HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Peel Street, Houghton Regis, Bedfordshire, LU5 5EY

Town Mayor: **Councillor M Herber** Tel: 01582 708540
Town Clerk: **Clare Evans** e-mail: info@houghtonregis-tc.gov.uk

12th May 2026

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 20th May 2026 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*

THIS MEETING MAY BE RECORDED[1]

Clare Evans
Town Clerk

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 2027.
- Members to elect a Town Mayor for 2026-27.
- 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.

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

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

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 2027.
- Members to elect a Deputy Town Mayor for 2026-27.
- 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 - 16

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 14th April 2026.

Recommendation: To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 14th April 2026.

7. COMMITTEE AND SUB-COMMITTEE MINUTES

Pages 17 -45

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

Corporate Services Committee	None to present.
Community Services Committee	23rd February 2026
Environment & Leisure Committee	12th January 2026
Planning Committee	9th and 30th March 2026 and 20th April 2026
Staffing Committee	None to present
Town Partnership Committee	27th January 2026

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 2026-27

Pages 46 - 52

The draft Council Calendar, including meeting dates, councillor briefings dates, and council and civic event dates, for 2026/27 was presented at the Town Council meeting held on the 14th April 2026. Subsequent to this meeting, Community Services Committee have agreed an adjustment to the frequency of meetings for both Community Engagement Sub Committee and Community Safety Sub Committee such that they both meet up to a maximum of six times a year. The draft calendar has been adjusted accordingly.

As usual the Council Calendar includes the date of the Annual Towns' Meeting, for next year it is shown on 17th May 2027. The Council facilitates this meeting for the benefit of all registered electors of the parish to enable them to raise any issue of parish wide significance under *Local Government Act 1972*, specifically *Schedule 12, Part III*. The meeting has to be held between 1st March and 1st June. As such it is held in fairly close proximity to the Annual Meeting of Houghton Regis Town Council. These two meetings have a significantly different remit and purpose, yet the meeting names are similar. To help to clarify the difference, members are invited to consider changing the title of the Annual Towns Meeting to the Houghton Regis Annual Town Assembly.

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 2026/27 with the alteration to the name of the Annual Towns Meeting to the Houghton Regis Annual Town Assembly.

9. COMMITTEE FUNCTIONS & TERMS OF REFERENCE

Pages 53 - 71

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 14th April 2026, as detailed under Minute 13495 Strategic Policies 2026/27 (attached under Agenda Item 6).

Recommendation: To approve the Committee Functions & Terms of Reference as presented for 2026/27.

10. COMMITTEE, SUB-COMMITTEE & WORKING GROUP MEMBERSHIP

Pages 72 - 73

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 (Standing Order 6dv).[2]

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)
Sub-Committees	
Complaints Sub-Committee[3]	3 members
Complaints Appeal Sub-Committee [2]	3 members
Disciplinary, Grievance & Appeals Sub-Committee [2]	3 members
Community Engagement Sub Committee [2]	5 members
Neighbourhood Plan Implementation Sub Committee [2]	5 members
Community Safety Sub-Committee [2]	5 members
Working Groups	
Pride of Houghton Awards Working Group [2]	5 members
Investment Working Group [2]	3 members Corporate Services + ad hoc members from other standing committees
Task & Finish Groups	
Town Centre Community Task & Finish Group [2]	7 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.**

[2] Chairs for Sub Committee's, Working and other Group's will be agreed at the first meeting following the AGM after apologies have been received

[3] To be appointed as required

11. REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

Page 74

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

Members will find attached the list of outside organisations to which the Council is invited to appoint representatives for 2026/27 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 2026/27;**
2. **To note the reporting back mechanism as set out.**

12. STANDING ORDERS

Pages 75 - 77

At the Town Council meeting held on the 14th April 2026 members discussed whether Standing Orders could be amended to allow non-members of committees, sub-committees, working and other groups to remain at a meeting when the meeting moves into private and confidential session.

Following this meeting, clarity has been sought and members will find a report as attached.

Pages 78 - 102

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'. [4]

Standing Orders were reviewed at the Town Council meeting held on the 14th April 2026. Given the advice contained in the report these are presented as considered at the meeting on 14th April 2026.

Recommendations:
1. **To note the advice as provided;**
2. **To approve Standing Orders as presented.**

13. FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

Pages 103 – 119

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

[4] Local Councils Explained, NALC

Financial Regulations are 'the "standing orders" of a local council that regulate and control its financial affairs and accounting procedures'. [5]

The attached Financial Regulations were reviewed at the Town Council meeting held on 14th April 2026.

Recommendation: To approve Financial Regulations as presented.

14. SCHEME OF DELEGATION

Pages 120 - 126

In accordance with Standing Order 4.j.iii. 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 14th April 2026 and was recommended for approval.

Recommendation: To approve the Scheme of Delegation as presented.

15. GENERAL POWER OF COMPETENCE

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

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

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

16. BANKING & SIGNING ARRANGEMENTS

At the Town Council meeting held on the 14th May 2025 the banking arrangements for the council's bank accounts were approved as follows (minute number 13202).

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.

[5] Local Councils Explained, NALC

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 & RFO
Head of Environmental & Community Services
Head of Democratic Services

Financial Regulation 6.1 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 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**

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.

o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Peel Street, Houghton Regis, Bedfordshire, LU5 5EY

Town Mayor: **Councillor M Herber** Tel: 01582 708540
Town Clerk: **Clare Evans** e-mail: info@houghtonregis-tc.gov.uk

15th May 2026

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL ANNUAL MEETING

To: **All Town Councillors**

AGENDA – ADDITIONAL ITEM

17. COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW – ADDITIONAL CONSULTATION

As members may be aware Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) determined to facilitate a further consultation as part of the Community Governance Review (CGR) specifically on the possibility of creating a new ward for the Linmere area.

Details of the consultation can be found here: www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/consultations

The consultation commenced on Tuesday, 12 May 2026 and focuses on how Linmere should be represented as it continues to grow into a distinct and established community within Houghton Regis.

Through this consultation, CBC is seeking views on whether creating a new ward would provide dedicated representation at town council level and help ensure local decision-making reflects the needs of residents and businesses.

The consultation closes on Tuesday, 9 June 2026.

The HRTC response (Minute 13505) to the CGR can be viewed by following this link:
418-minutes.pdf

However in relation to Linmere this is the relevant extract from the Resolution:

> **Request a wording change for clarification to as follows:**
> **Draft Recommendation 6: undertake a further community governance review of the parish in 2030 to align with the local elections in 2031 to ensure effective community governance arrangements in light of the development at Linmere**

Members are invited to consider a response to this consultation.

The recommendation below reflects and supports Minute 13505.

Members may prefer additional time to consider this consultation. A request has already been submitted to CBC seeking an extension to allow the matter to be considered at the next scheduled Town Council meeting. Should this request be refused, a special meeting of the Town Council would need to be convened.

Recommendation: **That HRTC reaffirms its previously submitted response to the Community Governance Review, namely that a further CGR should be undertaken in 2030 to ensure that governance arrangements for Linmere remain effective, proportionate, and reflective of the community's continued development.**

o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Town Council
meeting held on
14th April 2026 7.00pm.

Present:	Councillors:	M Herber	Town Mayor
		J Carroll	
		E Billington	
		P Burgess	
		E Cooper	
		E Costello	
		W Henderson	
		D Jones	
		T McMahon	
		C Rollins	
		A Slough	
		C Slough	
		D Taylor	
	Officers:	Clare Evans	Town Clerk
		D Marsh (virtual)	Head of Corporate Services
		I Haynes (virtual)	Head of Environmental and Community Services
		Amanda Samuels	Administration Officer
	Public:	0	
Apologies:	Councillor:	Y Farrell	

13590 APOLOGIES & SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Councillor Farrell.

13591 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

13592 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

None.

13593 MINUTES

To approve the Minutes of the meetings held on 16th March 2026.

Resolved: To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 16th March 2026 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

DRAFT

13594 RESPONSIBLE FINANCE OFFICER – ARRANGEMENTS

At the Staffing Committee meeting held on the 2nd February 2026 Members supported a recommendation from Corporate Services on the separation of the Responsible Finance Officer and Town Clerk roles.

Members were asked to consider this recommendation prior to the minutes of the Staffing Committee being formally accepted as a correct record and signed accordingly at its next meeting. Some concerns had been raised at the March Town Council meeting regarding process, and the Town Clerk had emailed Members details explaining how the process had been followed.

While one Member expressed willingness to approve the recommendation, this was challenged by Cllr Carroll who felt that due process had not been observed. Cllr Carroll felt a number of issues needed to be addressed:

- The appointment of RFO was changed on 1st April and there was a delay in the policies being adapted
- Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Scheme of Delegation would need to be amended accordingly
- Relevant staff contracts would need to be updated.
- Internal and external evaluations would be required
- Suitability of workload
- Members were being asked to agree a resolution prior to draft minutes being confirmed
- Not all Members had access to all the information, specifically that in confidential papers as presented at Staffing Committee. Cllr Carroll felt that this meant Members were denied access to all the relevant information prior to voting.

Cllr Henderson joined the meeting.

Standing Order, 3a which named the Town Clerk as the RFO, was specifically referred to. Cllr Carroll expressed that these issues were personally felt and not necessarily shared by other councillors.

The Town Clerk responded that:

- Policies were a work in progress and would be finalised at the AGM
- Contracts for Town Clerk and Head of Corporate Services would not require amending. The appointment of RFO would form part of the job description
- HRTC did not carry out internal job evaluation. The Head of Corporate Services role had been evaluated externally, and the outcome had been fed back to the Staffing Committee. The Staffing Committee had also requested that the Town Clerk role be evaluated, and this was being undertaken.
- Consideration had been given to whether the workload would be manageable
- Council decisions were effective from the date of the meeting
- HRTC had sought legal advice regarding Members attendance in private session and had been advised that non-members had the same rights as members of the public.

DRAFT

Concern continued to be expressed that Members were being asked to approve decisions without access to all the relevant information. Cllr Carroll felt that he would be unable to vote in favour of the recommendation on these grounds.

Members suggested that access to confidential papers and confidential sections of council meetings should be discussed on another occasion as this appeared to be the primary issue. It was highlighted that to change the process on closed sessions would mean going against legal advice.

Cllr Jones proposed accepting the recommendation
Cllr C Slough seconded the proposal
Cllr Carroll requested a recorded vote

On being put to the vote, Members votes as follows:

In favour:	Cllrs A Slough, C Slough, E Billington, W Henderson, D Jones, T McMahon and E Cooper
Against:	Cllrs J Carroll, and C Rollins
Abstained:	Cllrs M Herber, P Burgess, D Taylor and E Costello

Resolved: To approve Minute 13519, namely, to formally recognise that the responsibilities of RFO be transferred to Head of Corporate Services from 1st April 2026.

13495 STRATEGIC POLICIES 2026/27

Members had been provided with information to enable a review of the Town Councils strategic polices prior to them being presented at the Town Council meeting to be held on 20th May 2026. Approval of the policies had been deferred from the Town Council meeting in March for further adjustments to be made.

In summary the amendments included:

- Standing Orders – no amendments
- Financial Regulations - amendments to Financial Regulation 13.3 to align with section 38 of the Scheme of Delegation
- Scheme of Delegation - amendments included reflecting the transfer of the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO)
- Committee Functions & Terms of Reference - amendments included:
  - Updated table on Page 2
  - Corporate Services Committee – clarification of policies to be considered by this committee, namely legislative policies relating to Council governance, compliance, finance, data protection, health & safety, equality, and other statutory obligations
  - Environment & Leisure Committee – to extend the functions of this committee to enable it to consider and determine matters surrounding the development of a new cemetery for Houghton Regis.

DRAFT

- Staffing Committee – clarification of policies to be considered by this committee, namely 'To draft, implement, review, monitor and revise policies for staff'.
- Inclusion of Investment Working Group
- Deletion of proposed New Cemetery Sub Committee (see Point 3 above)
- Replacement of Combating Crime Working Group with Community Safety Sub Committee
- Inclusion of Town Centre Community Venue Task & Finish Group

Councillor Carroll referenced Standing Order 7a regarding confidential matters and reiterated the wish to see access to the issue revisited. The Head of Corporate Services stated that going into private session was to ensure the integrity of the process rather than exclude Members from relevant information.

The Town Clerk questioned if Members would like confidential matters to be discussed as a separate item on the AGM agenda or at the June meeting. Members were of the opinion that this should be addressed at the AGM. The Town Clerk confirmed that, in response to the request from Members, a report on confidential matters would be generated and this would be brought forward at the AGM.

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

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

13496 COUNCIL CALENDAR 2026/27

Further to the March meeting of Town Council, Cllr Jones had met with staff to review the draft Calendar of Meetings.

Members were provided with a draft calendar of meetings and events for 2026/27.

In summary, the following meetings had been diarised:

Town Council: 15th June; 12th October; 7th December 2026, 25th January and 22nd March 2027

Corporate Services Committee: 1st June; 7th September; 30th November 2026 and 1st March 2027

Community Services Committee: 20th July; 2nd November; 9th November (Grants) 2026; 22nd February and 26th April 2027

Environment and Leisure Committee: 6th July; 19th October 2026; 11th January and 5th April 2027

Planning Committee: meetings held every three weeks

DRAFT

Staffing Committee: 21st July; 20th October 2026 19th January and 12th April 2027

Town Partnership Committee: 28th July; 27th October 2026 and 16th March 2027

Annual Towns Meeting 17th May 2027

Notes:

1. At the March Town Council meeting it was suggested that the Community Safety Sub Committee and the Community Engagement Sub Committee be disbanded as these committees primarily dealt with operational matters. Members were advised that a report was to be included on the Community Services agenda for 27th April. Should the committee decide to alter the arrangements for these sub committees the calendar would be adjusted accordingly.
2. The calendar also included dates for Leaders Briefings. These were scheduled to be held monthly, usually the first Monday of each month at 11am. These could be adjusted should there be any changes to nominated group leaders to ensure meetings dates were convenient.

Members highlighted that the Arts and Culture event had been moved from May to 25th July 2026 and needed to be amended in the schedule.

The Head of Environmental and Community Services joined the meeting

The Town Clerk highlighted that further amendments might be required, depending on decisions regarding the Community Safety Sub-Committee and the Community Engagement Sub-Committee.

