



HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Peel Street, Houghton Regis, Bedfordshire, LU5 5EY

Town Mayor: **Councillor M Herber**
Town Clerk: **Clare Evans**

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11th June 2025

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

To: All Town Councillors

Notice of Meeting

You are hereby summoned to the Meeting of the Houghton Regis Town Council to be held at the Council Offices, Peel Street on Monday 16th June 2025 at 7pm.

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

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

Clare Evans
Town Clerk

***THIS MEETING MAY BE
RECORDED¹***

AGENDA

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

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

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

- 3. SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS**

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.

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

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

4. MINUTES

Pages 7 - 20

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 14th May 2025.

Recommendation: To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 14th May 2025.

5. COMMITTEE AND SUB-COMMITTEE MINUTES

Pages 21 - 34

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

Corporate Services Committee

3rd March 2025

- Minute number 13131 Banking and Signing Arrangements
To recommend to Town Council the inclusion of the following, officers on the approved bank mandate have delegated responsibility for electronically approving online payments and transfers between bank accounts and investments, on behalf of the Council.
- Minute number 13134 Sexual Harassment at Work Legislation – policy updates
To recommend to Town Council, the adoption of the following updated policies:
 - a) Bullying and Harassment Policy
 - b) IT Policy
 - c) Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
 - d) Disciplinary Policy
 - e) Social Media Policy
- Minute number 13135 Holidays and Other Absences Policy
To recommend to Town Council the adoption of the Town Councils Holidays and Other Absences Policy.

Community Services Committee
Environment & Leisure Committee
Planning Committee
Staffing Committee
Town Partnership Committee

None to present
None to present
22nd April 2025, 12th May 2025.
None to present
None to present

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

New Cemetery Sub-Committee

None to present.

- Recommendations:** To receive the Minutes detailed above and to approve the following:
1. **Banking and Signing Arrangements (Minute number 13131)**
 2. **In light of the Sexual Harassment at Work Legislation (Minute number 13134) to adopt the following updated policies;**
 - a) **Bullying and Harassment Policy**
 - b) **IT Policy**
 - c) **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy**
 - d) **Disciplinary Policy**
 - e) **Social Media Policy**
 3. **Holidays and Other absences Policy (Minute number 13135)**

6. TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

A verbal report will be provided.

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

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

8. YEAR END ACCOUNTS

Pages 35 - 37

Members will find attached a report providing brief outline of the year end accounting process. Members are invited to raise any queries relating to the process.

This report is provided for information purposes.

9. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN 2024/2025 ANNUAL INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT 2024/2025

Pages 38 - 51

In accordance with Financial Regulation 3.5, Members are advised that the internal auditor completed an interim internal audit on 20th November 2024 and the year-end internal audit on 6th June 2025.

A copy of the Annual Internal Audit Report and supporting paperwork as part of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return, for the year ended 31st March 2025 is attached.

Members may recall that a recommendation from the Internal Auditor as part of the 2024/25 interim internal audit was to note the requirement for the council to regularly review the effectiveness of its internal control system. The agreed response to this recommendation was for the council to consider and confirm the effectiveness of its internal control system when the council considers the year end internal audit.

Members are advised that the Council approved its Internal Control Policy at its meeting on 14th October 2025. A copy of the policy can be found here: [241014 Internal Control Policy.pdf](#)

Section 3 of the policy sets out the internal control environment. Members are invited to consider and confirm the effectiveness of its internal control system in light of the approved Internal Control Policy.

Recommendation:

- 1. To receive the Annual Internal Audit Report 2024/25 and to approve the actions detailed in the annotated Observations report;**
- 2. To confirm the effectiveness of the council's internal control system in accordance with the approved Internal Control Policy.**

10. DATES FOR THE EXERCISE OF PUBLIC RIGHTS FOR 2024/2025

Page 52

Members are requested to approve the dates for the Exercise of Public Rights in relation to the Annual Governance & Accountability Return, for the year ended 31st March 2025.

Members are advised of the following

1. Date of announcement: 19th June 2025
2. Date of commencement: 20th June 2025
3. End date: 31st July 2025

Recommendation: **To approve the dates for the Exercise of Public Rights in relation to the Annual Governance & Accountability Return, for the year ended 31st March 2025 as follows:**

- 1. Date of announcement: 19th June 2025**
- 2. Date of commencement: 20th June 2025**
- 3. End date: 31st July 2025**

11. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN 2024/2025 SECTION 1 - ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

Page 53

In accordance with Financial Regulation 3.4, a draft completed version of Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return, for the year ended 31st March 2025 is attached for consideration, approval and signature, Appendix A.

Recommendation: **To approve and sign Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return for the year ended 31st March 2025.**

12. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN 2024/2025 SECTION 2 – ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS

Pages 54 - 70

In accordance with Financial Regulation 3.4, Section 2 – Accounting Statements of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return and the supporting Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2025 is attached for consideration, approval and signature subject to external audit.

Members will note that the column headed Year Ending 31 March 2024 has been headed 'Restated' in accordance with the Internal Auditors Observation covered in Agenda Item 9. The External Auditor requires an explanation to be provided of the figure/s changed. This explanation is also attached for reference.

Recommendation:

- 1. To approve and sign Section 2 – Accounting Statements of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return for the year ended 31st March 2025 subject to external audit.**
- 2. To approve the restated explanation for submission alongside the Annual Governance & Accountability Return for 2024/25.**

13. REVIEW OF EARMARKED RESERVE MOVEMENTS 2025/26

Page 71

Members will find attached a schedule of earmarked reserves for 2025/26 with predicted movements to and from reserves during the course of the financial year.

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

14. RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY AND SCHEDULE

Pages 72 - 109

In accordance with Financial Regulation 2.2, the council is responsible for putting in place arrangements for the management of risk. The Clerk shall prepare, for approval by the council, risk management policy statements in respect of all activities of the council. Risk policy statements and consequential risk management arrangements shall be reviewed by the council at least annually.

A copy of the Risk Management Strategy and Schedule is attached. Members are requested to note that the register has been extended to include reference to s106 / deferred income, shown in red.

Recommendation: To approve the HRTC Risk Management Strategy & Schedule.

15. APPOINTMENT OF INTERNAL AUDITOR

Members are reminded that the Council has appointed IAC Audit & Consultancy Ltd as the Town Councils internal audit provider, for a period of 3 years covering financial years 2024/25, 2025/26 and 2026/7.

This report is provided for information purposes.

16. SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE POLICY

Pages 110 - 135

Members will find attached the Town Council Draft Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy. Members are advised that this is a wholly rewritten Policy.

This policy was presented to and reviewed by members of the Community Services Committee at the meeting held on the 24th February 2025. At this meeting members resolved (minute number 13121) that the approval of the Town Council Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy be made by the Corporate Services Committee along with a recommendation to Town Council to adopt the policy.

At the Corporate Services Committee meeting held on the 9th June 2025 members approved this policy and recommended it be adopted by Council. Due to the timings of meetings and as this policy is vital for supporting the safety of children and young people in our community, members agreed for this policy be recommended at the Town Council meeting to be held on the 16th June 2025 so as not to delay the implementation of this policy.

Once adopted all staff and councillors will be issued a copy of the policy and will be required to sign to confirm they have read and understood it and in particular those elements highlighted in Appendix A.

Following this, training will be provided either in house via the Designated Safeguarding Leads or by an external provider.

