and internal control

- 2.1. The council must ensure that it has a sound system of internal control, which delivers effective financial, operational and risk management.
- 2.2 The Clerk shall prepare, for approval by the council, a risk management policy covering all activities of the council. This policy and consequential risk management arrangements shall be reviewed by the council at least annually.
- 2.3. When considering any new activity, the Clerk shall prepare a draft risk assessment including risk management proposals for consideration by the council.
- 2.4. At least once a year, the council must review the effectiveness of its system of internal control, before approving the Annual Governance Statement.
- 2.5. The accounting control systems determined by the RFO must include measures to:
 - ensure that risk is appropriately managed;
 - ensure the prompt, accurate recording of financial transactions;
 - prevent and detect inaccuracy or fraud; and

- allow the reconstitution of any lost records;
- identify the duties of officers dealing with transactions and
- ensure division of responsibilities.
- 2.6. At least once in each quarter, and at each financial year end, a member other than the Chair shall be appointed to verify bank reconciliations (for all accounts) produced by the RFO. The member shall sign and date the reconciliations and the original bank statements (or similar document) as evidence of this. This activity, including any exceptions, shall be reported to and noted by the council.
- 2.7. Regular back-up copies shall be made of the records on any council computer and stored either online or in a separate location from the computer. The council shall put measures in place to ensure that the ability to access any council computer is not lost if an employee leaves or is incapacitated for any reason.

3. Accounts and audit

- 3.1 All accounting procedures and financial records of the council shall be determined by the RFO in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- **3.2** The accounting records determined by the RFO must be sufficient to explain the council's transactions and to disclose its financial position with reasonably accuracy at any time. In particular, they must contain:
 - day-to-day entries of all sums of money received and expended by the council and the matters to which they relate;
 - a record of the assets and liabilities of the council;
- 3.3 The accounting records shall be designed to facilitate the efficient preparation of the accounting statements in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return.
- 3.4 The RFO shall complete and certify the annual Accounting Statements of the council contained in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with proper practices, as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year. Having certified the Accounting Statements, the RFO shall submit them (with any related documents) to the council, within the timescales required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 3.5 The council must ensure that there is an adequate and effective system of internal audit of its accounting records and internal control system in accordance with proper practices.
- 3.6 Any officer or member of the council must make available such documents and records as the internal or external auditor consider 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.

- 3.7 The internal auditor shall be appointed by [the council] and shall carry out their work to evaluate the effectiveness of the council's risk management, control and governance processes in accordance with proper practices specified in the Practitioners' Guide.
- 3.8 The council shall ensure that the internal auditor:
 - is competent and independent of the financial operations of the council;
 - reports to council in writing, or in person, on a regular basis with a minimum of one written report during each financial year;
 - can demonstrate competence, objectivity and independence, free from any actual or perceived conflicts of interest, including those arising from family relationships; and
 - has no involvement in the management or control of the council
- 3.9 Internal or external auditors may not under any circumstances:
 - perform any operational duties for the council;
 - initiate or approve accounting transactions;
 - provide financial, legal or other advice including in relation to any future 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.
- 3.10 For the avoidance of doubt, in relation to internal audit the terms 'independent' and 'independence' shall have the same meaning as described in The Practitioners Guide.
- 3.11 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 documents required by the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, or any superseding legislation, and the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 3.12 The RFO shall, without undue delay, bring to the attention of all councillors any correspondence or report from internal or external auditors.

4. Budget and precept

4.1 Before setting a precept, the council must calculate its council tax requirement for each financial year by preparing and approving a budget, in accordance with The Local Government Finance Act 1992 or succeeding legislation.

- 4.2 Budgets for salaries and wages, including employer contributions shall be reviewed by the relevant committee at least annually by December for the following financial year and the final version shall be evidenced by a hard copy schedule signed by the Clerk and the Chair of the relevant committee.
- 4.3 No later than November each year, the RFO shall prepare a draft budget with detailed estimates of all receipts and payments/income and expenditure for the following financial year taking account of the lifespan of assets and cost implications of repair or replacement.
- 4.4 Unspent budgets for completed projects shall not be carried forward to a subsequent year. Unspent funds for partially completed projects may only be carried forward (by placing them in an earmarked reserve) with the formal approval of the full council.
- 4.5 Each committee (if any) shall review its draft budget and submit any proposed amendments to the council not later than the end of January each year.
- 4.6 The draft budget forecast, including any recommendations for the use or accumulation of reserves, shall be considered by the council.
- 4.7 Having considered the proposed budget, the council shall determine its council tax (England) requirement by setting a budget. The council shall set a precept for this amount no later than the end of January for the ensuing financial year.
- 4.8 Any member with council tax unpaid for more than two months is prohibited from voting on the budget or precept by Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and must disclose at the start of the meeting that Section 106 applies to them.
- 4.9 The RFO shall **issue the precept to the billing authority no later than the end of February** and supply each member with a copy of the agreed annual budget.
- 4.10 The agreed budget provides a basis for monitoring progress during the year by comparing actual spending and income against what was planned.
- 4.11 Any addition to, or withdrawal from, any earmarked reserve shall be agreed by the council or relevant committee.

5. Procurement

- 5.1 Members and officers are responsible for obtaining value for money at all times. Any officer procuring goods, services or works should ensure, as far as practicable, that the best available terms are obtained, usually by obtaining prices from several suppliers.
- 5.2 The RFO should verify the lawful nature of any proposed purchase before it is made and in the case of new or infrequent purchases, should ensure that

the legal power being used is reported to the meeting at which the order is authorised and also recorded in the minutes.

- 5.3 Every contract shall comply with these the council's Standing Orders and these Financial Regulations and no exceptions shall be made, except in an emergency.
- 5.4 For a contract for the supply of goods, services or works where the estimated value will exceed the thresholds set by Parliament, the full requirements of The Public Contracts Regulations 2015 or any superseding legislation ("the Legislation"), must be followed in respect of the tendering, award and notification of that contract.
- 5.5 Where the estimated value is below the Government threshold, the council shall (with the exception of items listed in paragraph 5.12) obtain prices as follows:
- 5.6 For contracts estimated to exceed £100,000 including VAT, the Clerk shall advertise an open invitation for tenders in compliance with any relevant provisions of the Legislation. Tenders shall be invited in accordance with Appendix 1.
- 5.7 For contracts estimated to be over £30,000 including VAT, the council must comply with any requirements of the Legislation¹ regarding the advertising of contract opportunities and the publication of notices about the award of contracts.
- 5.8 For contracts greater than £5,000 excluding VAT the Clerk or Head of Service shall seek at least 3 fixed-price quotes;
- 5.9 where the value is between £500 and £5,000 excluding VAT, the Clerk or Head of Service shall try to obtain 3 estimates which might include evidence of online prices, or recent prices from regular suppliers.
- 5.10 For smaller purchases, all officers shall seek to achieve value for money.
- 5.11 Contracts must not be split into smaller lots to avoid compliance with these rules.
- 5.12 The requirement to obtain competitive prices in these regulations need not apply to contracts that relate to items (i) to (iv) below:
 - i. specialist services, such as legal professionals acting in disputes;
 - ii. repairs to, or parts for, existing machinery or equipment;
 - iii. works, goods or services that constitute an extension of an existing contract;
 - iv. goods or services that are only available from one supplier or are sold at a fixed price.

¹ The Regulations require councils to use the Contracts Finder website if they advertise contract opportunities and also to publicise the award of contracts over £30,000 including VAT, regardless of whether they were advertised.

- 5.13 When applications are made to waive this financial regulation to enable a price to be negotiated without competition, the reason should be set out in a recommendation to the council or relevant committee. Avoidance of competition is not a valid reason.
- 5.14 The council shall not be obliged to accept the lowest or any tender, quote or estimate.
- 5.15 Individual purchases within an agreed budget for that type of expenditure may be authorised by:
 - The Budget Holder, under delegated authority.
 - Such authorisation must be supported by a minute or other auditable evidence trail.
- 5.16 No individual member, or informal group of members may issue an official order or make any contract on behalf of the council.
- 5.17 No expenditure may be authorised that will exceed the budget for that type of expenditure other than by resolution of the council or a duly delegated committee acting within its Terms of Reference except in an emergency.
- 5.18 In cases of serious risk to the delivery of council services or to public safety on council premises, the clerk may authorise expenditure of up to 5,000 excluding VAT on repair, replacement or other work that in their judgement is necessary, whether or not there is any budget for such expenditure. The Clerk shall report such action to the Chair as soon as possible and to the council as soon as practicable thereafter.
- 5.19 No expenditure shall be authorised, no contract entered into, or tender accepted in relation to any major project, unless the delegated committee is satisfied that the necessary funds are available and that where a loan is required, Government borrowing approval has been obtained first.
- 5.20 An official order or letter shall be issued for all work, goods and services. Copies of orders shall be retained, along with evidence of receipt of goods.
- 5.21 Any ordering system can be misused and access to them shall be controlled by the RFO.

6. Banking and payments

- 6.1 The council's banking arrangements, including the bank mandate, shall be made by the RFO and authorised by the council; banking arrangements shall not be delegated to a committee. The council has resolved to bank with NatWest. The arrangements shall be reviewed annually for security and efficiency.
- 6.2 The council must have safe and efficient arrangements for making payments, to safeguard against the possibility of fraud or error. Wherever possible, more than one person should be involved in any payment, for

example by dual online authorisation or dual cheque signing. Even where a purchase has been authorised, the payment must also be authorised, and only authorised payments shall be approved or signed to allow the funds to leave the council's bank.

- 6.3 All invoices for payment should be examined for arithmetical accuracy, analysed to the appropriate expenditure heading and verified to confirm that the work, goods or services were received, checked and represent expenditure previously authorised by the council before being certified by the relevant Head of Service. Where the certification of invoices is done as a batch, this shall include a statement by the RFO that all invoices listed have been 'examined, verified and certified' by the RFO.
- 6.4 Personal payments (including salaries, wages, expenses and any payment made in relation to the termination of employment) may be summarised to avoid disclosing any personal information.
- 6.5 All payments shall be made by online banking, in accordance with a resolution of the council or duly delegated committee, unless the council resolves to use a different payment method.
- 6.6 For each financial year the RFO may draw up a schedule of regular payments due in relation to a continuing contract or obligation (such as Salaries, PAYE, National Insurance, pension contributions, rent, rates, regular maintenance contracts and similar items), which the council or a duly delegated committee may authorise in advance for the year.
- 6.7 A copy of this schedule of regular payments shall be signed by two members on each and every occasion when payment is made to reduce the risk of duplicate payments.
- 6.8 A list of such payments shall be reported to the next appropriate meeting of the Corporate Services Committee for information only.
- 6.9 The RFO shall have delegated authority to authorise payments in the following circumstances:
 - i. payments of up to £5,000 excluding VAT in cases of serious risk to the delivery of council services or to public safety on council premises.
 - ii. any payment necessary to avoid a charge under the Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1998 or to comply with contractual terms, where the due date for payment is before the next scheduled meeting of the Corporate Services Committee, where the RFO certify that there is no dispute or other reason to delay payment, provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of council.
 - iii. Fund transfers within the councils banking arrangements up to the value of half the precept, provided that a list of such movements

between the councils bank accounts shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of council or corporate services committee.