Members expressed appreciation for the meeting invitations that were sent out to those who requested them but suggested that an opt-out option would be more appropriate.

13497 BUDGET SETTING PROCESS

Members were advised that officer consideration has been given to the timetable for the budget setting process.

Several Members had highlighted that the timetable placed a significant concentration of work in early January, often immediately before the Town Council meeting. This could make it difficult for councillors to engage fully with the detail and lead to feelings of pressure or frustration.

The revised timetable aimed to address these concerns and support more effective scrutiny and decision-making.

The proposed timetable was as follows:

- Officers would prepare a draft budget, based on the Financial Forecast, by 30 September.

DRAFT

- This draft would be included on Standing Committee agendas throughout October and early November.
- A revised officer draft, reflecting committee feedback, would be circulated in early November.
- The tax base was usually received around 10 November; officers would assess its implications and, if required, issue a further updated draft.
- The final budget would then be presented to Town Council at the scheduled meeting in early December.

A scheduled town council meeting in January would allow for the draft budget to be presented if necessary.

Members were generally in favour of the proposed budget setting timetable but felt that decision making on the precept should not be made earlier than necessary.

13498 DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT

Members were provided with a draft Annual Report for 2025/26 for approval.

The Annual Report provided a transparent account of the council's work over the year, demonstrating how public funds had been used and how key decisions had supported the town's strategic priorities. It highlighted progress across all committees, showcased achievements, and evidenced the council's commitment to openness, accountability and good governance.

The Town Clerk informed Members that some of the figures in the report might require updating at year end.

Members felt it was unnecessary to for code numbers to form part of the public document. Members also noted that the expenditure detail was perhaps more extensive than necessary.

Resolved: To approve the Annual Report 2025/26.

13499 PROJECT H

Members received a report outlining considerations for the tender process and the naming of the venue.

In relation to the tender process members considered:

- A restricted tender invitation process
- Means of tender submission
- Tender opening process

Members were requested to decide on the process they would prefer to implement regarding the naming the venue. Members suggested an alternative option to those presented: for the Task and Finish Group to generate a shortlist of suggestions, to put this list out to consultation and using the consultation responses for the Task & Finish Group to make a recommendation back to Town Council.

DRAFT

Resolved: Tender Process:

1. **To approve a selective tendering process for Project H, based on the identified benefits of inviting a small number of proven contractors, thereby ensuring a competitive exercise, reducing procurement risk, and securing value for money. (Suspension of Financial Regulation 5.6)**
2. **To approve the use of an electronic tendering process in accordance with the provision within Appendix 1, point 2 of Financial Regulations).**
3. **To approve the Proper Officer and Town Mayor to open the tender submissions on behalf of HRTC, in accordance with Standing Order 18, d iv.**

Venue Name:

4. **To request that the Task and Finish Group generate a shortlist of suggestions, to put this list out to consultation and using the consultation responses for the Task & Finish Group to make a recommendation back to Town Council.**

13500 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

- Project H

Proposed by: Cllr Jones Seconded by: T McMahon

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

13501 PROJECT H

Members were requested to consider the appointment of a consultant to undertake the Tender Analysis process and the appointment of a consultant to act as the Contract Manager.

Resolved: Tender Analysis

1. **To appoint Common Works to support to review, analyse and recommend on tender submissions at a cost of up to £2,450. To fund this via EMR 355.**

Contract Manager

2. **To appoint Stockton Bradley to act as the Contract Manager for the delivery of the fit out of Project H at a cost of 7.5% of the most economical tender bid (with a minimum fee of £18,000). To fund this as part of the capital cost of the project as to be determined by Town Council in due course.**

DRAFT

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.13pm

Dated this 20th day of May 2026

Chairman

DRAFT

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL
Community Services Committee
Minutes of the meeting held on 23rd February 2026 at 7.00pm

Present:	Councillors:	T McMahon	Chairman
		P Burgess	
		E Cooper	
		Y Farrell	
		A Slough	
		C Slough	
	Officers:	Ian Haynes	Head of Environmental & Community Services
		Amanda Samuels	Administration Officer
Public:		0	
Apologies:	Councillors:	D Taylor	
Also present:		J Carroll	

13531 APOLOGIES & SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Councillor Taylor.

13532 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

13533 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

None.

13534 MINUTES

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 10th November 2025.

Resolved: **To confirm the minutes of the Community Services Committee meetings held on 10th November 2025, and for these to be signed by the Chairman.**

13535 TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING WORKING GROUPS AND CONSIDER ANY RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED THEREIN

Community Engagement Sub-Committee	23rd September & 25th November 2025
Combating Crime Working Group	15th October 2025

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

13536 COMMITTEE WORKPLAN

Members were provided with the workplan for the municipal year 2025/26.

The Head of Environmental and Community Services informed Members that the main points to note were that the Central Community Hub had been removed and now sat with the Community Venue Task and Finish Group, and that the Community Conference had been deferred until Project H was up and running.

13537 INCOME AND EXPENDITURE REPORT

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

Generally, figures were as expected; however, some income targets would be missed, and there was an underspend on revenue to balance the budget. The appointment of the Project Manager was still outstanding, resulting in an underspend on Staff Salaries.

13538 COMMUNICATIONS COMMUNITY STRATEGY

The Head of Environmental and Community Services provided Members with a verbal update on the improvements made to the town council's communications strategy following the delegation of authority at the Community Services Committee meeting on 22nd July 2024.

Members were informed that there had been slight amendments to the IT Policy and that the Accessibility Statement had been updated.

A set of house rules for social media, setting out guidelines, would be produced. A Communication Strategy would be documented to formalise core objectives and the position of HRTC.

New noticeboards had been ordered and would provide a platform for community groups and volunteers to advertise their activities.

A clear brand for HRTC Internal communications and marketing would be introduced.

Members would be provided with updates on these items when details were finalised.

13539 SMALL CAPITAL GRANTS UPDATE

Members were advised that the following Small Project Grants had been awarded under delegated authority.

- Houghton Regis Helpers - £200

13540 HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL YOUTH SERVICES

The Head of Environmental and Community Services informed Members that attendance figures for youth engagement and detached youth work were not yet available.

There was some disappointment with the attendance figures for Tuesday night activities at Houghton Hall Park, and consideration would be given to the future format. Thursday evenings at the 3G pitch at Tithe Farm were exceptionally popular with over forty attendees.

Members suggested working with other groups to improve the activities provided and the attendance figures. There was also a wish to see some form of provision being established at Parkside.

13541 REVIEW OF THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE

Members had been asked to request that the Community Engagement Sub-Committee consider ways to increase community engagement and partnership working. It had been suggested that consideration should be given to following the format of the Community Safety Sub-Committee.

The Head of Environmental and Community Services stated that the meetings were not working as well as hoped and had not increased community engagement. By moving to a daytime meeting, it was hoped that:

- Representatives from the library would attend meetings
- There would be greater community engagement
- Both the Events Manager and the Youth and Community Manager would clerk the meeting jointly rather than alternating
- Co-optee numbers would potentially improve

Members expressed concern that scheduling another sub-committee during the day might potentially exclude some councillors/political groups. It was felt that expense should not be an overriding factor in decision-making and that suitable consideration should be given to increased diversity. Members were generally supportive of adopting a combination of evening and daytime meetings.

Members agreed that the CESC should review its format at the meeting on 24th March 2026.

Resolved: **To consider and request that the Community Engagement Sub-Committee review its current format.**

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 7.52 pm

Dated this 27th day of April 2026

Chairman

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL
Environment & Leisure Committee
Minutes of the meeting held on
12th January 2026 at 7.00 pm

Present:	Councillors:	A Slough	Chairman
		P Burgess	
		Y Farrell	
		T McMahon	
		C Rollins	
		D Taylor	
	Officers:	Ian Haynes	Head of Environmental & Community Services
		Amanda Samuels	Administration Officer
	Public:	0	
Apologies:	Councillors:	W Henderson	
Also present:		J Carroll	

13484 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Henderson.

13485 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

13486 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

13487 MINUTES

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

Resolved: To confirm the minutes of the Environment & Leisure Committee meeting held on 20th October 2025, and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

13488 COMMITTEE WORKPLAN

Members were provided with a work plan for the 2025/26 municipal year.

The work plan provided a structured approach to the committee's business throughout 2025/26, ensuring all statutory requirements and governance obligations were met in a timely manner.

Members were informed that all items on the work plan were due to be discussed, except the annual review of land assets, which had been postponed until April.

13489 HOUGHTON HALL PARK

Members were informed that Houghton Regis Town Council (HRTC) had reached its first anniversary of operational management of Houghton Hall Park (HHP) and feedback so far had been positive. The main items of note were:

- A community gardener had been recruited.
- The proposed work to the formal garden and kitchen garden would be presented to the HHP board.
- The borehole had been drilled, and a water analysis had deemed the water fit to drink. Electric works for the pump were due to take place.
- There were plans to promote volunteering numbers at HHP; to assist this, the section of the Houghton Regis promotional film relating to HHP volunteers would be released.
- Improvements were continuing, and all income from HHP would be reinvested in the site.
- A 'lessons learnt' report was due to be produced.

13490 INCOME AND EXPENDITURE REPORT

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

The Head of Environmental and Community Services went through the main points of note. The report was much as anticipated, with the highest costs being utilities and items outside HRTC's control.

In response to a query from Members regarding sustainability at the Thorn Park pavilion, the Head of Environmental and Community Services confirmed that works would be carried out on other older assets as a priority, with works to the Thorn Park pavilion dependent on available funding.

13491 BIODIVERSITY POLICY

The biodiversity policy has been created to comply with legislation. For the policy to be considered effective, it required the whole Council to support it through the town council's committee structure.

Members were informed that, in addition to meeting a legal obligation, the policy would benefit the community and would allow HRTC to participate in the Local Council Award Scheme run by NALC.

Resolved: To endorse and request that the Council adopt the Biodiversity Policy.

13492 TOWN PLANTING STRATEGY

Members were provided with the updated objectives for the town planting strategy.

HRTC had adopted the grass cutting at the East End Common and around the Chequers roundabout; bulb planting would be extended to include these areas.

Three objectives were complete, and two were ongoing.

Members were also requested to review the maintenance of the trees outside All Saints Church. It was proposed that the trees in front of the Church undergo staggered pollarding rather than simultaneous pollarding of all the trees. It was suggested that this would be more aesthetically appealing while maintaining views of the church. Members were supportive of this proposal. Members requested a copy of the work plan, for information, as this would allow them to keep residents updated. The Head of Environmental and Community Services confirmed the work plan would be provided.

Resolved: To discuss and agree on the updates to the named objectives.

13493 TITHE FARM RECREATION GROUND SPORTS PROJECT UPDATE

Members received a verbal update on the Tithe Farm Recreation Ground Sports Project.

Following the completion of the Section 278 agreement, the bond for the highway programme had been agreed, and legal particulars were now awaited.

The Head of Environmental and Community Services confirmed he would contact Members as soon as additional information became available.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 7.41 pm

Dated this 21st day of April 2026

Chairman

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Planning Committee
Minutes of the meeting held on
9th March 2026 at 7.00pm

Present:	Councillors:	M Herber	Chairman
		E Billington	
		E Cooper	
		Y Farrell	
		D Jones	
		D Taylor	
	Officers:	Louise Senior	Head of Democratic Services
		Amanda Samuels	Administration Officer
	Public:	3 (1 virtual)	
Apologies:	Councillors:	C Slough	
Also present:		J Carroll	
		S Goodchild (virtual)	

13558 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Councillor Slough.

13559 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Members of the public were present to address application CB/26/00085/FULL. Members agreed to receive questions under the relevant agenda item.

13560 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

13561 MINUTES

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on the 16th February 2026.

Members had been provided with amended Minutes prior to the meeting.

Resolved: **To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 16th February 2026 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.**

13562 PLANNING MATTERS

(a) The following planning applications were considered:

CB/26/00085/FULL (click for more details)	Change of Use from (C3) Dwelling to (C2) Residential Childrens Care Home 15 Tennyson Avenue, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5UQ

Comments: A member of the public made a statement to the Committee highlighting the following issues:

- **The property was situated in a residential cul-de-sac and the driveway opened on to a hammerhead junction. Given the layout of the road, congestion was likely to become an issue.**
- **There were insufficient parking spaces for the proposed 4-6 staff who would be working on site**
- **Residential refuse bins were currently on the driveway. Larger refuse bins would reduce parking availability further.**
- **There was a potential risk of increased noise in a quiet neighbourhood**

Members noted this was a retrospective application and a home had been in operation since July 2025. Such a facility was required to be registered with Ofsted who were responsible for assessing suitability.
It was suggested that the residents in Tennyson Avenue should be encouraged to raise their individual objections to Central Bedfordshire Council.
Members expressed their concern regarding

- **Parking availability**
- **Traffic congestion**
- **Noise levels**

Houghton Regis Town Council raised no objection to this application.

CB/26/00468/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 5,150 dwellings (Use Class C3); up to 202,500 sqm gross of additional development in Use Classes: A1, A2, A3 (retail), A4 (public house), A5 (take away); B1, B2, B8 (offices, industrial and storage and distribution); C1 (hotel), C2 (care home), D1 and D2 (community and leisure); car showroom; data centre; petrol filling station; car parking; primary substation; energy centre; and for the laying out of the buildings; routes and open spaces within the development; and all associated works and operations including but not limited to: demolition; earthworks; engineering operations. All development, works and operations to be in accordance with the Development Parameters Schedule and Plans.) Approval of access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale for 236 dwelling units
Phase 4, Parcels 2 and 3, Houghton Regis North Site 1, Houghton Regis, Bedfordshire

Comments: Members highlighted that the application stated three nearby badger setts would be retained if possible. It was thought that this was unlikely to be possible given the extent of the development. It was hoped that, as a protected species, this issue would be successfully resolved.

Houghton Regis Town Council raised no objection to this application.