The policy will undergo an annual desktop review by staff who will report all recorded incidents to Community Services Committee in private session once a year.

Recommendation: **To adopt the Town Councils Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy.**

17. REQUEST TO SITE A CABIN ON PARKSIDE RECREATION GROUND TO SERVE AS A LOCAL COMMUNITY SPACE

Pages 136 - 138

To enable members to consider a request from Parkside Action Group to site a cabin on Parkside recreation ground to serve as a local community space.

Recommendation:

- 1. To provide permission in principle for Parkside Action Group to site a cabin on Parkside recreation ground to serve as a local community space;**
- 2. To request that Parkside Action Group provide detail on the following matters: planning and building control, legal issues including a lease, safety & technical matters, utilities, operational details and finance.**

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HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 14th May 2025 at 7.00pm

Present: Councillors: E Cooper
P Burgess
J Carroll
E Cooper
E Costello
Y Farrell
M Herber (Chair)
D Jones
T McMahon
C Rollins
A Slough
C Slough
D Taylor

Officers: Clare Evans Town Clerk
Amanda Samuels Administration Officer

Public 8

Also present: L Senior Head of Democratic Services
E Holland Support Officer (Democratic)

Apologies: Councillor: W Henderson

13187 ELECTION OF THE TOWN MAYOR

The retiring Town Mayor, Cllr Cooper, invited nominations for the position of Town Mayor for the period May 2025 to May 2026.

Nominee: M Herber Nominated by: J Carroll
Seconded by: T McMahon

There were no other nominations.

Those in Favour of electing Cllr Herber as Town Mayor: 12.

On being put to the vote Cllr Herber was duly elected as Town Mayor for the municipal year 2025 – 2026.

The new Town Mayor retired to receive the mayoral robes and the Chain of Office from the retiring Town Mayor.

The new Mayor adopted the role of Chairman and gave an acceptance speech.

The Mayor thanked Members for the opportunity to represent Houghton Regis. Thanks were expressed to the outgoing Mayor, Cllr Cooper, for their time in office and for their dedication and support for local causes.

The Mayor looked forward to working with Members for the benefit of the town and to engaging with the local community.

The Mayor nominated Keech Hospice Care and Tithe Farm Children's Centre as their chosen charities during their time in office.

The new Town Mayor read and signed the 'Declaration of Acceptance of Office'.

Cllr Jones proposed a vote of thanks to the outgoing Mayor, Cllr Cooper. Cllr Cooper's participation in local events and tackling local issues was highlighted and their achievements acknowledged.

Cllr Herber was thanked for their help and support in their role of Deputy Mayor.

Cllr Cooper was thanked again for their dedicated service.

The outgoing Mayor thanked Members for the opportunity to represent Houghton Regis over the previous year and Cllr Carroll was thanked for his support during Cllr Cooper's term as Deputy Mayor.

The outgoing mayor had enjoyed a wonderful year of stand-out moments. They wished the new Mayor good luck for their mayoralty

Both of Cllr Cooper's charities would be receiving cheques in the coming days.

13188 ELECTION OF THE DEPUTY MAYOR

The Town Mayor invited nominations for the position of Deputy Mayor for the period May 2025 to May 2026.

Nominee:	J Carroll	Nominated by:	P Burgess
		Seconded by:	D Jones

Those in favour of electing Cllr Carroll as Deputy Town Mayor: 12

On being put to the vote Cllr Carroll was duly elected as the new Deputy Town Mayor.

Cllr Carroll read and signed the 'Declaration of Acceptance of Office'.

13189 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr Henderson.

13190 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

13191 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

None.

13192 MINUTES

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 17th March 2025.

Resolved: To approve the amended minutes of the meeting held on 17th March 2025 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

13193 COMMITTEE AND SUB-COMMITTEE MINUTES

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

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

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

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

13194 COUNCIL CALENDAR FOR 2025-26

The draft Council Calendar, including meeting dates, member briefing dates, and council and civic event dates, for 2025/26 had been presented at the Town Council meeting held on the 17th March 2025. At this meeting Members noted the draft Council Calendar, made some suggested alterations and recommended its approval at the Annual Meeting of Town Council.

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

The proposed adjustments to the calendar presented at the March meeting were as follows:

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

The Town Clerk proposed one further adjustment which was to remove the Staffing meeting scheduled for 18th May 2026 as this was close to the AGM on 20th May 2026.

Members requested that the date of the Skate Jam event be checked and rectified.

Members were happy to accept the meeting calendar with these amendments.

Resolved: To approve the Council Calendar for 2025/26.

13195 COMMITTEE FUNCTIONS & TERMS OF REFERENCE

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

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

The approved Committee Functions & Terms of Reference were reviewed at the Town Council meeting held on the 17th March 2025. As detailed under Minute 13155, Strategic Policies 2025/26.

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

13196 COMMITTEE, SUB-COMMITTEE & WORKING GROUP MEMBERSHIP

Members were requested to:

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

The following summarised the committee structure and associated membership:

Standing Committees

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

Joint Committees

Partnership Committee	8 members (4 Town Cllrs & 4 CBC Cllrs)
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<i>Sub-Committees</i>	To be appointed as and when required
Complaints Sub-Committee	3 members
Complaints Appeal Sub-Committee	3 members
Disciplinary, Grievance & Appeals Sub-Committee	3 members
Proposed New Cemetery Sub Committee	5 members
Community Engagement Sub-Committee	5 members
Neighbourhood Plan Implementation Sub-Committee	5 members
 <i>Working Groups</i>	 5 members
Pride of Houghton Awards Working Group	5 members
Combating Crime Working Group	5 members

The Town Clerk informed Members of the following items:

- The Neighbourhood Plan Sub-Committee would include Cllrs Carroll, Cooper, Herber, Jones and C Slough.
- Cllr Cooper would sit on the Pride of Houghton Committee.

Members appointed chairs of Standing Committees:

Chair of Corporate Services Committee

Nominees:	D Jones	Nominated by:	Y Farrell
		Seconded by:	J Carroll

There were no other nominations.

On being put to the vote, Cllr Jones was elected as Chair of Corporate Services Committee.

Chair of Environment & Leisure Committee

Nominees:	A Slough	Nominated by:	C Slough
		Seconded by:	D Jones

There were no other nominations.

On being put to the vote, Cllr A Slough was elected as Chair of Environment & Leisure Committee.

Chair of Community Services Committee

Nominees:	T McMahon	Nominated by:	J Carroll
		Seconded by:	P Burgess

On being put to the vote, Cllr McMahon was elected as Chair of Community Services Committee.

Chair of Planning Committee

Nominees:	M Herber	Nominated by:	D Jones
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Seconded by:

J Carroll

There were no other nominations.

On being put to the vote, Cllr Herber was elected as Chair of Planning Committee.

Chair of Staffing Committee

Nominees:

W Henderson

Nominated by:

C Slough

Seconded by:

D Jones

There were no other nominations.

On being put to the vote, Cllr Henderson was elected as Chair of Planning Committee.

- Resolved:**
- 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.**

13197 REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

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

Members were provided with a list of outside organisations to which the Council was invited to appoint representatives for 2025/26 along with Cllrs who have expressed an interest in being appointed as the Council representative.

Reporting Mechanisms

Members who were appointed as representatives were 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 was a standing item on Town Council agendas to facilitate this.

The Town Clerk advised Members that Cllr Jones had expressed a willingness to sit on the Chews Foundation.

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

13198 STANDING ORDERS

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'.

