



# HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Peel Street, Houghton Regis, Bedfordshire, LU5 5EY

Town Mayor: **Councillor E Cooper**  
Town Clerk: **Clare Evans**

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7<sup>th</sup> May 2025

## HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL ANNUAL MEETING

**To: All Town Councillors**

### Notice of Meeting

**You are hereby summoned to the Annual Meeting of the Houghton Regis Town Council to be held in the Council Offices, Peel Street on Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> May 2025 at 7pm.**

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

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

**Clare Evans**  
**Town Clerk**

***THIS MEETING MAY BE  
RECORDED<sup>1</sup>***

### AGENDA

#### 1. ELECTION OF THE TOWN MAYOR

The following process is suggested:

- The retiring Town Mayor to invite nominations for a Town Mayor to hold office until the Annual Meeting in 2026.
- Members to elect a Town Mayor for 2025-26.
- The newly elected Mayor will receive the Chain of Office from the retiring Town Mayor, make and sign the statutory Declaration of Acceptance of Office and make an acceptance speech.
- A vote of thanks will be proposed to the retiring Town Mayor, and he/she will receive the Past Mayor's badge.
- The retiring Town Mayor is invited to reply.
- The Town Mayor is invited to make his/her Announcements.

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

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

## 2. ELECTION OF THE DEPUTY MAYOR

The following process is suggested:

- The Town Mayor to invite nominations for a Deputy Town Mayor to hold office until the Annual Meeting in 2026.
- Members to elect a Deputy Town Mayor for 2025-26.
- The newly elected Deputy Town Mayor will make and sign the statutory Declaration of Acceptance of Office and receive the Chain of Office from the Town Mayor

## 3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

## 4. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

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

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

## 5. SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

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

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

## 6. MINUTES

*Pages 9 - 15*

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2025.

**Recommendation: To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2025.**

## 7. COMMITTEE AND SUB-COMMITTEE MINUTES

*Pages 16 -39*

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

Corporate Services Committee	None to present.
Community Services Committee	None to present.
Environment & Leisure Committee	13 <sup>th</sup> January 2025
Planning Committee	10 <sup>th</sup> and 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2025
Town Partnership Committee	28 <sup>th</sup> January 2025

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

New Cemetery Sub-Committee                      None to present.

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

## 8. COUNCIL CALENDAR FOR 2025-26

*Pages 40 - 48*

The draft Council Calendar, including meeting dates, councillor briefings dates, and council and civic event dates, for 2025/26 was presented at the Town Council meeting held on the 17<sup>th</sup> March 2025. At this meeting Members noted the draft Council Calendar, made some suggested alterations and recommended its approval at the Annual Meeting of Town Council. In addition to these alterations the following amendments have been made:

- Members open sessions changed to Councillor Briefings to accord with the CPC Action Plan
- Community Services Committee on 24<sup>th</sup> November changed to 3<sup>rd</sup> November
- Staffing Committee on 3<sup>rd</sup> November changed to 24<sup>th</sup> November
- Removed Members Open Session / Councillor Briefings on 23<sup>rd</sup> Dec
- Staffing Committee on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2025 removed as too close to AGM
- Staffing Committee on 7<sup>th</sup> July brought forward to 3<sup>rd</sup> June (Tuesday)

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

**Recommendation:     To approve the Council Calendar for 2025/26.**

## 9. COMMITTEE FUNCTIONS & TERMS OF REFERENCE

*Pages 49 - 70*

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

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

The approved Committee Functions & Terms of Reference were reviewed at the Town Council meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2025, as detailed under Minute 13155 Strategic Policies 2025/26 (attached under Agenda Item 6).

**Recommendation:     To approve the Committee Functions & Terms of Reference as presented for 2025/26.**

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

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Members are requested to:

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

A draft membership list is attached.

The following summarises the committee structure and associated membership:

### *Standing Committees*

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

### *Joint Committees*

Partnership Committee	8 members (4 Town Cllrs & 4 CBC Cllrs)
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### *Sub-Committees*

Complaints Sub-Committee <sup>3</sup>	3 members
Complaints Appeal Sub-Committee <sup>2</sup>	3 members
Disciplinary, Grievance & Appeals Sub-Committee <sup>2</sup>	3 members
Proposed New Cemetery Sub Committee	5 members
Community Engagement Sub Committee	5 members
Neighbourhood Plan Implementation Sub Committee	5 members

### *Working Groups*

Pride of Houghton Awards Working Group	5 members
Combating Crime Working Group	5 members

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

## 11. REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

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

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<sup>2</sup> Chairs for Sub Committee's and Working Group's will be agreed at the first meeting following the AGM after apologies have been received

<sup>3</sup> To be appointed as required

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Members will find attached the list of outside organisations to which the Council is invited to appoint representatives for 2025/26 along with Cllrs who have expressed an interest in being appointed as the Council representative.

#### *Reporting Mechanisms*

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

**Recommendation:**

- 1. To appoint the councillor representatives for the listed outside organisations for 2025/26 as attached;**
- 2. To note the reporting back mechanism as set out.**

## 12. STANDING ORDERS

*Pages 73 - 99*

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

Standing Orders are ‘the written rules of a local council. they are used to confirm a council’s internal organisational and administrative procedures, procurement and procedural matters for meetings’.<sup>4</sup>

Standing Orders were reviewed at the Town Council meeting held on the 17<sup>th</sup> March 2025. Subsequent to this NALC have made 2 revisions (31/03/2025) to model Standing Orders:

1. Standing Order 18 – changed to comply with new procurement legislation. Accordingly, officers have updated the HRTC Standing Orders to ensure consistency. The changes are to Standing Orders 18.d, 18.e.iii and 18.g.
2. Standing Order (England) 26 has also been updated to better reflect Code of Conduct Complaints requirements, including the removal of 26.a, 26.b, 26.c and 26.d.

The language in the document has also been changed to gender-neutral terms to align with our policy and the Civility and Respect Project.

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

## 13. FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

*Pages 100 - 116*

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

Financial Regulations are ‘the “standing orders” of a local council that regulate and control its financial affairs and accounting procedures’.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Local Councils Explained, NALC

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

The attached Financial Regulations were reviewed at the Town Council meeting held on the 17<sup>th</sup> March 2025. However, since the agenda for the above meeting was issued, NALC have provided an updated version of Financial Regulations. The regulations were updated due to new legislation, The Procurement Act 2023 and The Procurement Regulation 2024, that has now come into force. The changes are to Financial Regulations 5.4, 5.7 and 5.11. Members will find a track change document attached and are requested to adopt the amended version as presented.

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

#### 14. SCHEME OF DELEGATION

*Pages 117 - 122*

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

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

A revised Scheme of Delegation was reviewed at the Town Council meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2025 and was recommended for approval subject to amendments.

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

#### 15. GENERAL POWER OF COMPETENCE

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

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

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

#### 16. BANKING & SIGNING ARRANGEMENTS

At the Town Council meeting held on the 15<sup>th</sup> May 2024 the banking arrangements for the council's bank accounts were approved as follows (minute number 12837).

##### ***Banking Arrangements***

To approve the bank mandate be set up as follows:

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

To remove all other signatories.

To accord with banking requirements the following resolution was also passed:

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

### ***Signing Arrangements***

Councillor Jones and Councillor Herber were nominated as the 2 members to receive, check and authorise the payment of invoices.

Members are advised that the following signatories are now authorised on the banks mandate:

#### Group A (councillors)

J Carroll  
E Costello  
Y Farrell  
W Henderson  
M Herber  
D Jones  
T McMahon  
A Slough  
C Slough

#### Group B (officers)

Town Clerk  
Head of Corporate Services  
Head of Environmental & Community Services  
Head of Democratic Services

Financial Regulation 5.1 states:

The council's banking arrangements, including the bank mandate, shall be made by the RFO and approved by the council; banking arrangements may not be delegated to a committee. They shall be regularly reviewed for safety and efficiency.

### **Recommendation: Bank Mandate**

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

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

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

- **if we add or remove Authorised Signatories in the “Add or Remove Authorised Signatories” section on the “About your request” page of this form, the Bank will update our mandate**

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

- if we change the Signing Rules in the "Change the Signing Rules on the Mandate" section on the "About your request" page of this form, the Bank will update our mandate accordingly for the accounts we specify in this form's "About your business" section
- and the current mandate will continue as amended.

**Signing Arrangements**

**For Councillor Jones and Councillor Herber as the 2 members to receive, check and authorise the payment of invoices.**

**17. COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW**

*Report to follow.*

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# HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

## Minutes of the Town Council meeting held on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2025 7.00pm.

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

Officers: Clare Evans Town Clerk  
Ian Hayes Head of Environmental and  
Community Services  
D Marsh Head of Corporate Services  
L Senior Head of Democratic Services  
Amanda Samuels Administration Officer

Public: 1

Apologies Councillor: E Costello  
D Taylor

### 13145 APOLOGIES & SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Cllr Costello and Cllr Taylor.

### 13146 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

### 13147 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

None.

### 13148 MINUTES

To approve the Minutes of the meetings held on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2025.

**Resolved: To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2025 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.**

## 13149 COMMITTEE AND SUB-COMMITTEE MINUTES

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

Corporate Services Committee	2 <sup>nd</sup> December 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 <sup>st</sup> October and 11 <sup>th</sup> November 2024
Environment & Leisure Committee	30 <sup>th</sup> September 2024
Planning Committee	6 <sup>th</sup> and 27 <sup>th</sup> January 2025, 17 <sup>th</sup> February 2025
Town Partnership Committee	27 <sup>th</sup> November 2024

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

New Cemetery Sub-Committee None to present.

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

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 – Flexitime Scheme;
4. Minute number 13054 - Ceremonial Robes Policy.

## 13150 TOWN MAYOR’S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Members were provided with a verbal update highlighting the following engagements:

- Jan
  - Opening of a new play area at Aspen Crescent
  - Mayor of Leighton Linlade's quiz night
- Feb
  - Fund raising coffee morning at Jewels
  - Best Bar None Awards at Chicksands
  - Houghton Regis Helpers AGM
  - Unveiling of two benches for Legend on a Bench at Tithe Farm and the Village Green
- Mar
  - Mayor of Luton's International Women's Day charity event
  - All Saints National Day of Reflection for Covid
  - Mayor of Ampthill's Civic Service
  - Chiltern School visit
  - St Patrick's Day festival in Luton
  - Mayor of Flitwick's Civic Reception
  - Keech Hospice rebranding
  - Mayor of Leighton Linlade's Civic Service

The Deputy Mayor had attended the Leighton Linlade quiz evening, the coffee morning at Jewels, Legend on the Bench unveiling and Keech Hospice rebranding. Section 106 and Planning training had also been undertaken.

#### **13151 REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS & ON TRAINING SESSIONS ATTENDED**

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

Cllr Farrell had attended Memorial Hall meetings. Upcoming events included an afternoon tea for over 65s and a race night.

Cllr Cooper had attended a Citizen's Advice Bureau meeting. There had been an increase in clients being supported, some with complex issues. Information packs were being provided to homeless clients and there had also been involvement with the food bank.

Cllr Jones had attended the BATPC Finance and General Purposes Committee and County Committee in February. The main item for discussion had been regarding the government consultation on introducing disciplinary measures to the Code of Conduct.

Cllr McMahan had attended the Houghton Hall Park Board meeting. Main points to note were that facilities management had agreed to finance some decoration, and there was an extended list of events scheduled for the coming months. There were plans to modify the Management Advisory Group and the Board to incorporate input from stakeholders and users.

**13152 CORPORATE PLAN REVIEW & UPDATE**

Members received an updated Corporate Plan Action Plan.

Following a request from Members the Town Clerk read through the items marked as ‘discarded’ on the Corporate Plan. Members highlighted that many of these items remained important to the town although it was recognised that many of them were significant items which may be beyond the scope of the Town Council.

Members queried whether items marked ‘discarded’ could instead be marked as ‘review’ or ‘defer’. The Town Clerk agreed that this was possible, and these items could be referred to the standing committees for further detailed consideration.

**Resolved: To note the update on the Corporate Plan.**

**13153 CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE PROGRESS REVIEW REPORT**

Members were updated on the Corporate Peer Challenge Progress Review and the updated Action Plan was presented.

The Town Clerk advised Members that there were no major areas of concern.

Members expressed disappointment that Councillors had not had the opportunity to see the review report prior to its publication.

**Resolved: To endorse the updated Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan.**

**13154 FINANCIAL FORECAST**

A 3-year budget forecast to 2029 had formed part of the Corporate Plan and the CPC Review and was presented to Members.

It was noted that this was a guide and did not oblige HRTC to adhere to the suggested timescales/budgets. It was confirmed that the forecast did not include any income outside of mainstream income.

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

**13155 STRATEGIC POLICIES 2025/26**

Members were provided with information to enable a review of the Town Council’s strategic policies prior to them being presented at the Town Council meeting to be held on 14<sup>th</sup> May 2025.