Noted:

CB/26/00360/NMA (click for more details)	Non-material amendment to planning permission CB/23/03448/FULL (Revised scheme: Demolition of existing outbuildings whilst retaining the existing dwelling. Erection of 26 dwellings with access road and sewers.) Amendment sought to the wording of condition 3 to remove reference to the works beyond the immediate raised table. This is replaced by a variation of the S106 to add an obligation to pay a sum of Ł10,000 towards further traffic calming measures on the Bedford Road corridor Red Cow Farm House, Bedford Road, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 6JP
CB/26/00325/DOC (click for more details)	Discharge of Conditions 7,8 & 24, 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 rationalisation of accesses and provision of yard area, parking, landscaping, and all other associated works.) Unit 1, Humphrys Road, Dunstable, LU5 4TP
CB/26/00511/NMA (click for more details)	Non-material amendment to planning permission CB/25/01728/RM (Reserved Matters: following Outline Application CB/12/03613/OUT (Outline planning permission with the details of access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale reserved for later determination. Development to comprise: up to 5,150 dwellings (Use Class C3); up to 202,500 sqm gross of additional development in Use Classes: A1, A2, A3 (retail), A4 (public house), A5 (take away); B1, B2, B8 (offices, industrial and storage and distribution); C1 (hotel), C2 (care home), D1 and D2 (community and leisure); car showroom; data centre; petrol filling station; car parking; primary substation; energy centre; and for the laying out of the buildings; routes and open spaces within the development; and all associated works and operations including but not limited to: demolition; earthworks; engineering operations. All development, works and operations to be in accordance with the Development Parameters Schedule and Plans.) Reserved matters sought for appearance only to bandstand) Amendment Sought: Amendment to the bandstand roof. Land To The North And East Of Houghton Regis, Sundon Road, Houghton Regis

CB/26/00445/TDM (click for more details)	Telecommunications Determination Masts: Erection of a 20m monopole c/w 6 antennas, 3 RRUs, 3 cabinets, 10 paving slabs with ancillary development Land at Houghton Regis Car Park, Parkside Drive, Houghton Regis, Bedfordshire, LU5 5RD **Councillor Carroll was in attendance at the meeting to express concerns regarding the location of the installations. In the application, the land had been described by the developer as a verge; however, it was believed that the plot formed part of the Parkside local open space; as such, it was considered that the development at this site would be in contravention of the Neighbourhood Plan.** **It was felt that to allow installation of these items in a local open space would set an unwelcome precedent.** **It was also highlighted that this was a commercial enterprise and would fail to provide any pecuniary benefit for the community.** **Members requested that the Head of Democratic Services contact CBC, alerting them to the fact that this was potentially amenity land. The Head of Democratic Services confirmed they would compose a communication to CBC outlining concerns and share this with Members.**
CB/26/00411/GPDE (click for more details)	Prior Notification of Householder Extension: Single storey rear extension, 5m beyond the rear wall of the original dwelling, maximum height of 2.90m & 2.90m to the eaves 21 Hinton Walk, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5RB
CB/26/00349/DOC (click for more details)	Discharge of Conditions 8 and 29, against planning permission ref. CB/12/03613/OUT (Outline planning permission with the details of access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale reserved for later determination. Development to comprise: up to 5,150 dwellings (Use Class C3); up to 202,500 sqm gross of additional development in Use Classes: A1, A2, A3 (retail), A4 (public house), A5 (take away); B1, B2, B8 (offices, industrial and storage and distribution); C1 (hotel), C2 (care home), D1 and D2 (community and leisure); car showroom; data centre; petrol filling station; car parking; primary substation; energy centre; and for the laying out of the buildings; routes and open spaces within the development; and all associated works and operations including but not limited to: demolition; earthworks; engineering operations. All development, works and operations to be in accordance with the Development Parameters Schedule and Plans.) Parcel 3A, Houghton Regis North Site 1, Land on the northern edge of Houghton Regis

CB/26/00544/NMA (click for more details)	Non-material amendment to planning permission CB/12/03613/OUT (Outline planning permission with the details of access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale reserved for later determination. Development to comprise: up to 5,150 dwellings (Use Class C3); up to 202,500 sqm gross of additional development in Use Classes: A1, A2, A3 (retail), A4 (public house), A5 (take away); B1, B2, B8 (offices, industrial and storage and distribution); C1 (hotel), C2 (care home), D1 and D2 (community and leisure); car showroom; data centre; petrol filling station; car parking; primary substation; energy centre; and for the laying out of the buildings; routes and open spaces within the development; and all associated works and operations including but not limited to: demolition; earthworks; engineering operations. All development, works and operations to be in accordance with the Development Parameters Schedule and Plans.) Amendment sought: Non-material amendment to amend the plots that are M4(2) compliant, to formalise the accessibility and ensure that it aligns with delivery on site. Parcel 5, Houghton Regis North 1, Sundon Road, Houghton Regis
CB/26/00616/DOC (click for more details)	Discharge of Conditions 8 and 29 against planning permission ref. CB/12/03613/OUT (Outline planning permission with the details of access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale reserved for later determination. Development to comprise: up to 5,150 dwellings (Use Class C3); up to 202,500 sqm gross of additional development in Use Classes: A1, A2, A3 (retail), A4 (public house), A5 (take away); B1, B2, B8 (offices, industrial and storage and distribution); C1 (hotel), C2 (care home), D1 and D2 (community and leisure); car showroom; data centre; petrol filling station; car parking; primary substation; energy centre; and for the laying out of the buildings; routes and open spaces within the development; and all associated works and operations including but not limited to: demolition; earthworks; engineering operations. All development, works and operations to be in accordance with the Development Parameters Schedule and Plans.) Parcel 7 and 8, Linmere, Houghton Regis North Site 1, Land on the northern edge of Houghton Regis

Permissions / Approvals / Consents

CB/25/01963/FULL (click for more details)	Erection of single storey timber frame rear extension to create a storage area and a covered sitting area, with new door, and steel corrugated roofing 8 Ashington Way, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 6RQ

Refusals:

None received.

Withdrawals:

CB/25/01901/FULL (click for more details)	Erection of 5 commercial units (Class E(g)(iii),B2 and B8) with associated access from Bedford Road, car parking, service yards, drainage and landscaping. Land Rear Of Cresswell Edge and Seaton Crescent, Seaton Crescent, Houghton Regis

13563 PLANNING APPLICATIONS – DELEGATED AUTHORITY

The following planning application was received for consultation and fell within delegated authority. In accordance with the Committee's Terms of Reference, this item did not require discussion unless a member had requested it be referred to committee. It was therefore recommended for approval.

CB/26/00351/FULL (click for more details)	Erection of a single storey side extension, with roof lights 194 Tithe Farm Road, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5JE

13564 CB/25/02246/FULL: WHELANS FARM, THE BUNGALOW, BEDFORD ROAD, HOUGHTON REGIS LU5 6JS

Members were provided with notification of amendments from Central Bedfordshire Council advising of revisions received in relation to CB/25/02246/FULL.

The main change appeared to be an increase in the number of houses at the end of the road from two to three. The orientation meant that the house fronts faced a public footpath which was not thought ideal.

Members observed that thirteen objections had been received and echoed the concerns raised regarding the lack of infrastructure and the strain likely to be experienced by local services. Concerns regarding the proximity to the boundary of residents' homes and potential privacy issues were also noted.

Councillor Goodchild confirmed they would write to the Planning Officer for guidance on this application.

Houghton Regis Town Council objected to this application on the grounds of overdevelopment and the capacity of the Bedford Road to accommodate increased traffic.

Resolved: **To consider the revisions received from Central Bedfordshire Council in relation application CB/25/02246/FULL and to consider comments for submission to Central Bedfordshire Council.**

13565 CB/25/03234/RM: LOCATION: PARCELS 7 & 8 IN AREA 4 AT LINMERE, HOUGHTON REGIS NORTH, DUNSTABLE

Members were provided with notification of amendments from Central Bedfordshire Council advising of revisions that have been received in relation to CB/25/03234/RM.

Houghton Regis Town Council had raised no objections to the previous application and would, therefore, raise no objection to the amended application.

Resolved: **To consider the revisions received from Central Bedfordshire Council in relation to application CB/25/03234/RM and to consider comments for submission to Central Bedfordshire Council.**

13566 500MW BESS AT LUTON ROAD, CHALTON (CB/25/01098/FULL)

Charlton Parish Council had written to update neighbouring councils regarding the 500MW BESS at Luton Road, Chalton (CB/25/01098/FULL), which was approved at the January 2026 Central Bedfordshire Council Development Management Committee.

Chalton Parish Council had written to the Secretary of State requesting intervention. This request was based on the scale of the proposal, its Green Belt location, and the cumulative concentration of grid-connected energy infrastructure around the Sundon substation.

The Head of Democratic Services read an email from the Secretary of State to Chalton Parish Council confirming that the application would not be called in. Members felt this indicated the 500MW BESS was likely to proceed but proposed that Houghton Regis Town Council wrote to Chalton to express support and to commiserate on the decision. The Head of Democratic Services confirmed that an appropriate communication would be drafted and shared with the Chair and Vice-Chair prior to sending.

Resolved: **To consider comments to Central Bedfordshire Council in support of the concerns raised by Charlton Parish Council.**

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.04pm

Dated this 30th day of March 2026

Chairman

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Planning Committee
Minutes of the meeting held on
30th March 2026 at 7.00pm

Present:	Councillors:	M Herber	Chairman
		E Cooper	
		D Jones	
		C Slough	
		D Taylor	
	Officers:	Louise Senior	Head of Democratic Services
		Amanda Samuels	Administration Officer
Also present:		J Carroll	
	Public:	0	
Apologies:	Councillors:	E Billington	
Absent:		Y Farrell	

13582 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Councillor Billington.

13583 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

13584 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

13585 MINUTES

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on the 9th March 2026.

Resolved: To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 9th March 2026 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

13586 PLANNING MATTERS

(a) The following planning applications were considered:

CB/25/02843/FULL (click for more details)	Part single storey and part two storey rear extensions 32 Churchfield Road, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5HL

Comments: Members agreed that, while the development was unusual, the extension appeared to be in keeping with other properties on the road.

Houghton Regis Town Council raised no objection to this application.

CB/26/00369/FULL (click for more details)	Siting of a portakabin for community use Parkside Recreation Ground, Parkside Drive, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5RY

Comments: This application had previously been approved by Houghton Regis Town Council but refused by Central Bedfordshire Council. The two issues raised appeared to have been addressed:

- **Biodiversity Net Gain**
- **Distance from the portakabin to the playing pitch**

Houghton Regis Town Council raised no objection to this application.

Noted:

CB/26/00636/DOC (click for more details)	Discharge of Conditions 4, 12 and 20 against planning permission ref. CB/23/03987/RM (Reserved Matters: following Outline Application CB/12/03613/OUT (Outline planning permission with the details of access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale reserved for later determination. Development to comprise: up to 5,150 dwellings (Use Class C3); up to 202,500 sqm gross of additional development in Use Classes: A1, A2, A3 (retail), A4 (public house), A5 (take away); B1, B2, B8 (offices, industrial and storage and distribution); C1 (hotel), C2 (care home), D1 and D2 (community and leisure); car showroom; data centre; petrol filling station; car parking; primary substation; energy centre; and for the laying out of the buildings; routes and open spaces within the development; and all associated works and operations including but not limited to: demolition; earthworks; engineering operations. All development, works and operations to be in accordance with the Development Parameters Schedule and Plans.) Reserved matters approval sought for layout, scale, appearance, landscaping and access relating to Local Centre Parcel, Phase 1.) Local Centre Parcel, Linmere (HRN1), Phase 1, Waterslade Way & Lime Tree Drive, Houghton Regis, LU5 7AS
CB/26/00784/NMA (click for more details)	Non material amendment to planning permission CB/23/03448/FULL (Revised scheme: Demolition of existing outbuildings whilst retaining the existing dwelling. Erection of

26 dwellings with access road and sewers. Amendment sought to the wording of condition 27 to amend this from a prior commencement condition to a prior to occupation condition.
Red Cow Farm House, Bedford Road, Houghton Regis, Beds. LU5 6JP

CB/26/00787/DOC (click for more details)	Discharge of Conditions 25, 26, 29, 32, 33 & 35 against planning permission ref. CB/12/03613/OUT (Outline planning permission with the details of access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale reserved for later determination. Development to comprise: up to 5,150 dwellings (Use Class C3); up to 202,500 sqm gross of additional development in Use Classes: A1, A2, A3 (retail), A4 (public house), A5 (take away); B1, B2, B8 (offices, industrial and storage and distribution); C1 (hotel), C2 (care home), D1 and D2 (community and leisure); car showroom; data centre; petrol filling station; car parking; primary substation; energy centre; and for the laying out of the buildings; routes and open spaces within the development; and all associated works and operations including but not limited to: demolition; earthworks; engineering operations. All development, works and operations to be in accordance with the Development Parameters Schedule and Plans. Phase 4, Parcels 4 & 5 - Houghton Regis North site 1, land on the northern edge of Houghton Regis
CB/26/00770/DOC (click for more details)	Discharge of Condition 9 against planning permission (CB/12/03613/OUT) (Development to comprise: up to 5,150 dwellings (Use Class C3); up to 202,500 sqm gross of additional development in Use Classes: A1, A2, A3 (retail), A4 (public house), A5 (take away); B1, B2, B8 (offices, industrial and storage and distribution); C1 (hotel), C2 (care home), D1 and D2 (community and leisure); car showroom; data centre; petrol filling station; car parking; primary substation; energy centre; and for the laying out of the buildings; routes and open spaces within the development; and all associated works and operations including but not limited to: demolition; earthworks; engineering operations. All development, works and operations to be in accordance with the Development Parameters Schedule and Plans). CB/20/03903/DOC also refers. Land To The North And East Of Houghton Regis, Sundon Road, Houghton Regis
CB/26/00641/DOC (click for more details)	Discharge of Condition 20 against planning permission ref. CB/24/000801/FULL (Erection of a Class B8 (self-storage) building on southern boundary and associated works to car park and landscaping) Former Site Of Morrisons, High Street, Houghton Regis

CB/26/00617/DOC (click for more details)	Discharge of Conditions 1,3,5,7,8,11,12,13,16,17B,18,21,22,23,24,25 against planning permission ref. CB/24/00801/FULL Erection of a Class B8 (self-storage) building on southern boundary and associated works to car park and landscaping. Former Site Of Morrisons, High Street, Houghton Regis

Permissions / Approvals / Consents

None received.