Members expressed disappointment that there appeared to be a dilution of retribution/sanctions for breach of Code of Conduct.

Resolved: To approve Standing Orders as presented.

13199 FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

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

Financial Regulations were ‘the “standing orders” of a local council that regulated and controlled its financial affairs and accounting procedures’.

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

Resolved: To approve Financial Regulations as presented.

13200 SCHEME OF DELEGATION

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

The Scheme of Delegation authorised the Proper Officer and 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 17th March 2025 and was recommended for approval subject to amendments.

Resolved: To approve the Scheme of Delegation as presented.

13201 GENERAL POWER OF COMPETENCE

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

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

Resolved: 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.

13202 BANKING & SIGNING ARRANGEMENTS

At the Town Council meeting held on the 17th May 2023 the banking arrangements for the council's bank accounts were approved as follows (minute number 12437).

Banking Arrangements

To approve the bank mandate be set up as follows:

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

To remove all other signatories.

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

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

Signing Arrangements

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

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

Group A (councillors)

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

Group B (officers)

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

Financial Regulation 5.1 states:

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

Resolved: Bank Mandate

To approve the bank mandate be set up as follows:

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

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

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

13203 COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

Members were reminded that at the March 2025 meeting (Minute 13159), authority was granted for five members of the Town Council to work with officers on the Community Governance Review. The councillors had subsequently convened twice and additionally met with Chalton Parish Council to discuss the suitability of the current boundaries between the two councils. A report had been circulated to Members. CBC had provided four points for consideration and had requested feedback from the Town Council by 31st May 2025. The point for discussion were:

- The creation; merger; alteration; and abolition of parishes.
- The naming of Parishes

-
- Electoral arrangements for existing parishes, including council size, the number of councillors and parish warding
 - Grouping of parishes under a new common parish council

Cllr Jones suggested that the recommendation be moved in order for an amendment to be proposed.

Proposed: C Slough
Seconded: E Cooper

Cllr Jones requested that 'no comment' was deleted from the item 'Alteration' and instead insert:

"Houghton Regis Town Council (HRTC) wishes to suggest that that part of Chalton Parish Council's area bounded by the Houghton Regis parish boundary, the Luton Borough Council boundary, the Motorway M1 and the A5 - M1 Link Road (Dunstable Northern Bypass) be transferred to HRTC."

This was an attempt to revert to an agreement made at the Town Council meeting in October 2021 (Minute 11804). This had been presented to CBC who had not moved forward with the proposal until a full Community Governance Review across the whole area was completed.

There had been a difference of opinion among the nominated councillors at their meetings as to whether this course should be pursued, or to maintain 'no comment'; therefore, no recommendation had been made.

The following points were raised:

- Ease of electoral arrangements needed to be taken into consideration in addition to equity in terms of current and future residents of Houghton Regis.
- Services within Houghton Regis were also more extensive.
- A part of the conurbation would vote in mid-Bedfordshire, rather than Leighton Buzzard and Dunstable.

Members voted on the proposed amendments. A recorded vote was requested.

For: Cllrs Costello, Billington, C Slough, A Slough, Jones, Taylor, Farrell and Cooper
Against: J Carroll, P Burgess and C Rollins
Abstention: Cllr McMahon

The amendment was duly carried and became the substantive motion for consideration.

The amended motion was:
Proposed by Cllr C Slough
Seconded by Cllr Taylor

Members voted on the new proposal as follows:

For: Cllrs Costello, Billington, C Slough, A Slough, Jones, Taylor, Farrell and Cooper.

Against: Cllrs Carroll, Burgess and Rollins
Abstention: Cllr Mc Mahon

The proposed amendment was adopted by Members.

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

1. The creation, merger, alteration or abolition of parishes:

- *Creation* – no comment
- *Merger* – no comment
- *Abolition* – no comment
- *Alteration* – Houghton Regis Town Council (HRTC) wishes to suggest that that part of Chalton Parish Council's land bounded by the Houghton Regis parish boundary, the Luton Borough Council boundary, the Motorway M1 and the A5 - M1 Link Road (Dunstable Northern Bypass) be transferred to HRTC.

2. The naming of parishes and the style of any new or revised parish – no comment

3. Electoral arrangements for existing parishes including council size, the number of councillors to be elected to the council, parish warding

- *council size* – no comment
- *no. of Cllrs* – to ensure adequate demographic representation given the population growth of Houghton Regis it is requested that the number of HR councillors be increased to 16 (from 14)
- *parish warding* – given the recent growth of Houghton Regis, a 4th ward to cover the growth area of Bidwell would support suitable demographic representation. This new ward should be named Thorn ward as it is reflective of historic name for this area. The suggested ward boundary would be from Bedford Road following the line of the public right of way to Blue Waters. At this time HRTC are unable to comment on how 16 councillors should be split across the 4 wards (as proposed) as CBC have not released population / electorate data in support of the CGR process. HRTC request that HRTC councillors be split across the proposed 4 wards as evenly as possible such that each councillor represents the same number of electorate. Alternatively, CBC are requested extend the town and parish council deadline to 30th June 2025 to enable the data to be released and considered by HRTC.
- *Grouping parishes under a new common parish council with any of their surrounding areas* – no comment

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 7.48pm

Dated this 16th day of June 2025

Chairman

DRAFT

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP 2025 / 2026***STANDING COMMITTEES – 2025 / 2026*****Corporate Services**

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

Environment & Leisure

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

Planning

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

Community Services

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

Staffing Committee

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

OTHER COMMITTEES – 2025 / 2026**Town Partnership**

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

SUB-COMMITTEES – 2025 / 2026**Complaints Sub-Committee (Reporting to Town Council)**

Cllrs: To be appointed as required.

Complaints Appeal Sub-Committee (Reporting to Town Council)

Cllrs: To be appointed as required.

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

Cllrs: To be appointed as required.

New Cemetery Sub Committee (Reporting to Town Council)

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

Community Engagement Sub Committee (Reporting to Community Services)

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

Neighbourhood Plan Implementation (Reporting to Planning)

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

WORKING GROUPS – 2025 / 2026**Pride of Houghton Awards Working Group (Reporting to Community Services)**

Cllrs: E Cooper, M Herber, D Jones, A Slough, D Taylor

Combating Crime Working Group (Reporting to Community Services)

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



HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

2025 / 2026

Bedfordshire Association of Town & Parish Councils	Cllrs: M Herber, Cllr Jones, Cllr C Slough
Bedfordshire Bus Users	Cllr T McMahon
Chews Foundation	Cllr D Jones
Citizens Advice	Cllr E Cooper
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 D Jones
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
NALC	Cllrs: J Carroll, D Jones, C Slough

DRY

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL
Corporate Services Committee
Minutes of the meeting held on
Monday 3rd March 2025 7.00pm.

Present:	Councillors:	D Jones E Billington J Carroll Y Farrell W Henderson C Rollins	Chairman (Substitute)
	Officers:	Debbie Marsh Amanda Samuels	Head of Corporate Services Administration Officer
	Public:	0	
Apologies:	Councillor:	E Costello M Herber	

13122 APOLOGIES & SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Cllr Costello (Cllr Farrell substituted) and Cllr Herber.

13123 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

13124 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

None.

13125 MINUTES

Members noted an error under minute number 13046. The date shown should have been 2010 not 1010. The minutes were amended by hand and initialled by the Chair.

To approve the Minutes of the meetings held on 2nd December 2024.