- Standing Orders – no changes
- Financial Regulations – no changes although some changes will be presented to the May meeting arising from NALC changes to the Model Financial Regulations re contracts
- Scheme of Delegation – some changes
- Committee Functions & Terms of Reference – extensive changes

The main points for consideration were:

- The abolition of the Personnel Sub-Committee and implementation of a Staffing Committee responsible for staffing, salaries, disciplinary matters, staffing policy etc. The Staffing Committee would report directly to Town Council.
- Initiating the use of delegated powers to officers in relation to the smaller applications considered at Planning Committee meetings.

Members were given assurances that they would continue to be consulted on planning applications and that the process would be robust. It was agreed that the delegation process would be implemented in the new council year.

In relation to the proposed Staffing Committee, Members were advised that the new committee would have the responsibility of overseeing all staffing-related matters, some of which were currently presented at Corporate Services and other standing committees. Members questioned the benefits of creating a new committee rather than amend the Terms of Reference for the Personnel Sub-Committee. The Head of Corporate Services informed Members that this would streamline and expediate the process. Councillors expressed concerns that this proposal had not been discussed by members of the Personnel Sub-Committee, and the Head of Corporate Services responded that this proposal was to make meetings more productive and was in response to Members' frustration at delays to decision making.

Members agreed that as Houghton Regis Town Council expanded it would be necessary to have adequate processes in place. Members were happy to accept the recommendation and review the Staffing Committee following a 12-month trial period.

Following these discussions, Members highlighted two changes that were needed:

- Pg 169: under functions of the Disciplinary, Grievance and Appeals Sub-Committee Group, 'Corporate Services' would need to be changed to 'Staffing Committee'
- Pg 170: Functions of the Pride of Houghton Awards Group 'Events Working Group' needed to be changed to 'Community Engagement Sub-Committee'.

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

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

## 13156 COUNCIL CALENDAR 2025/26

Members were provided with a draft calendar of meetings and events for 2025/26. The following amendments were suggested:

- The 2026/27 AGM needed to be deferred by a week to 20<sup>th</sup> May. This would allow 13 days after 7<sup>th</sup> May elections in 2026.
- 23<sup>rd</sup> December Member Open Session to be removed.

Members requested that invitations were sent out for Town Council meetings as diary holders.

### **13157 ANNUAL REVIEW OF COUNCIL ASSETS**

Members were presented with the list of council assets held on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025, as amended by additions and disposals during 2024/25.

It was highlighted that, on the agenda, Appendix B and C were the same. The Town Clerk confirmed that the Disposals document would be distributed to Members.

### **13158 BAD DEBTS**

Members were advised of the current debtors' position and authorisation was requested to write off debts deemed to be unrecoverable.

The Town Clerk highlighted two debts of over £1,000 each that it was proposed be written off. Both debts were due to duplicate invoices being issued and did not represent an actual debt.

**Resolved: To approve the writing off of the following debts:**

- **Invoice number 4746**
- **Invoice number 5051**

### **13159 COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW**

Members were invited to discuss the Community Governance Review process.

CBC had advised that the Review would be taking place in Spring/Summer 2025. HRTC had considered a number of public engagement events to promote the process and encourage engagement. A budget had been made available, and approval was requested in order to proceed with the proposed events.

Three Members were sought, who would work with officers on the process and would liaise with neighbouring councils if necessary in order to draft a response to the Community Governance Review.

Members were happy to endorse the proposals, and the following councillors expressed their willingness to take part in the process: Cllrs D Jones, M Herber, T McMahon, J Carroll and C Slough.

The Town Clerk confirmed that the recommendation would be amended to include five councillors.

- Resolved:**
- 1. To approve a series of public engagement events in 2025/26 to proactively promote the Community Governance Review process;**
  - 2. To nominate 5 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.**

**The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.53pm**

**Dated this 14<sup>th</sup> day of May 2025**

**Chairman**

**DRAFT**

**HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL**  
**Environment & Leisure Committee**  
**Minutes of the meeting held on**  
**13<sup>th</sup> January 2025 at 7.00pm**

Present: Councillors: A Slough Chairman  
 J Carroll (Sub)  
 Y Farrell  
 W Henderson  
 T McMahan  
 C Rollins  
 D Taylor

Officers: Ian Haynes Head of Environmental &  
 Community Services  
 Amanda Samuels Administration Officer

Public: 0

Apologies: Councillors: P Burgess

**13081 APOLOGIES**

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

**13082 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

None.

**13083 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

**13084 MINUTES**

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024.

**Resolved: To confirm the minutes of the Environment & Leisure Committee meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.**

**13085 TITHE FARM RECREATION GROUND SPORTS PROJECT UPDATE**

Members were informed that the Section 278 was still outstanding on the Tithe Farm Recreation Ground Sports Project.

The original entrance could be used, although it was in need of improvement, and the site was operational. The 21-year lease for pitch, pavilion and car park had been reviewed by solicitors and would be signed following checks by HRTC and Beds FA. Local teams had been using the facility and feedback had been positive.

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There would be an overspend but funds had been included in the emerging budget for 2025/26. There were insufficient funds for the entrance, but it was hoped that funds in next year's budget would be help cover this.

### **13086 HOUGHTON HALL PARK**

The day-to-day management of Houghton Hall Park had transferred to Houghton Regis Town Council on 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2024.

HRTC now controlled the website and social media, and a new email address had been created. CBC officer access had ended future updates/posts would be the responsibility of HRTC.

A meeting of the Management Advisory Group was due, followed by a meeting of the Board. The financing for the JVA had been agreed and it was hoped CBC would soon issue a purchase order for 23<sup>rd</sup> December– 31<sup>st</sup> March. A breakdown of costings would be presented to the Board.

A number of projects were planned, including updating the website and subtly altering the logo to reflect the Houghton Regis colours.

Of the three members of staff from Houghton Hall Park, two had transferred to HRTC while the third member had not. This vacancy would be advertised. The community gardener was collaborating with the grounds team on works to be done and there was a financial commitment to improving the grounds. The Park Ranger had joined HRTC's grounds team

The running of the building would be overseen by HRTC while the building itself continued to be the responsibility of Central Bedfordshire Council. Members were keen to see improvement to the upkeep of the house and it was confirmed that there was an earmarked reserve which could be used to this end if necessary.

### **13087 UKSPF UPDATE**

CBC had given approval for landscaping to commence at All Saints View and six raised planters would be situated at the site. The giant precinct planters had been ordered and were ready for installation. Sleeper beds would be created and filled with drought-tolerant planting. Quotes were being gathered as the initial proposal had changed.

Funds had been received for hanging baskets and floral displays around the town centre. It was confirmed that there was the potential to extend the floral displays to additional local centres in the future.

### **13088 TERRA CROFT LEISURE GARDEN UPDATE**

- Waiting list up from 223 in September 2024 to 232
- 47 plots rated green
- 1 plot rated red

Original plot holders were reaching the third year which was a point where interest could potentially decline. If plot holders retained their allotment beyond this point, the likelihood was they would become long-term users.

There was no update on the second allotment at Bidwell West, but discussions had been taking place.

In response to questions from Members, the Head of Environmental and Community Services confirmed that:

- A breakdown of user demographics and times of demand could be provided.
- All plot holders were residents of Houghton Regis.
- A quote had been received on the compostable toilets, but comparable quotes were also being sought.
- There had been no complaints from plot holders regarding wind damage at the site.
- A meeting was due regarding the Linnere allotment.

#### **13089 HORTICULTURE OPERATIVE LEVEL 2 APPRENTICESHIP**

Due to a recent flexible retirement, an opportunity had opened up for the Town Council to consider introducing a horticultural apprenticeship programme, with low to zero cost to the budget.

The course would allow candidates to choose a pathway that suited their skills and job role, including Horticulture, Parks, Gardens and Green Space, Landscaping, or Sports Turf Groundsman. Students would also have the opportunity to study for additional professional qualifications, such as safe use of pesticides, hedge trimmers, and powered cultivators.

It was highlighted that while in-house provision of an apprenticeship would be more expensive, it would allow greater flexibility and ensure quality.

It was hoped that on completion of the course a position would be available at HRTC for the student. There was also the aspiration that it would be possible to grow the grounds team through the apprenticeship route as opportunities became available.

A fixed-term contract for two years would be offered to the candidate. This would allow sufficient time to explore increasing the staffing budget to retain an exceptional apprentice on completion of study.

**Resolved: To delegate authority to the Head of Environmental & Community Services to liaise with suitable providers to create a horticultural operative level 2 apprenticeship scheme.**

#### **13090 INCOME AND EXPENDITURE REPORT**

Members were provided with the income and expenditure report, with appropriate commentary, for the Environment & Leisure Services Committee.

It was highlighted that income from burial fees had declined; however, three months of the financial year remained.

Electricity at Tithe Farm was still high, but part of the cost could be passed on to Beds FA as part of the running cost.

Money from lettings would go over budget, which would balance finances out. Bidwell had also been budgeted for but there had been no expenditure as it had not yet passed to HRTC.

Houghton Hall Park was included because of the staff transfer. The only costs were for one week in December and would not affect the budget.

**The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 7.59pm**

**Dated this 28<sup>th</sup> day of April 2025**

**Chairman**



## **HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL**

### **Planning Committee**

**Minutes of the meeting held on  
Monday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2025 at 7.00pm**

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

#### **13138 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

Apologies were received from Cllrs M Herber, C Slough and D Taylor.

#### **13139 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

None.

#### **13140 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

#### **13141 MINUTES**

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on the 17<sup>th</sup> February 2025.

**Resolved: To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> February 2025 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.**

#### **13142 PLANNING MATTERS**

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

[CB/25/00370/FULL](#)  
(click for more  
details)

Erection of two detached bungalows and associated works.  
Expansion of existing dropped kerb.  
65 - 67 Cemetery Road, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5DA  
Mr Brian Aitken

**Comments: Members felt this application constituted overdevelopment. Members also supported the report from**

the Tree and Landscape Officer objecting to the removal of trees, most notably those outside of the boundary.

Houghton Regis Town Council raised an objection to this application on the grounds of:

- Overdevelopment
- The removal of trees outside of the boundary

[CB/25/00653/FULL](#)  
(click for more details)

Single storey rear extension  
20 Kent Road, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5NZ  
Mr & Mrs Smith

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

[CB/25/00614/FULL](#)  
(click for more details)

Single-Storey rear extension with a felt roof and 3-roof lights.  
Chalton View, East End, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5LB  
Mr K Sivagnanavel

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

[CB/25/00531/FULL](#)  
(click for more details)

Conversion of stables to form one dwelling and associated works  
Stables at Manor Farm, Sewell Lane, Sewell, Dunstable, LU6 1RP  
Mr S McNamara

**Comments: Members noted that this was a re-presentation of an application (Minute 12682) previously refused by Central Bedfordshire Council. It was felt that this was an improved application which maintained established buildings.**

**Houghton Regis Town Council raised no objection to this application.**

[CB/25/00568/FULL](#)  
(click for more details)

Installation of 1 new communications Kiosk with integrated defibrillator  
Footpath to the front of Unit 4 All Saints View, High Street,  
Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5QT  
Mr T Johnston

**Comments: Members noted that the Highways Officer had questioned proximity of the kiosk to the road and its impact on the intervisibility of drivers and users of the zebra crossing.**

**Members questioned whether there was likely to be any conflict between the proposed location of the kiosk and the planters that were due to be installed by Houghton Regis Town Council. The Head of Democratic Services would**

DJT.