Refusals:

None received.

Withdrawals:

None received.

13587 PLANNING APPLICATIONS – DELEGATED AUTHORITY

The following planning application had been received for consultation and fell within delegated authority. In accordance with the Committee's Terms of Reference, this item did not require discussion unless a Member had requested it be referred to committee prior to the meeting. It was therefore recommended for approval.

CB/26/00542/FULL (click for more details)	Two storey side extension with integrated garage. 11 Cemetery Road, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5BZ

13588 PROPOSED TELECOMMUNICATIONS UPGRADE – SITE 10555, PARKSIDE DRIVE

Members were requested to consider a consultation relating to a proposed upgrade of a 20m telecommunications monopole on Parkside Drive.

Members felt that the proposed new position of the pole would be an improvement.

Members questioned why an associated cabinet categorised as 'not active' was still in place. It was suggested that enquiries should be made regarding its removal.

Resolved: **To consider comments to M Group Telecom in relation to this application.**

13589 CB/25/03320/RM - PHASE 4, PARCEL 1, & CB/25/03319/RM - PHASE 4, PARCEL 6, HOUGHTON REGIS NORTH 1, SUNDON ROAD, HOUGHTON REGIS

Members were provided with notifications received from Central Bedfordshire Council regarding amendments made to outline application CB/12/03613/OUT.

a. CB/25/03320/RM - Phase 4, Parcel 1
b. CB/25/03319/RM - Phase 4, Parcel 6

Members had not objected to this application previously and saw no grounds for objection this time.

Resolved: **To consider the revisions for Phase 4 Parcels 1 & 6 in relation to applications CB/25/03320/RM and CB/25/03319/RM and consider comments, if any, for submission to Central Bedfordshire Council.**

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 7.18pm

Dated this 20th day of April 2026

Chairman

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Planning Committee
Minutes of the meeting held on
20th April 2026 at 7.00pm

Present:	Councillors:	M Herber	Chairman
		E Billington	
		E Cooper	
		D Jones	
		C Slough	
	Officers:	Debbie Marsh	Head of Corporate Services
		Amanda Samuels	Administration Officer
	Public:	2	
Apologies:	Councillors:	Y Farrell	
		D Taylor	

13502 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Councillor Farrell and Councillor Taylor.

13503 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

13504 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

13505 MINUTES

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on the 30th March 2026.

Resolved: **To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 30th March 2026 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.**

13506 PLANNING MATTERS

(a) The following planning applications were considered:

CB/26/00870/FULL (click for more details)	Conversion of barn, subdivided into 3 office units, demolition of lean to, insertion of new windows, doors, new steps and railings to office unit 3 and installation of mezzanine floor to each unit. Change of use of former Doctor's Surgery to 1 residential dwelling. Landscaping and associated works Manor Farm, Sewell Lane, Sewell, Dunstable, LU6 1RP

Comments: The Town Council raised an objection to this application on the grounds of:

- **Overdevelopment: each of the office units would accommodate 7 workstations.**
- **The proposals were likely to result in the intensification of activity at the site, thus leading to an increase in vehicular movements.**
- **Loss of residential amenity: the increased activity associated with the development would lead to higher levels of noise, disturbance and general activity, undermining the quiet residential character of the surrounding area.**
- **The design was inappropriate and detracted from the character of the site.**
- **Increased hard landscaping to accommodate additional parking.**
- **The submitted proposals, as illustrated within the Landscape Masterplan, would introduce works that would alter the character, appearance and historic setting of the listed asset, resulting in heritage harm that the Town Council feels cannot be justified.**
- **This application, if approved, would contribute to the cumulative erosion of the historic character of Sewell.**

CB/26/00871/LB (click for more details)

Listed Building: Conversion of barn, subdivided into 3 office units, demolition of lean to, insertion of new windows, doors, new steps and railings to office unit 3 and installation of mezzanine floor to each unit. Change of use of former Doctor's Surgery to 1 residential dwelling. Landscaping and associated works
Manor Farm, Sewell Lane, Sewell, Dunstable, LU6 1RP

Comments: The Town Council raised an objection to this application on the grounds of:

- **Overdevelopment: each of the office units would accommodate 7 workstations.**
- **The proposals were likely to result in the intensification of activity at the site, thus leading to an increase in vehicular movements.**
- **Loss of residential amenity: the increased activity associated with the development would lead to higher levels of noise, disturbance and general activity, undermining the quiet residential character of the surrounding area.**
- **The design was inappropriate and detracted from the character of the site.**

- **Increased hard landscaping to accommodate additional parking.**
- **The submitted proposals, as illustrated within the Landscape Masterplan, would introduce works that would alter the character, appearance and historic setting of the listed asset, resulting in heritage harm that the Town Council feels cannot be justified.**
- **This application, if approved, would contribute to the cumulative erosion of the historic character of Sewell.**

Noted:

CB/26/00852/DOC (click for more details)	Discharge of Condition 14, against planning permission ref. CB/23/03987/RM (Reserved Matters: following Outline Application CB/12/03613/OUT (Outline planning permission with the details of access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale reserved for later determination. Development to comprise: up to 5,150 dwellings (Use Class C3); up to 202,500 sqm gross of additional development in Use Classes: A1, A2, A3 (retail), A4 (public house), A5 (take away); B1, B2, B8 (offices, industrial and storage and distribution); C1 (hotel), C2 (care home), D1 and D2 (community and leisure); car showroom; data centre; petrol filling station; car parking; primary substation; energy centre; and for the laying out of the buildings; routes and open spaces within the development; and all associated works and operations including but not limited to: demolition; earthworks; engineering operations. All development, works and operations to be in accordance with the Development Parameters Schedule and Plans.) Reserved matters approval sought for layout, scale, appearance, landscaping and access relating to Local Centre Parcel, Phase 1.) Local Centre Parcel, Linmere (HRN1), Phase 1, Waterslade Way & Lime Tree Drive, Houghton Regis, LU5 7AS
CB/26/01006/DOC (click for more details)	Discharge of Condition 20 against planning permission CB/12/03613/OUT(Outline planning permission with the details of access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale reserved for later determination. Development to comprise: up to 5,150 dwellings (Use Class C3); up to 202,500 sqm gross of additional development in Use Classes: A1, A2, A3 (retail), A4 (public house), A5 (take away); B1, B2, B8 (offices, industrial and storage and distribution); C1 (hotel), C2 (care home), D1 and D2 (community and leisure); car showroom; data centre; petrol filling station; car parking; primary substation; energy centre; and for the laying out of the buildings; routes and open spaces within the development; and all associated works and operations including but not limited to: demolition; earthworks; engineering operations. All development, works and operations to be in accordance with the Development Parameters Schedule and Plans) Phase 4, Parcels 2 & 3 Houghton Regis North Site 1, Land on the northern edge of Houghton Regis

CB/26/01076/NMA (click for more details)	The Non Material Amendment to 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. Amendment sought to omit the external balconies on coach houses and flats. Bury Spinney, Thorn Road, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 6JQ
CB/26/01050/TDM (click for more details)	Telecommunications Determination Masts: Removal of the 8m lamppost pole, erection of 20m pole with supporting 6 antennas with a wraparound cabinet. Removal of 2 ground-based cabinets and the installation of 2 cabinets and ancillary development Land West Of Parkside Drive And North Of Conquest Road, Parkside Drive, Houghton Regis

Permissions / Approvals / Consents

None received.

Refusals:

None received.

Withdrawals:

None received.

13507 PLANNING APPLICATIONS – DELEGATED AUTHORITY

The following planning applications had been received for consultation and fell within delegated authority. In accordance with the Committee's Terms of Reference, these items did not require discussion unless a Member requested they be referred to committee. They were therefore recommended for approval.

CB/26/00619/FULL (click for more details)	Erection of a single storey rear extension and refurbishment to an existing detached outbuilding, internal reconfiguration, and external alterations 33 Dalling Drive, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5EF
CB/26/00074/FULL (click for more details)	Erection of a single storey rear and side extensions with rooflights 82 Fensome Drive, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5SH
CB/26/00380/FULL (click for more details)	Installation of an additional staircase – Retrospective 75 Fensome Drive, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5SF

CB/26/00903/FULL (click for more details)	Removal of conservatory, erection of single storey rear extension with roof lights and new side window 12 Park Avenue, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5EA

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 7.22pm

Dated this 11th day of May 2026

D. J. Jones.

Chairman

Houghton Regis
Partnership Committee

Town Mayor: Cllr M Herber
Town Clerk: Clare Evans

Tel: 01582 708540

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF HOUGHTON REGIS PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, PEEL STREET ON 27th JANUARY 2026

Present:	Town Cllrs:	D Jones, M Herber, C Slough, D Taylor
	CBC Cllrs	C Alderman, Y Farrell (Substitute), S Goodchild, T McMahon
	CBC Officers:	S Hughes, Community Engagement Manager S Mooring, Head of Sustainability (virtual)
	HRTC Officers:	C Evans, Town Clerk A Samuels, Administration Officer
	Co-opted members:	0
Also in attendance:		0
Apologies:		Cllr Hamill, J Anderson, D Gibbons, T Haines, C Regan and R Turner
Members of the public:		0

1117 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Cllr Hamill (Cllr Farrell substituted), J Anderson, D Gibbons, T Haines, C Regan and R Turner.

1118 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

1119 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

None.

1120 MINUTES

To approve the Minutes of the meetings held on 21st October and 26th November 2025.

Resolved: To approve the Minutes of the meetings held on 21st October and 26th November 2025 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

1121 TOWN CENTRE BENCHMARKING

Stephen Mooring, Head of Sustainability at Central Bedfordshire Council briefed Members on the recent town centre benchmarking report.

The report, commissioned by CBC, highlighted the following points:

- Vacancy rates were in line with national average but had risen since 2021.
- Houghton Regis provided a local, convenience-led role rather than a destination point.
- Comparison retail had declined since 2019 but convenience and service use had increased.
- Higher share of multiple retailers; fewer independent retailers.

Positive
- Convenience
- Ease of walking
- Access to Services
- Business confidence was high
- Car parking capacity was high (although the perception was that this was an issue)

Negative
- Physical appearance (although improvements had been made since the survey)
- Safety
- Footfall was low compared to national average
- Parking dissatisfaction among residents

It was proposed that the positives could be enhanced by:
- Strengthening the town centre role as a high-quality local centre
- Public realm improvements
- Visible action on safety and ASB
- Use of events, pop-ups and markets to boost footfall and dwell time
- Building business confidence and growing walk-in use.

Members questioned how Houghton Regis could be made safer, especially for the older community, and improvements made to the physical appearance of some areas.
Mr Mooring stated that funding was an issue for local government and that UKSPF funding would not be available in the upcoming year. It would be necessary to establish short-, medium- and long-term goals and to decide what was deliverable when funding was available.

Members queried what historical data was available. Mr Mooring responded that the report contained data going back to 2017.

1122 SCHOOL ORGANISATIONAL PLAN

Sarah Hughes joined the meeting.

This was an interim update to Members on the CBC considerations of the School Organisational Plan progress as reported through Children's Services on 11th November and Executive on 2nd December.

Given the timescales indicated it was suggested that a report back be requested at a later meeting in 2026. The Community Engagement Manager suggested that a July

meeting would be the preferred option. It was also important to ensure suitable officer / member representation at future meetings where this was an agenda item.

Resolved: **To formally request that the relevant officer attend a HR Partnership Committee meeting to update the committee.**

1123 CBC UPDATE REPORT

The Community Engagement Manager presented the update report from CBC

Safer Communities	July 1st – December 31st 2025 – 87 cases open (predominantly fly tipping, pollution and noise). – 5 weapon sweeps – Various visits and letter drops Consultation on powers to tackle vehicle ASB taking place. Penalty charges: 65 in November, 43 in December.
Business Investment Sustainability	14 applications from HR businesses for UKSPF support – Food Summit scheduled for 24th February – A survey was underway to gather information on local food projects and activities – Local schools taking part in the Eco Schools programme – Eco Forum on school menu planning and redistribution of school uniforms
Highways	September – November 2025 – 56 potholes, 134 Streetlights 8 bollards and signs repaired in HR – A list of consultations on highway schemes was provided – Fly tip clearances carried out
Engagement & Consultation	Cllr R Goodchild appointed Deputy Executive Member for Town and Parish Councils and Town Centres. The TPC Forum meeting to discuss the budget had been well attended. A Voluntary Community Sector forum had been successful. An online session was planned for March. Applications to the Ward Councillor Grant Scheme in the year 2025/26 would close in February and Members were provided with relevant deadlines. CBC continued to work hard to meet Armed Forces Covenant obligations. Household Support Fund: CBC had been working with HRTC to channel support through local partners. Consultations: budget was the main one.

Members informed the Community Engagement Manager that the camera at Farmstead was out of operation and Members were informed that this would be investigated.

Members requested that Primary Care was included on the Workplan.

1124 COMMUNITY BUILDINGS IN HOUGHTON REGIS

The Committee's workplan included reference to the following community buildings:

Project H / Unit 1 All Saints View (HRTC)
Lease negotiations were well underway.
HRTC was working with a wider project team to develop a tender pack for the fitting out of the property.

HRN 2 Community Building
A planning application had been submitted. CBC was working to get the land transferred from the consortium and to get a lease drawn up. It was hoped the site would open in the autumn.

1125 COMMITTEE FUNCTIONS & TERMS OF REFERENCE

At a previous meeting of the HR Partnership Committee support was given to a report being presented to the October Partnership meeting on the Committee Functions and Terms of Reference (CF&TofR) (Minute 1092).

CBC was unable to provide advice on the appetite within CBC to review the CF&TofR and in what form the review should take place. Other clerks from the Partnership network were contacted but there didn't appear to be strong enthusiasm at this stage. Stronger direction and a shared commitment from the Partnership network within Central Bedfordshire were needed to create the momentum required to move this forward.

A Member stated that an attendance rate of 75% was required from both councils to remain quorate, which was onerous compared to the requirements of other committees.

It was recommended that the position continued to be monitored and that a review was pursued in due course.

1126 PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE WORKPLAN

Members were invited to consider the Partnership Committee workplan for 2025/26.