Resolved: To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 2nd December 2024 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

13126 TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING MEETINGS AND CONSIDER ANY RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED THEREIN

Personnel Sub-Committee: 8th July 2024 and 25th November 2024.

Resolved: To receive the Minutes of the Personnel Sub-Committee meeting of the 8th July 2024 and 25th November 2024.

DJJ.

13127 INCOME AND EXPENDITURE REPORT

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

Gas (pg 20) - a faulty meter had meant that Houghton Regis Town Council were not charged for several months. It was queried whether there would be back billing from the supplier and the Head of Corporate Services informed Members that this would not be the case.

Cllr Rollins joined the meeting.

Computer costs (pg 21) – there was an overspend of £2,000 in the current year and Members queried what the increase would be for 2025/26. Members were informed that the budget for the coming year was £8,500 which was thought sufficient to cover all licences.

With regard to the report, it was highlighted that an email had outlined how the loss incurred from the sale of the property portfolio would be treated in the accounts. Following input from the auditor, there was now a new budget heading showing the full amount of the sale proceeds but omitting to account for the £600,000 original cost. The Head of Corporate Services confirmed that the sum had been accounted for in the nominal ledger; however, following a request from Members, it was agreed that the issue would be addressed in an explanatory note for inclusion in the Minutes.

13128 BANK AND CASH RECONCILIATION STATEMENTS

Members received the monthly bank and cash reconciliation statements for November and December 2024 and January 2025.

Members felt that the statements presented should be as current as possible and suggested that the Corporate Services Committee meetings should be scheduled later in the month to allow this. The Head of Corporate Services advised Members that, due to the distribution date of the agenda, even if meetings were moved to a later date it was likely this information would still be a month behind upon receipt.

- Resolved:**
- 1. To approve the monthly bank and cash reconciliation statements for November and December 2024 and January 2025;**
 - 2. For these along with the original bank statements to be signed by the Chair of Corporate Services Committee and the Council's RFO.**

13129 LIST OF CHEQUE PAYMENTS

Members were provided with a list of payments for the period November and December 2024 and January 2025 (inclusive).

855.

Members drew attention to the extensive list of payments to the water provider. The Head of Corporate Services confirmed that the Finance Officer had raised this matter with the provider and the issue would be rectified.

13130 INVESTMENT REPORT

This report was provided in accordance with the approved Committee Functions, Financial Regulation 8 and Banking Arrangements, Investment Strategy & Investment Arrangements.

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

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

Members had been presented with an extensive report and were informed that Flagstone was a platform that allowed users to access and manage accounts at multiple banks and building societies. Members queried the advantages of using Flagstone over CCLA, which was AAA rated, allowed instant access and provided a good return. The Head of Corporate Services stated that the proposed investment via Flagstone was in response to the auditor's advice to diversify the portfolio while still providing a satisfactory level of liquidity.

Members agreed to approve the minimum investment of £150,000, rather than the proposed £250,000, for a 12-month trial period, to commence in April 2025 at the start of the new financial year. The performance of the investment would be monitored during the year and reviewed at the end of the trial period.

Proposed by: Cllr Henderson

Seconded by: Cllr Carroll

Members voted unanimously in favour of investing the minimum sum of £150,000 with Flagstone for a 12-month period.

The Head of Corporate Services informed Members that there would be some amendments to the banking arrangements, and these would be presented at the next meeting of the Committee.

Resolved: To approve the investment of £150,000, held in the Town Councils CCLA Deposit Fund, with Flagstones cash deposit platform.

13131 BANKING & SIGNING ARRANGEMENTS

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

QJJ.

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

Following receipt of the Interim Internal Auditors report, under the observation made under number B1, it was recommended that the Council formally review and approve the mandate to apply for making online payments. At the Town Council meeting held on the 16th December 2024 it was agreed to support the comments made in response to the Interim Internal Audit Observations/Recommendations (Minute number 13074). The comment in response to this observation/recommendation was:

This is noted and will be presented for consideration and approval to Corporate Services Committee at its meeting on 3rd March 2025.

Therefore, Members were requested to recommend to Town Council the following revision to the banking arrangements:

Officers on the approved bank mandate have delegated responsibility for electronically approving online payments and transfers between bank accounts and investments, on behalf of the Council.

Resolved: To recommend to Town Council the inclusion of the following, officers on the approved bank mandate have delegated responsibility for electronically approving online payments and transfers between bank accounts and investments, on behalf of the Council.

13132 REVIEW OF CHARGES 2025/2026

In accordance with Financial Regulation 13.2 Members were presented with a list of charges for 2024/25 which were under the control of this Committee. In order to support users of these facilities, it was suggested that Members consider applying the same charges for 2025/26.

Members were requested to note under section 2 of the Fee Schedule that the officer determining had been changed from the Town Clerk to the Head of Corporate Services.

Resolved: To approve the charges for 2025/26 as attached.

13133 VAT RETURN

In accordance with Financial Regulation 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.

For information, Members were provided with a copy of the VAT returns for quarters 1, 2 and 3 for financial year 2024/2025.

DTJ.

13134 SEXUAL HARASSMENT AT WORK LEGISLATION – POLICY UPDATES

Following the introduction of the new Sexual Harassment at Work legislation a number of the Town Councils policies had been revised.

Members were provided with a report and copies of the revised policies.

Members sought clarification on the level of changes within the policies. The Head of Corporate Services informed Members that the Bullying and Harassment Policy had been written almost in entirety; Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, and Social Media had included significant changes while the remainder had minimal amendments. The Whistleblowing policy was also due to be updated.

The Head of Corporate Services confirmed that all policies accorded with current legislation. While the policies would not be presented to Town Council until June, HRTC already had them in place and had been shared with staff.

It was confirmed that the Safeguarding Policy had been presented to the Community Services Committee.

Resolved: To recommend to Town Council, the adoption of the following updated policies:

- a) **Bullying and Harassment Policy**
- b) **IT Policy**
- c) **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy**
- d) **Disciplinary Policy**
- e) **Social Media Policy**

13135 HOLIDAYS AND OTHER ABSENCES POLICY

Members were informed that following an enquiry by a member of staff, in regard to the Town Councils Policy on Reservists, the Town Councils Holidays and Other Absences Policy had been revised.

Members were provided with a report and revised Holidays and Other Absences Policy. It was agreed by Members that the proposed changes were appropriate.

Resolved: To recommend to Town Council the adoption of the Town Councils Holidays and Other Absences Policy.

13136 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Proposed by: Cllr Henderson

Seconded by: Cllr Carroll

Members voted unanimously in favour

DDJ

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.

13137 PAY SCALES 2025/26

At the Personnel Sub-Committee meeting held on the 3rd February 2025, Members received a list of the Salary Point number for all staff, along with overtime rates, additional payments, mileage rates and employer and employee pension contribution rates and resolved to recommend to Corporate Services (Minute number PE347) that these be noted and signed by the Chair of Corporate Services at its meeting to be held on the 3rd March 2025.

Members were provided with a list, as presented to the Personnel Sub-Committee.

Resolved: To note the list of the Salary Point number for all staff along with overtime rates, additional payments, mileage rates and employer and employee pension contribution rates and for this list to be signed by the Chair of Corporate Services.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.09pm.

Dated this 9th day of June 2025

D. J. Jones

Chairman

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Planning Committee

**Minutes of the meeting held on
22nd April 2025 at 7.00pm**

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

13166 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Cllr Carroll, Cllr Taylor and Cllr Cooper (Cllr Farrell substituted).