**confirm details with the Head of Environmental and Community Services.**

**Houghton Regis Town Council raised no objections to this application on the proviso that there was no conflict with the existing plans to install planters at the site.**

[CB/25/00569/ADV](#)  
(click for more details)

Advertisement: Installation of 1 advertising digital display screen to the rear of a new communications Kiosk  
 Footpath to the front of Unit 4 All Saints View, High Street, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5QT  
 Mr T Johnston

**Comments: Members debated whether the advertising would cause a distraction to drivers and if it should be moved back from the road. Upon discussion it was felt that the proposed position was unlikely to be a safety issue.**

**Houghton Regis Town Council raised no objection to this application.**

[CB/25/00320/RM](#)  
(click for more details)

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 5150 dwellings (Use Class C3); up to 202500 sqm gross of additional development in Use Classes: A1, A2, A3 (retail), A4 (public house), A5 (take away); B1, B2, B8 (offices, industrial, and storage and distribution); C1 (hotel), C2 (care home), D1 and D2 (community and leisure); car showroom; data centre; petrol filling station; car parking; primary substation; energy centre; and for the laying out of the buildings; routes and open spaces within the development; and all associated works and operations including but not limited to: demolition; earthworks; engineering operations. All development works and operations to be in accordance with the Development Parameters Schedule and Plans.). Reserved matters for the appearance and finish of external features, including play equipment, spatial arrangement, street furniture, signage, for the key spaces in the areas known as Phase 3A and 3B of Masterplan Area 3.  
 Land to the North and East of Houghton Regis, Sundon Road, Houghton Regis  
 Houghton Regis Management Company

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

**Noted:**

[CB/25/00361/DOC](#)  
(click for more  
details)

Discharge of Condition 2 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. ): As built drainage drawings by the civil engineer

Houghton Regis Leisure Centre And Community Centre, Parkside Drive, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5PX

[CB/25/00465/DOC](#)  
(click for more  
details)

Discharge of Condition 2 against planning permission ref. CB/24/01548/REG3 (Erection of external fencing and enclosure. Alterations and extension to hardsurfacing and soft landscaping; and provision of external lighting)  
Chiltern UTC, Parkside Drive, Houghton Regis, LU5 5PX

[CB/25/00456/DOC](#)  
(click for more  
details)

Discharge of Conditions 19 and 20 against planning permission ref. CB/22/04525/VOC (Removal of Condition 10 and variation of Conditions 13, 15 and 21 of planning permission  
CB/19/04220/OUT (Outline Application for Residential Development for up to 100 Dwellings with all matters reserved, except access) vary condition 13 from the requirement of 14 mainstream housing together with 9 units for care/support to 13.72% of total units suitable for the elderly and condition 21 to be amended to "The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plan: 13060as2.15 Rev D (in so far as it relates to the means of access)  
Bury Spinney, Thorn Road, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 6JQ

[CB/25/00458/DOC](#)  
(click for more  
details)

Discharge of Conditions 1, 4, 9, 14, and 15 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/25/00559/LDC](#)  
P (click for more  
details)

Lawful Development Certificate Proposed: Proposed single storey rear extension, single storey side extension, hip to gable and rear roof dormer and installation of 3no. rooflights to the front elevation.  
44 Leafields, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5LX

*DJJ.*

- [CB/25/00426/DOC](#) Discharge of Condition 9 against planning permission ref. CB/24/00059/FULL (Proposed 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 nationalisation of accesses, provision of yard area, parking, landscaping, and other works)  
Unit 1, Humphrys Road, Dunstable, LU5 4TP  
[\(click for more details\)](#)
- [CB/25/00482/PAS P](#) Prior Approval of the Installation or Replacement of other Solar Photovoltaics Equipment (Roof Mounted Only) : Installation of roof mounted solar PV panels.  
Unit 33, Woodside Industrial Estate, Humphrys Road, Dunstable, LU5 4TP  
[\(click for more details\)](#)
- [CB/25/00636/DOC](#) Discharge of Condition 6 against planning permission ref. CB/24/01548/REG3 (Erection of external fencing and enclosure. Alterations and extension to hardsurfacing and soft landscaping; and provision of external lighting.)  
Chiltern UTC, Parkside Drive, Houghton Regis, LU5 5PX  
[\(click for more details\)](#)
- [CB/25/00587/DOC](#) Discharge of Condition 16 against planning permission ref. CB/19/02130/FULL Demolition of existing residential dwelling and erection of 119 dwellings including the creation of a new vehicular access, recreational open space, parking infrastructure and associated landscaping and ancillary works.  
The Gates Land East of Bedford Road Bidwell Houghton Regis  
[\(click for more details\)](#)
- [CB/25/00561/DOC](#) Discharge of Condition 14 against planning permission ref. CB/24/03337/VOC (Variation of condition number 2 of planning permission CB/21/04756/FULL Erection of 4 detached dwelling and associated works) Variation sought to plans))  
Mouse Farm, Shefford Road, Clophill, Bedford, MK45 4BT  
[\(click for more details\)](#)

***Permissions / Approvals / Consents***

None received.

***Refusals:***

None received.

***Withdrawals:***

None received.

**13143    CB/24/03544/FULL - 22 RECREATION ROAD, LU5 5JW**

Members were advised that 2 notices of amendments had been received in relation to the above application, which was for a conversion from a house to a children's home.

More information was available to Members than at the meeting on 22nd January 2025 (Minute 13080). Members felt that parking remained the primary concern; however, no further objection was raised to this revised application.

**Resolved:** To consider the Town Council's response to the proposed amendments to application CB/24/03544/FULL - 22 Recreation Road, LU5 5JW:

- The Council maintains its original position of no objections, which now explicitly extends to the current amended plans;
- This resolution is predicated on the developer demonstrating:
  - Adequate and appropriate parking provision commensurate with the establishment's proposed use
  - Compliance with local parking standards and infrastructure requirements

**13144 STREET NAMING AND NUMBERING; BURY SPINNY, THORN ROAD, LU5 6JQ**

Members were provided with a notification of Street naming and numbering for Bury Spinney, Thorn Road, Houghton Regis, LU5 6JQ.

The proposed Street Name prefixes were:

- Artemis
- Juno
- Arcas

Members were advised that an officer from Houghton Regis had suggested that, rather than adopting street name prefixes from both Roman and Greek mythology, Roman names would be more appropriate to the area and would provide consistency. The officer had put forward the following names:

- Aurora
- Ceres
- Flora
- Fortuna
- Spes

Upon consideration, Members agreed with the original suggestion of Juno, but proposed Aurora and Ceres as potential street name prefixes.

**Resolved:** To consider the Town Council's response to the proposed road names for Bury Spinney, Thorn Road, LU5 6JQ:

The following road names were submitted for consideration:

- Juno
- Aurora
- Ceres

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 7.39pm



**Dated this 31<sup>st</sup> day of March 2025**

*D. J. Jones.*

**Chairman**

**HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL**

**Planning Committee**

**Minutes of the meeting held on  
Monday 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 at 7.00pm**

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

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

Public: 4

Apologies: Councillors: M Herber

Also present: Christian Rohman Regener8Power

**13160 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

Apologies were received from Cllr Herber.

**13161 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

Members of the public in attendance wished to address application CB/25/00685/FULL on the agenda. It was agreed to hold discussions under Planning Matters.

**13162 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

**13163 MINUTES**

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on the 10<sup>th</sup> March 2025

**Resolved: To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2025 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.**

**13164 PLANNING MATTERS**

*Members agreed to vary the order of business. Following discussion of planning application CB/25/00685/FULL, Item 6 on the agenda would be brought forward for a presentation by Regener8 Power.*

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



[CB/25/00685/FULL](#)  
(click for more details)

Demolition of commercial building and erection of 2 dwellings with associated parking and access improvements  
Cattle Shed, Manor Farm, Sewell Lane, Sewell, LU6 1RP  
Sewell (Eco)Ltd

**Comments:** A statement was made by a public attendee who highlighted this was the latest in a number of applications and raised the following issues:

- The proposed development was inappropriate for a conservation area and heritage site.
- The proposed building was significantly higher than the existing structure.
- There would be a detrimental impact to a listed building in the vicinity.
- Future investment in the barn at the site - which the Conservation Officer had recommended should be treated as a priority - would potentially be compromised.
- There would be significant traffic issues, including parking and access.
- Development was piecemeal and there was no coherent plan for the whole site.

Members acknowledged the points raised, and also noted the following:

- Development of the area was fragmented and unsympathetic to a heritage site and conservation area.
- A report from Natural England highlighted the need to assess the impact on a Special Area of Conservation. Since the likely impact was as yet unknown, it was considered inadvisable to recommend the application.
- The Neighbourhood Plan did not include Sewell as an area for development

Houghton Regis Town Council raised an objection to this application on the grounds of:

- The Development was inappropriate for a heritage site.
  - The impact on a Special Area of Conservation had not been established.
  - It would adversely impact a listed building
  - The proposed structure represented overdevelopment.
  - Access and parking would be problematic for vehicles.
  - Sewell was not a site for development under the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 

*Item 6 on the agenda was brought forward in order for a presentation to be made regarding the proposed Battery Energy Storage System (Minute 13165)*

[CB/25/00772/FULL](#)  
(click for more details)

Loft conversion with rear dormer, front dormer and front roof lights. Conversion of garage for summer house use. Install obscure windows to side elevation  
15 Centurion Way, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 6GN  
Mr Yasin

**Comments:** Members raised concerns regarding the extensive size of the proposed conversion and questioned whether parking provision would be adequate. Members also noted that the privacy of neighbouring properties would be significantly impacted by dormer windows to both the front and rear of the property.

**Houghton Regis Town Council raised an objection to this application on the grounds of overdevelopment.**

*Members were asked to consider the following two applications, which related to the same property, simultaneously*

[CB/25/00504/FULL](#)  
(click for more details)

Conversion of an outbuilding to an annexe ancillary to the main dwelling, including the installation of roof lights and solar panels to the rear elevation and a new window within the side elevation.  
Whitehill Farm, Sewell Lane, Sewell, Dunstable, LU6 1RP  
Mr R Phillips

**Comments:** This application had been submitted previously (Minute 12610, CB/23/02672/FULL). While there had been no objection on that occasion, the following recommendations had been made:

- That comments from the tree officer be taken into account.
- A heritage assessment of the area was strongly encouraged and carried out prior to the conversion in order to record the archaeology of the site.

Members noted that the issues raised by the Tree Officer appeared to have been addressed; however, The Archaeologist's report was disappointing, noting that the Heritage Statement was 'out of date' and did not 'include any archaeological information'.

**Houghton Regis Town Council raised no objection to this application but reiterated the request for an up-to-date Heritage Statement, with relevant archaeological information, to be provided.**



[CB/25/00505/LB \(click for more details\)](#)

Listed Building: Conversion of an outbuilding to an annexe ancillary to the main dwelling, including the installation of roof lights and solar panels to the rear elevation and a new window within the side elevation.

Whitehill Farm, Sewell Lane, Sewell, Dunstable, LU6 1RP  
Mr R Phillips

**Comments: As stated for application CB/25/00504/FULL (above).**

[CB/25/00627/FULL \(click for more details\)](#)

Erection of 2 side and rear extensions with side rooflights, front porch and alterations. Demolition of existing stand.

Dunstablians Rugby Union Football Club, Bedford Road, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 6JW  
Dunstablians RUF

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

[CB/25/00814/FULL \(click for more details\)](#)

Single storey rear extension

74 Grove Road, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5PF  
Mr D Neto

**Comments: Members highlighted that under 'items for noting', there was a 'Lawful Development Certificate Proposed' for a rear extension at this property; the LDCP was awaiting a decision.**

**Houghton Regis Town Council raised no objections to this application.**

**Noted:**

[CB/25/00855/LDCP \(click for more details\)](#)

Lawful Development Certificate Proposed: Single storey rear extension

74 Grove Road, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5PF  
Mr D Neto

[CB/25/00498/DOC \(click for more details\)](#)

Discharge of Condition 6 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 Leisure Centre, Formally Known as Houghton Regis Academy, Parkside Drive, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5PX

***Permissions / Approvals / Consents***

None received.

***Refusals:***

None received.

***Withdrawals:***

None received.

**13165 BATTERY ENERGY STORAGE SYSTEM (BESS) CONSULTATION PRESENTATION**

A representative from Regener8 Power made a presentation to Members regarding a new battery storage scheme (BESS) planned for the local area.

This presentation provided Councillors with an overview of the upcoming project before the formal planning application submission. Members were invited to raise questions and provide feedback.

The proposed site would cover 9.1 hectares at Bury Farm, north of the A505, between Tilsworth and Dunstable. The site formed part of a larger Greenbelt site but was thought a suitable location for the BESS.

The representative from Regener8 Power assured Members that:

- Work would be carried out with the minimum of disruption to local residents.
- Suitable screening would be installed at the site.
- A noise assessment would be carried out
- Heritage assessments would be carried out.
- Safeguarding Mechanisms would be put in place
- A robust complaints process would be established

The Representative from Regener8 informed Members that a public Consultation would take place on 3<sup>rd</sup> April at Tilsworth Community Hall, 3.00-7.30pm. The public consultation would close on 17<sup>th</sup> April and it was hoped the planning application would be submitted in May. If the application was successful, construction would begin in November 2027.

In answer to a question from Members it was confirmed that there would be a Community Benefit Fund but that a figure was yet to be confirmed.

**Resolved: To provide feedback to Regener8 on their proposals for a BESS.**

**The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.04pm**

**Dated this 22<sup>nd</sup> day of April 2025**

**Chairman**



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF HOUGHTON REGIS PARTNERSHIP  
COMMITTEE**

**HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, PEEL STREET**

**ON 28<sup>th</sup> January 2025**

Present: Town Cllrs: J Carroll, Y Farrell, D Jones  
CBC Cllrs: C Alderman, S Goodchild, P Hamill, T McMahon  
CBC Sarah Hughes, Community Engagement Manager  
Officers:  
HRTC Clare Evans, Town Clerk  
Officers: Amanda Samuels, Administration Officer  
  
Co-opted members: J Anderson, D Gibbons, T Haines, D Hill, C Regan, R Turner

Also in attendance: 0

Apologies: Cllr C Slough

Members of the public: 7

**1060 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

Apologies were received from Cllr C Slough.

**1061 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

Members of the public updated the Committee on developments since the special meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2024 (Minute numbers 1056 and 1059) in relation to the current leisure centre.

It was understood that the new leisure centre would open 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025 with the current leisure centre closing late March 2025.

The draft Community Use Agreement (CUA) was a publicly accessible document available via the CBC Planning Portal. The members of the public raised the following issues:

- It does not ringfence the rights of Houghton Regis residents to access broader leisure services.
- It was estimated there would be a deficit of 48-50% leisure access per week across the year, with the potential for further reductions of up to 75 days access per year if required by Houghton with only 2-weeks' notice.
- Clarity was required as to whether the agreement would allow for walk-in or pre-booked casual use. Casual access at this level needed to be protected and staffing needed to allow for this irrespective of advance bookings.