6.10 The RFO shall present a schedule of payments requiring authorisation, forming part of the agenda for the meeting, together with the relevant invoices, to the council or Corporate Services committee. The council or Corporate Services committee shall review the schedule for compliance and, having satisfied itself, shall authorise payment by resolution. The authorised schedule shall be initialled immediately below the last item by the person chairing the meeting. A detailed list of all payments shall be disclosed within or as an attachment to the minutes of that meeting.

7. Electronic payments

- 7.1 Where internet banking arrangements are made with any bank, RFO shall be appointed as the Service Administrator. The bank mandate agreed by the council shall identify a number of councillors who will be authorised to approve transactions on those accounts and a minimum of two people will be involved in any online approval process. The Clerk may be an authorised signatory, but no signatory should be involved in approving any payment to themselves.
- 7.2 All authorised signatories shall have access, if requested, to view the council's bank accounts online.
- 7.3 No employee or councillor shall disclose any PIN or password, relevant to the council or its banking, to anyone not authorised in writing by the council or a duly delegated committee.
- 7.4 The Service Administrator shall set up all items due for payment online. A list of payments for approval, together with copies of the relevant invoices, shall be sent by email to two authorised signatories.
- 7.5 In the prolonged absence of the Service Administrator an authorised signatory shall set up any payments due before the return of the Service Administrator.
- 7.6 Two councillors who are authorised signatories shall check the payment details against the invoices before approving each payment.
- 7.7 Evidence shall be retained showing which members approved the payment.
- 7.8 A full list of all payments made in a month shall be provided to the next Corporate Services committee meeting.
- 7.9 With the approval of the Corporate Services Committee in each case, regular payments (such as gas, electricity, telephone, broadband, water, National Non-Domestic Rates, refuse collection, pension contributions and HMRC payments) may be made by variable direct debit, provided that the instructions are signed/approved online by the RFO. The approval of the use

of each variable direct debit shall be reviewed by the Corporate Services committee at least every two years.

- 7.10 Payment may be made by BACS or CHAPS by resolution of the Corporate Services committee provided that each payment is approved online by two authorised bank signatories, evidence is retained, and any payments are reported to the Corporate Services committee at the next meeting. The approval of the use of BACS or CHAPS shall be renewed by resolution of the council at least every two years.
- 7.11 If thought appropriate by the council, regular payments of fixed sums may be made by banker's standing order, provided that the instructions are signed by the RFO, evidence of this is retained and any payments are reported to council when made. The approval of the use of a banker's standing order shall be reviewed by the Corporate Services committee at least every two years.
- 7.12 Account details for suppliers may only be changed upon written notification by the supplier verified by the RFO and authorised signatory. This is a potential area for fraud and the individuals involved should ensure that any change is genuine. Data held should be checked with suppliers every two years.
- 7.13 Members and officers shall ensure that any computer used for the council's financial business has adequate security, with anti-virus, anti-spyware and firewall software installed and regularly updated.
- 7.14 Remembered password facilities should not be used on any computer used for council banking.

8. Cheque payments

- 8.1 Cheques or orders for payment in accordance with a resolution or delegated decision shall be signed by two members and countersigned by an authorised officer.
- 8.2 A signatory having a family or business relationship with the beneficiary of a payment shall not, under normal circumstances, be a signatory to that payment.
- 8.3 To indicate agreement of the details on the cheque with the counterfoil and the invoice or similar documentation, the signatories shall also initial the cheque counterfoil and invoice.
- 8.4 Cheques or orders for payment shall not normally be presented for signature other than at, or immediately before or after a council or Corporate Services committee meeting. Any signatures obtained away from council meetings shall be reported to the council or Corporate Services committee at the next convenient meeting.

9. Payment cards

- 9.1 Any Debit Card issued for use will be specifically restricted to the Clerk and will also be restricted to a single transaction maximum value of £1000 unless authorised by council or corporate services committee in writing before any order is placed.
- 9.2 A pre-paid debit card may be issued to employees with varying limits. These limits will be set by the Corporate Services committee. Transactions and purchases made will be reported to Corporate Services committee and authority for topping-up shall be at the discretion of Corporate Services committee.
- 9.3 Any corporate credit card or trade card account opened by the council will be specifically restricted to use by the Clerk and Heads of Service and any balance shall be paid in full each month.
- 9.4 Personal credit or debit cards of members or staff shall not be used under any circumstances.

10. Petty Cash

- 10.1 The RFO shall maintain a petty cash float of £250 and may provide petty cash to officers for the purpose of defraying operational and other expenses.
 - a) Vouchers for payments made from petty cash shall be kept, along with receipts to substantiate every payment.
 - b) Cash income received must not be paid into the petty cash float but must be separately banked, as provided elsewhere in these regulations.
 - c) Payments to maintain the petty cash float shall be shown separately on any schedule of payments presented for approval.

11. Payment of salaries and allowances

11.1 As an employer, the council must make arrangements to comply with the statutory requirements of PAYE legislation.

11.2 Councillors allowances (where paid) are also liable to deduction of tax under PAYE rules and must be taxed correctly before payment.

- 11.3 Salary rates shall be agreed by the council, or a duly delegated committee. No changes shall be made to any employee's gross pay, emoluments, or terms and conditions of employment without the prior consent of the Corporate Services committee.
- 11.4 Payment of salaries shall be made, after deduction of tax, national insurance, pension contributions and any similar statutory or discretionary deductions, on the dates stipulated in employment contracts.

- 11.5 Deductions from salary shall be paid to the relevant bodies within the required timescales, provided that each payment is reported, as set out in these regulations above.
- 11.6 Each payment to employees of net salary and to the appropriate creditor of the statutory and discretionary deductions shall be recorded in a payroll control account or other separate confidential record, with the total of such payments each calendar month reported in the cashbook. Payroll reports will be reviewed, under an exclusion of press and public agenda item, by the Corporate Services committee to ensure that the correct payments have been made.
- 11.7 Any termination payments shall be supported by a report to the council, setting out a clear business case. Termination payments shall only be authorised by the full council.
- 11.8 Before employing interim staff, the council must consider a full business case.

12. Loans and investments

- 12.1 Any application for Government approval to borrow money and subsequent arrangements for a loan must be authorised by the full council and recorded in the minutes. All borrowing shall be in the name of the council, after obtaining any necessary approval.
- 12.2 Any financial arrangement which does not require formal borrowing approval from the Secretary of State (such as Hire Purchase, Leasing of tangible assets or loans to be repaid within the financial year) must be authorised by the full council, following a written report on the value for money of the proposed transaction.
- 12.3 The council shall consider the requirement for an Investment Strategy and Policy in accordance with Statutory Guidance on Local Government Investments, which must written be in accordance with relevant regulations, proper practices and guidance. Any Strategy and Policy shall be reviewed by the council at least annually.
- 12.4 All investment of money under the control of the council shall be in the name of the council.
- 12.5 All investment certificates and other documents relating thereto shall be retained in the custody of the RFO.
- 12.6 Payments in respect of short term or long-term investments, including transfers between bank accounts held in the same bank, shall be made in accordance with these regulations.

13. Income

13.1 The collection of all sums due to the council shall be the responsibility of and under the supervision of the RFO.

- 13.2 The council will review all fees and charges for work done, services provided, or goods sold at least annually as part of the budget-setting process, following a report of the Clerk. The RFO shall be responsible for the collection of all amounts due to the council.
- 13.3 Any sums found to be irrecoverable and any bad debts shall be reported to the council by the RFO and shall be written off in the year. The council's approval shall be shown in the accounting records.
- 13.4 All sums received on behalf of the council shall be deposited intact with the council's bankers, with such frequency as the RFO considers necessary. The origin of each receipt shall clearly be recorded on the paying-in slip or other record.
- 13.5 Personal cheques shall not be cashed out of money held on behalf of the council.
- 13.6 The RFO shall ensure that VAT is correctly recorded in the council's accounting software and that any VAT Return required is submitted from the software by the due date.

14. Payments under contracts for building or other construction works

- 14.1 Where contracts provide for payment by instalments the RFO shall maintain a record of all such payments, which shall be made within the time specified in the contract based on signed certificates from the architect or other consultant engaged to supervise the works.
- 14.2 Any variation of, addition to or omission from a contract must be authorised by the Clerk to the contractor in writing, with the council being informed where the final cost is likely to exceed the contract sum by 5% or more, or likely to exceed the budget available.

15. Stores and equipment

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

16. Assets, properties and estates

16.1 The Clerk shall make arrangements for the safe custody of all title deeds and Land Registry Certificates of properties held by the council.

- 16.2 The RFO shall ensure that an appropriate and accurate Register of Assets and Investments is kept up to date, with a record of all properties held by the council, their location, extent, plan, reference, purchase details, nature of the interest, tenancies granted, rents payable and purpose for which held, in accordance with Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 16.3 The continued existence of tangible assets shown in the Register shall be verified at least annually, possibly in conjunction with a health and safety inspection of assets.
- 16.4 No interest in land shall be purchased or otherwise acquired, sold, leased or otherwise disposed of without the authority of the council, together with any other consents required by law. In each case a written report shall be provided to council in respect of valuation and surveyed condition of the property (including matters such as planning permissions and covenants) together with a proper business case (including an adequate level of consultation with the electorate where required by law).
- 16.5 No tangible moveable property shall be purchased or otherwise acquired, sold, leased or otherwise disposed of, without the authority of the council, together with any other consents required by law, except where the estimated value of any one item does not exceed £500. In each case a written report shall be provided to council with a full business case.

17. Insurance

- 17.1 The RFO shall keep a record of all insurances effected by the council and the property and risks covered, reviewing these annually before the renewal date in conjunction with the council's review of risk management.
- 17.2 The Heads of Service shall give prompt notification to the RFO of all new risks, properties or vehicles which require to be insured and of any alterations affecting existing insurances.
- 17.3 The RFO shall be notified of any loss, liability, damage or event likely to lead to a claim, and shall report these to the Corporate Services committee at the next available meeting. The RFO shall negotiate all claims on the council's insurers.
- 17.4 All appropriate members and employees of the council shall be included in a suitable form of security or fidelity guarantee insurance which shall cover the maximum risk exposure as determined annually by the council, or duly delegated committee.

18. Charities

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

19. Suspension and revision of Financial Regulations

- 19.1 The council shall review these Financial Regulations annually and following any change of clerk or RFO. The Clerk shall monitor changes in legislation or proper practices and advise the council of any need to amend these Financial Regulations.
- 19.2 The council may, by resolution duly notified prior to the relevant meeting of council, suspend any part of these Financial Regulations, provided that reasons for the suspension are recorded and that an assessment of the risks arising has been presented to all members. Suspension does not disapply any legislation or permit the council to act unlawfully.
- 19.3 The council may temporarily amend these Financial Regulations by a duly notified resolution, to cope with periods of absence, local government reorganisation, national restrictions or other exceptional circumstances.