The need for primary care to be a specific item on the workplan was reiterated.

It was felt that the GP surgery would benefit from a better understanding of the resources and processes available to them, e.g. business plans and S106 funding. It was suggested that a meeting might also prove beneficial to understand the issues and pressures they faced and to share information regarding S106 funding, perhaps following this up by engagement with the ICB.

1127 HOUGHTON REGIS SPORTS HALL USAGE DATA

Following the Partnership meeting in October, contact had been made with Schools Plus to follow up on the establishment of a Management Committee, and on usage data availability. No update had as yet been received.

A Member informed the committee that the prices had risen and that rental for one court was £14.17 and £62.00 for the whole hall (four courts).

The Community Use Agreement would be an item on the CBC agenda later in the week.

1128 PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE CO-OPTION

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

Co-option

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

Cllr McMahon informed Members that an approach had been made by Parkside Action. The Town Clerk advised that it would be necessary for an individual member of the group to submit a completed co-option form to HRTC. Cllr McMahon confirmed that this information would be referred back to Parkside Action.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.25pm

Dated this 28th day of April 2026

D. J. Jones.

Chairman

Calendar of Meetings, Briefings and Events 2026 / 2027

Colour Key	Bank Holiday	No Scheduled Meeting	Events Manager Event	Youth & Community Manager Event

Date	Month		Day	Committee meeting	Event	Venue	Time	Lead Officer
20th	May	2026	Wednesday	Community Safety Sub-Committee		Council Chamber	11am	Community Services Manager
20th	May	2026	Wednesday	**Town Council (AGM)**		Council Chamber	7pm	Town Clerk
23rd	May	2026	Saturday		Dog Show	Houghton Hall Park	Daytime	Events Manager
25th	*May*	*2026*	*Monday*	*Spring Bank Holiday*				
26th	May	2026	Tuesday	Neighbourhood Plan Implementation Sub-Committee		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Democratic Services
27th/ 28th	May	2026	Wednesday/ Thursday		Half Term Holiday events		TBC	Events Manager
1st	*June*	*2026*	*Monday*	*Leaders Briefing*		*Virtual meeting via Teams*	*11am*	*Town Clerk*
1st	June	2026	Monday	Corporate Services		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Corporate Services
2nd	*June*	*2026*	*Tuesday*	*Councillor Briefing*		*Hybrid meeting*	*6pm*	*Town Clerk*
2nd	June	2026	Tuesday	Planning		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Democratic Services
6th	June	2026	Saturday		Classics in the Park	Houghton Hall Park	Afternoon	Events Manager
8th	June	2026	Monday	XXXXXX				
9th	June	2026	Tuesday	Community Engagement Sub-Committee		Council Chamber	TBC	Events Manager
15th	June	2026	Monday	Town Council		Council Chamber	7pm	Town Clerk

Meetings, briefings, events and training sessions may be subject to change, please check the website and social media for updates.

Date	Month		Day	Committee meeting	Event	Venue	Time	Lead Officer
22nd	June	2026	Monday	Planning		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Democratic Services
29th	June	2026	Monday	XXXXXX				
6th	*July*	*2026*	*Monday*	*Leaders Briefing*		*Virtual meeting via Teams*	*11am*	*Town Clerk*
6th	July	2026	Monday	Environment & Leisure		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Environmental and Community Services
11th	July	2026	Saturday		Carnival		All Day	Events Manager
13th	July	2026	Monday	Planning		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Democratic Services
15th	July	2026	Wednesday	Community Safety Sub-Committee		Council Chamber	11am	Community Services Manager
20th	July	2026	Monday	Community Services		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Environmental and Community Services
21st	July	2026	Tuesday	Staffing Committee		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Democratic Services
23rd	July	2026	Thursday		Skate Jam	Tithe Farm Skate Park	Daytime	Community Services Manager
25th	July	2026	Saturday		Arts and Cultural Event	TBC	Daytime	Events Manager
27th	July	2026	Monday	XXXXXX				
28th	July	2026	Tuesday	Town Partnership		Council Chamber	7pm	Town Clerk
29th	July	2026	Wednesday		Open Air Cinema	Houghton Hall Park	2pm onwards	Events Manager
3rd	August	2026	Monday	Planning		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Democratic Services
10th	August	2026	Monday	XXXXXX				
17th	August	2026	Monday	XXXXXX				
18th	August	2026	Tuesday		Open Air Theatre		Daytime	Events Manager

Meetings, briefings, events and training sessions may be subject to change, please check the website and social media for updates.

Date	Month		Day	Committee meeting	Event	Venue	Time	Lead Officer
24th	August	2026	Monday	Planning		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Democratic Services
29th	August	2026	Saturday		Houghton Rocks	Parkside	All Day	Events Manager
31st	*August*	*2026*	*Monday*	*Bank holiday Summer*				
7th	*September*	*2026*	*Monday*	*Leaders Briefing*		*Virtual meeting via Teams*	*11am*	*Town Clerk*
7th	September	2026	Monday	Corporate Services		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Corporate Services
8th	September	*2026*	Tuesday	Community Engagement Sub-Committee		Council Chamber	TBC	Events Manager
14th	September	2026	Monday	Planning		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Democratic Services
15th	*September*	*2026*	*Tuesday*	*Councillor Briefing*		*Hybrid meeting*	*6pm*	*Town Clerk*
16th	September	2026	Wednesday	Community Safety Sub-Committee		Council Chamber	11am	Community Services Manager
19th	September	2026	Saturday		Heritage Open Day		Daytime	Events Manager
21st	September	2026	Monday	XXXXXX				
28th	September	2026	Monday	XXXXXX				
5th	*October*	*2026*	*Monday*	*Leaders Briefing*		*Virtual meeting via Teams*	*11am*	*Town Clerk*
5th	October	2026	Monday	Planning		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Democratic Services
12th	October	2026	Monday	Town Council		Council Chamber	7pm	Town Clerk
19th	October	*2026*	Monday	Environment & Leisure		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Environmental and Community Services
20th	October	*2026*	Tuesday	Staffing Committee		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Democratic Services
26th	October	2026	Monday	Planning		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Democratic Services

Meetings, briefings, events and training sessions may be subject to change, please check the website and social media for updates.

Date	Month		Day	Committee meeting	Event	Venue	Time	Lead Officer
27th	October	*2026*	Tuesday	Town Partnership		Council Chamber	7pm	Town Clerk
2nd	*November*	*2026*	*Monday*	*Leaders Briefing*		*Virtual meeting via Teams*	*11am*	*Town Clerk*
2nd	November	2026	Monday	Community Services		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Environmental and Community Services
7th	November	2026	Saturday		Fireworks Display		Afternoon/ Evening	Events Manager
8th	November	2026	Sunday		Remembrance Sunday	All Saints Church	Morning	Events Manager
9th	November	2026	Monday	Community Services (Grants)		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Environmental and Community Services
10th	November	2026	Tuesday	Neighbourhood Plan Implementation Sub-Committee		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Democratic Services
11th	November	2026	Wednesday		Armistice Day	Memorial Stone	Morning	Events Manager
16th	November	2026	Monday	Planning		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Democratic Services
17th	*November*	*2026*	*Tuesday*	*Councillor Briefing*		*Hybrid meeting*	*6pm*	*Town Clerk*
18th	November	2026	Wednesday	Community Safety Sub-Committee		Council Chamber	11am	Community Services Manager
23rd	November	2026	Monday	XXXXXX				
24th	November	*2026*	Tuesday	Community Engagement Sub-Committee		Council Chamber	TBC	Events Manager
30th	November	2026	Monday	Corporate Services		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Corporate Services
5th	December	2026	Saturday		Carol Service and Christmas Light Switch on		Afternoon/ Evening	Events Manager
7th	*December*	*2026*	*Monday*	*Leaders Briefing*		*Virtual meeting via Teams*	*11am*	*Town Clerk*
7th	December	2026	Monday	Town Council		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Democratic Services
8th	December	2026	Tuesday	Planning		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Democratic Services

Meetings, briefings, events and training sessions may be subject to change, please check the website and social media for updates.

Date	Month		Day	Committee meeting	Event	Venue	Time	Lead Officer
12th	December	2026	Saturday		Santa's Grotto			Events Manager
14th	December	2026	Monday	XXXXXX				
21st	December	2026	Monday	XXXXXX				
25th	*December*	*2026*	*Friday*	*Bank Holiday* *Christmas Day*				
28th	*December*	*2026*	*Monday*	*Bank Holiday* *Boxing Day*				
1st	*January*	*2027*	*Friday*	*Bank Holiday* *New Year's Day*				
4th	*January*	*2027*	*Monday*	*Leaders Briefing*		*Virtual meeting via Teams*	*11am*	*Town Clerk*
4th	January	*2027*	Monday	Planning		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Democratic Services
11th	January	*2027*	Monday	Environment & Leisure		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Environmental and Community Services
12th	*January*	*2027*	*Tuesday*	*Councillor Briefing*		*Hybrid meeting*	*6pm*	*Town Clerk*
12th	January	*2027*	Tuesday	Community Engagement Sub-Committee		Council Chamber	TBC	Events Manager
18th	January	*2027*	Monday	XXXXXX				
19th	January	*2027*	Tuesday	Staffing Committee		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Democratic Services
20th	January	*2027*	Wednesday	Community Safety Sub-Committee		Council Chamber	11am	Community Services Manager
25th	January	*2027*	Monday	Town Council		Council Chamber	7pm	Town Clerk
26th	January	*2027*	Tuesday	Planning		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Democratic Services
1st	*February*	*2027*	*Monday*	*Leaders Briefing*		*Virtual meeting via Teams*	*11am*	*Town Clerk*
1st	February	*2027*	Monday	XXXXXX				

Meetings, briefings, events and training sessions may be subject to change, please check the website and social media for updates.

Date	Month		Day	Committee meeting	Event	Venue	Time	Lead Officer
15th	February	*2027*	Monday	Planning		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Democratic Services
16th	*February*	*2027*	*Tuesday*	*Councillor Briefing*		*Hybrid meeting*	*6pm*	*Town Clerk*
22nd	February	*2027*	Monday	Community Services		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Environmental and Community Services
1st	*March*	*2027*	*Monday*	*Leaders Briefing*		*Virtual meeting via Teams*	*11am*	*Town Clerk*
1st	March	*2027*	Monday	Corporate Services		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Corporate Services
8th	March	*2027*	Monday	Planning		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Democratic Services
15th	March	*2027*	Monday	XXXXXX				
16th	March	2027	Tuesday	Town Partnership		Council Chamber	7pm	Town Clerk
17th	March	*2027*	Wednesday	Community Safety Sub-Committee		Council Chamber	11am	Community Services Manager
20th	March	2027	Saturday		Easter Egg Hunt	Houghton Hall Park		Events Manager
22nd	March	*2027*	Monday	Town Council		Council Chamber	7pm	Town Clerk
23rd	March	*2027*	Tuesday	Community Engagement Sub-Committee		Council Chamber	TBC	Events Manager
26th	*March*	*2027*	*Friday*	*Bank Holiday Good Friday*				
29th	*March*	*2027*	*Monday*	*Bank Holiday Easter Monday*				
30th	March	*2027*	Tuesday	Planning		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Democratic Services
5th	*April*	*2027*	*Monday*	*Leaders Briefing*		*Virtual meeting via Teams*	*11am*	*Town Clerk*
5th	April	*2027*	Monday	Environment & Leisure		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Environmental and Community Services
11th	April	*2027*	Sunday	Civic Service		All Saints	3pm	Head of Democratic Services

Meetings, briefings, events and training sessions may be subject to change, please check the website and social media for updates.

Date	Month		Day	Committee meeting	Event	Venue	Time	Lead Officer
12th	April	*2027*	Monday	Staffing Committee		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Democratic Services
19th	April	*2027*	Monday	Planning		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Democratic Services
26th	April	2027	Monday	Community Services		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Environmental and Community Services
3rd	*May*	*2027*	*Monday*	*Bank holiday* *Early May*				
6th	**May**	**2027**	**Thursday**	**ELECTIONS**				
17th	May	*2027*	Monday	Annual Towns Meeting				
19th	May	*2027*	Wednesday	**Town Council (AGM)**		Council Chamber	7pm	Town Clerk
24th	May	*2027*	Monday	Planning		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Democratic Services

Meetings, briefings, events and training sessions may be subject to change, please check the website and social media for updates.

Houghton Regis Town Council

Committee Functions & Terms of Reference

Date of Approval:	Town Council 20th May 2015
Date of Review:	18th May 2016; 24th May 2017 (amendments to HRNPSG approved 9th October 2017); 3rd July 2018; 15th May 2019; 5th May 2021, 18th May 2022, 17th May 2023; 15th May 2024; 14th May 2025; 20th May 2026

1. Introduction

1.1 Meetings of Houghton Regis Town Council are to be conducted in accordance with the approved Standing Orders of Houghton Regis Town Council.

1.2 Legislation requires certain statutory functions of Houghton Regis Town Council to be discharged by the council itself. Houghton Regis Town Council cannot delegate responsibility to a committee or sub-committee for:

1. levying or issuing a precept,
2. borrowing money,
3. approving the council's annual accounts,
4. considering an auditor's report made in the public interest,
5. confirming (by resolution) that is has the statutory criteria to exercise the power of general competence or
6. adopting or revising the council's code of conduct.

1.3 The days and times of meetings will be set as far as possible on the following basis:
Town Council & Standing Committees – Mondays or Tuesdays, at 7pm
Annual General Meeting (AGM) - Wednesdays
Partnership – Tuesdays at 7pm
Sub Committees – Mondays, or the next available working day following a Bank Holiday, at 7pm
Working groups – Monday to Thursday to start no earlier than 9.30am and to conclude no later than 6.30pm
Inhouse Member training, open sessions, briefings – Mondays or Tuesdays at 6pm

2. Committee Overview Houghton Regis Town Council		
Department	**Areas of Responsibility**	**Democratic Management**
Corporate Services	Policy review & development Financial management Democratic management Health & safety matters	Corporate Services Committee Investment Working Group
Environment & Leisure Services	Facilities management Leisure services Recreation management Cemetery & churchyard management Allotments	Environment & Leisure Committee
Community Services	Community services Youth services Communications Events Mayoral services Community grants Community safety	Community Services Committee Community Engagement Sub-Committee Community Safety Sub Committee Pride of Houghton Awards Working Group
Planning	Planning applications Planning policy Strategic development Highways consultations	Planning Committee Neighbourhood Plan Implementation Sub Committee
Staffing	Non legislative policy review and development Personnel matters	Staffing Committee Disciplinary, Grievance and Appeals Sub-Committee
Town	Town Centre Town development	Town Council Town Partnership Committee Town Centre Community Venue Task and Finish Group 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 councilors (five)
- In an election year, the annual meeting of the Council shall be held on or within 14 days following the day on which the new councillors elected take office.
- In a year which is not an election year, the annual meeting of a Council shall be held on such day in May as the Council may direct.
- If no other time is fixed, the annual meeting of the Council shall take place at 6pm.
- In addition to the annual meeting of the Council, at least three other ordinary meetings shall be held in each year on such dates and times as the Council directs.