- The CUA did not address whether the school management company would provide First Aid, Public Liability, risk assessments etc.
- CUA stated 'Established within twelve months from the date of this agreement'. Concerns were expressed that the CUA had not been approved and the current leisure centre was due to close on 1<sup>st</sup> April. Thus there would be a significant gap between closing the current leisure centre and the sports hall at Houstone school being made available.
- The draft CUA made no reference to a representative from HRTC forming part of the Management Committee.
- CUA stated 'the Chair shall be the representative of the school'. This person would have the casting vote if necessary to resolve tied decisions.

The members of the public in attendance felt the CUA needed to be challenged as the CUA, as it stood, would not accommodate many of the users accessing the current facilities.

Enabling HRTC to manage the current sports hall as an interim measure was a matter of urgency.

It was further claimed that the current usage data as used by CBC was flawed as it recorded external bookings as 1 user regardless of the number of participants taking part in that booking.

Cllr Hamill advised that he had submitted questions at the Sustainable Communities meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2025. It was felt that the responses had been inaccurate and Cllr Hamill would look to challenge some of these inaccuracies.

Members were urged to keep pursuing a solution.

A representative of the Houghton Regis Badminton Club shared a copy of the statement made at CBC Full Council, highlighting the deficit in sports hall provision to the residents of Houghton Regis.

The representative from the Academy of Central Bedfordshire (ACB) addressed Members saying that notice had been received of the sports hall closure taking place on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2025. This meant that ACB would have no access to indoor sports facilities in eight weeks.

Cllr Hamill confirmed that he would ask to include sports hall provision as an agenda item at the next Sustainable Communities meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> February and speak with the relevant portfolio holders. In the interim, it was necessary to keep the current sports hall open until a solution was found.

Members of the public felt that responses from CBC had so far been defensive and a narrative, which needed to be challenged.

Members agreed to bring forward agenda item 7 'Update on Sports Hall' for discussion.

## 1062 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

None.

CA

**1063 MINUTES**

It was agreed that the Minutes of 22<sup>nd</sup> October would be approved following a minor amendment to the wording in Minute 1050.

**Resolved: To approve the Minutes of the meetings held on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2024, subject to amendment, and 27<sup>th</sup> November 2024 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.**

*The agenda item regarding the sports hall update was brought forward, as agreed by Members, following Questions from the Public.*

**1064 UPDATE ON SPORTS HALL**

Members were advised that an Expression of Interest (EoI) under the Community Asset Transfer process was submitted on 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2024 and receipt had been acknowledged. An update was awaited from CBC.

The CBC Community Engagement Manager confirmed that officers would be meeting to discuss the EoI, and HRTC would receive feedback in due course.

It was questioned whether CBC were now in possession of the correct statistics, since it was feared inaccurate data could impact the decision in respect of the EoI. The Town Clerk responded that the submitted EoI had stressed that the sports hall would be run in a non-competitive way in respect of other providers; it also highlighted the impact the loss of the facility would have on Houghton Regis residents, schools and clubs. Members believed that CBC should be made aware of the discrepancies in usage level statistics as this would reinforce the case for maintaining the sports hall. The Town Clerk agreed to revisit the EoI to further support and determine the value of continued access to the sports hall.

The Chair put forward that the Committee acknowledged the discrepancies in order to formally record dissatisfaction with the discrepancies, and the necessity of establishing actual numbers. Members suggested that CBC view the recording of the meeting and answer the questions raised at the meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> February.

A timeline from CBC would be beneficial in respect of its response to HRTC's EoI and potential progress to the submission of a business case. With significant time limitations, the closure of the sports hall should be halted while the process proceeded.

The CBC Community Engagement Manager confirmed that a meeting was due imminently to appraise the EoI and the merits of the proposal. It was hoped feedback would be provided during the following week. It was not possible to give a timescale on the ensuing process.

The Community Engagement Manager provided the CBC response to questions raised at the Partnership meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2024 (minute 1059):

In response to queries regarding the modelling and figures it was stated that:

- *The leisure facility strategy assessment was carried out in line with Sport England methodology.*

CA

- *Future need was assessed via the Sport England Facilities Planning Model (FPM) which looked at future housing growth and participation levels. Details of this could be found on the Sport England website.*
- *The modelling system was bespoke for local authorities and included local usage data.*
- *Following an assessment, a four-court sports hall had been deemed adequate to demand. There had been a decline in sports participation.*
- *The strategy had recommended the provision of a new sports hall with any new leisure centre for Houghton Regis; however, at this time the potential for a new secondary school adjacent to the potential leisure centre was not known.*
- *A feasibility study had concluded that provision at the centre and the school would result in over-provision and impact both facilities.*
- *Houstone school would provide sufficient capacity to accommodate the majority of community use outside school hours. Some displaced community use during school hours could be accommodated at the Dunstable Centre*

In response to queries on consultation, it was stated that:

- *Consultation was carried out prior to adoption of the Leisure Facility Strategy in 2021 and further consultation took place in early 2022.*

In response to queries on the Community Use Agreement, it was stated that:

- *A link had been provided and was on the CBC website*
- *Community use maximised use of facilities and reduced impact on public funding.*

In response to queries on usage, it was stated that:

- *Feedback during the consultation period the council had evaluated usage of the current sports hall showed an average of 10% before 4.30pm and 25% after 4.30 on weekdays compared to total capacity.*

At this point, Members questioned why the statement had not been made available prior to the meeting and it was requested that the report be circulated, in writing, among the committee at the soonest opportunity. The Community Engagement Manager confirmed authorisation to share the statement was being sought.

The final point of the response from CBC was:

- *The consultation process identified that activities not requiring a sports hall could be accommodated at the new centre. Those requiring a sports hall could be accommodated at the Dunstable centre, or in at the school in the evening.*

The CUA would not come into effect until the school had signed off on the building and it was questioned when was this likely to be. The Community Engagement Manager was unable to provide further information on discharge of the planning conditions.

There was frustration that the CBC response was a reiteration of previous points and did not address the questions raised. The data discrepancies were referenced again, and it was highlighted that the figures had been gathered during a period that included Covid and did not take recent population growth into account. Furthermore, Houghton Regis did not reflect national trends in sports participation and should be regarded in its own right.

The Community Engagement Manager was asked for a response to the question: 'As Houghton Regis is the fastest growing town in the UK, what were CBC plans to accommodate the growing population in terms of sports hall facilities going forward?' The Community Engagement Manager enquired if the data source regarding population growth

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was available but noted the question and confirmed that a response from CBC would be sought.

A member of the public informed the Committee that headcounts were not taken at sports halls, just bookings, which did not reflect the true usage figures. Confirmation of this system would be made in writing and supported by local leisure facilities.

The Town Clerk drafted a suggested resolution for consideration by Members:

1. This committee supports the EoI as submitted by HRTC.
2. The committee requests that CBC considers and reflects on the challenges made by community representatives on the accuracy of the data CBC has used, especially including, but not restricted to:
  - The data spanning 2017-2021 which includes Covid periods.
  - The data collected was prior to significant part of the growth of Houghton Regis.
  - The usage data of Houghton Regis leisure centre is flawed as an external booking by a club is recorded as one booking, regardless of the number of participants in the club. This has been verified by the current operator and further detail can be supplied if required.
3. The existing leisure centre is anticipated to be closed on 22<sup>nd</sup> March and the new leisure centre is due to open in early April. Due to the tight timescales involved and the lack of a firm timeline for consideration of the Expression of Interest (EoI) and the subsequent anticipated business plan, this committee requests that CBC, by working in partnership with HRTC facilitate the sports hall remaining open until longer-term solutions as presented through the EoI are duly considered and determined. This is to support in particular the ACB who are at risk of having no accessible PE space to support their vulnerable young people and the existing sports club users, many of whom are unlikely to be able to access facilities outside of HR.

It was proposed by the Chair that a meeting be scheduled for April in the event of HRTC being able to progress with the EoI, in order that Members could be updated on the business plan.

It was suggested a recommendation from Sustainable Communities could be made to Executive to keep the sports hall open.

Members were asked to vote on the proposal and voted unanimously in favour.

**Resolved:**

1. **This committee supports the EoI as submitted by HRTC.**
2. **The committee requests that CBC considers and reflects on the challenges made by community representatives on the accuracy of the data CBC has used, especially including, but not restricted to:**
  - **The data spanning 2017-2021 which includes Covid periods.**
  - **The data collected was prior to significant part of the growth of Houghton Regis.**
  - **The usage data of Houghton Regis leisure centre is flawed as an external booking by a club is recorded as one booking, regardless of the number of participants in the club. This has**

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- been verified by the current operator and further detail can be supplied if required.
3. The existing leisure centre is anticipated to be closed on 22<sup>nd</sup> March and the new leisure centre is due to open in early April. Due to the tight timescales involved and the lack of a firm timeline for consideration of the Expression of Interest (EoI) and the subsequent anticipated business plan, this committee requests that CBC, by working in partnership with HRTC facilitate the sports hall remaining open until longer-term solutions as presented through the EoI are duly considered and determined. This is to support in particular the ACB who are at risk of having no accessible PE space to support their vulnerable young people and the existing sports club users, many of whom are unlikely to be able to access facilities outside of HR.

#### 1065 INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW INTEGRATED CARE BOARD PLACE TEAM

The representative from the <sup>ICB</sup>CBC Place Team was unable to attend the meeting. The Town Clerk agreed to seek to schedule a suitable date for this item to be discussed separately. CA

#### 1066 COMMUNITY BUILDINGS IN HOUGHTON REGIS

The Community Engagement Manager read out a statement from CBC on the current lease of Bedford Square Community Centre:

- CBC Executive approved in 2022 that the HR resource centre in Bedford Square would continue with its dual education and community use on a permanent basis. The agreement with the college spanned 5 years, 1 August 2022 – 1<sup>st</sup> August 2027, with a break clause after 3 years (August 2025).
- Ownership of the college had since transferred to Bedford College Group and the Assets department would be engaging with the college in the coming months. There were no current plans to execute the break clause.

Members suggested that Town Partnership requested a public consultation on the current arrangement.

There were some questions regarding the dates of the lease. The Community Engagement Manager was unable to provide a response regarding lease dates but confirmed that a consultation had taken place on the community resource centre.

Regarding a further public consultation, it was understood that only Executive could approve such items. Members felt a representation should be made to CBC for a public consultation to take place on future use, once the contract had concluded. The Chair confirmed this would be requested at Sustainable Communities prior to the end of the contract.

#### 1067 COUNCIL BUDGETS 2025/26

*Update on CBC Budget 2025/26*

The CBC Community Engagement Manager informed Members that budget proposals were

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available on the website. Public consultation would close on 4<sup>th</sup> February 2024 and the budget determined at a meeting in late February.

*Update on HRTC Budget 2025/26*

The officer draft budget was presented for consideration to the Town Council meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> January, and a link to the agenda for that meeting was provided. The Town Clerk informed Members that adjustments had been made at the meeting to reduce the precept.

## **1068 PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE WORKPLAN**

It was highlighted to the Partnership Committee the forward plan of key decisions to be made by the Executive at Central Bedfordshire Council and the workplans for the Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

Members were invited to consider the Partnership Committee workplan for 2024/25.

It was requested that the results of the 'Have Your Say' on school organisation be included in the Work Plan item 'Education (inc. Primary School places).

There were questions regarding the status of Transfer of Assets; however, it was highlighted that this was something that would be addressed by individual councils and not under the Partnership Committee.

The Town Clerk suggested consideration of two items:

- There was a Devolution White Paper – would the Committee be interested to receive more information on this?
- Community Governance Review – would Members like to receive a briefing on the process?

Members agreed that further information on both items would be welcome.

## **1069 CBC UPDATE REPORT**

The CBC update report was provided for information.

Members questioned the accuracy of the report as the status regarding several items was incorrect.

There had been assurances made to residents that Clarkes Way would be resurfaced once Phase II at All Saints View had been completed. There was now some doubt as to whether this would be carried out. It was questioned why, if the work had been cancelled, this had not been communicated?

Traffic management and capacity for Windsor Drive was included on the report but was no longer required.

Members requested the results of the Active Travel engagement at Tithe Farm Primary School.

Parking around primary schools continued to cause significant problems, and it was questioned why PCNs were not being issued. Cllr Hamill agreed to take up the issue of hotspots for illegal parking with the parking enforcement team.

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It was requested that the Committee monitor the impact of the reduction in Houghton Regis services as it had been a difficult period for residents.

#### **1070 PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE CO-OPTION**

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

Members were invited to consider whether they would like to explore the possibility of seeking to co-opt local stakeholders onto the Houghton Regis Partnership Committee.