Appendix 1 - Tender process

- 1) Any invitation to tender shall state the general nature of the intended contract and the Clerk shall obtain the necessary technical assistance to prepare a specification in appropriate cases.
- 2) The invitation shall in addition state that tenders must be addressed to the Clerk in the ordinary course of post, unless an electronic tendering process has been agreed by the council.
- 3) Where a postal process is used, each tendering firm shall be supplied with a specifically marked envelope in which the tender is to be sealed and remain sealed until the prescribed date for opening tenders for that contract. All sealed tenders shall be opened at the same time on the prescribed date by the Clerk in the presence of at least one member of council.
- 4) Where an electronic tendering process is used, the council shall use a specific email address that will be monitored to ensure that nobody accesses any tender before the expiry of the deadline for submission.
- 5) Any invitation to tender issued under this regulation shall be subject to Standing Order 18 and shall refer to the terms of the Bribery Act 2010.
- 6) Where the council, or duly delegated committee, does not accept any tender, quote or estimate, the work is not allocated and the council requires further pricing, no person shall be permitted to submit a later tender, estimate or quote who was present when the original decision-making process was being undertaken.

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Houghton Regis Town Council

Scheme of Delegation

Date of Approval:	Town Council 18 th April 2016
Date of Review:	24 th May 2017; 3 rd July 2018; 15 th May 2019; 20 th July 2020, 12 th
	May 2021, 18 th May 2022, 17 th May 2023, 15 th May 2024; 14 th May
	2025

This Scheme of Delegation sets out how the Council delegates some of its powers and duties to Officers of the Council. These delegations are necessary for the effective day to day running of the Council and to prevent every decision having to come to a Committee/Council meeting for agreement. This Scheme of Delegation will be reviewed by Council annually alongside the review of Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.

This scheme does not delegate to Officers any matter that is reserved by law to the Council or may not be delegated to an Officer.

The Town Clerk may delegate any powers and duties to other Officers within the Council. A delegation to a subordinate Officer shall not prevent the Town Clerk from exercising the same power or duty at the same time

The Town Clerk shall exercise these powers in accordance with:

- Approved budgets
- Council's Standing Orders & Financial Regulations
- Council's Policies
- All statutory common law and contractual requirements

The Scheme places an obligation on Officers to keep Members of the Council properly informed of any action arising under these delegations and to record decisions.

Under this Scheme Officers are required to maintain an up to date schedule of decisions made, including the Scheme of Delegation reference number the decision has been made under, plus any actions arising from these delegations. This schedule is available upon request for inspection by any councillor of HRTC or member of the public, subject to compliance with the Town Councils approved Publication Scheme and GDPR

GENERAL		
1	To exercise any statute, regulation or order which confers functions	Town Clerk
	or duties of the Proper Officer	
2	To sign, or where appropriate, have sealed on behalf of the Town	Town Clerk
	Council any Orders, Deeds or Documents necessary to give effect to	
	any of the matters contained in reports or in any resolution passed by	
	the Town Council	
3	To take any proceedings or other steps as may be necessary to	Town Clerk
	enforce and recover any debt owing or other obligation to the Council	
4	To institute and appear in legal proceedings authorised by the council	Town Clerk
5	To appear or make representations to any tribunal or public Inquiry	Town Clerk
	into any matter in which the Council has an interest (in its own right	
	or on behalf of the citizens of Houghton Regis)	F C 1 1
6	To alter the date or time of a Council, Committee, Sub-Committee,	Town Clerk
	Working Group meeting but, before doing so shall consult the	
7	Mayor, Group Leaders or Committee Chairmen	T
7	To decide arrangements for the closure of the council offices in the	Town Clerk
8	Christmas/New Year period, subject to consultation with the Mayor	Hood of
8	To deal with the day-to-day matters relating to the use and hiring of	Head of Democratic
	Council Buildings	Services
9	To negotiate and enter into contractual arrangements for	Civic & Events
9	To negotiate and enter into contractual arrangements for artistes/promoters in relation to events held in Houghton Regis	Manager
	organised by the Town Council	wanagei
10	To act as the Council's Designated Officer for the purposes of the	Town Clerk
10	Freedom of Information Act 2000	10wil Clerk
11.	To apply for planning consent for the carrying out of development	Town Clerk
11.	by the Town Council.	rown cherk
12.	To respond to consultations on planning applications/highway	Head of
	matters/rights of way matters/street naming and other matters subject	Democratic
	to the comments of the Planning Committee	Services
13	To respond to complaints made under the Council's complaints	Town Clerk
	procedure and to make such ex-gratia payments in settlement of such	
	complaints as are considered justified, subject to ratification by the	
	Corporate Services Committee	
14	To manage, monitor and review the Council's internal control	Town Clerk
	procedures	
15	To manage, monitor and review the Council's Corporate Risk	Town Clerk
	Management Strategy	
16	To arrange all civic ceremonies and ancillary events in consultation	Civic & Events
	with the Mayor	Manager
17	To maintain the Council's Standing Orders	Town Clerk
FINANCIAL		
18	To be the Responsible Financial Officer for the purposes of s151	Town Clerk
	Local Government Act 1972	

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39To determine the Council's insurance requirements on behalf of the CouncilTown Clerk	38		Town Clerk
		To determine the Council's insurance requirements on behalf of the	
	40		Town Clerk

41	To enter into contracts for the purchase and supply of goods and services for the use in their respective services within estimates	Town Clerk
42	To prepare a draft budget for consideration by the Council	Town Clerk
43	To prepare the final accounts for each financial year	Town Clerk
44	To pay full compensation for loss where the Council is likely to be	Town Clerk
	legally liable to pay compensation, where sued	
45	To pay any proved out of pocket expenses of complaints where	Town Clerk
_	complaint is upheld	
46	To provide banking facilities for the Mayor's Charity Fund and to	Town Clerk
	pay the Mayor's Annual Allowance as may be determined from time	
	to time	
47	To maintain the Council's Financial Regulations	Town Clerk
	PLOYMENT	rown chorn
48	To exercise the functions of the Council's Head of Paid Service under	Town Clerk
10	S4 Local Government & Housing Act 1989	10wn Clerk
49	To manage the Council staff in accordance with the Council's	Town Clerk
т <i>)</i>	Policies, Procedures and Budget	10wii Cicik
50	To appoint posts including apprentices	Town Clerk
51	To appoint posts including apprentices To appoint temporary employees as and when required within the	Town Clerk
51	budget estimates	I UWII CIEIK
52	To prepare job description and person specifications, placing of	Town Clerk
52	advertisements and short-listing	10wn Clerk
53	To approve individual salary grading within any job evaluation	Town Clerk
55	grading structure approved by Council	TOWIT CICIK
54	To manage staff performance	Town Clerk
55	To control discipline and performance, including power of	Town Clerk
55	suspension and dismissal	TOWIT CICIK
56	To exercise Disciplinary & Grievance Procedures in accordance with	Town Clerk
50	the Council's Procedures	10wii Cicik
57	To determine approved duties for payment of travel, subsistence and	Town Clerk
57	car allowances to Officers where they represent the Council	TOWIT CICIK
58	To approve/refuse applications for re-grading, remove any bars in	Town Clerk
50	salary scales and to authorise salary increments and accelerated	TOWIT CICIK
	increments.	
59	To approve the payment of overtime	Town Clerk
60	To agree minor variations to the conditions of employment	Town Clerk
61	To implement and monitor arrangements for annual leave, flexi-time,	Town Clerk
01	sickness absence, flexible/hybrid working, maternity and paternity	
	leave in accordance with the Council's Policies	
<u>62</u>	To approve changes to Council polices reflecting changes to	Head of
<u>U</u> 2	legislation, to correct grammatical / typographical errors, and to basic	<u>Corporate</u>
	/ non fundamental updates such as changes to line management titles,	Services
	job titles etc.	501 11005
63	To authorise training in line with Council's Policies	Town Clerk
		Town Clerk
64 65	To authorise the provision of branded clothing & PPE To approve the payment of claims from employees for compensation	Town Clerk
05		I UWII CIEľK
66	for loss or damage to personal property	Town Clark
66	To negotiate and agree settlements on behalf of the Council in relation to any proceedings in the Employment Tribunal	Town Clerk
	relation to any proceedings in the Employment Tribunal	

TTE	ALTH AND SAFETY	
84	To engage valuers or selling agents on behalf of the Council	Town Clerk
		and Community Services
83	Administrator To make applications for all statutory consents necessitated by any approved Council proposal or development	Head of Environmental
82	To requisition off site services in respect of any construction contract approved by the Council for which they act as Architect or Contract	Town Clerk
81	To appoint the Principal Contractor and Planning Supervisors for the purposes of the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations.	Town Clerk
80	To place architectural, quantity surveying, civil engineering and other similar specialist work with outside agencies within the appropriate fee scale and the Council's relevant estimates, standing orders and financial regulations	Town Clerk
79	To exercise responsibility for the safe custody and maintenance of the Civic Regalia	Town Clerk
78	To direct the custody of Council property and documents in accordance with s226 Local Government Act 1972	Town Clerk
77	To initiate legal action or proceedings against unauthorised encampments or encroachments on Council land	Town Clerk
76	To grant easements, wayleaves and licence over Council land	Town Clerk
	salvage scrap and other waste	Environmental and Community Services
74 75	To agree the terms of any lease, licence, conveyance or transfer To sell surplus materials, vehicles, plant, equipment and goods,	Town Clerk Head of
13		Environmental and Community Services
PR(73	DPERTY To manage land and property of the Council	Head of
	absence	Corporate Services
72	To exercise any functions delegated to the Town Clerk in his/her	Head of
71	which the Council is invited unless the Council has indicated otherwise and to exercise any voting rights conferred by the corporate membership of any body To offer training to Councillors	Town Clerk
70	To represent the Council at any conference, meeting, or inquiry to	Town Clerk
68 69	To terminate employment during probation and to review salary on completion of probationary periods. To commission legal and professional advice on staffing matters	Town Clerk Town Clerk
67	To agree to premature retirement on the grounds of duly certified ill health	Town Clerk

85	To oversee the discharge of the Council's responsibilities under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974	Town Clerk
LEC	GAL PROCEEDINGS	
86	To take and discontinue legal proceedings in any court or at any tribunal	Town Clerk
87	To take Counsel's advice or instruct Counsel to represent the Council	Town Clerk
88	 To seek injunctions and commence proceedings for the purposes of: Enforcement in accordance with the Council's Policies Recovering Money due to the Council Recovering or otherwise preserving possession of the Council's land or property Defending the interests of the Council Appealing against a decision affecting the interests of the Council and responding to appeals against action taken by the Council 	Town Clerk
89	To represent the Council at Court or any tribunal or to make arrangements for appropriate representation	Town Clerk
90	To negotiate and settle the terms of documents to give effect to a decision of the Council or any of the Committees or any officer acting under delegated powers	Town Clerk
91	To be the responsible officer for the co-ordination and operation of the legal requirements under the Data Protection Act and the Freedom of Information Act	Town Clerk
92	To serve requisitions for information	Town Clerk
93	To authorise any member of staff to swear affidavits as to matter within their knowledge in any court proceedings involving the Council	Town Clerk
94	To authorise any member of staff to appear on behalf of the Council before a Magistrate's Court	Town Clerk
RE	CREATION & EVENTS	
95	To grant permissions for the use of recreational open space in accordance with Council Policy and statutory requirements	Head of Environmental and Community Services
96	To organise sporting, recreational, cultural events and entertainments in accordance with approved budget provision and the Council's Financial Regulations	 Civic & Events Manager Community Services Manager
97	To liaise with the Safety Advisory Group and carry out any necessary actions arising from recommendations from that body.	 Civic & Events Manager Community Services Manager