13167 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

13168 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

13169 MINUTES

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on the 31st March 2025.

Resolved: To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 31st March 2025 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

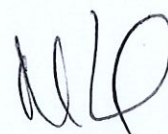
13170 PLANNING MATTERS

(a) The following planning applications were considered:

CB/25/00959/FULL
(click for more
details)

Single storey side and front extension.
39 Farriers Way, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5FF
Mrs Maria-Magdalena

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



CB/25/00933/FULL
(click for more
details)

Conversion of garage to habitable space. Demolition of existing garden wall, erection of new 1.8m high timber fence, brick pier and gates with additional parking space.
3 Titus Grove, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 6GZ
Mr & Mrs Feathers

Comments: Members noted that the address shared a vehicular entrance with several other properties, but the proposed conversion did not appear to impact parking availability.

Houghton Regis Town Council raised no objection to this application.

CB/25/01081/FULL
(click for more
details)

Change of use from residential dwellinghouse (C3) to use as a children's home (C2).
22 Recreation Road, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5JW

Comments: Central Bedfordshire Council had previously refused this application for failing to provide adequate parking provision. Members noted that the proposed plans failed to demonstrate any perceivable modification to those submitted in March 2025 (Minute 13143).

Members were advised that this application had been called in to the DMC raising concerns regarding the suitability of the site for a children's home and highlighting the lack of parking provision.

Houghton Regis Town Council objected to this application on the grounds of failing to demonstrate:

- Adequate and appropriate parking provision commensurate with the establishment's proposed use
- Compliance with local parking standards and infrastructure requirements

CB/25/00960/FULL
(click for more
details)

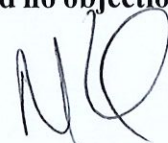
Two storey side extension and a new front dropped kerb
41 Tennyson Avenue, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5UQ
Mr & Mrs Ronan

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

CB/25/01119/FULL
(click for more
details)

Proposed new porch.
Whistlebrook Stud, Sewell Lane, Sewell, Dunstable, LU6 1RP
Mr Arber

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



CB/25/01035/NMA

(click for more details)

Non-material amendment to planning permission
CB/19/02130/FULL (Demolition of existing residential dwelling and erection of 119 dwellings including the creation of a new vehicular access, recreational open space, parking infrastructure and associated landscaping and ancillary works.) Amendment sought - Amendments to the size and orientation of the pumping station and substation and associated access route. Relocation of two off street parking bays from the north side of the road to the south. Minor diversion of footpath around parking bay to suit. Amended line of fence to LEAP to suit footpath.
The Gates, Land East of Bedford Road, Bidwell, Houghton Regis

CB/25/00956/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: To the proposal, for an extra care residential home and 32 senior living units, proposed in place of the consented C1 hotel use.
Land to the northern edge of Houghton Regis, Beds

CB/25/01186/NMA

(click for more details)

Non-material amendment to planning permission
CB/24/00059/FULL (demolition of existing buildings and redevelopment to provide new employment floorspace for a flexible range of uses (within Classes E(g)(iii), B2 and/or B8) with ancillary offices, together with the rationalisation of accesses and provision of yard area, parking, landscaping, and all other associated works). Amendment to the wording of condition 18 to reflect a revised drainage strategy.
Unit 1, Humphrys Road, Dunstable, LU5 4TP

CB/25/01092/LDCP

(click for more details)

Lawful Development Certificate Proposed: Single storey rear extension
4 The Cloisters, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5JN

Permissions / Approvals / Consents

None received.

CB/25/01085/FULL
(click for more
details)

New end of terrace dwelling
9 Woodlands Avenue, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5LJ
Mr Simao

Comments: It was highlighted that this property fell within a conservation area and an earlier outline application had been refused. Documentation had been provided regarding Biodiversity Net Gain; however, the Special Area of Conservation did not apply as this was a self-build. The concerns regarding parking had also been addressed.

Houghton Regis Town Council raised no objection to this application.

CB/25/01159/FULL
(click for more
details)

Erection of two semi detached dwellings
Land to the rear of Midway Cottage and to the side and rear of
The Cottage, Bedford Road, Houghton Regis
R O'Neil

Comments: The Ecologist and BNG Officer had stated that the BNG Assessment did not include the full statutory metric spreadsheet which was a mandatory requirement.

There was no report from a Trees and Landscape Officer on this occasion and a previous application had been refused on this issue.

Houghton Regis Town Council objected to this application on the grounds of potential damage to nearby trees.

Noted:

CB/25/01010/NMA
(click for more
details)

Non-material amendment to planning permission
CB/21/05552/RM (Reserved Matters: following Outline
Application CB/12/03613/OUT Mixed Development, supported
by an Environmental Statement, which was submitted to the
council during the application's determination process. Reserved
Matters sought for Access, Appearance, Landscaping, Layout
and Scale for 100 homes and retail units (Use Class E))
Amendment sought: Opaque glass added to lower section of full
height windows where a kitchen is located (applies to block C
only) - follows the approved NMA ref CB/24/01291/NMA
Land to the northern edge of Houghton Regis (HRN1)



Refusals:

CB/24/03469/FULL
(click for more
details)

Proposed site boundary timber fencing, 1350mm close board
timber panel with 150mm gravel board and 450mm trellis
(retrospective)
2 Arnald Way, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5UN

Withdrawals:

None received.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 7.28 pm

Dated this 12th day of May 2025

Chairman



HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Planning Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on

12th May 2025 at 7.00pm

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

13182 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Cllr Carroll, Cllr Cooper and Cllr Taylor.

13183 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

13184 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

13185 MINUTES

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on the 22nd April 2025

Resolved: To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 22nd April 2025 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

13186 PLANNING MATTERS

(a) The following planning applications were considered:

CB/25/01004/LB (click for more details)

Listed Building: Full repair and refurbishment of farmhouse roof with replacement of felt and battens and re use of original tiles also re-flashing and re-pointing of chimney stack.
Lane Farm, Sewell Lane, Sewell, Dunstable, LU6 1RP
Mrs McCaw

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



CB/25/01323/FULL
(click for more details)

Change of use from Class E to Place of Worship Class F1
23-25 Bedford Square, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5ES
Chris Okere

Comments: Members voiced concern that there was insufficient information regarding:

- Hours of operation
- Noise impact on nearby residents
- Parking facilities
- Anticipated attendance numbers

There was also concern that this would incur a loss of three retail units and it was questioned whether this was appropriate, taking into consideration that it would limit the number of retail outlets within Bedford Square.

Houghton Regis Town Council raised no objections to this application.