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

#### **1071 ITEMS REQUESTING ATTENTION BY CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL**

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

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

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

#### **1072 PROPOSED DATES FOR MEETINGS FOR 2025/26**

The proposed dates for the Houghton Regis Partnership meetings for 2025/26 were:

29<sup>th</sup> July 2025

21<sup>st</sup> October 2025

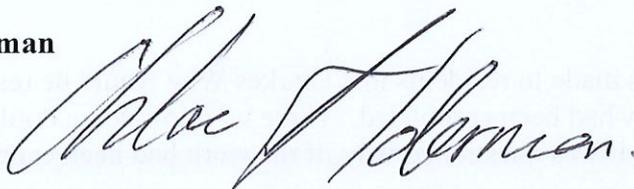
27<sup>th</sup> January 2026

28<sup>th</sup> April 2026

**The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9.29pm**

**Dated this 29<sup>th</sup> day of April 2025**

**Chairman**



## Calendar of Meetings, Briefings and Events 2025 / 2026

Colour Key		Bank Holiday	No Scheduled Meeting	Civic & Events Manager	Community Services Manager Event			
Date	Month		Day	Committee meeting	Event	Venue	Time	Lead Officer
14th	May	2025	Wednesday	<b>Town Council (AGM)</b>		Council Chamber	7pm	Town Clerk
19th	May	2025	Monday	XXXXXX				
20th	May	2025	Tuesday	<i>Councillor Briefing</i>		<i>Hybrid meeting</i>	6pm	Town Clerk
20th	May	2025	Tuesday	Neighbourhood Plan Implementation Sub-Committee		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Democratic Services
21st	May	2025	Wednesday	Combating Crime Working Group		Hybrid meeting	11am	Community Services Manager
24th	May	2025	Saturday		Dog Show	Houghton Hall Park	Afternoon	Events Manager
26th	May	2025	Monday	<i>Spring Bank Holiday</i>				
2nd	June	2025	Monday	<i>Leaders Briefing</i>		<i>Virtual meeting via Teams</i>	11am	Town Clerk
2nd	June	2025	Monday	Planning		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Democratic Services
3rd	June	2025	Tuesday	Staffing Committee		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Democratic Services

8th	June	2025	Sunday		Classics in the Park	Houghton Hall Park	Afternoon	Events Manager
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	Events Manager
30th	June	2025	Monday	XXXXXX				
7th	July	2025	Monday	Leaders Briefing		Virtual meeting via Teams	11am	Town Clerk
7th	July	2025	Monday	XXXXXX				
12th	July	2025	Saturday	Carnival			All Day	Events Manager
14th	July	2025	Monday	Planning		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Democratic Services
16th	July	2025	Wednesday	Combating Crime Working Group		Hybrid meeting	11am	Community Services Manager
21st	July	2025	Monday	Community Services		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Environmental and Community
23rd	July	2025	Wednesday		Open Air Cinema	Houghton Hall Park	2pm onwards	Events Manager

22nd	July	2024	Monday		Skate Jam	Tithe Farm Skate Park	Daytime	Community Services Manager
28th	July	2025	Monday	Environment & Leisure		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Environmental and Community
29th	July	2025	Tuesday	Town Partnership		Council Chamber	7pm	Town Clerk
4th	August	2025	Monday	Planning		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Democratic Services
11th	August	2025	Monday	XXXXXX				
18th	August	2025	Monday	XXXXXX				
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		Jemima Puddleduck Theatre Event		Daytime	Events Manager
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
6th	September	2025	Saturday		Houghton Rocks	Parkside	All Day	Events Manager
8th	September	2025	Monday	New Cemetery Sub-Committee		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Environmental and Community

15th	September	2025	Monday	Planning		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Democratic Services
16th	September	2025	Tuesday	Councillor Briefing		Hybrid meeting	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	Events Manager
29th	September	2025	Monday	XXXXXX				
	Sept/Oct	2025	TBC		Heritage Open Day			Events Manager
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
21st	October	2025	Tuesday	Town Partnership		Council Chamber	7pm	Town Clerk
27th	October	2025	Monday	Planning		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Democratic Services

1st	November	2025	Saturday		Fireworks Display		Afternoon/ Evening	Events Manager
3rd	November	2025	Monday	Leaders Briefing		Virtual meeting via Teams	11am	Town Clerk
3rd	November	2025	Monday	Community Services		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Democratic Services
9th	November	2025	Sunday		Remembrance Sunday	All Saints Church	Morning	Events Manager
10th	November	2025	Monday	Community Services (Grants)		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Environmental and Community
11th	November	2025	Tuesday		Armistice Day	All Saints Church	Morning	Events Manager
17th	November	2025	Monday	Planning		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Democratic Services
18th	November	2025	Tuesday	Councillor Briefing		Hybrid meeting	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	Staffing Committee		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Environmental and Community
25th	November	2025	Tuesday	Community Engagement Sub- Committee		Council Chamber	7pm	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
13th	December	2025	Saturday		Santa's Grotto		All Day	Events Manager
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				
25th	December	2025	Thursday	Bank Holiday Christmas Day				
26th	December	2025	Friday	Bank Holiday Boxing Day				
29th	December	2025	Monday	XXXXXX				
1st	January	2026	Thursday	Bank Holiday New Year's Day				
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
19th	January	2026	Monday	Town Council		Council Chamber	7pm	Town Clerk

20th	January	2026	Tuesday	Community Engagement Sub-Committee		Council Chamber	7pm	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
27th	January	2026	Tuesday	Town Partnership		Council Chamber	7pm	Town Clerk
2nd	February	2026	Monday	Leaders Briefing		Virtual meeting via Teams	11am	Town Clerk
2nd	February	2026	Monday	Staffing 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	Councillor Briefing		Hybrid meeting	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
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
24th	March	2026	Tuesday	Community Engagement Sub-Committee		Council Chamber	7pm	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	Councillor Briefing		Hybrid meeting	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
27th	April	2026	Monday	Community Services		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Environmental and Community

28th	April	2026	Tuesday	Town Partnership		Council Chamber	7pm	Town Clerk
4th	May	2026	Monday	Bank holiday Early May				
11th	May	2026	Monday	Leaders Briefing		Virtual meeting via Teams	11am	Town Clerk
11th	May	2026	Monday	Planning		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Democratic Services
18th	May	2026	Monday	Staffing Committee		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Democratic Services
20th	May	2026	Wednesday	Combating Crime Working Group		Hybrid meeting	11am	Community Services Manager
20th	May	2026	Wednesday	<b>Town Council (AGM)</b>		Council Chamber	7pm	Town Clerk
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

Ave annual salary of someone who may claim overtime

Ave hourly rate of someone who may claim overtime



## Houghton Regis Town Council

### Committee Functions & Terms of Reference

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

<b>2. Committee Overview Houghton Regis Town Council</b>		
<b>Department</b>	<b>Areas of Responsibility</b>	<b>Democratic Management</b>
<b>Corporate Services</b>	Policy review & development Financial management <del>Personnel matters</del> Democratic management Health & safety matters	Corporate Services Committee <del>Disciplinary, Grievance and Appeals Sub-Committee</del> <del>Personnel Sub-Committee</del>
<b>Environment &amp; Leisure Services</b>	Facilities management Leisure services Recreation management Cemetery & churchyard management Allotments	Environment & Leisure Committee
<b>Community Services</b>	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 Group
<b>Planning</b>	Planning applications Planning policy Strategic development Highways consultations	Planning Committee <del>Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group</del> <u>Neighbourhood Plan</u> <u>Implementation Sub Committee</u>
<b><u>Staffing</u></b>	<u>Non legislative policy review and development Personnel matters</u>	<u>Staffing Committee</u> <u>Disciplinary, Grievance and Appeals Sub-Committee</u>
<b>Town</b>	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, sub-committees, staff and other local authorities;
  - iv. Review of the terms of reference for committees;
  - v. Appointment of members to existing committees;
  - vi. Appointment of any new committees in accordance with standing order 6
  - vii. Review and adoption of appropriate standing orders and financial regulations;
  - viii. In an election year, to make arrangements with a view to the Council becoming eligible to exercise the general power of competence in the future;
  - ix. Determining the time and place of ordinary meetings of the Council up to and including the next annual meeting of the Council.

At other meetings of the Council:

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

Corporate Services as to any policy matters arising from them.

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

### **Corporate Services Committee**

#### *Terms of Reference*

- 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 30<sup>th</sup> 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**

### *Terms of Reference*

- To consider any matters referred to it by the Council or other Committees.
- To respond on behalf of the Council to initiatives from other organisations relating to matters under the Committee's jurisdiction.
- To exercise management of health and safety issues in respect of all the services of this Committee.
- To consider and determine any new contracts and any renewals of existing contracts under the jurisdiction of this committee.
- To assemble and submit to the Town Council estimates of income and expenditure for each financial year in respect of all the services of this Committee no later than 30<sup>th</sup> November each year.
- [To 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**

### *Terms of Reference*

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

#### *Terms of Reference*

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

to matters under the Committee's jurisdiction.

- To exercise management of health and safety issues in respect of all the services of this Committee.
- To assemble and submit to the Town Council estimates of income and expenditure for each financial year in respect of all the services of this Committee no later than 30<sup>th</sup> November each year.
- [To 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.

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*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 policies.
- 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.

## **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).

## **Neighbourhood Plan Implementation Sub Committee (reporting to Planning Committee)**

### *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 contained with the NHP
- Review any significant changes to the local area and assess their impact on the NHP's projects and aspirations

### *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 act 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)**

##### *Terms of Reference*

- ~~Overview of staffing structure and staffing budget, ensuring that it is commensurate with objectives of the Council.~~
- ~~Review staff sickness absence.~~
- ~~Receive reports and review of Employee Assistance Programme~~
- ~~Review staff training~~
- ~~Identify and agree training needs for the Town Clerk and Members~~
- ~~Ensure Council employees are working in a safe environment~~
- ~~To consider and recommend to Corporate Services Committee any changes to employees pay, emoluments or terms and conditions of employment~~
- ~~Review Job Description and Contract of Town Clerk annually or when there is a significant change~~
- ~~Receive notification of the Town Clerk's annual leave and matters relating to overtime working and sickness.~~
- ~~Succession plan for key staff who may wish to retire.~~
- ~~Agree the recruitment process for the Town Clerk and other senior members of staff.~~
- ~~If supported by the conclusion of a disciplinary process to consider the termination of contract for the Town Clerk and other senior members of staff.~~
- ~~Act as interview panel for the posts of Town Clerk and other senior members of staff (final approval for the appointment of the Clerk rests with Council as per Standing Orders).~~
- ~~Appoint one member of the Committee as the Clerks Appointed Person, preferably the Chair, to act as contact for day to day matters, support, handle leave requests, absence from work and to feed matters to Committee where any decisions/action is needed and to undertake the Clerks appraisal.~~
- ~~Report any outcomes of employee complaints received.~~

*Functions*

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

**Disciplinary, Grievance & Appeals Sub-Committee Group (reporting to ~~Corporate Services~~ 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~~ Staffing Committee.
- The quorum shall be three members.

**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 co-

opted members or members of the ~~Events Working Group~~Community Engagement Sub-Committee.

### **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.~~

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## APPENDIX A

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

#### Purpose

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

#### Objectives

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

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

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

### **Membership**

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

*Who must be elected representatives of the wards.*

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

### **Meetings and Quorum**

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

**Chairman and Vice Chairman**

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

**Secretariat**

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

**Decision making arrangements**

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

**Co-option**

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

## Governance

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

## APPENDIX B

### Houghton Regis Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

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



	5.4	<del>At least 7 days clear notice of meetings will be sent to members via email.</del>
	5.5	<del>The Secretary will keep a record of meetings and circulate the Minutes to HRNPSG members and the Town Council (via the Planning Committee Clerk) no more than 14 days after each meeting.</del>
	5.6	<del>Decisions made by HRNPSG will be by consensus at Group meetings. Where a vote is required, each member will have one vote. A simple majority vote will be required to support any motion. The Chairman will have one casting vote.</del>
<b>6. Working Groups</b>		
	6.1	<del>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.</del>
	6.2	<del>Each working group will have a lead person from the HRNPSG.</del>
<b>7. Affiliations, Interests and Contributions:</b>		
	7.1	<del>The HRNPSG will not itself be affiliated to any particular political party. It is recognized that Councillors and community members may have such affiliations, which will be declared where relevant.</del>
	7.2	<del>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.</del>
	7.3	<del>Having declared an interest, that member will not take part in a discussion or vote on the related issue. In event of disagreement, the Chairman's decision will be binding. Organizations and businesses may assist in the production of the NP and may contribute to the cost of producing it. Details of any donations or assistance must be made publicly available and must not influence the recommendations of The Plan.</del>
<b>8. Finance</b>		
	8.1	<del>Funding, including grants, will be applied for and held by the Town Council, who will ring fence the funds for Neighbourhood Plan development work.</del>
	8.2	<del>HRNPSG will notify the Town Council (via the Planning Committee) of any planned expenditure <b>before</b> it is incurred</del>
<b>9. Conduct</b>		
	9.1	<del>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.</del>
	9.2	<del>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.</del>

	9.3	<del>HRNPSG will achieve this through applying the following principles:</del>	
		i	<del>Be clear and open when their individual roles or interests are in conflict;</del>
		ii	<del>Treat everyone with dignity, courtesy and respect, regardless of their age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity or religion and belief; and</del>
		iii	<del>Actively promote equality of access and opportunity.</del>
<b>10</b>	<b><del>Changes to the Terms of Reference</del></b>		
	10.1	<del>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.</del>	
<b>11</b>	<b><del>Dissolution of the HRNPSG</del></b>		
	11.1	<del>The HRNPSG will continue to operate until the adoption of the Neighbourhood Plan.</del>	
	11.2	<del>Upon dissolution of the HRNPSG, any remaining resources will be passed to the Town Council.</del>	



# HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

## COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP 2025 / 2026 – DRAFT

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### *STANDING COMMITTEES – 2025 / 2026*

#### **Corporate Services Committee**

Cllrs: D Jones, W Henderson, E Billington, J Carroll, E Costello, M Herber, C Rollins

#### **Environment & Leisure Committee**

Cllrs: A Slough, P Burgess, Y Farrell, W Henderson, T McMahon, C Rollins, E Cooper

#### **Planning Committee**

Cllrs: M Herber, D Jones, E Billington, E Cooper, C Slough, D Taylor, Y Farrell

#### **Community Services Committee**

Cllrs: C Slough, P Burgess, E Cooper, Y Farrell, A Slough, T McMahon, D Taylor

#### **Staffing Committee**

Cllrs: E Costello, D Jones, D Taylor, A Slough, W Henderson, M Herber, T McMahon

### *OTHER COMMITTEES – 2025 / 2026*

#### **Town Partnership Committee**

Cllrs: D Jones, Y Farrell, C Slough, M Herber

### *SUB-COMMITTEES – 2025 / 2026*

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

Cllrs: To be appointed as required.