Corporate Services Committee

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
- To review and maintain legislative policies relating to Council governance,

compliance, finance, data protection, health & safety, equality, and other statutory obligations.

- To oversee and manage the financial obligations of the Council, including:
  - To receive quarterly reports on investments containing a forecast of capital expenditure, investment opportunities and a recommendation for further investment including where, length and amount
  - To receive bank and cash reconciliation statements.
  - To receive an annual report (based on the previous financial year) on loans taken out, repayments made and outstanding liability.
  - To confirm the use of direct debits, standing orders, BACS, CHAPS
- Review and confirmation of arrangements for insurance cover in respect of all insured risks.
- To recommend to Council the writing off of irrecoverable amounts.
- To assemble and submit to the Town Council estimates of income and expenditure for each financial year in respect of all the services of this Committee no later than 30th November each year.
- To review annually (Spring / Summer) the staffing structure and staffing forecast in relation to this Committee for consideration by the Staffing Committee late Autumn to feed into the budget process.
- To monitor periodically the income and expenditure of the Committee.
- To consider and determine any proposed expenditure or reduction in income for which no provision has been made in the approved budget.
- To set the level of charges for facilities in respect of all the services of this Committee.
- To ensure the proper administration of the Council's financial affairs and to designate a single officer with overall responsibility for these functions.

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 30th November each year.
- To review annually (Spring / Summer) the staffing structure and staffing forecast in relation to this Committee for consideration by the Staffing Committee late Autumn to feed into the budget process.
- To monitor periodically the income and expenditure of the Committee.
- To consider and determine any proposed expenditure or reduction in income for which no provision has been made in the approved budget.
- To set the level of charges for facilities in respect of all the services of this Committee and to control the collection of revenues thereof.
- Reviewing policies of the Council as required by the Policy Document Review Schedule
- Annually review its inventory of land and assets including buildings.
- To provide and maintain all recreation grounds and pavilions, open spaces and play areas in the control of the Council.
- To manage and maintain sports provision including football pitches, the bowls green and cricket table.
- To manage and maintain the Houghton Regis Town Cemetery and All Saints Churchyard.
- To consider and determine matters surrounding the development of a new cemetery for Houghton Regis and to commission specialist services such as may be deemed appropriate in progressing options for future cemetery provision and make such recommendations to Town Council for consideration.
- 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 30th November each year.
- To review annually (Spring / Summer) the staffing structure and staffing forecast in relation to this Committee for consideration by the Staffing Committee late Autumn to feed into the budget process.
- To monitor periodically the income and expenditure of the Committee.
- To consider and determine any proposed expenditure or reduction in income for which no provision has been made in the approved budget.
- To set the level of charges for facilities in respect of all the services of this Committee.
- To consider and determine any new contracts and any renewals of existing contracts under the jurisdiction of this committee.
- Reviewing policies of the Council as required by the Policy Document Review Schedule
- To encourage and regulate activities and events at Council properties, venues and locations.
- To advise Environment & Leisure Committee of events using land / buildings
- To award financial grants to local organisations within an overall budget approved by the Town Council
- To review the grant application process as necessary
- To oversee and manage the promotion of the Town and the Council, including the council's newsletter and website, Christmas lights, Pride of Houghton, events
- Consider community service provision provided by outside organisations
- To provide community support to enhance community service provision
- To liaise with other organisations on community issues
- To provide support and promotion of the Town centre and the retail offer

Functions

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

Planning Committee

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 30th November each year.

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

<u>Delegated Powers to Officers – Planning</u>

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

Functions

- The Planning Committee shall function and operate in accordance with the Council's approved Standing Orders.
- The Planning Committee shall consist of seven Councillors. The quorum shall

be half of its members (four).

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

Staffing Committee

Terms of Reference

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

Functions

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

Investment Working Group Reports to the Corporate Services Committee

Terms of Reference

- To oversee the Council's investment portfolio and ensure proper stewardship of public funds
- To develop and recommend for approval the Council's Treasury Strategy.
- To ensure that investments are compliant with legislation and align with the Council's risk appetite.
- To monitor performance and ensure transparency in reporting.
- To promote ethical, environmental and socially responsible investment, where practical.
- To evaluate new investment opportunities and provide recommendations to the Corporate Services Committee
- Submit regular monitoring reports to the Corporate Services Committee. Including:
    - Investment performance
    - Risk assessments
    - Any breaches of the Investment Policy.
- To review these terms of reference annually.
- To propose. to the Corporate Service Committee. any amendments to these terms of reference at any time
- To seek funding authorisation from the Corporate Service Committee

Functions

- The Investment Working Group shall function and operate in accordance with the Council's approved Standing Orders.
- The Investment Working Group shall include three members from the Corporate Services Committee and members from other standing committees.

Meetings

Notes and action points arising from Working Group meetings shall be recorded (by an agreed member of the working group), circulated to members of the Working Group no later than 10 working days following each meeting and presented to the next meeting of the Corporate Services Committee.

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.

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 actings as a critical friend to ensure the Council's activities and Events get better.
- To support and promote town wide events and activities to promote the town.
- To report to the Community Services Committee on the outcome of its deliberations.

Functions

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

Co-option

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

Disciplinary, Grievance & Appeals Sub-Committee Group (reporting to 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 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 Community Engagement Sub-Committee.

Community Safety Sub Committee (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).

Town Centre Community Venue Task & Finish Group

Terms of Reference

The Town Centre Community Venue Task & Finish Group is to take a strategic view of the project and acting as a critical friend to ensure the progression of the project. Operational decision-making is delegated to the Town Clerk and Head of Environmental and Community Services.
The Town Centre Community Venue Task & Finish Group is to consider matters surrounding the development of a Town Centre Community Venue for Houghton Regis, including but not restricted to:

- Lease detail

- Legal advice
- Tenders and Contracts
- Design matters
- Public consultation
- Income and expenditure monitoring
- Future operation, management and finances, including future partners and stakeholders
- Sourcing and securing of grant opportunities

The Town Centre Community Venue Task & Finish Group will cease upon practical completion of the project. The Venue will subsequently fall under the remit to Community Services Committee.

Functions

- The Town Centre Community Venue Task & Finish Group shall function and operate in accordance with the Council's approved Standing Orders.
- The Town Centre Community Venue Task & Finish Group shall consist of 7 Councillors. The quorum shall be half of its members (four).

APPENDIX A

Houghton Regis Town Partnership Committee [1]

Purpose

1. To influence decisions and help shape initiatives and their delivery for the benefit of the whole town taking into account the needs of the town, customers, employees, residents, visitors, traders, property owners and developers.

2. To develop and encourage public participation and engagement and take into consideration the resident voice in the work of the Committee

Objectives

1. Help improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural vitality of the town

2. Ensure a partnership and collaborative approach to achieve the delivery of town regeneration, including influencing Section 106 funding received for town improvements and community facilities.

3. Opportunities to delegate funding decisions to the Committees should be explored, such as Section 106 received to spend on community facilities.

4. The Committee will make decisions on any joint funding allocated to it.

5. Influence and help shape strategies / plans that impact on the future viability of the town.

6. Provide a forum for briefing Members of the Joint Committee on all key issues affecting the town, at the discretion of the Chairman and Vice Chairman.

7. Make recommendations on strategically significant projects to the relevant Council's decision-making committees, including Committees of the Town Council.

8. Develop and maintain joint branding of communication, agendas and minutes.

9. To enable communities to discuss services and influence decisions at the local level as to how these services are delivered.

10. To provide a forum for two-way communication about public service delivery and the implementation and effectiveness of policies affecting the town.

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

11. Promote resilience by encouraging communities to do more for themselves and champion local solutions.

12. Consider the ways in which proposals and initiatives can help to advance equality of opportunity, eliminate discrimination and foster good relations.

Membership

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

Who must be elected representatives of the wards.

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

7. Members are appointed annually.

8. All Members of the Committee should have the interests of the town as a priority, not their own wards.

Meetings and Quorum

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

Chairman and Vice Chairman

1. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman shall be appointed from and by the Joint Committee's core membership; each Council must be represented in either role.

2. The appointed Chairman and Vice-Chairman will hold their post for a period of one year, after which they may stand for re-election.

3. The Vice Chairman will preside in the absence of the Chairman. If neither is present, the Committee members in attendance will appoint a Chairman from amongst them for the duration of that meeting.

4. The Chairman and Vice Chairman will be responsible for the content of the Committee agendas and will allow committee members and other stakeholders to submit agenda topics which will be included unless the proposed agenda item is not relevant to the Purpose and/or Objectives of the Joint Committee.

Secretariat

1. Either Council can administer the Joint Committee, according to their own Standing Orders. The Committee will decide annually which Council is to administer the Committee.

2. Agendas, minutes and press releases will be issued under joint branding.

3. The secretariat will prepare, monitor and keep up to date an annual work plan to set the broad direction and priorities for the Committee.

Decision making arrangements

1. Only members of the Committee can vote. Co-opted Members have no voting rights.

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.

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP 2026 / 2027

STANDING COMMITTEES – 2026 / 2027

Corporate Services Committee – 7 members required, nominated 6 members plus 1 vacancy

Cllrs: D Jones, W Henderson, E Billington, J Carroll, M Herber, D Taylor, Vacancy

Environment & Leisure Committee – 7 members required

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

Planning Committee – 7 members required, nominated 6 members plus 1 vacancy

Cllrs: J Carroll, M Herber, D Jones, E Billington, E Cooper, C Slough, Vacancy

Community Services Committee 7 members required, nominated 6 members plus 1 vacancy

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

Staffing Committee – 7 members required, nominated 8 members

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

OTHER COMMITTEES – 2026 / 2027

Town Partnership Committee – 7 members required

Cllrs: J Carroll, D Jones, C Slough, D Taylor

SUB-COMMITTEES – *2026 / 2027*

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.

Community Engagement Sub Committee (Reporting to Community Services)

– 5 members required

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

Community Safety Sub Committee (Reporting to Community Services)

– 5 members required

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

Neighbourhood Plan Implementation (Reporting to Planning)

– 5 members required

Cllrs: J Carroll, E Cooper, D Jones, C Slough, Vacancy

WORKING GROUPS – 2026 / 2027

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

– 5 members required, nominated 3 members plus 1 vacancy

Cllrs:, E Costello, D Jones, A Slough, Vacancy

Investment Working Group (Reporting to Corporate Services)

– 4 members required, nominated 5 members

Cllrs: J Carroll, M Herber, D Jones, T McMahon, D Taylor

Community Venue Task & Finish Group (Reporting to Town Council)

– 7 members required, nominated 6 members

Cllrs: E Billington, E Costello, Y Farrell, M Herber, D Jones, T McMahon

DRAFT

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS
2026 / 2027

DRAFT

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

TOWN COUNCIL **Agenda Item 12**

Date:	**20th May 2026**
Title:	**STANDING ORDERS REPORT**
Purpose of the Report:	**To clarify the position of non-members at a council meeting when the meeting moves into confidential session**
Contact Officer:	**Clare Evans, Town Clerk**

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **To note the advice as provided;**
2. **To approve Standing Orders as presented.**

2. BACKGROUND

At the Town Council meeting held on the 14th April 2026 members discussed whether Standing Orders could be amended to allow non-members of committees, sub-committees, working and other groups to remain at a meeting when the meeting moves into private and confidential session and to receive the corresponding agenda papers.

3. INFORMATION

Members queried whether Standing Order 7a could be amended because it was not shown in bold type. However, Standing Order 7a is drafted as a permissive provision: it sets out what any councillor may do at a meeting of a committee or sub-committee of which they are not a member, when the meeting is not in private session (i.e. they may attend and, with the Chair's permission, speak on particular matters). It is not intended to describe, more generally, what councillors *cannot* do, and it should not be read as creating a right for non-members to remain once a meeting properly moves into private/confidential session, as that position is governed by the relevant legislation and the meeting's resolution

4. OUTCOME

Following the meeting clarification has been sought from the following:
National Association of Local Councils - NALC

Advice on committees and the rights of councillors who are not members of committees is contained within the NALC advice notes (2nd April 2018). https://www.nalc.gov.uk/resource/local-councils-powers-to-discharge-their-functions.html

In summary, the legal basis underpinning this position is set out in the Local Government Act 1972 (sections 101 and 102), which recognises that committees exercise delegated authority or make recommendations on behalf of the Council. Accordingly, the key outcome is that the Standing Orders cannot be amended to create a right for non-members to remain in confidential session: Standing Order 7a describes what non-members may do in public session, and the law determines the position once a meeting is properly moved into private session. In light of this advice non-members are not permitted to receive, be provided with or have access to confidential or exempt information or papers.

Central Bedfordshire Council- CBC
Central Bedfordshire Councils Monitoring Officer considers whether it is relevant for all Members of the Council to have access to documents or to be able to attend meetings/briefings on topics. Whilst in many cases there is no reason to exclude Members from a meeting or from receiving information, there are instances where the need to know cannot be demonstrated, and therefore information will not be shared. The emphasis is on Members to demonstrate that they have a need.

Central Bedfordshire Councils Governance Director agrees with the guidance provided by officers and the approach members are taking.

5. HRTC CORPORATE PLAN

4 Management and Operations: To improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Town Council as the key local service provider

4.5 Enhance the role of the council.

6. IMPLICATIONS

Corporate Implications

- Standing Order 7a states the following: 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.