Noted:

CB/25/01129/LDCP
(click for more details)

Lawful Development Certificate Proposed: Single storey undercroft infill extension (amendment to approved planning permission 24/03487/FULL)
Whistlebrook Stud, Sewell Lane, Sewell, Dunstable, LU6 1RP

CB/25/01320/DOC
(click for more details)

Discharge of Condition 15 against planning permission ref. CB/22/00545/FULL (Development of a single industrial warehouse unit for E(g)(iii), B2 and B8 use with ancillary offices, car parking, service areas and soft landscaping)
Unit 15, Humphrys Road, Dunstable, LU5 4TP

CB/25/01401/DOC
(click for more details)

Discharge of Condition 26 against planning permission ref. CB/21/05575/REG3 (Development of a new leisure centre, incorporating landscaping and parking provisions. Demolition of the existing building and the construction of a new facility to include an eight-lane 25 metre community swimming pool, dedicated learner pool, confidence pool, fitness suite, exercise studio and two squash courts. Building to include a café, community space, creche, children's outdoor play zone and an outdoor fitness trail and public area)
Houghton Regis Leisure And Community Centre, Parkside Drive, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5PX

MLQ

[CB/25/01372/DOC](#)
(click for more details)

Discharge of Conditions 12, 21 and 22 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

Permissions / Approvals / Consents

[CB/25/00267/FULL](#)
(click for more details)

Partial single/two storey rear extensions with rooflights and two storey side extension
27 Linnere Walk, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5PS

Refusals:

[CB/24/03469/FULL](#)
(click for more details)

Proposed site boundary timber fencing, 1350mm close board timber panel with 150mm gravel board and 450mm trellis (retrospective)
2 Arnald Way, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5UN

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

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

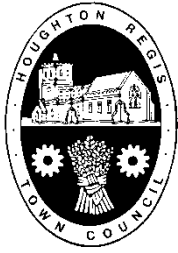
Withdrawals:

None received.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 7.21pm

Dated this 2nd day of June 2025

Chairman



TOWN COUNCIL

Agenda Item 8

Date: 16th June 2025

Title: YEAR END ACCOUNTS PROCESS

Purpose of the Report: To advise members of the year end accounting processes.

Contact Officer: Clare Evans, Town Clerk

1. RECOMMENDATION

The report is provided for information only.

2. BACKGROUND

This report is provided to advise members of the year end accounting processes.

There are 3 elements to the Council's accounts:

1. Day to day accounts administration
2. Year end close down
3. Preparation of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return

The report provides guidance on each of these elements.

3. DAY TO DAY ACCOUNTS ADMINISTRATION

The administration of the council's accounts is undertaken by the Town Clerk / RFO with support from the Head of Corporate Services and the Finance Officer.

4. YEAR END CLOSE DOWN

The RFO specifies a date for year end close down to DCK Accounting Solutions for mid May. This is to enable March invoices to be received and processed and for journals of corrections, adjustments, accruals and prepayments to be completed.

DCK Accounting Solutions then undertake the following:

1. Check prepayment, accrual and adjustments journals
2. Complete any outstanding journals over which there was a query

3. Make recommendations as appropriate to RFO & Accounts Officer
4. Check the proposed EMR transfers, make necessary amendments and input the appropriate journal entries
5. Print journal report for HRTC officer to check
6. Close down for the month of March and complete back-up
7. Closed the year and complete year end back-up.
8. Open new live company for the subsequent year's accounts.

5. PREPARATION OF THE ANNUAL GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN

The Annual Governance & Accountability Return comprises:

- Completion of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return form;
- Bank Reconciliation Statement for year end;
- Explanation of Differences to figures contained within the Annual Return form;
- Reconciliation of Boxes 7 & 8 of the Annual Return form;
- Statement of Accounts for the Year;
- Completion of Intermediate Audit Questionnaire supported by evidence specified by the external auditors.

DCK Accounting Solutions assist in the completion of the Annual Return. In preparation they require a Questionnaire to be completed in January which provides them with information on the Council's pension scheme, recruitment, advertising, publicity, asset purchases and disposals to date, leases and tenancies, and agency work. This information is provided to assist with the preparation of the Notes to the Statement of Accounts. In addition, the RFO specifies a date for the completion of the Statement of Accounts to DCK Accounting Solutions for early June dependent on the date of the Town Council meeting.

DCK Accounting Solutions provide a draft of Section 2 Statement of Accounts Notes to the Accounts by the date specified. Officers check information provided.

DCK Accounting Solutions do not prepare the following for submission with the Annual Return:

- Bank Reconciliation Statement for year end;
- Explanation of Differences to figures contained within the Annual Return form;
- Reconciliation of Boxes 7 & 8 of the Annual Return form;
- Completion of Intermediate Audit Questionnaire with evidence required

These are completed by the RFO.

6. 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.

7. IMPLICATIONS

Corporate Implications

- This process is supported by the following council policies:
 - Standing Orders
 - Financial Regulations
 - Internal Audit, Planning & Review

Legal Implications

Smaller authorities must:

- Approve and publish the unaudited AGAR by 30th June 2025
- Must commence the period of public rights on or before 1st July 2025
- Submit the AGAR to the external auditor by 30th June 2025
- Publish the audited AGAR and notice of completion by 30th September 2025

Financial Implications

- There are no budget implications.

Risk Implications

- Failure to submit the Annual Governance & Accountability Return by 30th June 2025 would result in the external auditor issuing Qualified Accounts. This may result in reputational damage to the council.

Equalities Implications

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

This report does not discriminate.

Climate Change Implications

There are no climate change implications arising from the recommendations

Press Contact

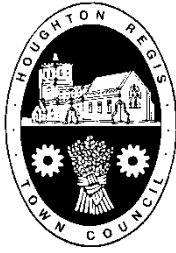
The decision relating to this agenda item will be communicated to the press, via the council's website and social media.

8. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

This is an annual process. The report provides background guidance for members information.

9. APPENDICES

None.



TOWN COUNCIL

Agenda Item 9

Date: 16th June 2025

Title: INTERNAL AUDIT 2024/25

Purpose of the Report: To present to members to internal auditors' findings for the financial year 2024/25.

Contact Officer: Clare Evans, Town Clerk

1. RECOMMENDATION

To receive the Annual Internal Audit Report 2024/25 and to approve the actions detailed in the annotated Observations reports.

2. BACKGROUND

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

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

The scope of the internal audit is set out in the Internal Audit Planning & Review Policy. This is reviewed on an annual basis by Corporate Services Committee and subsequently approved by Town Council [241216 Internal Audit Planning & review policy.pdf](#)

The internal audit for the financial year 2024/25 was carried out by IAC Audit & Consultancy Ltd on 20th November 2024 and 6th June 2025.

Please note that the dates included at the bottom of Appendix D are the dates of reports. Those on the left are dates within the financial year when reports were issued (one of them was date of last year's audit report) and the date on the right is the date of signature of this year's report.

3. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Members will find attached from the internal auditor the following:

- Cover letter dated 8th June 2025 including an explanation of the ‘Not Covered’ response in relation to Control Objective K, L and O – App A
- Observations reports (Part 1 and Part 2) annotated to show responses (Comments column) – App B
- Summary report – App C
- Annual Internal Audit Report 2024/25 - App D

The Observations report as annotated is the suggested council’s response, with timeline, to the internal audit.

4. HRTC CORPORATE PLAN

Aspirations

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

4.5 Enhance the role of the council.

5. IMPLICATIONS

Corporate Implications

- Internal Audit report to be presented to Town Council in October or December 2024

Legal Implications

- There are no legal implications arising from the recommendations

Financial Implications

- There are no financial implications arising from the recommendations

Risk Implications

- There is a reputational risk should the council not follow accounting practices.

Equalities Implications

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

- This project / issue does not discriminate.

Climate Change Implications

- There are no climate change implications arising from the recommendations.

Press Contact

- There are no press implications arising from the recommendations.

6. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

The internal audit for 2024/25 has been carried out by an independent and suitability qualified company. A number of observations have been made and an action plan to address these observations has been presented to members for consideration and approval.