Reviewed: 14th May 2025



Houghton Regis Town Council

Committee Functions & Terms of Reference

Date of Approval:	Town Council 20 th May 2015
Date of Review:	18 th May 2016; 24 th May 2017 (amendments to HRNPSG approved
	9 th October 2017); 3 rd July 2018; 15 th May 2019; 5 th May 2021, 18 th
	May 2022, 17 th May 2023; 15 th May 2024; 14 th May 2025

1. Introduction

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

Town Council & Standing Committees – Mondays or Tuesdays, at 7pm Annual General Meeting (AGM) - Wednesdays

Partnership - Tuesdays at 7pm

Sub Committees – Mondays, or the next available working day following a Bank Holiday, at 7pm

Working groups – Monday to Thursday to start no earlier than 9.30am and to conclude no later than 6.30pm

Inhouse Member training, open sessions, briefings – Mondays or Tuesdays at 6pm

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Reviewed: 14th May 2025

Department	Areas of Responsibility	Democratic Management
Corporate Services	Policy review & development Financial management Personnel matters Democratic management Health & safety matters	Corporate Services Committee Disciplinary, Grievance and Appeals Sub Committee Personnel Sub Committee
Environment & Leisure Services	Facilities management Leisure services Recreation management Cemetery & churchyard management Allotments	Environment & Leisure Committ
Community Services	Community services Youth services Communications Events Mayoral services Community grants Community safety	Community Services Committee Community Engagement Sub- Committee Pride of Houghton Awards Working Group Combating Crime Working Grou
Planning	Planning applications Planning policy Strategic development Highways consultations	Planning Committee Neighbourhood Plan Steering Gi Neighbourhood Plan Implementation Sub Committee
Staffing	Non legislative policy review and development Personnel matters	Staffing Committee Disciplinary, Grievance and Appeals Sub-Committee
Town	Town Centre Town development	Town Council Town Partnership Committee New Cemetery Sub Committee Complaints Sub Committee Complaints Appeals Sub Committee

3. Functions & Terms of Reference

Town Council

Terms of Reference

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

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

At other meetings of the Council:

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

Corporate Services as to any policy matters arising from them.

- To receive reports from committees and recommendations made therein.
- To receive the Town Mayors' announcements.
- To consider and approve any short or long-term borrowing requirements including interest rates and borrowing period.
- To approve a 4-year rolling programme of policy review
- To receive conclusions drawn at any meeting of the Complaints and Complaints Appeals Sub-Committees.
- Monitor and review risk management issues.
- To approve the appointment of the Town Clerk

Functions

- The Town Council consists of all councillors.
- The quorum shall be one third of all councilors (five)
- In an election year, the annual meeting of the Council shall be held on or within 14 days following the day on which the new councillors elected take office.
- In a year which is not an election year, the annual meeting of a Council shall be held on such day in May as the Council may direct.
- If no other time is fixed, the annual meeting of the Council shall take place at 6pm.
- In addition to the annual meeting of the Council, at least three other ordinary meetings shall be held in each year on such dates and times as the Council directs.

Corporate Services Committee

- To consider any matters referred to it by the Council or other Committees.
- To respond on behalf of the Council to initiatives from other organisations relating to matters under the Committee's jurisdiction.
- To exercise management of health and safety issues in respect of all the services of this Committee.
- To consider and determine any new contracts and any renewals of existing contracts under the jurisdiction of this committee.
- Review of arrangements, including any charters, with other local authorities and review of contributions made to expenditure incurred by other local authorities.
- Review of the Council's and/or employees' memberships of other bodies.
- To consider the suitability of the current office provision and the requirements of future office provision.
- To manage and maintain the Council Offices including office equipment and furniture.
- Reviewing the Council's procedures for handling requests made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA 2018) and to take action to comply.

- To receive information relating to the number of Freedom of Information requests received by the Clerk
- Reviewing policies of the Council as required by the Policy Document Review Schedule-legislation.
- To oversee and manage the financial obligations of the Council, including:
- To receive quarterly reports on investments containing a forecast of capital expenditure, investment opportunities and a recommendation for further investment including where, length and amount
- To receive bank and cash reconciliation statements.
- To receive an annual report (based on the previous financial year) on loans taken out, repayments made and outstanding liability.
- > To confirm the use of direct debits, standing orders, BACS, CHAPS
- Review and confirmation of arrangements for insurance cover in respect of all insured risks.
- To recommend to Council the writing off of irrecoverable amounts.
- To assemble and submit to the Town Council estimates of income and expenditure for each financial year in respect of all the services of this Committee no later than 30th November each year.
- To review annually (Spring / Summer) the staffing structure and staffing forecast in relation to this Committee for consideration by the Staffing Committee late Autumn to feed into the budget process.
- To monitor periodically the income and expenditure of the Committee.
- To consider and determine any proposed expenditure or reduction in income for which no provision has been made in the approved budget.
- To set the level of charges for facilities in respect of all the services of this Committee.
- To exercise overall responsibility for staffing issues, excluding the appointment of the Town Clerk, who shall be appointed by the Town Council
- To determine staff conditions of service including salary scales, working hours, employee assessments and evaluations etc
- To determine all matters relating to staff including staffing resources and structures
- To consider, determine and approve staff and Member training requirements.

Functions

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

Environment & Leisure Committee

- To consider any matters referred to it by the Council or other Committees.
- To respond on behalf of the Council to initiatives from other organisations relating to matters under the Committee's jurisdiction.
- To exercise management of health and safety issues in respect of all the services of this Committee.
- To consider and determine any new contracts and any renewals of existing contracts under the jurisdiction of this committee.
- To assemble and submit to the Town Council estimates of income and expenditure for each financial year in respect of all the services of this Committee no later than 30th November each year.
- To review annually (Spring / Summer) the staffing structure and staffing forecast in relation to this Committee for consideration by the Staffing Committee late Autumn to feed into the budget process.
- To monitor periodically the income and expenditure of the Committee.
- To consider and determine any proposed expenditure or reduction in income for which no provision has been made in the approved budget.
- To set the level of charges for facilities in respect of all the services of this Committee and to control the collection of revenues thereof.
- Reviewing policies of the Council as required by the Policy Document Review Schedule
- Annually review its inventory of land and assets including buildings.
- To provide and maintain all recreation grounds and pavilions, open spaces and play areas in the control of the Council.
- To manage and maintain sports provision including football pitches, the bowls green and cricket table.
- To manage and maintain the Houghton Regis Town Cemetery and All Saints Churchyard.
- To provide and maintain seats, noticeboards, litterbins and dog waste bins.
- To purchase and maintain such vehicles and equipment as may be required to carry out the Council's duties in connection with the facilities under the control of the Committee.
- To monitor all matters relating to leases and bye-laws in connection with the facilities under the control of the Committee.

Functions

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

Community Services Committee

- To consider any matters referred to it by the Council or other Committees.
- To respond on behalf of the Council to initiatives from other organisations relating to matters under the Committee's jurisdiction.
- To exercise management of health and safety issues in respect of all the services of this Committee.
- To assemble and submit to the Town Council estimates of income and expenditure for each financial year in respect of all the services of this Committee no later than 30th November each year.
- To review annually (Spring / Summer) the staffing structure and staffing forecast in relation to this Committee for consideration by the Staffing Committee late Autumn to feed into the budget process.
- To monitor periodically the income and expenditure of the Committee.
- To consider and determine any proposed expenditure or reduction in income for which no provision has been made in the approved budget.
- To set the level of charges for facilities in respect of all the services of this Committee.
- To consider and determine any new contracts and any renewals of existing contracts under the jurisdiction of this committee.
- Reviewing policies of the Council as required by the Policy Document Review Schedule
- To encourage and regulate activities and events at Council properties, venues and locations.
- To advise Environment & Leisure Committee of events using land / buildings
- To award financial grants to local organisations within an overall budget approved by the Town Council
- · To review the grant application process as necessary
- To oversee and manage the promotion of the Town and the Council, including the council's newsletter and website, Christmas lights, Pride of Houghton, events
- Consider community service provision provided by outside organisations
- To provide community support to enhance community service provision
- To liaise with other organisations on community issues
- To provide support and promotion of the Town centre and the retail offer

Functions

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

Planning Committee

- To consider any matters referred to it by the Council or other Committees.
- · To respond on behalf of the Council to initiatives from other organisations relating

to matters under the Committee's jurisdiction.

- To exercise management of health and safety issues in respect of all the services of this Committee.
- To assemble and submit to the Town Council estimates of income and expenditure for each financial year in respect of all the services of this Committee no later than 30th November each year.
- To review annually (Spring / Summer) the staffing structure and staffing forecast in relation to this Committee for consideration by the Staffing Committee late Autumn to feed into the budget process.
- To monitor periodically the income and expenditure of the Committee.
- To consider and determine any new contracts and any renewals of existing contracts under the jurisdiction of this committee.
- To consider and determine any proposed expenditure or reduction in income for which no provision has been made in the approved budget.
- Reviewing policies of the Council as required by the Policy Document Review Schedule
- To consider all planning related applications within the Parish and to make representations to the appropriate authority on behalf of the Town Council.
- To consider matters surrounding the growth proposals, including strategic development proposals and documents from local authorities and other agencies and bodies.
- To consider highways proposals from local authorities and other agencies and bodies and to make representations to the appropriate authority on behalf of the Town Council.
- To oversee the development and introduction of a Neighbourhood Plan for Houghton Regis.

Delegated Powers to Officers - Planning

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

Functions

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

Staffing Committee

Terms of Reference

- To establish and keep under review the staffing structure and staffing forecast in consultation with the Standing Committees.
- To make recommendations on staffing related expenditure to Town Council ahead of the annual budget setting process
- To draft, implement, review, monitor and revise policies for staff, that fall outside of legislative requirements
- To note salary payscales based on job evaluation outcomes for all tiers of staff and to be responsible for their administration and annual review.
- Succession plan for key staff who may wish to retire.
- To oversee the recruitment and appointment (including the provision of signed contracts of employment) of staff to ensure that processes have been carried out in accordance with council polices.
- To determine any substantial changes to contracts (beyond the scope of point 61 in the Scheme of Delegation).
- To oversee any process leading to the dismissal of staff employed for longer than 2 years, including redundancy.
- To keep under review staff working conditions.
- To monitor sustained staff absence and to ensure that sickness management processes have been carried out in accordance with council policies.
- To note the outcome of a grievance or disciplinary matter and any appeal.
- To supervise and performance manage the Clerk's work, to administer their leave requests and monitor their absences.
- To appoint one of its members as the day-to-day contact to support the Clerk.
- To consider an appeal against a decision in respect of pay.
- To appoint two members of the committee to conduct staff appraisal of the Clerk.

Functions

• The Staffing Committee shall function and operate in accordance with the

Council's approved Standing Orders.

• The Staffing Committee shall consist of seven Councillors. The quorum shall be half of its members (four).

To appoint sub-committees or working groups as necessary including setting out membership and terms of reference.