#### **Complaints Appeal Sub-Committee (Reporting to Town Council)**

Cllrs: To be appointed as required.

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

Cllrs: To be appointed as required.

#### **Proposed New Cemetery Sub Committee (Reporting to Town Council)**

Cllrs: A Slough, D Jones, M Herber, T McMahon, D Taylor

#### **Community Engagement Sub Committee (Reporting to Community Services)**

Cllrs: Y Farrell, T McMahon, E Cooper, C Rollins, C Slough

#### **Neighbourhood Plan Implementation (Reporting to Planning)**

Cllrs: Y Farrell, T McMahon, E Cooper, C Rollins, C Slough

### *WORKING GROUPS – 2025 / 2026*

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

Cllrs: D Jones, D Taylor, A Slough, M Herber, Vacancy

#### **Combating Crime Working Group (Reporting to Community Services)**

Cllrs: M Herber, Y Farrell, C Slough, E Cooper, T McMahon

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Town Clerk: Ms Clare Evans



# HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

## REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS 2025 / 2026

### **DRAFT**

<b>Bedfordshire Association of Town &amp; Parish Councils</b>	Cllrs: M Herber, Cllr Jones, Cllr C Slough
<b>Bedfordshire Bus Users</b>	Cllr T McMahon
<b>Chews Foundation</b>	Vacant
<b>Citizens Advice</b>	Cllr E Cooper
<b>Hospice at Home Volunteers</b>	Cllr D Jones
<b>Houghton Hall Park Project Board</b>	Cllrs: D Jones, D Taylor
<b>Houghton Hall Park MAG</b>	Cllr E Cooper
<b>Houghton Regis North Stakeholder Group</b>	Cllr D Jones
<b>Memorial Hall Committee</b>	Cllrs: J Carroll, Y Farrell
<b>South Beds Dial-a-Ride</b>	Cllr M Herber
<b>Friends of Windsor Drive Community Open Space</b>	Cllr A Slough
<b>NALC</b>	Cllrs: D Jones, J Carroll, C Slough



## Houghton Regis Town Council

### Standing Orders

Date of Approval:	Town Council 22 <sup>nd</sup> June 2015
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Based on NALC Model Standing Orders 2018 (Revised 2020) and updated April 2022 (Update to Model Standing Order 18 only), [31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 Standing Orders 18 and 26](#)

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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 & 31 March 2025. 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.~~

These standing orders use gender-neutral language (e.g. "Chair")

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

Notes:

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

## STANDING ORDERS

### 1. MEETINGS

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

Smoking is not permitted at any meeting of the Council.

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

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

**of charge or at a reasonable cost.**

- b The minimum three clear days for notice of a meeting does not include the day on which notice was issued, the day of the meeting, a Sunday, a day of the Christmas break, a day of the Easter break or of a bank holiday or a day appointed for public thanksgiving or mourning.**
- c The minimum three clear days' public notice for a meeting does not include the day on which the notice was issued or the day of the meeting unless the meeting is convened at shorter notice**
- d Meetings shall be open to the public unless their presence is prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for other special reasons. The public's exclusion from part or all of a meeting shall be by a resolution which shall give reasons for the public's exclusion.**
- e Members of the public may make representations, ask questions and give evidence at a meeting which they are entitled to attend in respect of the business on the agenda.
- f The period of time designated for public participation at a meeting in accordance with standing order 1(e) above shall not exceed 15 minutes unless directed by the chair~~man~~ 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 chair~~man~~ 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 chair~~man~~ of the meeting.
- k Only one person is permitted to speak at a time. If more than one person wants to speak, the chair~~man~~ of the meeting shall direct the order of speaking.
- l Subject to standing order 1(m), a person who attends a meeting is permitted to report on the meeting whilst the meeting is open to the public. To "report" means to film, photograph, make an audio recording of meeting**

**procedures, use any other means for enabling persons not present to see or hear the meeting as it takes place or later or to report or to provide oral or written commentary about the meeting so that the report or commentary is available as the meeting takes place or later to persons not present.**

*See Appendix A for the Procedure for Recording Meetings*

- m **A person present at a meeting may not provide an oral report or oral commentary about a meeting as it takes place without permission.**
- n **The press shall be provided with reasonable facilities for the taking of their report of all or part of a meeting at which they are entitled to be present.**
- o **Subject to standing orders which indicate otherwise, anything authorised or required to be done by, to or before the Chair~~man~~ of the Council may in his absence be done by, to or before the Vice-Chair~~man~~ of the Council (if there is one).**
- p **The Chair~~man~~ of the Council, if present, shall preside at a meeting. If the Chair~~man~~ is absent from a meeting, the Vice-Chair~~man~~ of the Council, (if there is one) if present, shall preside. If both the Chair~~man~~ and the Vice-Chair~~man~~ 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 chair~~man~~ 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 Chair~~man~~ of the Council at the annual meeting of the council.*
- s **Unless standing orders provide otherwise, voting on a question shall be by a show of hands. At the request of a councillor, the voting on any question shall be recorded so as to show whether each councillor present and voting gave his vote for or against that question. Such a request shall be made before moving on to the next item of business on the agenda.**
- t **The minutes of a meeting shall include an accurate record of the following:**
  - i. the time and place of the meeting;
  - ii. the names of councillors who are present (virtually or in person) and the names of councillors who are absent, with or without apologies;

- iii. interests that have been declared by councillors and non-councillors with voting rights;
- iv. the grant of dispensations (if any) to councillors and non-councillors with voting rights;
- v. whether a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights left the meeting when matters that they held interests in were being considered;
- vi. if there was a public participation session; and
- vii. the resolutions made.

 u **A councillor or a non-councillor with voting rights who has a disclosable pecuniary interest or another interest as set out in the Council's code of conduct in a matter being considered at a meeting is subject to statutory limitations or restrictions under the code on his right to participate and vote on that matter.**

 v **No business may be transacted at a meeting unless at least one-third of the whole number of members of the council are present and in no case shall the quorum of a meeting be less than three.**

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

 w **If a meeting is or becomes inquorate no business shall be transacted** and the meeting shall be closed. The business on the agenda for the meeting shall be adjourned to another meeting.

x A meeting shall not normally exceed a period of 2.5 hours unless by agreement of those Members present.

## 2 PROPER OFFICER

a The Proper Officer shall be either (i) the clerk or (ii) other staff member(s) nominated by the Council to undertake the work of the Proper Officer when the Proper Officer is absent.

b The Proper Officer shall:

i. **at least three clear days before a meeting of the council, a committee or a sub-committee,**

- **serve on councillors, by delivery or post at their residences or by email authenticated in such a manner as the Proper Officer thinks fit, a signed summons confirming the time, place and the agenda (provided the councillor has consented to service by email) and**

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

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

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

- xvi. manage access to information about the council via the publication scheme; and
- xvii. retain custody of the seal of the council (if any) which shall not be used without a resolution to that effect.

*See also standing order 20.*

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

### **3 RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER**

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

### **4 ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETINGS**

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

- h **In an election year, if the current Chair~~man~~ of the Council has not been re-elected as a member of the council, he shall preside at the annual meeting until a successor Chair~~man~~ of the Council has been elected. The current Chair~~man~~ of the Council shall not have an original vote in respect of the election of the new Chair~~man~~ 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 Chair~~man~~ of the Council has been re-elected as a member of the council, he shall preside at the annual meeting until a new Chair~~man~~ of the Council has been elected. He may exercise an original vote in respect of the election of the new Chair~~man~~ of the Council and shall give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.**
  
- j Following the election of the Chair~~man~~ of the Council and Vice-Chair~~man~~ (if there is one) of the Council at the annual meeting, the business shall include:
  - i. **In an election year, delivery by the Chair~~man~~ 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 Chair~~man~~ 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 chair~~man~~ of the meeting shall request such person(s) to moderate or improve their conduct.

- b If person(s) disregard the request of the chair~~man~~ of the meeting to moderate or improve their conduct, any councillor or the chair~~man~~ 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 chair~~man~~ of the meeting may take further reasonable steps to restore order or to progress the meeting. This may include temporarily suspending or closing the meeting.

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

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

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

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

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

## **8 WORKING GROUPS**

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

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

- a **The Chair~~man~~ of the Council may convene an extraordinary meeting of the council at any time.**
- b **If the Chair~~man~~ 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 chair~~man~~ 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 chair~~man~~ 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 chair~~man~~ 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 chair~~man~~ 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 chair~~man~~ of the meeting, is expressed in writing to the chair~~man~~.
- 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 chair~~man~~ 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 chair~~man~~ of the meeting.
- k One or more amendments may be discussed together if the chair~~man~~ of the

meeting considers this expedient but each amendment shall be voted upon separately.

l A councillor may not move more than one amendment to an original or substantive motion.

m The mover of an amendment has no right of reply at the end of debate on it.

n Where a series of amendments to an original motion are carried, the mover of the original motion shall have a right of reply either at the end of debate on the first amendment or at the very end of debate on the final substantive motion immediately before it is put to the vote.

o Unless permitted by the chair~~man~~ 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 chair~~man~~ 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 chair~~man~~ 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 chair~~man~~ 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 Chair~~man~~.

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 Chair~~man~~.

d. The ruling of the Chair~~man~~ on a point of order or on the admissibility of a personal explanation shall not be discussed.

e. Members shall address the Chair~~man~~. If two or more members wish to speak, the Chair~~man~~ shall decide whom to call upon.

f. Whenever the Chair~~man~~ speaks during a debate all other members shall be silent.

#### **15 PREVIOUS RESOLUTIONS**

a A resolution shall not be reversed within six months except either by a special motion, which requires written notice by at least 6 councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing order 11, or by a motion moved in pursuance of the recommendation of a committee or a sub-committee.

b When a motion moved pursuant to standing order 15(a) has been disposed of, no similar motion may be moved within a further six months.

#### **16 DRAFT MINUTES**

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

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

## 17. ACCOUNTS AND ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS

- a “Proper practices” in standing orders refer to the most recent version of “Governance and Accountability for Local Council’s – a Practitioners’ Guide”.
- b All payments by the council shall be authorised, approved and paid in accordance with the law, proper practices and the council’s financial regulations.
- c The Responsible Financial Officer shall supply to each member a list of all receipts and payments.

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

## **18 FINANCIAL CONTROLS AND PROCUREMENT**

- a The Council's financial regulations may make provision for the authorisation of the payment of money in exercise of any of the Council's functions to be delegated to a committee, sub-committee or to an employee.
  
- b The council shall consider and approve financial regulations drawn up by the Responsible Financial Officer, which shall include detailed arrangements in respect of the following:
  - i. the keeping of accounting records and systems of internal controls;
  - ii. the assessment and management of financial risks faced by the council;
  - iii. the work of the independent internal auditor in accordance with proper practices and the receipt of regular reports from the internal auditor, which shall be required at least annually;
  - iv. the inspection and copying by councillors and local electors of the council's accounts and/or orders of payments; and
  - v. whether contracts with an estimated value below £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;
  - ii. an invitation to tender shall be drawn up to confirm (i) the council’s specification (ii) the time, date and address for the submission of tenders (iii) the date of the council’s written response to the tender and (iv) the prohibition on prospective contractors contacting councillors or staff to encourage or support their tender outside the prescribed process;
  - ~~iii. — the invitation to tender shall be advertised in a local newspaper and in any other manner that is appropriate;~~
  - ~~iv.iii.~~ tenders are to be submitted in writing in a sealed marked envelope addressed to the Proper Officer;
  - ~~v.iv.~~ 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.v.~~ 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 Commeree~~ 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, contract is subject to the requirements of the current procurement legislation and if so,~~ the Council must comply with procurement rules. NALC’s procurement guidance contains further

**details.**

## **19 ESTIMATES / PRECEPTS**

- a. The Council shall approve written estimates for the coming financial year at its meeting before the end of January. Once the Estimates have been accepted they shall be known as the Budget.
- b. Any committee desiring to incur expenditure shall give the Proper Officer a written estimate of the expenditure recommended for the coming year no later than 30<sup>th</sup> October.