Legal Implications

- By allowing non-members to remain in committee meetings during private session would contravene Local Government Act 1972 ss101 and 102

Crime and Disorder Implications

- There are no crime and disorder implications arising from the recommendation

Financial Implications

- There are no financial implications arising from the recommendation

Risk Implications

- Reputational risk should non-members attend a meeting and remain during private session.

Equalities Implications

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

This project / issue does not discriminate.

Climate Change Implications

- There are no climate change implications arising from the recommendation

Press Contact

- There are no press implications arising from the recommendations

7. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

The advice received confirms that Standing Orders cannot be amended to allow non-members to remain in committee or sub-committee meetings once they move into private or confidential session. Standing Order 7a only applies to public sessions, and the position in confidential session is governed by legislation, not local discretion.

- Councillors to note and accept the legal advice provided and thereby not amend Standing Orders in relation to non-members attending private sessions or receiving confidential papers.
- Current practice should continue, ensuring meetings move correctly into confidential session and only entitled members remain and receive confidential information.

8. APPENDICES

None

Houghton Regis Town Council

Standing Orders

Date of Approval:	Town Council 22nd June 2015
Date of Review:	18th May 2016; 18th July 2017; 3rd July 2018; 8th October 2018 (following advice from NALC); 15th May 2019; 18th May 2022; 17th May 2023; 15th May 2024; 14th May 2025; 15th December 2025 (following observation from Internal Auditor (18.b.v)); 20th May 2026

Based on NALC Model Standing Orders 2018 (Revised 2020) and updated April 2022 (Update to Model Standing Order 18 only), 31st March 2025 Standing Orders 18 and 26

Contents

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

28. Communication with District and County or Unitary Councillors
29. Relations with The Press/Media
30. Responsibilities to Provide Information
31. Responsibilities under Data Protection Legislation
32. Standing Orders Generally
33. Virtual attendance

Appendix A – Procedure for Recording Meetings

PREFACE

This is a set of Standing orders based on the model set of Standing orders produced by NALC (April 2018), revised 2020,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.

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

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

Notes:

- *The word "Chair" includes "Town Mayor" and means the person actually presiding at a meeting*
- *The word "Vice-Chair" 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 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 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 of the meeting.

k Only one person is permitted to speak at a time. If more than one person wants to speak, the chair 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 of the Council may in his absence be done by, to or before the Vice-Chair of the Council (if there is one).**

p **The Chair of the Council, if present, shall preside at a meeting. If the Chair is absent from a meeting, the Vice-Chair of the Council, (if there is one) if present, shall preside. If both the Chair and the Vice-Chair 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 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 Chairof the Council at the annual meeting of the council.

s **Unless standing orders provide otherwise, voting on a question shall be by a show of hands. At the request of a councillor, the voting on any question shall be recorded so as to show whether each councillor present and voting gave his vote for or against that question.** Such a request shall be made before moving on to the next item of business on the agenda.

t The minutes of a meeting shall include an accurate record of the following:
   i. the time and place of the meeting;
   ii. the names of councillors who are present (virtually or in person) and the names of councillors who are absent, with our without apologies;
   iii. interests that have been declared by councillors and non-councillors with voting rights;
   iv. the grant of dispensations (if any) to councillors and non-councillors with

voting rights;

v. whether a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights left the meeting when matters that they held interests in were being considered;

vi. if there was a public participation session; and

vii. the resolutions made.

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

v **No business may be transacted at a meeting unless at least one-third of the whole number of members of the council are present and in no case shall the quorum of a meeting be less than three.**
See standing order 6d(vii) for the quorum of a committee or sub-committee meeting.

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

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

2 PROPER OFFICER

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

b The Proper Officer shall:

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

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

- **Provide, in a conspicuous place, public notice of the time, place and agenda (provided that the public notice with agenda of an**

extraordinary meeting of the council convened by councillors is signed by them);

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

ii. subject to standing order 11, include on the agenda all motions in the order received unless a councillor has given written notice at least 5 days before the meeting confirming his withdrawal of it;

iii. **convene a meeting of full council for the election of a new Chair 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 Chair or in his absence Vice-Chair 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 and Vice-Chair (if there is one) of the Council.**

f **The Chair 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 of the Council, if there is one, unless he resigns or becomes disqualified, shall hold office until immediately after the election of the Chair of the Council at the next annual meeting of the council.**

h **In an election year, if the current Chair 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 of the Council has been elected. The current Chair of the Council shall not have an original vote in respect of the election of the**

new Chair 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 of the Council has been re-elected as a member of the council, he shall preside at the annual meeting until a new Chair of the Council has been elected. He may exercise an original vote in respect of the election of the new Chair of the Council and shall give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.**

j Following the election of the Chair of the Council and Vice-Chair (if there is one) of the Council at the annual meeting, the business shall include:

i. **In an election year, delivery by the Chair 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 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 of the meeting shall request such person(s) to moderate or improve their conduct.

b If person(s) disregard the request of the chair of the meeting to moderate or improve their conduct, any councillor or the chair 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 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 of the standing committee;
vi. shall permit a committee other than a standing committee, to appoint its own chair and vice chair 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 Chair 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 of the Council may convene an extraordinary meeting of the council at any time.**

b **If the Chair 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 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 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 chair 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 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 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 of the meeting, is expressed in writing to the chair.

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 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 of the meeting.

k One or more amendments may be discussed together if the chair 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 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 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 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 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.

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.

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

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

f. Whenever the Chair 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 chair of the meeting and stand as an accurate record of the meeting to which the minutes relate.

d If the chair 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 chair 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 **£100,000** 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 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. tenders are to be submitted in writing in a sealed marked envelope addressed to the Proper Officer;

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;

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.

e Neither the council, nor a committee or a sub-committee with delegated responsibility for considering tenders, is bound to accept the lowest value tender.

f Where the value of a contract is likely to exceed the threshold specified by the Government from time to time, the Council must consider whether the 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 30th October.

20 EXECUTION AND SEALING OF LEGAL DEEDS

a A legal deed shall not be executed on behalf of the council unless authorised by a resolution.

b **Subject to standing order 20(a) above, any two councillors may sign, on behalf of the council, any deed required by law and the Proper Officer shall witness their signatures.**

21 MANAGEMENT OF INFORMATION

See also standing order 31.

a **The Council shall have in place and keep under review, technical and organisational measures to keep secure information (including personal data) which it holds in paper and electronic form. Such arrangements shall include deciding who has access to personal data and encryption of personal data.**

b **The Council shall have in place, and keep under review, policies for the retention and safe destruction of all information (including personal data) which it holds in paper and electronic form. The Council's retention policy shall confirm the period for which information (including personal data) shall be retained or if this is not possible the criteria used to determine that period (e.g. the Limitation Act 1980).**

c **The agenda, papers that support the agenda and the minutes of a meeting shall not disclose or otherwise undermine confidential information or personal data without legal justification.**

d **Councillors, staff, the Council's contractors and agents shall not disclose confidential information or personal data without legal justification.**

e To assist councillors and staff such information will normally be printed on pink papers and marked as confidential.

22 HANDLING STAFF MATTERS

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

b The council shall keep all written records relating to employees secure. All paper records shall be secured and locked and electronic records shall be password protected and encrypted.

c In accordance with standing order 21(a), persons with line management responsibilities shall have access to staff records referred to in standing order 22(a).

d Access and means of access by keys and/or computer passwords to records of employment referred to in above shall be provided only to the Clerk.

e The Clerk shall conduct an appraisal of all Council employees and shall keep a

written record of it. The Chair of the Council and the Chair of Corporate Services Committee or in their absence, the Vice-Chair 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 of the meeting.

24 CANVASSING OF AND RECOMMENDATIONS BY COUNCILLORS

a. Canvassing of members of the Council or of any committee, directly or indirectly, for any appointment under the Council shall disqualify the candidate for such appointment. The Proper Officer shall disclose the requirements of this standing order to every candidate.

b. A councillor or a member of a committee or sub-committee shall not solicit a person for appointment to or by the Council or recommend a person for such appointment or for promotion; but, nevertheless, any such person may give a written testimonial of a candidate's ability, experience or character for submission to the Council with an application for appointment.

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

25 CODE OF CONDUCT AND DISPENSATIONS

See also standing order 1(u).

a All councillors and non-councillors with voting rights shall observe the code of conduct adopted by the council.

b Unless he has been granted a dispensation, a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights shall withdraw from a meeting when it is considering a matter in

which he has a disclosable pecuniary interest. He may return to the meeting after it has considered the matter in which he had the interest.

c Unless he has been granted a dispensation, a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights shall withdraw from a meeting when it is considering a matter in which he has another interest if so required by the council's code of conduct. He may return to the meeting after it has considered the matter in which he had the interest.

d **Dispensation requests shall be in writing and submitted to the Proper Officer** as soon as possible before the meeting, or failing that, at the start of the meeting for which the dispensation is required.

e A decision as to whether to grant a dispensation shall be made by a meeting of the council, or committee or sub-committee for which the dispensation is required and that decision is final.

f A dispensation request shall confirm:

i. the description and the nature of the disclosable pecuniary interest or other interest to which the request for the dispensation relates;
ii. whether the dispensation is required to participate at a meeting in a discussion only or a discussion and a vote;
iii. the date of the meeting or the period (not exceeding four years) for which the dispensation is sought; and
iv. an explanation as to why the dispensation is sought.

g Subject to standing orders 25(d) and (f), dispensations requests shall be considered at the beginning of the meeting of the council, or committee or a sub-committee for which the dispensation is required.

h **A dispensation may be granted in accordance with standing order 25(e) if having regard to all relevant circumstances the following apply:**

i. without the dispensation the number of persons prohibited from participating in the particular business would be so great a proportion of the meeting transacting the business as to impede the transaction of the business or
ii. granting the dispensation is in the interests of persons living in the council's area or
iii. it is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation.

26 CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINTS

a **Upon notification by the 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 date breach.**

d. **The Council shall keep a record of all personal data breaches comprising the facts relating to the personal data breach, its effects and the remedial action taken.**

e. **The Council shall ensure that information communicated in its privacy notice(s) is in an easily accessible and available form and kept up to date.**

f. **The Council shall maintain a written record of its processing activities.**

32 STANDING ORDERS GENERALLY

a All or part of a standing order, except one that incorporates mandatory statutory or legal requirements, may be suspended by resolution in relation to the consideration of an item on the agenda for a meeting.

b A motion to add to or vary or revoke one or more of the council's standing orders, except one that incorporates mandatory statutory or legal requirements, shall be proposed by a special motion, the written notice by at least 2 councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing order 11.

c The Proper Officer shall provide a copy of the council's standing orders to a councillor as soon as possible after he has delivered his acceptance of office form.

d The decision of the chair 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.
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 regards as disruptive, while a meeting is in progress. The chair 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 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:	16th December 2024; 14th May 2025
Date of Review:	2nd December 2024; 17th March 2025; 20th May 2026

Based on NALC Financial Regulations 2024 updated March 2025

Contents

1. General 2
2. Risk management and internal control 3
3. Accounts and audit 4
4. Budget and precept 5
5. Procurement 6
6. Banking and payments 8
7. Electronic payments 10
8. Cheque payments 11
9. Payment cards 12
10. Petty Cash 12
11. Payment of salaries and allowances 12
12. Loans and investments 13
13. Income 14
14. Payments under contracts for building or other construction works 14
15. Stores and equipment 14
16. Assets, properties and estates 15
17. Insurance 15
18. Charities 16
19. Suspension and revision of Financial Regulations 16

Appendix 1 - Tender process 17

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 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[1] regarding the publication of invitations and notices.**

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 to avoid compliance with these rules.**

5.12 The requirement to obtain competitive prices in these regulations need not apply to contracts that relate to items (i) to (iv) below:

i. specialist services, such as legal professionals acting in disputes;

ii. repairs to, or parts for, existing machinery or equipment;

iii. works, goods or services that constitute an extension of an existing contract;

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

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

5.13 When applications are made to waive this financial regulation to enable a price to be negotiated without competition, the reason should be set out in a recommendation to the council or relevant committee. Avoidance of competition is not a valid reason.

5.14 The council shall not be obliged to accept the lowest or any tender, quote or estimate.

5.15 Individual purchases within an agreed budget for that type of expenditure may be authorised by:

- The Budget Holder, under delegated authority.
- Such authorisation must be supported by a minute or other auditable evidence trail.

5.16 No individual member, or informal group of members may issue an official order or make any contract on behalf of the council.

5.17 No expenditure may be authorised that will exceed the budget for that type of expenditure other than by resolution of the council or a duly delegated committee acting within its Terms of Reference except in an emergency.

5.18 In cases of serious risk to the delivery of council services or to public safety on council premises, the clerk may authorise expenditure of up to 5,000 excluding VAT on repair, replacement or other work that in their judgement is necessary, whether or not there is any budget for such expenditure. The Clerk shall report such action to the Chair as soon as possible and to the council as soon as practicable thereafter.

5.19 No expenditure shall be authorised, no contract entered into, or tender accepted in relation to any major project, unless the delegated committee is satisfied that the necessary funds are available and that where a loan is required, Government borrowing approval has been obtained first.

5.20 An official order or letter shall be issued for all work, goods and services. Copies of orders shall be retained, along with evidence of receipt of goods.

5.21 Any ordering system can be misused and access to them shall be controlled by the RFO.

6. Banking and payments

6.1 The council's banking arrangements, including the bank mandate, shall be made by the RFO and authorised by the council; banking arrangements shall not be delegated to a committee. The council has resolved to bank with NatWest. The arrangements shall be reviewed annually for security and efficiency.

6.2 The council must have safe and efficient arrangements for making payments, to safeguard against the possibility of fraud or error. Wherever possible, more than one person should be involved in any payment, for

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

6.3 All invoices for payment should be examined for arithmetical accuracy, analysed to the appropriate expenditure heading and verified to confirm that the work, goods or services were received, checked and represent expenditure previously authorised by the council before being certified by the relevant Head of Service. Where the certification of invoices is done as a batch, this shall include a statement by the RFO that all invoices listed have been 'examined, verified and certified' by the RFO.

6.4 Personal payments (including salaries, wages, expenses and any payment made in relation to the termination of employment) may be summarised to avoid disclosing any personal information.