Houghton Regis Town Partnership

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

Complaints Sub-Committee (reporting to Town Council)

Terms of Reference

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

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

Functions

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

Complaints Appeals Sub-Committee (reporting to Town Council)

Terms of Reference

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

Functions

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

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Proposed New Cemetery Sub-Committee (reporting to Town Council)

Terms of Reference

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

4. To report and to make such recommendations to Town Council as appropriate.

Functions

• The Proposed New Cemetery Sub Committee shall function and operate in accordance with the Council's approved Standing Orders.

The Proposed New Cemetery Sub Committee shall consist of 5 members. The quorum shall be half of its members (three).

<u>Neighbourhood Plan Implementation Sub Committee (reporting to Planning Committee)</u>

Terms of Reference

- To monitor the implementation of the Houghton Regis Neighbourhood Plan.
- To keep the NHP under review especially in light of any changes to national and local planning policies and to recommend any updates to the NHP as necessary.
- Review and respond to emerging national and local planning policies for their impact on the NHP
- Review planning application decisions with reference to conformity with the NHP and the responses made by the HRTC Planning Committee
- Monitor progress towards realisation of specific projects and aspirations
 <u>contained with the NHP</u>
- Review any significant changes to the local area and assess their impact on the <u>NHP's projects and aspirations</u>

Functions

 The Sub-committee shall function and operate in accordance with the Council's approved Standing Orders.

- The Sub-committee shall consist of five Councillors and shall include the Chair of the HRTC Planning Committee. The quorum shall be half of its members (three)
- The Sub-committee shall meet at least twice each year.
- The Sub-committee shall report to the Planning Committee
- •
- The draft minutes shall be presented to the HRTC Planning Committee to
 enable the Planning Committee to consider the work of the Sub Committee in a
 timely fashion.

Community Engagement Sub Committee (reporting to Community Services Committee)

Terms of Reference

- To consider any matters referred to it by the Council or other Committees.
- To consider and submit to the Community Services Committee the scope, nature and form of the Council's community activities and council events (Programme of Events) for the following council year no later than 30th November each year.
- To assemble and submit to the Community Services Committee estimates of income and expenditure for each financial year in respect of all the services of this Sub Committee no later than 30th November each year.
- To monitor periodically the income and expenditure relevant to the Sub Committee.
- To consider and refer to the Community Services Committee any proposed expenditure or reduction in income for which no provision has been made in the approved budget.
- To recommend the level of charges for facilities in respect of all the services of this Sub Committee to the Community Services Committee.
- To monitor and review the Council's events.
- To monitor and review the Council's community activities.
- To advise Environment & Leisure Committee of events using land / buildings.
- To monitor and review each event and activity to ensure all areas of the town are covered by the annual programme of events.
- Delegate all operational decision-making and activities to the Head of Environmental and Community Services, Civic & Events Manager and Community Services Manager to take decisions on the arrangements for council events. The Community Engagement Sub Committee is to take a strategic view, and actings as a critical friend to ensure the Council's activities and Events get better.
- To support and promote town wide events and activities to promote the town.
- To report to the Community Services Committee on the outcome of its deliberations.

Functions

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

Co-option

- To support engagement with local stakeholders the sub committee can co-opt members from local representative groups, as appropriate, up to a maximum of 5. Each co-opted Member will be able to engage fully in all discussions but will not have any voting rights. Co-opted members can be removed from the sub committee by joint agreement of the Chairman and Vice Chairman.
- The list of co-opted Members should be reviewed annually.

Personnel Sub-Committee (Reporting to Corporate Services Committee)

- Overview of staffing structure and staffing budget, ensuring that it is commensurate with objectives of the Council.
- Review staff sickness absence.
- Receive reports and review of Employee Assistance Programme
- Review staff training
- Identify and agree training needs for the Town Clerk and Members
- Ensure Council employees are working in a safe environment
- To consider and recommend to Corporate Services Committee any changes to employees pay, emoluments or terms and conditions of employment
- Review Job Description and Contract of Town Clerk annually or when there is a significant change
- Receive notification of the Town Clerk's annual leave and matters relating to overtime working and sickness.
- Succession plan for key staff who may wish to retire.
- Agree the recruitment process for the Town Clerk and other senior members of staff.
- If supported by the conclusion of a disciplinary process to consider the terminiation of contract for the Town Clerk and other senior members of staff.
- Act as interview panel for the posts of Town Clerk and other senior members of staff (final approval for the appointment of the Clerk rests with Council as per Standing Orders).

- Appoint one member of the Committee as the Clerks Appointed Person, preferably the Chair, to act as contact for day to day matters, support, handle leave requests, absence from work and to feed matters to Committee where any decisions/action is needed and to undertake the Clerks appraisal.
- Report any outcomes of employee complaints received.

Functions

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

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

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

Terms of Reference

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

Functions

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

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

Terms of Reference

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

Functions

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

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

Terms of Reference

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

Functions

- The Combating Crime Working Group shall function and operate in accordance with the Council's approved Standing Orders.
- The Combating Crime Working Group shall consist of five councillors. The quorum shall be half its members (three).

Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (reporting to Planning Committee)

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

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

APPENDIX A

Houghton Regis Town Partnership Committee ¹

Purpose

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

Objectives

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

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

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

Membership

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

Who must be elected representatives of the wards.

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

Meetings and Quorum

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

Chairman and Vice Chairman

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

Secretariat

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

Decision making arrangements

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

Co-option

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

Governance

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

APPENDIX B

Houghton Regis Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

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

		adjoining parishes, developers and other key parties.
	3.7	Identify sources of funding.
	3.8	Liaise with statutory, and other, relevant authorities and organizations to ensure
		the Plan is as comprehensive and inclusive as possible.
	<u>3.9</u>	Identify ways of involving the whole community and gather the views and
	0.17	opinions of as many groups and organizations in the community as possible.
	3.10	Determine the types of consultation and information gathering to be used.
	3.11	Be responsible for the analysis arising from consultations and the production
	5.11	and distribution of the final reports.
	3.12	Conform to national policies and with EU and Human Rights legislation.
	3.13	Report back regularly to the Town Council on progress, significant issues and
	5.15	budgetary implications.
	3.14	Present key documents and the draft NP for consultation with the Town Council,
	5.14	local residents, CBC, businesses, the Independent Examiner, and assist in
	2.15	arrangements for the Referendum.
	3.15	Present recommendations for the implementation of The Plan.
4 .	Mem	bership and Conduct
	4.1	The HRNPSG will be formed from current Town Councillors, CBC Councillors
		for the town and local members of the community. The Group will be comprised
		of up to12 members, the composition of which to be 5 Town Councillors,
		(appointed by the full Town Council), 1 CBC Councillor and 6 representatives
		from the local community. The Town Clerk, or Senior Manager, will be present
		in an <i>ex-officio</i> , non-voting capacity at all meetings. The Group will only be
		quorate when 50% of its members are present.
	4 .2	The HRNPSG may co-opt additional support to carry out specific task for as
		short or long a period as necessary.
	4.3	Membership is voluntary.
	4.4	All members of the HRNPSG must abide by the Code of Conduct of Houghton
		Regis Town Council and in doing so must submit a register of interests.
	4.5	All members of the HRNPSG must declare any personal interest that may be
		perceived as being relevant to the decisions or recommendations made by it.
		This may include membership of an organization, ownership or interest in land or
		business or any other matter likely to be relevant to the work undertaken by the
		HRNPSG.
	4.6	A person will cease to be a member of the HRNPSG upon notification to the
		Chairman in writing of their wish to resign.
		- ×
5.	Meet	ings
		<u> </u>
	5.1	The HRNPSG will elect a Chairman, Vice Chair. Secretary and Treasurer from its
	5.1	The HRNPSG will elect a Chairman, Vice Chair, Secretary and Treasurer from its membership to remain in these positions until the project is complete. If these
	5.1	membership to remain in these positions until the project is complete. If these
		membership to remain in these positions until the project is complete. If these positions should become vacant, the Group will elect an alternative.
	5.1 5.2	membership to remain in these positions until the project is complete. If these

	5.4	At least 7 days clear notice of meetings will be sent to members via email.
	5.5	The Secretary will keep a record of meetings and circulate the Minutes to
		HRNPSG members and the Town Council (via the Planning Committee Clerk) no
		more that 14 days after each meeting.
	5.6	Decisions made by HRNPSG will be by consensus at Group meetings. Where a
	5.0	vote is required, each member will have one vote. A simple majority vote will be
		required to support any motion. The Chairman will have one casting vote.
6.	Wo l	-king Groups
	6.1	HRNPSG may establish working groups for dealing with specific issues, made up
		of Members of the Steering Group and volunteers from the community, to aid
		them in any NP related work.
	6.2	Each working group will have a lead person from the HRNPSG.
7.	Affi	liations, Interests and Contributions.
	7.1	The HRNPSG will not itself be affiliated to any particular political party. It is
	/.1	recognized that Councillors and community members may have such affiliations,
		which will be declared where relevant.
	7.2	
	1.2	The Localism Act and Houghton Regis Town Council's Code of Conduct will
		apply to all members of the HRNPSG. All members of the HRNPSG must
		declare any pecuniary interest that may be perceived as being relevant to a
		decision of the HRNPSG. This may include membership of an organization,
		ownership of land or a business, or any other matter that may be considered to be
		relevant. Such declarations must be recorded and publicly available.
		Having declared an interest, that member will not take part in a discussion or vote
		on the related issue. In event of disagreement, the Chairman's decision will be
		binding.
	7.3	Organizations and businesses may assist in the production of the NP and may
		contribute to the cost of producing it. Details of any donations or assistance must
		be made publicly available and must not influence the recommendations of The
		Plan.
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8.	Fina	
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	8.1	Funding, including grants, will be applied for and held by the Town Council, who
	0.1	will ring fence the funds for Neighbourhood Plan development work.
	8.2	
	0.2	HRNPSG will notify the Town Council (via the Planning Committee) of any
		planned expenditure before it is incurred
	Conduct	
9.	Con	duct
	0.1	
	9.1	It is expected that all HRNPSG members will abide by the principles and practice
		of the Town Council Code of Conduct, including the declaration of interests.
	9.2	Whilst members as individuals will be accountable to their parent organizations,
		the HRNPSG as a whole is accountable to the wider community for ensuring that
		The Plan reflects their collective expectations.
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Reviewed: 14th May 2025

	9.3 1	HRNPSG will achieve this through applying the following principles:
		 Be clear and open when their individual roles or interests are in conflict; Treat everyone with dignity, courtesy and respect, regardless of their age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity or religion and belief; and Actively promote equality of access and opportunity.
10	Chang	ges to the Terms of Reference
	10.1	This document may be amended with the support of at least two-thirds of the current membership at a HRNPSG meeting and with the approval of the Town Council.
11	Dissol	ution of the HRNPSG
	11.1	The HRNPSG will continue to operate until the adoption of the Neighbourhood Plan.
	11.2	Upon dissolution of the HRNPSG, any remaining resources will be passed to the Town Council.