7. APPENDICES

Appendix A – Cover Letter dated 8th June 2025

Appendix B – Observations report – annotated

Appendix C - Summary report

Appendix D – Annual Internal Audit Report 2024/25



Clare Evans
Town Clerk
Houghton Regis Town Council
Council Offices
Peel Street
Houghton Regis
Bedfordshire
LU5 5EY

8th June 2025

Dear Clare,

Year End Internal Audit Report

An audit was carried out by Kevin Rose on Friday 6 June 2025. This was the Year End audit following on from the interim audits carried out on 20 November 2024 and 2 April 2025.

The audit was undertaken using the standard IAC Audit Checklist, which we use for all Local Councils, which has 208 items. A total of 58 items were tested during this audit in addition to the 150 items tested and checked during the interim audit process. All items on the checklists were tested during the year.

The following 'Internal Control Objectives' of the Annual Internal Audit Report (part of the AGAR) were checked and confirmed as being Not Applicable to your Council for this financial year.

- Exemption from External Audit (Box K)
- the Transparency Code (for Smaller Authorities) (Box L)
- Trust Funds (Box O)

(Please refer to the explanation of my 'Not Covered' responses on Page 3)

Areas subject to audit were;

- the Payment system (Box B)
- Budget and precept setting and monitoring (Box D)
- Payroll (Box G)
- Assets and investments (Box H)
- Bank reconciliations (Box I)
- Accounting Statements (Box J)

Summary of tests undertaken during this audit

Positive response	20
Negative response	7
Not Applicable to your Council	31
Total tests carried out	<u>58</u>

Of the 27 applicable items tested a Positive response was obtained in respect of 20 tests. There were 7 Negative responses identified and 7 Observations were made, details of which are set out in the attached Year End Internal Audit Observations.

Summary of tests undertaken for the financial year (including interim audit work)

Positive response	151
Negative response	14
Not Applicable to your Council	43
Total tests carried out	<u>208</u>
Tests not carried out	Nil

I am pleased to advise that no 'Non-Compliances' were identified that would give rise to a negative response on the statutory Annual Internal Audit Report.

I would like to express my thanks for the assistance and hospitality provided to me during my audit.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Rose'.

Kevin Rose ACMA
Director

Internal Audit 'Not Covered' Responses

Internal Control Objective	Reason for Not Covered Response
K: If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2023/24, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. (If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2023/24 AGAR tick “not covered”	The reason for the “Not Covered” response for Objective K is that it is not applicable to your Council as the Council did not certify itself exempt from a limited assurance review for the relevant financial year.
L: The authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation.	At present no specific guidance has been provided to Internal Auditors as to what the ‘relevant legislation’ is in respect of Control Objective L. We have tested against the requirements of Statutory Instruments 2015/480 The Local Government (Transparency Requirements) and 2015/494 The Smaller Authorities (Transparency Requirements), neither of which apply to your Council. The publication requirements of Statutory Instrument (2015/234) The Accounts and Audit Regulations are covered in our responses to Internal Control Objectives M and N. The Council should note that we have not considered any additional publication requirements that may apply, for example those set out in the ICO Model Publication Scheme for Parish Councils.
O: (For local councils only) Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee	The reason for the Not Covered response for Objective O as it is our understanding that the Council does not act as Trustee.

Houghton Regis Town Council

Financial Year 2024-25



IAC Audit and Consultancy Ltd

Audit date: 2 April 2025

Visit 2 Internal Audit Observations

B This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.

No.	Audit Test	Response	Observation	Recommendation	Priority	Comments
1	Is the tender threshold set in Financial Regulations the same value as stated in Standing Orders	Yes	<i>The tender value stated in Financial Regulations is £100,000, in Standing Orders it is stated at £30,000.</i>	The Council to review its Financial Regulations and Standing Orders and ensure that the tender threshold stated in both is the same.	High	This recommendation coincided with revised Standing Orders being issued, by NALC, to address this anomalie. Council received and adopted revised SO's & FR's at the AGM meeting to be held on the 14th May 2025.
2	Is expenditure on Credit / Debit Card subject to independent review and scrutiny?	No	<p><i>The practice at the Council is for a listing of Purchase Ledger payments to be reported to Council. Other payments, such as debit card payments, and salary payments are not reported to Council.</i></p> <p><i>As Council only reviews and approves a Purchase Ledger payment listing, which does not include direct payments, it is unclear how the Council would become aware of any issues with these payments (see below).</i></p>	The Council to put in place arrangement so that ALL payments made by Council are report to, and approved by Council, or the appropriate committee.	High	Monthly salary payment reports will be provided to Corporate Services Committee, starting as of April 2025. Monthly cash book reports, listing all payment will be provided to the Corporate Services Committee, starting as of April 2025.

3	Can bank payment transactions be traced to source documents ? (Year End)	Yes	<p><i>It was noted that a payment of £17,521 in respect of pension contributions was made twice on 5th February 2025 in error.</i></p> <p><i>It is understood that this was due to two different officers receiving the same request for payment (the Council still permits payments to be made on a sole authoriser basis). It is unclear how two requests, for the same payment, were entered on the banking system.</i></p>	<p>The Council to note that a significant, high value, payment was duplicated and that a major contributing factor to this was the continued existence of sole payment authorisation on the Councils bank account (This has previously been raised as an audit issue).</p> <p>The Council, as a priority, to review the online signing authority on its bank accounts and arrange to implement dual authorisation of payments. If necessary the Council should consider opening a bank account which permits dual authorisation as a standard facility.</p>	High	Dual authorisation requirement has been implemented (8th April 2025) on the Town Councils bank accounts.
4	If the Council has incurred significant legal fees the reason for these is documented and has been properly authorised by Council.	Yes	<p><i>It was noted that £8,000 income in respect of an insurance claim has been netted off against costs.</i></p>	<p>The Council to note that income should not be netted off against expenditure. The £8,000 entry should be corrected and journaled from costs to an income code.</p>	Medium	This has been corrected.

G Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.

No.	Audit Test	Response	Observation	Recommendation	Priority	Comments
1	Salaries paid agree with those approved by the council	No	<p><i>A detailed test was carried out in respect of January payroll. It was noted that one member of staff had been paid at Spinal Column Point 17 although their contract states a pay band of SCP 18-21. It is unclear whether the payment, or the contract, is correct.</i></p>	<p>The Council to review the salary paid, and the contract of employment, for the staff member concerned and ensure that either the rate of pay, or the contract, is amended to the correct value.</p>	High	This is in the process of being actioned.

I Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.

No.	Audit Test	Response	Observation	Recommendation	Priority	Comments
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1	There a bank reconciliation for each account (Interim)	No	<p><i>It was noted that the Council is operating a bank account for youth services which is not recorded in the Council accounting system. The practice is the transfers to that account, from other Council accounts, have been recorded as payments and that transactions on this account, and the current bank balance is not recorded.</i></p> <p><i>It is understood that this account operates using a debit card issued to one member of staff and that this is a longstanding arrangement.</i></p>	<p>The Council to note the one bank account is operated outside of the Councils accounting system.</p> <p>The Council to review transactions on this account and verify whether they are in accordance with Council approvals.</p> <p>The Council to ensure that, as a priority, this bank account is brought into the Council accounting system and that transactions on this account are properly recorded and reported.</p>	High	This has been actioned.
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(For local councils only)

O Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee

No.	Audit Test	Response	Observation	Recommendation	Priority	Comments
1	Trust income and expenditure has been transacted through a separate bank account in the name of the Trust and has not been recorded in Councils accounts	N/A	<p><i>The Town Council does not act as a Sole Trustee, however it does operate a Mayors Charity. It is not currently practice for the annual statement of the Mayors Charity, setting out income and expenditure, to be reported to Council.</i></p>	<p>The Council should consider introducing a process whereby a summary account of the income and expenditure of the Mayors Charity is formally reported to Council, for their information, each year.</p> <p>The Council to consider whether, as good practice, the annual statement of income and expenditure of the charity should be published on the Councils website.</p>	Medium	It is suggested that Council receive an annual summary of the income and expenditure for the Mayors Appeal Fund (unregistered charity) at the end of each Mayoral year. Members comments are invited.