6.5 All payments shall be made by online banking, in accordance with a resolution of the council or duly delegated committee, unless the council resolves to use a different payment method.

6.6 For each financial year the RFO may draw up a schedule of regular payments due in relation to a continuing contract or obligation (such as Salaries, PAYE, National Insurance, pension contributions, rent, rates, regular maintenance contracts and similar items), which the council or a duly delegated committee may authorise in advance for the year.

6.7 A copy of this schedule of regular payments shall be signed by two members on each and every occasion when payment is made - to reduce the risk of duplicate payments.

6.8 A list of such payments shall be reported to the next appropriate meeting of the Corporate Services Committee for information only.

6.9 The RFO shall have delegated authority to authorise payments in the following circumstances:

i. payments of up to £5,000 excluding VAT in cases of serious risk to the delivery of council services or to public safety on council premises.

ii. any payment necessary to avoid a charge under the Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1998 or to comply with contractual terms, where the due date for payment is before the next scheduled meeting of the Corporate Services Committee, where the RFO certify that there is no dispute or other reason to delay payment, provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of council.

iii. Fund transfers within the councils banking arrangements up to the value of half the precept, provided that a list of such movements

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

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

7. Electronic payments

7.1 Where internet banking arrangements are made with any bank, RFO shall be appointed as the Service Administrator. The bank mandate agreed by the council shall identify a number of councillors who will be authorised to approve transactions on those accounts and a minimum of two people will be involved in any online approval process. The Clerk may be an authorised signatory, but no signatory should be involved in approving any payment to themselves.

7.2 All authorised signatories shall have access, if requested, to view the council's bank accounts online.

7.3 No employee or councillor shall disclose any PIN or password, relevant to the council or its banking, to anyone not authorised in writing by the council or a duly delegated committee.

7.4 The Service Administrator shall set up all items due for payment online. A list of payments for approval, together with copies of the relevant invoices, shall be sent by email to two authorised signatories.

7.5 In the prolonged absence of the Service Administrator an authorised signatory shall set up any payments due before the return of the Service Administrator.

7.6 Two councillors who are authorised signatories shall check the payment details against the invoices before approving each payment.

7.7 Evidence shall be retained showing which members approved the payment.

7.8 A full list of all payments made in a month shall be provided to the next Corporate Services committee meeting.

7.9 With the approval of the Corporate Services Committee in each case, regular payments (such as gas, electricity, telephone, broadband, water, National Non-Domestic Rates, refuse collection, pension contributions and HMRC payments) may be made by variable direct debit, provided that the instructions are signed/approved online by the RFO. The approval of the use

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

7.10 Payment may be made by BACS or CHAPS by resolution of the Corporate Services committee provided that each payment is approved online by two authorised bank signatories, evidence is retained, and any payments are reported to the Corporate Services committee at the next meeting. The approval of the use of BACS or CHAPS shall be renewed by resolution of the council at least every two years.

7.11 If thought appropriate by the council, regular payments of fixed sums may be made by banker's standing order, provided that the instructions are signed by the RFO, evidence of this is retained and any payments are reported to council when made. The approval of the use of a banker's standing order shall be reviewed by the Corporate Services committee at least every two years.

7.12 Account details for suppliers may only be changed upon written notification by the supplier verified by the RFO and authorised signatory. This is a potential area for fraud and the individuals involved should ensure that any change is genuine. Data held should be checked with suppliers every two years.

7.13 Members and officers shall ensure that any computer used for the council's financial business has adequate security, with anti-virus, anti-spyware and firewall software installed and regularly updated.

7.14 Remembered password facilities should not be used on any computer used for council banking.

8. Cheque payments

8.1 Cheques or orders for payment in accordance with a resolution or delegated decision shall be signed by two members and countersigned by an authorised officer.

8.2 A signatory having a family or business relationship with the beneficiary of a payment shall not, under normal circumstances, be a signatory to that payment.

8.3 To indicate agreement of the details on the cheque with the counterfoil and the invoice or similar documentation, the signatories shall also initial the cheque counterfoil and invoice.

8.4 Cheques or orders for payment shall not normally be presented for signature other than at, or immediately before or after a council or Corporate Services committee meeting. Any signatures obtained away from council meetings shall be reported to the council or Corporate Services committee at the next convenient meeting.

9. Payment cards

9.1 Any Debit Card issued for use will be specifically restricted to the Clerk and will also be restricted to a single transaction maximum value of £1000 unless authorised by council or corporate services committee in writing before any order is placed.

9.2 A pre-paid debit card may be issued to employees with varying limits. These limits will be set by the Corporate Services committee. Transactions and purchases made will be reported to Corporate Services committee and authority for topping-up shall be at the discretion of Corporate Services committee.

9.3 Any corporate credit card or trade card account opened by the council will be specifically restricted to use by the Clerk and Heads of Service and any balance shall be paid in full each month.

9.4 Personal credit or debit cards of members or staff shall not be used under any circumstances.

10. Petty Cash

10.1 The RFO shall maintain a petty cash float of £250 and may provide petty cash to officers for the purpose of defraying operational and other expenses.

a) Vouchers for payments made from petty cash shall be kept, along with receipts to substantiate every payment.

b) Cash income received must not be paid into the petty cash float but must be separately banked, as provided elsewhere in these regulations.

c) Payments to maintain the petty cash float shall be shown separately on any schedule of payments presented for approval.

11. Payment of salaries and allowances

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

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

11.3 Salary rates shall be agreed by the council, or a duly delegated committee. No changes shall be made to any employee's gross pay, emoluments, or terms and conditions of employment without the prior consent of the Staffing committee.

11.4 Payment of salaries shall be made, after deduction of tax, national insurance, pension contributions and any similar statutory or discretionary deductions, on the dates stipulated in employment contracts.

11.5 Deductions from salary shall be paid to the relevant bodies within the required timescales, provided that each payment is reported, as set out in these regulations above.

11.6 Each payment to employees of net salary and to the appropriate creditor of the statutory and discretionary deductions shall be recorded in a payroll control account or other separate confidential record, with the total of such payments each calendar month reported in the cashbook. Payroll reports will be reviewed, under an exclusion of press and public agenda item, by the Corporate Services committee to ensure that the correct payments have been made.

11.7 Any termination payments shall be supported by a report to the council, setting out a clear business case. Termination payments shall only be authorised by the full council.

11.8 Before employing interim staff, the council must consider a full business case.

12. Loans and investments

12.1 Any application for Government approval to borrow money and subsequent arrangements for a loan must be authorised by the full council and recorded in the minutes. All borrowing shall be in the name of the council, after obtaining any necessary approval.

12.2 Any financial arrangement which does not require formal borrowing approval from the Secretary of State (such as Hire Purchase, Leasing of tangible assets or loans to be repaid within the financial year) must be authorised by the full council, following a written report on the value for money of the proposed transaction.

12.3 The council shall consider the requirement for an Investment Strategy and Policy in accordance with Statutory Guidance on Local Government Investments, which must written be in accordance with relevant regulations, proper practices and guidance. Any Strategy and Policy shall be reviewed by the council at least annually.

12.4 All investment of money under the control of the council shall be in the name of the council.

12.5 All investment certificates and other documents relating thereto shall be retained in the custody of the RFO.

12.6 Payments in respect of short term or long-term investments, including transfers between bank accounts held in the same bank, shall be made in accordance with these regulations.

13. Income

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

13.2 The council will review all fees and charges for work done, services provided, or goods sold at least annually as part of the budget-setting process, following a report of the Clerk. The RFO shall be responsible for the collection of all amounts due to the council.

13.3 Any sums, over £1000, 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 18th April 2016
Date of Review:	24th May 2017; 3rd July 2018; 15th May 2019; 20th July 2020, 12th May 2021, 18th May 2022, 17th May 2023, 15th May 2024; 14th May 2025; 20th May 2026

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 and Heads of Service 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

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

GENERAL		
1	To exercise any statute, regulation or order which confers functions 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 Chairs	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 Environmental and Community 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	Head of Environmental and Community Services
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	Head of Democratic Services
17	To maintain the Council's Standing Orders	Town Clerk

FINANCIAL		
18	To be the Responsible Financial Officer for the purposes of s151 Local Government Act 1972	Head of Corporate Services
19	To determine the financial management and accounting procedures and extent of financial records	Town Clerk
20	To operate the Council's banking arrangements	Head of Corporate Services
21	To pay all accounts properly incurred	Head of Corporate Services
22	To pay all subscriptions to organisations to which Council belongs.	Head of Corporate Services
23	To pay salaries and allowances	Head of Corporate Services
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	Head of Corporate Services
26	To make all necessary arrangements for the provision of internal and external audit service for the Council	Head of Corporate Services
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	Heads of Service
29	To incur expenditure on capital schemes within the Council's approved Capital Programme	Heads of Service
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: • The cost not exceeding the approved budget • The tender being the most economically advantageous to the Council according to the criteria set out in the tender documentation • All the requirements of the Council's Financial Regulations being complied with	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.	Head of Corporate Services
36	Apply for and repay loans as appropriate in accordance with the Financial Regulations.	Town Clerk
37	To authorise action for the recovery of debts	Head of Corporate Services
38	To write-off debts up to £1000 where the sum is considered irrecoverable.	Town Clerk
39	To maintain a Register of Assets and Inventory of Equipment	Head of Corporate Services
40	To determine the Council's insurance requirements on behalf of the Council	Town Clerk
41	To make all necessary arrangements for the Council's insurances.	Head of Corporate Services
42	To enter into contracts for the purchase and supply of goods and services for the use in their respective services within estimates	Heads of Service
43	To prepare a draft budget for consideration by the Council	Head of Corporate Services
44	To prepare the final accounts for each financial year	Head of Corporate Services
45	To pay full compensation for loss where the Council is likely to be legally liable to pay compensation, where sued	Town Clerk
46	To pay any proved out of pocket expenses of complaints where complaint is upheld	Town Clerk
47	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
48	To maintain the Council's Financial Regulations	Town Clerk

EMPLOYMENT		
49	To exercise the functions of the Council's Head of Paid Service under S4 Local Government & Housing Act 1989	Town Clerk
50	To manage the Council staff in accordance with the Council's Policies, Procedures and Budget	Town Clerk
51	To appoint posts including apprentices	Town Clerk
52	To appoint temporary employees as and when required within the budget estimates	Town Clerk
53	To prepare job description and person specifications, placing of advertisements and short-listing	Heads of Service
54	To approve individual salary grading within any job evaluation grading structure approved by Council	Town Clerk
55	To manage staff performance	Town Clerk
56	To control discipline and performance, including power of suspension and dismissal	Town Clerk
57	To exercise Disciplinary & Grievance Procedures in accordance with the Council's Procedures	Town Clerk
58	To determine approved duties for payment of travel, subsistence and car allowances to Officers where they represent the Council	Town Clerk
59	To approve/refuse applications for re-grading, remove any bars in salary scales and to authorise salary increments and accelerated increments.	Town Clerk
60	To approve the payment of overtime	Heads of Service
61	To agree minor variations to the conditions of employment	Town Clerk
62	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
63	To approve changes to Council polices 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.	Heads of Service
64	To authorise training in line with Council's Policies	Head of Service
65	To authorise the provision of branded clothing & PPE	Town Clerk
66	To approve the payment of claims from employees for compensation for loss or damage to personal property	Town Clerk
67	To negotiate and agree settlements on behalf of the Council in relation to any proceedings in the Employment Tribunal	Town Clerk
68	To agree to premature retirement on the grounds of duly certified ill health	Town Clerk
69	To terminate employment during probation and to review salary on completion of probationary periods.	Town Clerk
70	To commission legal and professional advice on staffing matters	Town Clerk
71	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

72	To offer training to Councillors	Head of Democratic Services
73	To exercise any functions delegated to the Town Clerk in his/her absence	Head of Corporate Services & Head of Environmental and Community Services
PROPERTY		
74	To manage land and property of the Council	Head of Environmental and Community Services
75	To agree the terms of any lease, licence, conveyance or transfer	Town Clerk
76	To sell surplus materials, vehicles, plant, equipment and goods, salvage scrap and other waste	Head of Environmental and Community Services
77	To grant easements, wayleaves and licence over Council land	Town Clerk
78	To initiate legal action or proceedings against unauthorised encampments or encroachments on Council land	Town Clerk
79	To direct the custody of Council property and documents in accordance with s226 Local Government Act 1972	Town Clerk
80	To exercise responsibility for the safe custody and maintenance of the Civic Regalia	Town Clerk
81	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
82	To appoint the Principal Contractor and Planning Supervisors for the purposes of the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations.	Town Clerk
83	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
84	To make applications for all statutory consents necessitated by any approved Council proposal or development	Head of Environmental and Community Services
85	To engage valuers or selling agents on behalf of the Council	Town Clerk
HEALTH AND SAFETY		
86	To oversee the discharge of the Council's responsibilities under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974	Town Clerk

LEGAL PROCEEDINGS		
87	To take and discontinue legal proceedings in any court or at any tribunal	Town Clerk
88	To take Counsel's advice or instruct Counsel to represent the Council	Town Clerk
89	To seek injunctions and commence proceedings for the purposes of: • Enforcement in accordance with the Council's Policies • Recovering Money due to the Council • Recovering or otherwise preserving possession of the Council's land or property • Defending the interests of the Council • Appealing against a decision affecting the interests of the Council and responding to appeals against action taken by the Council	Town Clerk
90	To represent the Council at Court or any tribunal or to make arrangements for appropriate representation	Town Clerk
91	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
92	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
93	To serve requisitions for information	Town Clerk
94	To authorise any member of staff to swear affidavits as to matter within their knowledge in any court proceedings involving the Council	Town Clerk
95	To authorise any member of staff to appear on behalf of the Council before a Magistrate's Court	Town Clerk
RECREATION & EVENTS		
96	To grant permissions for the use of recreational open space in accordance with Council Policy and statutory requirements	Head of Environmental and Community Services
97	To organise sporting, recreational, cultural events and entertainments in accordance with approved budget provision and the Council's Financial Regulations	Head of Environmental and Community Services
98	To liaise with the Safety Advisory Group and carry out any necessary actions arising from recommendations from that body.	Head of Environmental and Community Services