Agenda Item 12⁸⁷/⁸²/⁸²

Colou Key	Bank Holiday		No Scheduled meeting		Officer event	Community Development Officer Event			
Date	Month		Day	Comn	nittee meeting	Event	Venue	Time	Lead Officer
14th	Мау	2025	Monday	Town	Council (AGM)		Council Chamber	7pm	Town Clerk
19th	Мау	2025	Monday	Persor	nnel Sub-Committee		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Democratic Services
20th	May	2025	Tuesday	Memb	er Open Session		Virtual meeting via Teams	6pm	Town Clerk
20th	Мау	2025	Tuesday		bourhood Plan Implementa ommittee	tion	Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Democratic Services
21st	Мау	2025	Wednesday	Comb	ating Crime Working Group		Hybrid meeting	11am	Community Services Manage
26th	May	2025	Monday	Spring	Bank Holiday				

2nd	June	2025	Monday	Leaders Briefing	Virtual meeting via Teams	11am	Town Clerk
2nd	June	2025	Monday	Planning	Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Democratic Services
9th	June	2025	Monday	Corporate Services	Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Corporate Services
16th	June	2025	Monday	Town Council	Council Chamber	7pm	Town Clerk
18th	June	2025	Wednesday	Combating Crime Working Group	Hybrid meeting	11am	Community Services Manager
23rd	June	2025	Monday	Planning	Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Democratic Services
24th	June	2025	Tuesday	Community Engagement Sub- Committee	Council Chamber	7pm	Civic and Events Manager
30th	June	2025	Monday	xxxxxx			
7th	July	2025	Monday	Leaders Briefing	Virtual meeting via Teams	11am	Town Clerk

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July	2025	Monday	Personnel Sub-Committee	Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Democratic Services
July	2025	Monday	Planning	Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Democratic Services
July	2025	Wednesday	Combating Crime Working Group	Hybrid meeting	11am	Community Services Manager
July	2025	Monday	Community Services	Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Environmental and Community Services
July	2025	Monday	Environment & Leisure	Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Environmental and Community Services
July	2025	Tuesday	Town Partnership	Council Chamber	7pm	Town Clerk
August	2025	Monday	Planning	Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Democratic Services
August	2025	Monday	XXXXXX			
August	2025	Monday	xxxxxx			

7th

14th

16th

21st

28th

29th

4th

11th

18th

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20th	August	2025	Wednesday	Combating Crime Working Group		Hybrid meeting	11am	Community Services Manager
25th	August	2025	Monday	Bank holiday Summer	-			
26th	August	2025	Tuesday	Planning		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Democratic Services
1st	September	2025	Monday	Leaders Briefing		Virtual meeting via Teams	11am	Town Clerk
1st	September	2025	Monday	Corporate Services		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Corporate Services
8th	September	2025	Monday	New Cemetery Sub-Committee		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Environmental and Community Services
15th	September	2025	Monday	Planning		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Democratic Services
16th	September	2025	Tuesday	Member Open Session		Virtual meeting via Teams	6pm	Town Clerk
17th	September	2025	Wednesday	Combating Crime Working Group		Hybrid meeting	11am	Community Services Manager

22nd	September	2025	Monday	xxxxxx			
23rd	September	2025	Tuesday	Community Engagement Sub- Committee	Council Chamber	7pm	Civic and Events Manager
29th	September	2025	Monday	xxxxxx			
6th	October	2025	Monday	Leaders Briefing	Virtual meeting via Teams	11am	Town Clerk
6th	October	2025	Monday	Planning	Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Democratic Services
13th	October	2025	Monday	Town Council	Council Chamber	7pm	Town Clerk
15th	October	2025	Wednesday	Combating Crime Working Group	Hybrid meeting	11am	Community Services Manager
20th	October	2025	Monday	Environment & Leisure	Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Environmental and Community Services
21st	October	2025	Tuesday	Town Partnership	Council Chamber	7pm	Town Clerk

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27th	October	2025	Monday	Planning	Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Democratic Services
3rd	November	2025	Monday	Leaders Briefing	Virtual meeting via Teams	11am	Town Clerk
3rd	November	2025	Monday	Personnel Sub-Committee	Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Democratic Services
10th	November	2025	Monday	Community Services (Grants)	Council Chamber	7nm	Head of Environmental and Community Services
17th	November	2025	Monday	Planning	Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Democratic Services
18th	November	2025	Tuesday	Member Open Session	Virtual meeting via Teams	6pm	Town Clerk
18th	November	2025	Tuesday	Neighbourhood Plan Implementation Sub-Committee	Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Democratic Services
19th	November	2025	Wednesday	Combating Crime Working Group	Hybrid meeting	11am	Community Services Manager
24th	November	2025	Monday	Community Services	Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Environmental and Community Services

25th	November	2025	Tuesday	Community Engagement Sub- Committee	Council Chamber	7pm	Civic and Events Manager
1st	December	2025	Monday	Leaders Briefing	Virtual meeting via Teams	11am	Town Clerk
1st	December	2025	Monday	Corporate Services	Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Corporate Services
8th	December	2025	Monday	Planning	Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Democratic Services
15th	December	2025	Monday	Town Council	Council Chamber	7pm	Town Clerk
17th	December	2025	Wednesday	Combating Crime Working Group	Hybrid meeting	11am	Community Services Manager
22nd	December	2025	Monday	xxxxxx			
23rd	December	2025	Tuesday	Member Open Session	Virtual meeting via Teams	6pm	Town Clerk
25th	December	2025	Thursday	Bank Holiday Christmas Day			

TEMOAV	Bank Holiday Boxing Day			
Tinurgaav	Bank Holiday New Year's Day			
Monday	Leaders Briefing	Virtual meeting via Teams	11am	Town Clerk
Monday	Planning	Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Democratic Services
Monday	Environment & Leisure	Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Environmental and Community Services
Monday	Town Council	Council	7nm	Town Clork

5th	January	2026	Monday	Leaders Briefing	Virtual meeting via Teams	11am	Town Clerk
5th	January	2026	Monday	Planning	Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Democratic Services
12th	January	2026	Monday	Environment & Leisure	Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Environmental and Community Services
19th	January	2026	Monday	Town Council	Council Chamber	7pm	Town Clerk
20th	January	2026	Lillesdav	Community Engagement Sub- Committee	Council Chamber	7pm	Civic and Events Manager
21st	January	2026	Wednesday	Combating Crime Working Group	Hybrid meeting	11am	Community Services Manager
26th	January	2026	Monday	Planning	Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Democratic Services

26th

1st

December

January

2025

2026

27th	January	2026	Tuesday	Town Partnership	Council Chamber	7pm	Town Clerk
2nd	February	2026	Monday	Leaders Briefing	Virtual meeting via Teams	<i>11am</i>	Town Clerk
2nd	February	2026	Monday	Personnel Sub-Committee	Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Democratic Services
9th	February	2026	Monday	xxxxxx			
16th	February	2026	Monday	Planning	Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Democratic Services
17th	February	2026	Tuesday	Member Open Session	Virtual meeting via Teams	6pm	Town Clerk
18th	February	2026	Wednesday	Combating Crime Working Group	Hybrid meeting	11am	Community Services Manager
23rd	February	2026	Monday	Community Services	Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Environmental and Community Services
2nd	March	2026	Monday	Leaders Briefing	Virtual meeting via Teams	11am	Town Clerk

2nd	March	2026	Monday	Corporate Services	Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Corporate Services
9th	March	2026	Monday	Planning	Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Democratic Services
16th	March	2026	Monday	Town Council	Council Chamber	7pm	Town Clerk
18th	March	2026	Wednesday	Combating Crime Working Group	Hybrid meeting	11am	Community Services Manager
23rd	March	2026	Monday	New Cemetery Sub-Committee	Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Environmental and Community Services
24th	March	2026	Lillesdav	Community Engagement Sub- Committee	Council Chamber	7pm	Civic and Events Manager
30th	March	2026	Monday	Planning	Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Democratic Services
3rd	April	2026	Friday	Bank Holiday Good Friday			
6th	April	2026	Monday	Bank Holiday Easter Monday			

13th	April	2026	Monday	Leaders Briefing	Virtual meeting via Teams	11am	Town Clerk
13th	April	2026	Monday	Annual Towns Meeting	Council Chamber	7pm	Town Clerk
14th	April	2026	Tuesday	Member Open Session	Virtual meeting via Teams	6pm	Town Clerk
15th	April	2026	Wednesday	Combating Crime Working Group	Hybrid meeting	11am	Community Services Manager
20th	April	2026	Monday	Planning	Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Democratic Services
21st	April	2026	Tuesday	Environment & Leisure	Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Environmental and Community Services
27th	April	2026	Tuesday	Community Services	Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Environmental and Community Services
28th	April	2026	Tuesday	Town Partnership	Council Chamber	7pm	Town Clerk
4th	May	2026	Monday	Bank holiday Early May			

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11th	May	2026	Monday	Leaders Briefing	Virtual meeting via Teams	11am	Town Clerk
11th	Мау	2026	Monday	Planning	Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Democratic Services
13th	Мау	2026	Wednesday	Town Council (AGM)	Council Chamber	7pm	Town Clerk
18th	Мау	2026	Monday	Personnel Sub-Committee	Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Democratic Services
20th	Мау	2026	Wednesday	Combating Crime Working Group	Hybrid meeting	11am	Community Services Manager
25th	May	2026	Monday	Spring Bank Holiday			
1st	June	2026	Monday	Planning	Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Democratic Services

Total hours which may be claimed as overtime



TOWN COUNCIL

Agenda Item 13

Date:17th March 2025Title:ANNUAL REVIEW OF COUNCIL ASSETSPurpose of the Report:To review and update members on the Corporate Plan.Contact Officer:Clare Evans, Town Clerk

1. RECOMMENDATION

This report is presented for information only.

2. BACKGROUND

In accordance with good practice Members will be presented on an annual basis, in March, a copy of the Council Asset Register incorporating additions and disposals for that financial year.

3. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Members will find attached the list of council assets¹ held on 31st March 2025, as amended by additions and disposals during 2024/25.

4. HRTC CORPORATE PLAN

- 4 Management and Operations: To improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Town Council as the key local service provider
 - 4.5 Enhance the role of the council.

5. IMPLICATIONS

Corporate Implications

• There are no corporate implications arising from the recommendations.

Legal Implications

¹ Minute 12404: A council asset should be defined as a purchase of over £1,000 with a longevity of use of over one year.

• 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 additional arising risk implications.

Equalities Implications

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

This project / issue does not discriminate.

Climate Change Implications

• There are no climate change implications arising from the recommendations

Press Contact

• There are no press implications arising from the recommendations.

6. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

An annual review of the Asset register is a positive and proactive way to monitor the assets of the council.