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

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

## **21 MANAGEMENT OF INFORMATION**

See also standing order 31.

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

## **22 HANDLING STAFF MATTERS**

- a Any persons responsible for all or part of the management of staff shall treat as confidential the written records of all meetings relating to their performance, capabilities, grievance or disciplinary matters.
- b The council shall keep all written records relating to employees secure. All paper records shall be secured and locked and electronic records shall be password protected and encrypted.
- c In accordance with standing order 21(a), persons with line management responsibilities shall have access to staff records referred to in standing order 22(a).
- d Access and means of access by keys and/or computer passwords to records of employment referred to in above shall be provided only to the Clerk.
- e The Clerk shall conduct an appraisal of all Council employees and shall keep a written record of it. The Chair~~man~~ of the Council and the Chair~~man~~ of Corporate Services Committee or in their absence, the Vice-Chair~~man~~ 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 chair~~man~~ 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

- iv. the dispensation is sought; and  
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;~~~~
- ea Upon notification by the ~~District or Unitary~~Principal Council that a

**councillor or non-councillor with voting rights has breached the council's code of conduct, the council shall consider what, if any, action to take against him. Such action excludes disqualification or suspension from office.**

## **27 RESTRICTIONS ON COUNCILLOR ACTIVITIES**

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

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

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

## **29 RELATIONS WITH THE PRESS/MEDIA**

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

## **30 RESPONSIBILITIES TO PROVIDE INFORMATION**

*See also standing order 31.*

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

## **31. RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER DATA PROTECTION LEGISLATION** **(Below is not an exhaustive list).**

*See also standing order 21*

- a. The Council may appoint a Data Protection Officer.
- b. **The Council shall have policies and procedures in place to respond to an individual exercising statutory rights concerning his personal data.**

- c. **The Council shall have a written policy in place for responding to and managing a personal data breach.**
- d. **The Council shall keep a record of all personal data breaches comprising the facts relating to the personal data breach, its effects and the remedial action taken.**
- e. **The Council shall ensure that information communicated in its privacy notice(s) is in an easily accessible and available form and kept up to date.**
- f. **The Council shall maintain a written record of its processing activities.**

### **32 STANDING ORDERS GENERALLY**

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

### **33. VIRTUAL ATTENDANCE**

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

## APPENDIX A

### Procedure for recording meetings

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

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

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

1. The council and officers shall afford reasonable facilities for the recording of the meeting.
2. Any filming, recording or photography of meetings shall only be permitted from the Public Seating Areas.
3. No additional lighting or flash photography shall be used except by agreement of the chair~~man~~.
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 chair~~man~~ regards as disruptive, while a meeting is in progress. The chair~~man~~ 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 Chair~~man~~ 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 <sup>th</sup> December 2024; 14 <sup>th</sup> May 2025(TBC)
Date of Review:	2 <sup>nd</sup> December 2024; 17th March 2025

Based on NALC Financial Regulations 2024 [updated March 2025](#)

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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~~ The Procurement Act 2023 and The Procurement Regulations 2024 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 Legislation<sup>1</sup> regarding ~~the advertising of contract opportunities and the publication of invitations and 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;

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

- iv. goods or services that are only available from one supplier or are sold at a fixed price.

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 be written 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.

\* \* \*



## Houghton Regis Town Council

### Scheme of Delegation

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

<b>GENERAL</b>		
1	To exercise any statute, regulation or order which confers functions or duties of the Proper Officer	Town Clerk
2	To sign, or where appropriate, have sealed on behalf of the Town 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	Town Clerk
3	To take any proceedings or other steps as may be necessary to enforce and recover any debt owing or other obligation to the Council	Town Clerk
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 into any matter in which the Council has an interest (in its own right or on behalf of the citizens of Houghton Regis)	Town Clerk
6	To alter the date or time of a Council, Committee, Sub-Committee, Working Group meeting but, before doing so shall consult the Mayor, Group Leaders or Committee Chairmen	Town Clerk
7	To decide arrangements for the closure of the council offices in the Christmas/New Year period, subject to consultation with the Mayor	Town Clerk
8	To deal with the day-to-day matters relating to the use and hiring of Council Buildings	Head of Democratic Services
9	To negotiate and enter into contractual arrangements for artistes/promoters in relation to events held in Houghton Regis organised by the Town Council	Civic & Events Manager
10	To act as the Council's Designated Officer for the purposes of the Freedom of Information Act 2000	Town Clerk
11.	To apply for planning consent for the carrying out of development by the Town Council.	Town Clerk
12.	To respond to consultations on planning applications/highway matters/rights of way matters/street naming and other matters subject to the comments of the Planning Committee	Head of Democratic Services
13	To respond to complaints made under the Council's complaints 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	Town Clerk
14	To manage, monitor and review the Council's internal control procedures	Town Clerk
15	To manage, monitor and review the Council's Corporate Risk Management Strategy	Town Clerk
16	To arrange all civic ceremonies and ancillary events in consultation with the Mayor	Civic & Events Manager
17	To maintain the Council's Standing Orders	Town Clerk
<b>FINANCIAL</b>		
18	To be the Responsible Financial Officer for the purposes of s151 Local Government Act 1972	Town Clerk

19	To determine the financial management and accounting procedures and extent of financial records	Town Clerk
20	To operate the Council's banking arrangements	Town Clerk
21	To pay all accounts properly incurred	Town Clerk
22	To pay all subscriptions to organisations to which Council belongs.	Town Clerk
23	To pay salaries and allowances	Town Clerk
24	To act as the Council's Administrator for the Bedfordshire Pension Fund	Town Clerk
25	To collect all income due to the Council including appropriate interest and costs	Town Clerk
26	To make all necessary arrangements for the provision of internal and external audit service for the Council	Town Clerk
27	To negotiate settlements in connection with claims made by and against the Council in consultation with the Council's Insurers where appropriate.	Town Clerk
28	To incur expenditure on revenue items with the approved estimates and budgets	Town Clerk
29	To incur expenditure on capital schemes within the Council's approved Capital Programme	Town Clerk
30	To use the Repairs & Maintenance Budgets for the maintenance, replacement or repair of existing buildings, plant, vehicles or equipment	Head of Environmental and Community Services
31	To enter into leasing and/or contract hire agreements for the acquisition of vehicles, machinery and equipment on such items as are considered appropriate	Head of Environmental and Community Services
32	To accept quotations or tenders for work, supplies or services (where tenders are required by the Council's Financial Regulations) subject to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The cost not exceeding the approved budget</li> <li>• The tender being the most economically advantageous to the Council according to the criteria set out in the tender documentation</li> <li>• All the requirements of the Council's Financial Regulations being complied with</li> </ul>	Town Clerk
33	To carry out virements of sums between cost centres in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations	Heads of Service
34	To exercise the powers of the Council to borrow and invest	Town Clerk
35	To manage investments. Apply for and repay loans as appropriate in accordance with the Financial Regulations.	Town Clerk
36	To authorise action for the recovery of debts	Town Clerk
37	To write-off debts up to £1000 where the sum is considered irrecoverable.	Town Clerk
38	To maintain a Register of Assets and Inventory of Equipment	Town Clerk
39	To determine the Council's insurance requirements on behalf of the Council	Town Clerk
40	To make all necessary arrangements for the Council's insurances.	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 legally liable to pay compensation, where sued	Town Clerk
45	To pay any proved out of pocket expenses of complaints where complaint is upheld	Town Clerk
46	To provide banking facilities for the Mayor's Charity Fund and to pay the Mayor's Annual Allowance as may be determined from time to time	Town Clerk
47	To maintain the Council's Financial Regulations	Town Clerk
<b>EMPLOYMENT</b>		
48	To exercise the functions of the Council's Head of Paid Service under S4 Local Government & Housing Act 1989	Town Clerk
49	To manage the Council staff in accordance with the Council's Policies, Procedures and Budget	Town Clerk
50	To appoint posts including apprentices	Town Clerk
51	To appoint temporary employees as and when required within the budget estimates	Town Clerk
52	To prepare job description and person specifications, placing of advertisements and short-listing	Town Clerk
53	To approve individual salary grading within any job evaluation grading structure approved by Council	Town Clerk
54	To manage staff performance	Town Clerk
55	To control discipline and performance, including power of suspension and dismissal	Town Clerk
56	To exercise Disciplinary & Grievance Procedures in accordance with the Council's Procedures	Town Clerk
57	To determine approved duties for payment of travel, subsistence and car allowances to Officers where they represent the Council	Town Clerk
58	To approve/refuse applications for re-grading, remove any bars in salary scales and to authorise salary increments and accelerated increments.	Town Clerk
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, sickness absence, flexible/hybrid working, maternity and paternity leave in accordance with the Council's Policies	Town Clerk
62	<u>To approve changes to Council policies reflecting changes to legislation, to correct grammatical / typographical errors, and to basic / non fundamental updates such as changes to line management titles, job titles etc.</u>	<u>Head of Corporate Services</u>
63	To authorise training in line with Council's Policies	Town Clerk
64	To authorise the provision of branded clothing & PPE	Town Clerk
65	To approve the payment of claims from employees for compensation for loss or damage to personal property	Town Clerk
66	To negotiate and agree settlements on behalf of the Council in relation to any proceedings in the Employment Tribunal	Town Clerk

67	To agree to premature retirement on the grounds of duly certified ill health	Town Clerk
68	To terminate employment during probation and to review salary on completion of probationary periods.	Town Clerk
69	To commission legal and professional advice on staffing matters	Town Clerk
70	To represent the Council at any conference, meeting, or inquiry to 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	Town Clerk
71	To offer training to Councillors	Town Clerk
72	To exercise any functions delegated to the Town Clerk in his/her absence	Head of Corporate Services
<b>PROPERTY</b>		
73	To manage land and property of the Council	Head of Environmental and Community Services
74	To agree the terms of any lease, licence, conveyance or transfer	Town Clerk
75	To sell surplus materials, vehicles, plant, equipment and goods, salvage scrap and other waste	Head of Environmental and Community Services
76	To grant easements, wayleaves and licence over Council land	Town Clerk
77	To initiate legal action or proceedings against unauthorised encampments or encroachments on Council land	Town Clerk
78	To direct the custody of Council property and documents in accordance with s226 Local Government Act 1972	Town Clerk
79	To exercise responsibility for the safe custody and maintenance of the Civic Regalia	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
81	To appoint the Principal Contractor and Planning Supervisors for the purposes of the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations.	Town Clerk
82	To requisition off site services in respect of any construction contract approved by the Council for which they act as Architect or Contract Administrator	Town Clerk
83	To make applications for all statutory consents necessitated by any approved Council proposal or development	Head of Environmental and Community Services
84	To engage valuers or selling agents on behalf of the Council	Town Clerk
<b>HEALTH AND SAFETY</b>		

85	To oversee the discharge of the Council's responsibilities under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974	Town Clerk
<b>LEGAL PROCEEDINGS</b>		
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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enforcement in accordance with the Council's Policies</li> <li>• Recovering Money due to the Council</li> <li>• Recovering or otherwise preserving possession of the Council's land or property</li> <li>• Defending the interests of the Council</li> <li>• Appealing against a decision affecting the interests of the Council and responding to appeals against action taken by the Council</li> </ul>	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
<b>RECREATION &amp; EVENTS</b>		
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Civic &amp; Events Manager</li> <li>• Community Services Manager</li> </ul>
97	To liaise with the Safety Advisory Group and carry out any necessary actions arising from recommendations from that body.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Civic &amp; Events Manager</li> <li>• Community Services Manager</li> </ul>



TOWN COUNCIL

Agenda Item 17

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**Date:** 16<sup>TH</sup> May 2025

**Title:** Community Governance Review

**Purpose of the Report:** To enable members to consider the HRTC response to the town and parish council consultation on the CBC Community Governance review.

**Contact Officer:** Clare Evans, Town Clerk

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## 1. RECOMMENDATION

To notify CBC of the following response to the town and parish council consultation on the Community Governance review:

1. The creation, merger, alteration or abolition of parishes;
  - *Creation* – no comment
  - *Merger* – no comment
  - *Abolition* – no comment
  - *Alteration* – no comment
2. The naming of parishes and the style of any new or revised parish – no comment
3. Electoral arrangements for existing parishes including council size, the number of councillors to be elected to the council, parish warding
  - *council size* – no comment
  - *no. of Cllrs* – to ensure adequate demographic representation given the population growth of Houghton Regis it is requested that the number of HR councillors be increased to 16 (from 14)
  - *parish warding* – given the recent growth of Houghton Regis, a 4<sup>th</sup> ward to cover the growth area of Bidwell would support suitable demographic representation. This new ward should be named Thorn ward as it is reflective of historic name for this area. The suggested ward boundary would be from Bedford Road following the line of the public right of way to Blue Waters.

At this time HRTC are unable to comment on how 16 councillors should be split across the 4 wards (as proposed) as CBC have not released population / electorate data in support of the CGR process.