7. APPENDICES

Appendix A:	Asset Register 2024/25
Appendix B:	Asset Purchase List 2024/25
Appendix C:	Asset Sales List 2024/25

Appendix A

	Asset Name	Description	Notes	Brand	0.1	-	0	Rent/Purcha	0	D
Asset ID Status					Category	Туре	Ownership	se date	Current value	Purchase value
407041 Active	Dell Latitude Notebook	Grounds tablet for play area inspections		Dell	Vehicles & Equipment	IT	Owned.	01/04/2019	£1,024.05	£1,024.05
	MC Pav Viessman Boiler	Boiler		Viessman	Vehicles & Equipment	Building equipment	Owned.	01/04/2019	£3,255.00	£3,255.00
	Kubota Flail Deck	FLAIL ATTACHMENT	MODEL TEG 1601	Kubota	Vehicles & Equipment	Grounds equipment	Owned.	01/04/2019	£3,551.79	£3,551.79
	Stihl Shellcordless	1 Bile / I / I Official Company		Stihl	Vehicles & Equipment	Grounds equipment	Owned.	01/04/2020	£1,019.32	£1,019.32
			model Pro 48						,	,
407082 Active	Rotary mower	Hayter pro48 rotary mower	formally 0005	Hayter	Vehicles & Equipment	Grounds equipment	Owned.	01/04/2020	£1,149.17	£1,149.17
	D		model Pro 48	11						
407083 Active	Rotary mower	Hayter pro48 rotary mower	formally 0006	Hayter	Vehicles & Equipment	Grounds equipment	Owned.	01/04/2020	£1,149.17	£1,149.17
	Poton mouror	Hayter pro48 rotary mower	model Pro 48	Houtor				01/04/2020		
407084 Active	Rotary mower	Hayter pro48 rotary mower	formally 0007	Hayter	Vehicles & Equipment	Grounds equipment	Owned.	01/04/2020	£1,149.17	£1,149.17
	Rotary mower	Hayter pro48 rotary mower	model Pro 48	Hayter				01/04/2020		
407085 Active	Rotary mower	Hayter pro46 rotary mower	formally 0008	Tayler	Vehicles & Equipment	Grounds equipment	Owned.	01/04/2020	£1,149.17	£1,149.17
	Rotary mower	Hayter pro48 rotary mower	model Pro 48	Hayter				01/04/2020		
407086 Active	notary monor		formally 0009	hajtor	Vehicles & Equipment	Grounds equipment	Owned.	01/0 // 2020	£1,149.17	£1,149.17
	Stihl brushcutter	brushcutter	previously 0026	Stihl						
407131 Active			model FS91R		Vehicles & Equipment	Grounds equipment	Owned.		£1,020.00	£1,020.00
407138 Active		Combi cricket rake & brush	previously 0110	Sisis	Vehicles & Equipment	Grounds equipment	Owned.		£5,209.00	£5,209.00
407139 Active		rotavator unit 80cm	previously 0108	BCS	Vehicles & Equipment	Grounds equipment	Owned.		£4,300.00	£4,300.00
407144 Active		Ashes vaults	includes multiple vaults (poss no. 25)	Greenbridge	Infrastructure assets	Vaults	Owned.	01/04/2020	£11,850.00	£11,850.00
407146 Active		shed bases		paving slab paving slabs	Infrastructure assets	Surfacing	Owned.	03/02/2023	£10,000.00	£10,000.00
407149 Active		Orthough ist		F	Community Asset	Buildings	Owned.		£27,088.20	£27,088.20
407150 Active	Ford Ranger	Grds vehicle	Reg: EN68VTG	Ford	Vehicles & Equipment	Road vehicles	Owned.		£22,520.00	£22,520.00
407151 Active	Orchard Close Play area resurfacing	Play area resurfacing		Wetpore	Community Asset	Land	Owned.		£21,081.00	£21,081.00
	Parkside Family Area furniture	Parkside Family Area furniture			Infrastructure assets	Play equipment	Owned.		£1,465.00	£1,465.00
	Parkside pergola	Farkside Failing Area furniture	Parkside pergola as part of family area	Custom made	Infrastructure assets	Fences	Owned.		£6,276.00	£6,276.00
413152 Active		Bowls Green Shed	Purchased 2012	Custommade	Infrastructure assets	Street furniture	Owned.	27/02/2023	£2,800.00	£2,800.00
	Houghton Regis Memorial Hall	Houghton Regis Memorial Hall	Turchased 2012		Operational Land & Buildings	Building	Owned.	01/04/1958	£293,000.00	£293,000.00
	HRTC Premises	HRTC Offices and land			Operational Land & Buildings	Building	Owned.	01/04/1975	£260,400.00	£260,400.00
	Moore Crescent Sports Pavilion	Moore Crescent Sports Pavilion			Operational Land & Buildings	Building	Owned.	01/04/1993	£340,020.00	£340,020.00
413156 Active		Tithe Farm Pavilion			Operational Land & Buildings	Building	Owned.	01/04/1980	£165,988.00	£165,988.00
413157 Active		Parkside Pavilion			Operational Land & Buildings	Building	Owned.	01/04/1980	£154,784.00	£154,784.00
	Village Green Pavilion	Village Green Pavilion			Operational Land & Buildings	Building	Owned.	01/04/1980	£459,836.00	£459,836.00
			_			Ū.				
413164 Active	Orchard Close Pavilion	Orchard Close Pavilion	Pavilion owned but land under leasehold		Operational Land & Buildings	Building	Owned.	01/04/1985	£112,100.00	£112,100.00
413165 Active	Boiler	Office heating boiler			Vehicles & Equipment	Office Furniture	Owned.	01/04/2019	£2,990.00	£2,990.00
413166 Active	Skate Park	Concrete skate park			Infrastructure assets	Play equipment	Owned.	01/04/2011	£90,306.00	£90,306.00
413167 Active	Multi Use Games Area (MUGA)	Multi Use Games Area (MUGA)			Infrastructure assets	Play equipment	Owned.	01/04/2012	£30,062.00	£30,062.00
413168 Active	Tractor	Tractor		Kubota	Vehicles & Equipment	Road vehicles	Owned.	01/04/2005	£35,000.00	£35,000.00
413169 Active	Transit	Ford transit tipper		Ford	Vehicles & Equipment	Road vehicles	Owned.	01/04/2019	£22,620.00	£22,620.00
413170 Active	Ford Ranger	Grds Vehicle	Reg. EX67KKW	Ford	Vehicles & Equipment	Road vehicles	Owned.	01/04/2019	£16,942.00	£16,942.00
413172 Active	Trailer	Grds trailer			Grounds equipment	Vehicle accessories	Owned.	01/04/2015	£2,465.00	£2,465.00
413175 Active	Mower	Mower		Dennis	Grounds equipment	Grounds maintenance eq	Owned.	01/04/2015	£1,500.00	£1,500.00
413178 Active		Mower			Grounds equipment	Grounds maintenance eq	Owned.	01/04/2015	£1,200.00	£1,200.00
413180 Active				Hayter	Grounds equipment	Grounds maintenance eq		04/04/2015	£2,137.00	£2,137.00
413183 Active		Haytor Pro Rotary Mower		Haytor	Grounds equipment	Grounds maintenance eq	Owned.	04/04/2021	£1,149.00	£1,149.00
413186 Active					Grounds equipment	Grounds maintenance eq	Owned.	04/04/2015	£1,329.00	£1,329.00
413190 Active				Stihl	Grounds equipment	Grounds maintenance eq		01/04/2010	£1,320.00	£1,320.00
413191 Active				Stihl	Grounds equipment	Grounds maintenance eq		01/04/2010	£1,037.00	£1,037.00
413193 Active				Sissis	Grounds equipment	Grounds maintenance eq		01/04/2021	£5,209.00	£5,209.00
417186 Active		Honda tractor unit rotavator		Honda	Grounds equipment	Vehicle accessories	Owned.	06/03/2023	£4,300.00	£4,300.00
	Ranger LC69HCL	2.0 XL Ecoblue 2D 170PS 4WD		Ford	Vehicles & Equipment	Road vehicles	Owned.	27/03/2023	£18,990.00	£18,990.00
418709 Active		Mitsubishi truck		Mitsubishi	Vehicles & Equipment	Road vehicles	Owned.	01/04/2020	£15,000.00	£15,000.00
	Exac post hole borer				Grounds equipment	Grounds maintenance eq			£1,500.00	£1,500.00
418711 Active	Dump trailer				Grounds equipment	Vehicle accessories	Owned.		£4,650.00	£4,650.00

418712 Active	Mini excavator			JCB	Grounds equipment	Grounds maintenance eq			£3,476.00	£3,476.00
418713 Active	Kubota				Vehicles & Equipment	Road vehicles	Owned.		£14,116.00	£14,116.00
418715 Active				Kubota	Vehicles & Equipment	Road vehicles	Owned.		£18,368.00	£18,368.00
418717 Active	CCTV Equipment	redeployable cameras			Infrastructure assets	Street furniture	Owned.		£18,028.00	£18,028.00
	Anti ram bollards				Infrastructure assets	Gates	Owned.		£5,592.00	£5,592.00
418722 Active	Tractor			Shibarua	Vehicles & Equipment	Road vehicles	Owned.		£19,755.00	£19,755.00
	Village Green Family Games Area	Fitness equipment and family games		Proludic						
418723 Active		equipment			Infrastructure assets	Outdoor Gym equipment			£69,999.00	£69,999.00
	Orchard Close Outdoor Gym	Fitness equipment		Proludic	Infrastructure assets	Outdoor Gym equipment			£4,100.00	£4,100.00
418726 Active	,	Community Defibrillators	Community Heartbeat trust		Infrastructure assets	Street furniture	Owned.		£10,092.00	£10,092.00
418727 Active	U U				Infrastructure assets		Owned.		£92,569.00	£92,569.00
418728 Active	o ,				Grounds equipment	Grounds maintenance eq			£7,290.00	£7,290.00
	Speed activated sign				Infrastructure assets	0	Owned.		£9,226.00	£9,226.00
	Town Signs & Noticeboards				Infrastructure assets	0	Owned.		£10,685.00	£10,685.00
418731 Active					Infrastructure assets		Owned.		£5,941.00	£5,941.00
418732 Active					Infrastructure assets		Owned.		£7,192.00	£7,192.00
418733 Active					Infrastructure assets		Owned.		£4,991.00	£4,991.00
418734 Active					Infrastructure assets	Street furniture	Owned.		£2,204.00	£2,204.00
418735 Active					Infrastructure assets	0	Owned.		£5,875.00	£5,875.00
418736 Active	Floodlights	Skate Park			Infrastructure assets	Play equipment	Owned.		£15,844.00	£15,844.00
	All Saints Churchyard Gate				Infrastructure assets		Owned.		£20,018.00	£20,018.00
	Play Area surfacing				Infrastructure assets		Owned.		£48,000.00	£48,000.00
	Play area surfacing				Infrastructure assets	Play area surfacing		01/04/2021	£21,081.00	£21,081.00
	Seating & Pergola	Parkside Family Picnic area			Infrastructure assets			01/04/2021	£8,975.00	£8,975.00
	Allotment Shed bases				Infrastructure assets	Surfacing		01/04/2021	£10,000.00	£10,000.00
418742 Active	Civic Regalia	Mayors and Deputy Mayors chains			Community Asset	0	Owned.	01/04/2021	£4,779.00	£4,779.00
418743 Active					Community Asset	War memorial	Owned.		£9,363.00	£9,363.00
418744 Active	Village Green				Community Asset	Land	Owned.		£1.00	£1.00
	Tithe Farm Recreation Ground	Rec grd, car park, pavilion, play area, skate								
418745 Active		park			Community Asset		Owned.		£1.00	£1.00
	Land to rear of Orchard Close	Forms part of wider rec grd	forms part of wide rec grd		Community Asset		Owned.		£1.00	£1.00
418747 Active	Cemetery				Community Asset	Land	Owned.		£109,635.00	£109,635.00
	Orchard Close Recreation Ground	Land, pavilion, play area, exercise equipment								
418748 Active					Community Asset		Owned.		£1.00	£1.00
	Land rear of Houghton Court	Land			Community Asset		Owned.		£1.00	£1.00
	Land rear of Village Green Pavilion	Land			Community Asset		Owned.		£1.00	£1.00
	Land adj to Chapel Path	Land			Community Asset		Owned.		£1.00	£1.00
	Land off Townsend Farm Road	Land			Community Asset		Owned.		£1.00	£1.00
	All Saints Churchyard		Closed Churchyard		Community Asset		Owned.		£1.00	£1.00
	Moore Crescent Recreation Ground		Land, pavilion, bowls green, car park		Community Asset		Owned.		£1.00	£1.00
	Land at The Baulk		Land		Community Asset		Owned.		£1.00	£1.00
	Land at Orchard Close				Community Asset		Owned.		£1.00	£1.00
418/5/ Active	Dog Kennel Down open space		Open space, county wildlife site		Community Asset	Land	Owned.		£1.00	£1.00
440750 4.1	Parkside Recreation Ground		Open space, pavilion, 2 x play areas, MUGA,			t and	0		04.00	04.00
418758 Active			family picnic area		Community Asset		Owned.		£1.00	£1.00
	Land at The Paddocks, Dunstable		Open space		Community Asset		Owned.		£1.00	£1.00
418/60 Active	Former Railway Line		Open space		Community Asset	Land	Owned.		£1.00	£1.00
440005	Balance junction / wobble bridge		Replaced equipment as damage by car	Proludic		DI	0	01/04/2022	01 005 00	04 005 00
418835 Active			accident in July 2022		Infrastructure assets	Play equipment	Owned.		£1,205.00	£1,205.00
	Town Sign Planter			0	Infrastructure assets	Street furniture		01/04/2022	£3,720.00	£3,720.00
418852 Active		Dialeur		Greenbridge	Infrastructure assets			01/04/2022	£6,520.00	£6,520.00
420327 Active	Ford Kanger	Pickup		Ford	Vehicles & Equipment	Road vehicles	Owned.	28/03/2023	£20,000.00	£20,000.00
170000 1.1	Tithe Farm 3G Artificial Grass Pitch (AGP)			FieldTurf		DI	0	22/12/2023	0007.045.00	0007.045.00
478262 Active				Freeh Air Fitness T/A Lturt	Infrastructure assets	Play equipment	Owned.		£937,915.32	£937,915.32
470000 4-1	Adult Outdoor Gym for Parkside	Big Rig		Fresh Air Fitness T/A Hugh Harris Ltd	Infrastructure accete	Discoguinment	Owned	22/02/2024	015 050 00	C1E OF 0 00
478263 Active					Infrastructure assets	Play equipment	Owned.		£15,950.00	£15,950.00
478270 Active	Trafalgar single Axle Street washing			Trafalgar Cleaning	Grounds equipment	Grounds maintenance eq	Ownod	26/06/2023	£9.999.00	£9,999.00
4/02/U ACIVE	ualleí			Equipment Ltd	Grounus equipment	Grounus maintenance eq	owned.		£9,999.00	19,999.00

540367 Active	RMX 620 - G2 Roller Mower	6.2m Triple Deck Roller Mower		Wessex	Grounds equipment	Grounds maintenance ec	l Owned.	06/08/2024	£34,586.50	£34,586.50
581/14 Active	New Tithe Farm Sports Pavilion	New Tithe Farm Sports Pavilion, plus additional car park		Deberine	Operational Land & Buildings	Building	Owned.		, ,	£2,438,337.56
581768 Active	Roberine F302	three-unit ride on flail mower	Reg- LK74AKO	Roberine	Vehicles & Equipment	Grounds equipment	Owned.		£55,790.00	£55,790.00
581929 Active	Kubota G26	Ride-on mower with integrated rear discharge and grass collection		Kubots	Vehicles & Equipment	g	Owned.	Total:	£2,000.00 £6,257,272.59	£2,000.00

Appendix B

Asset Created From: 01/04/2024 To: 06/03/2025

Asset ID	Custom Code	Status	Asset Name	Description	Value	Date
54036	7	Active	RMX 620 - G2 Roller Mower	6.2m Triple Deck Roller Mower	GBP 34586.5	07/11/2024
581714	4	Active	New Tithe Farm Sports Pavilion	New Tithe Farm Sports Pavilion, plus additional car park	GBP 2438337.56	25/02/2025
58176	8	Active	Roberine F302	three-unit ride on flail mower	GBP 55790	25/02/2025
58192	9	Active	Kubota G26	Ride-on mower with integrated rear discharge and grass collection	GBP 2000	26/02/2025

Appendix C

Asset Created From: 01/04/2024 To: 06/03/2025

Asset ID	Custom Code	Status	Asset Name	Description	Notes	Brand	Serial Nr.	Mark	Group	Category	Туре	Ownership	Value
54036	7	Active	RMX 620 - G2 Roller Mower	6.2m Triple Deck Roller Mower		Wessex			Asset	Grounds equipment	Grounds maintenance equipment	Owned. Purchase date: 06/08/2024	GBP 34586.5
58171	.4	Active		New Tithe Farm Sports Pavilion, plus additional car park					Asset	Operational Land & Buildings	Building	Owned	GBP 2438337.56
58176	8	Active	Roberine F302	three-unit ride on flail mower	Reg- LK74AKO	Roberine	XL9R210FLP5621008		Asset	Vehicles & Equipment	Grounds equipment	Owned	GBP 55790
58192	9	Active	Kubota G26	Ride-on mower with integrated rear discharge and grass collection		Kubota			Asset	Grounds equipment	Grounds maintenance equipment	Owned	GBP 2000



Agenda Item 14

Date:	17 th March 2025
Title:	UNRECOVERABLE DEBTS
Purpose of the Report:	To advise members of the current debtors position and to request authorisation to write off debts deemed to be unrecoverable.
Contact Officer:	Clare Evans, Town Clerk

1. RECOMMENDATION

To approve the writing off of the following bad debts:

- Invoice number 4746
- Invoice number 5051

2. BACKGROUND

Members are advised that the Finance Officer has undertaken a considerable amount of work on the council's schedule of debtors. To date the debtors list totals $\pounds47,824$, of which $\pounds41,188$ comprises outstanding invoices within 2024/25. Officers anticipate that all debts from 2024/25 will be settled.

3. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Within the debtors schedule a total of $\pounds 6,635$ relate to long standing debts from 2019 onwards. After close scrutiny of the long-standing debtors list it appears that many of these debts relate to duplicate invoices having been issued and also some clubs and organisations folding during the pandemic.

The approved Scheme of Delegation enables the Clerk to write-off debts up to $\pm 1,000$ where the sum is considered irrecoverable (Ref point 37) This will be actioned accordingly.

There are 2 debts of over £1,000 (£2176 and £1084), both of which relate to duplicate invoices having been sent. As these debts relate to an internal administrative errors Members are requested to approve the writing off of these 2 debts.

4. HRTC CORPORATE PLAN

- 4 Management and Operations: To improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Town Council as the key local service provider
 - 4.5 Enhance the role of the council.

5. IMPLICATIONS

Corporate Implications

• There are no additional arising corporate implications.

Legal Implications

• There are no legal implications arising from the recommendations

Financial Implications

• The writing off of these longstanding debts will have a negative impact on the Councils accounts in 2024/25.

Risk Implications

• There are no additional arising risk implications.

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 additional arising risk implications.

6. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

Going forwards an annual report on long standing debts, including bad debts, will be presented to this meeting of Town Council.

7. APPENDICES

None.



CORPORATE SERVICES COMMITTE

Agenda Item 15

Date:	17 th March 2025
Title:	COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW PROCESS
Purpose of the Report:	To enable members to discuss the Community Governance Review process.
Contact Officer:	Debbie Marsh, Head of Corporate Services

1. RECOMMENDATION

- **1.** To approve a series of public engagement events in 2025/26 to proactively promote the Community Governance Review process;
- 2. To nominate 3 members to work with officers on shaping a Council response to the Community Governance Review process, including liaising with any relevant neighbouring councils, for approval by Town Council in due course.

2. BACKGROUND

As members are aware Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) intend to start a Community Governance Review (CGR) process in Spring / Summer 2025. The CPC process highlighted the challenges and opportunities that this process may present.

Members considered the CGR process at Town Council in December 2024. At this meeting it was decided to promote the process within the community by all usual communications means plus hold a series of public engagement events to promote the process further subject to budget availability.

3. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Preliminary Feedback

In advance of the commencement of the Community Governance Review (CGR) CBC has invited all of the parishes to submit a case for any changes that they would wish for their respective parish in order that Central Bedfordshire Council can include these proposals in the initial consultation stage.

The review will consider:

- the creation, merger, alteration or abolition of parishes;
- the naming of parishes and the style of any new or revised parish;
- electoral arrangements for existing parishes including council size, the number of councillors to be elected to the council, parish warding, and
- grouping parishes under a new common parish council with any of their surrounding areas.

CBC have requested that if a parish is looking to alter boundaries between neighbouring parishes that a formal discussion with the appropriate council(s)/residents has taken place before submitting a response to the consultation.

More information about how a CGR is conducted can be found here: www.gov.uk/government/publications/community-governance-reviews-guidance

As members have detailed knowledge on parish and ward boundaries and councillor work loads, it is requested that up to 3 members be nominated to work with officers on shaping a Council response, including liaising with any relevant neighbouring council, to the Community Governance Review process. The draft response will be presented for approval by Town Council in due course.

Community Engagement

At the December meeting members supported HRTC being proactive in encouraging engagement in this process by residents.

As previously advised a local organisation has been approached on a preliminary / exploratory basis to enquire as to their ability to support a resident engagement process.

Their support would comprise:

- To produce display material for use at events providing information on the governance review, the influence the community can have and the implications of any changes
- Use local contacts / partners and social media to further promote the planned drop in events (HRTC will produce publicity material and also promote through their channels)
- Distribution of publicity to key locations (shops, cafes etc)
- 1 member of staff at 5 x 2 hrs drop in events (1 event in each town ward plus Bidwell and Linmere), supported by HRTC staff and Councillors. HRTC to support with securing venues. HRTC to pay for venue hire.
- Produce surveys which can be completed at events or online
- Analyse survey results and summarise.

The cost of this support is £2,062. There is budget availability in 190-4059 Central Services / Professional Fees.

4. HRTC CORPORATE PLAN

- 1 Town and Community: To unify all areas of the parish as one community and foster civic pride in our town
 - 1.1 Improve integration between existing and new communities.
 - 1.2 Support the sense of arrival and identity.
- 4 Management and Operations: To improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Town Council as the key local service provider
 4.5 Enhance the role of the council
 - 4.5 Enhance the role of the council.

5. IMPLICATIONS

Corporate Implications

- Staff time implications
- Town wide engagement would support and encourage participation in the process

Legal Implications

• There are no legal implications arising from the recommendations

Financial Implications

• Budget provision in 190-4059 Central Services / Professional Fees.

Risk Implications

• Reputation – promotion of this process would support the reputation of the town council

Equalities Implications

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

This 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 recommendation at this stage

6. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

This is an important process for HRTC and the local community to engage in. Proactive work by HRTC would support the community in engaging effectively in this process.

7. APPENDICES

None.