**HRTC request that HRTC councillors be spilt across the proposed 4 wards as evenly as possible such that each councillor represents the same number of electorate. Alternatively, CBC are requested extend the town and parish council deadline to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2025 to enable the data to be released and considered by HRTC.**

- **Grouping parishes under a new common parish council with any of their surrounding areas – no comment**

## 2. BACKGROUND

Central Bedfordshire Council has invited all parishes to submit a case for any changes (boundaries, councillor numbers, wards) that they would wish for their respective parish in order that Central Bedfordshire Council can include these proposals in the initial CGR consultation stage (due to commence 30<sup>th</sup> June 2025).

HRTC has agreed to host a series of events to promote this consultation. The draft schedule is attached for information (Appendix A).

It is highlighted to members that CBC explored with town and parish councils in 2021 whether there was a desire to carry out a CGR ahead of the anticipated timescale of 2023. This consideration was carried out at the Town Council meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> October 2021;

Agenda - [Town Council Agenda 041022021](#)

Minutes – [Town Council Minutes 04102021](#)

## 3. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

At the March Town Council meeting 5 councillors were nominated to work with officers on shaping a HRTC response. This group has meet 3 times including a meeting with Chalton Parish Council.

Members will find attached at Appendix B ward maps as provided by CBC to support this process.

CBC requested feedback under 4 headings. The following summaries the discussions the group had under each heading:

4. The creation, merger, alteration or abolition of parishes;
  - *Creation* – no comment
  - *Merger* – no comment
  - *Abolition* – no comment
  - *Alteration* – this was the main area of discussion under this heading. Thinking of the current physical forms in proximity to the parish boundary of Houghton Regis (HR) there are a number of areas where the parish boundary is not consistent with current physical forms such as:
    - The HR / Dunstable boundary at Sewell
    - The HR / Toddington boundary where HR parish boundary spans the A5/M1 bypass

The HR / Chalton boundary and the M1 – a number of variations of this option were discussed:

- Extend the HRTC parish boundary to M1 and Northern Bypass
- Extend the HRTC parish boundary to Woodside Link and Northern Bypass
- Extend the HRTC parish boundary to include the greenspace (allotments and open space) only

A meeting was held with representatives from Chalton Parish Council (CPC) to discuss this in more detail. The implications were discussed including residents' sense of place / local identity, ability to influence local decisions, alignment of and access to services and facilities, what would be the advantages / disadvantages of such a change etc.

CPC indicated that their preference was to retain the boundary as existing.

Subsequent to the meeting with CPC, there was not a recommendation from the nominated Councillors for there to be a change in the parish boundary.

5. The naming of parishes and the style of any new or revised parish – no comment
6. Electoral arrangements for existing parishes including council size, the number of councillors to be elected to the council, parish warding
  - *council size* – no comment
  - *no. of Cllrs* – given the population growth of Houghton Regis it was felt that it would be suitable, to ensure adequate demographic representation, to increase the number of HR councillors to 16 (from 14)
  - *parish warding* – given the recent growth of Houghton Regis, the group felt that it was appropriate to request that a 4<sup>th</sup> ward be established to cover the growth area of Bidwell. It was suggested that this new ward be named Thorn as it was more reflective of historic name for this area. The suggested ward boundary would be from Bedford Road following the line of the public right of way to Blue Waters. The group were unable to form a suggestion on how 16 councillors should be split across the 4 wards (as proposed) as CBC had not released population / electorate data in support of the CGR process. Although the release of this data had been followed up by officers, it was understood that CBC had embargoed the release of the data until the end of May.
7. Grouping parishes under a new common parish council with any of their surrounding areas – no comment

#### 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.
- 1.6 Protection and promotion of cultural and heritage assets.

#### 6. IMPLICATIONS

##### Corporate Implications

- Given the lack of supporting statistical data in support of the CGR process, Members may feel the need to facilitate an additional Town Council meeting to debate the spread of councillors across the 4 parish wards as proposed)
- Conformity with the adopted NHP – should the parish ward boundary change as a result of the CGR process, implications for the NHP would need to be investigated.

#### **Legal Implications**

- There are no legal implications arising from the recommendations

#### **Financial Implications**

- There are no financial implications arising from the recommendations

#### **Risk Implications**

- There are no risk implications arising from the recommendations

#### **Equalities Implications**

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

This project / issue does not discriminate.

#### **Climate Change Implications**

- There are no climate change implications arising from the recommendations

#### **Press Contact**

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

### **7. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS**

The nominated councillors have worked with officers to fully examine and discuss the issues involved. The recommendations made support these discussions.

### **8. APPENDICES**

**Appendix A:** CGR Consultation Events - Draft  
**Appendix B:** Parish Boundary Maps (4)



# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EVENTS

# JULY 2025

12 - 4pm

**Sat  
12th****Houghton Regis Carnival  
Village Green**

10am - 12

**Tues  
15th****The Farmstead  
Linmere**

12 - 2pm

**Wed  
16th****Tithe Farm Pavilion  
Tithe Farm Road**

6 - 8pm

**Thurs  
17th****Houghton Regis Leisure Centre  
Parkside Drive**

10am - 12

**Sat  
19th****Houghton Regis Library  
Bedford Square**

2 - 4pm

**Mon  
21st****Esquires Café  
1 Collie Place, Bidwell**

Visit us at any of the events listed above to learn about your Town Council — what we do, how we operate, and how you can participate in local governance.

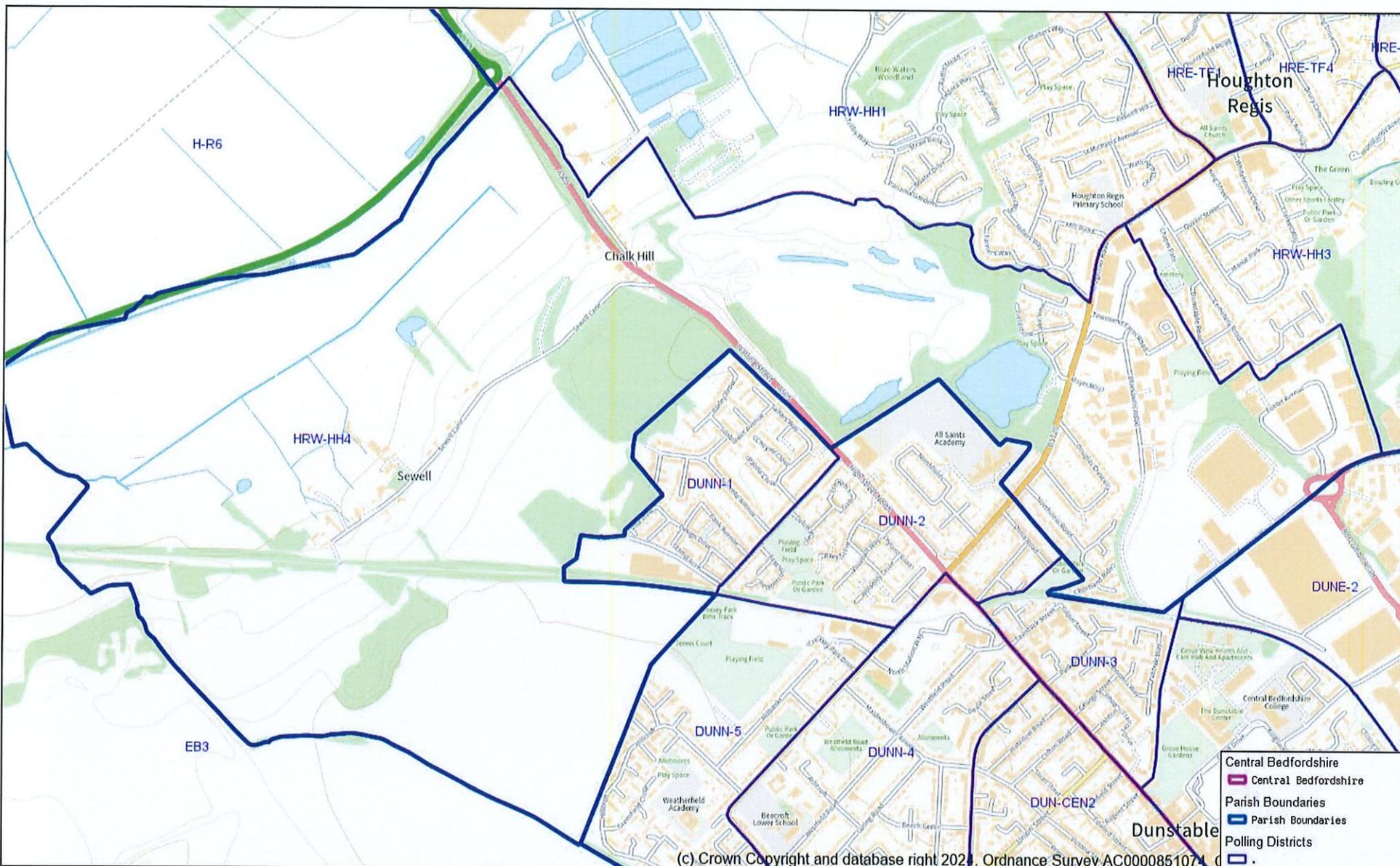
Plus take this opportunity to provide your input on the Central Bedfordshire Council's Community Governance Review, which will help shape future electoral arrangements in our area. You can even submit your official consultation response directly at our events.



Houghton Regis Town Council  
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01582 708540  
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HRHH4

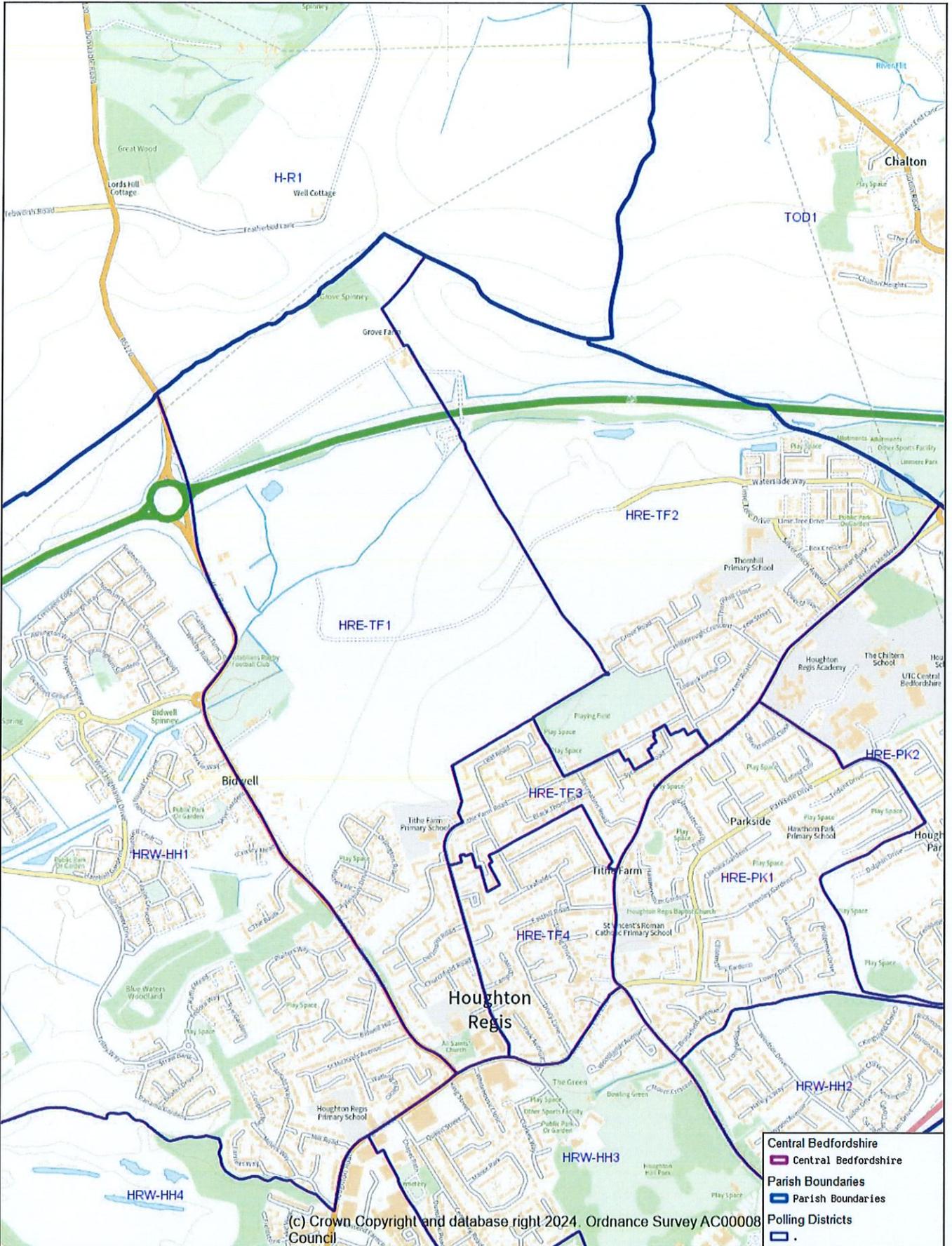
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**HRTF**

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