Houghton Regis Town Council

Financial Year 2024-25



IAC Audit and Consultancy Ltd

Audit date: 6 June 2025

Year End Internal Audit Observations

G Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.

No.	Audit Test	Response	Observation	Recommendation	Priority	Comments
1	Accounting Statements Box 4 - Staff Costs value agrees to total payments of Salaries, Wages and Pensions.	No	<i>Accounting Statements Box 4 value does not agree to total payments of Salaries, Wages and Pensions. It appears that the value computed for Box 4 does not include the balance on nominal code 4005 Staff Overtime.</i>	The Council to note the difference between the draft Accounting Statements Box 4 value and the value computed by the Internal Auditor. The Council to review the computation and, if appropriate, amend the Box 4 value.	High	Upon receipt of the IA comments, further work was undertaken on the draft Accounting Statements including Box 4. The figure for Box 4 now accords with the IA's computed value.

H Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.

No.	Audit Test	Response	Observation	Recommendation	Priority	Comments
1	The asset register has been subject to review by Council	No	<i>From a review of Minutes it was not possible to verify that the asset register, and any additions and disposals, has been subject to review by Council.</i>	The Council should formally review the asset register, and approve any additions and disposals, each year prior to the approval of the Accounting Statements.	High	The Town Council considered the asset register including additions and disposals at its meeting on 17th March 2025. A copy of the agenda and minutes are on the Council's website.

I Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.

No.	Audit Test	Response	Observation	Recommendation	Priority	Comments
1	The Year End bank reconciliations have been signed and dated as evidence of independent review.	No	<i>The Year End bank reconciliations have not been signed and dated as evidence of independent review.</i>	Prior to the Council's approval of the Accounting Statements the year end bank reconciliations should be subject to review and signed and dated as evidence of this review.	Medium	The bank reconciliations covering year end were presented to Corporate Services Committee on 9th June 2025.

2	Year end bank reconciliation agrees to Box 8 of the Accounting Statements	No	<i>The Year End bank reconciliation provided does not agree to Box 8 of the Accounting Statements. The difference of £200 appears to relate to the balance on the Clerks Imprest Account written off during the year but is still included on the bank reconciliation.</i>	Council to review the computation of the Box 8 value and agree it to the Councils accounting records and bank reconciliation.	High	Upon receipt of the IA comments, further work was undertaken on the draft Accounting Statements including Box 8. The figure for Box 8 now accords with the IA's computed value.
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J *Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.*

No.	Audit Test	Response	Observation	Recommendation	Priority	Comments
1	The Accounting Statements Box 5 value agrees to total payments of Principal and Interest on loans.	No	<i>The Accounting Statements Box 5 value does not agree to total payments of Principal and Interest on loans. It appears the value stated does not include the balance on nominal code 4066 - 'Loan payments - Tithe Farm Pav'.</i>	Council to review the Box 5 value stated and agree it to the value of payments (of Principal and Interest) made during the year.	High	Upon receipt of the IA comments, further work was undertaken on the draft Accounting Statements including Box 5. The figure for Box 5 now accords with the IA's computed value.
2	Audit Extended Trial Balance agrees to draft Accounting Statements	No	<i>The Internal Audit Extended Trial Balance does not agree to the draft Accounting Statements. It was not possible to agree the values stated for Boxes 4,5, 6 and 7.</i>	Council to review the values stated in the draft accounting statements to ensure that they agree to the Councils accounting records	High	Upon receipt of the IA comments, it was clarified to the IA that a adjustment was made for an additional prepayment for the Civic Service totalling £732.62 as the event was being held in 25/26. The IA had based his assessment on data provided prior to this adjustment.
3	Prior year numbers reported on this years Accounting Statements agree to prior year Accounting Statements	No	<i>The prior year numbers of this year's Accounting Statement do not agree to those stated on the previous years Accounting Statements. There is a difference on the value stated in Box 10.</i>	Council to review the prior year values stated in the draft accounting statements to ensure that they are correct.	High	Upon receipt of the IA comments, further work was undertaken on the draft Accounting Statements including the prior year values. The figure stated in Box 10 in 2023/24 was incorrectly statd at £686,557, the correct figure was £686,554. This figure in re-stated in Section 2 for 2023/24.

Appendix C

2024-25 Internal Audit Houghton Regis Town Council

Houghton Regis Town Council

Audit 1 Date: 20/11/2024
 Audit 2 Date: 02/04/2025
 Year End Audit Date: 06/06/2025



Internal Audit Summary for the year 2024-25

(shaded Internal Control Objectives are not applicable to your Council)

Internal Control Objective		Observations	Observation Analysis					Responses			
			Non - Compliance	High	Medium	Low	Advisory	Positive	Negative	N/A	Not Checked
A	Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.	1	0	0	1	0	0	6	0	0	0
B	This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	3	0	4	3	0	0	39	2	1	0
C	This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	1	0	0	1	0	0	11	1	2	0
D	The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	3	0	2	1	0	0	13	2	2	0
E	Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	0	0	1	0	0	0	20	0	6	0
F	Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	0	0	0
G	Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	1	0	2	0	0	0	16	2	7	0
H	Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	1	0	1	0	0	0	7	1	3	0
I	Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.	2	0	2	1	0	0	11	3	2	0
J	Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	4	0	3	1	0	0	6	3	2	0
K	If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2023/24, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. (If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2023/24 AGAR tick "not covered"	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	3	N/A
L	The authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1	1	0	7	N/A

2024-25 Internal Audit Houghton Regis Town Council

Internal Control Objective		Observations	Observation Analysis					Responses			
			Non - Compliance	High	Medium	Low	Advisory	Positive	Negative	N/A	Not Checked
M	<i>The authority, during the previous year (2023/24) correctly provided for the period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations (evidenced by the notice published on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set).</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	0
N	<i>The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2023/24 AGAR (see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes).</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	0	1	0
O	<i>(For local councils only) Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee</i>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	7	N/A
Total		24	0	15	8	0	1	151	14	43	0

Houghton Regis Town Council

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During the financial year ended 31 March 2025, this authority's internal auditor acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with the relevant procedures and controls in operation and obtained appropriate evidence from the authority.

The internal audit for 2024/25 has been carried out in accordance with this authority's needs and planned coverage. On the basis of the findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in this table. Set out below are the objectives of internal control and alongside are the internal audit conclusions on whether, in all significant respects, the control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of this authority.

Internal control objective	Yes	No*	Not covered**
A. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.	Yes		
B. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	Yes		
C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	Yes		
D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	Yes		
E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	Yes		
F. Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.	Yes		
G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	Yes		
H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	Yes		
I. Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.	Yes		
J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	Yes		
K. If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2023/24, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. <i>(If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2023/24 AGAR tick "not covered")</i>			N/A
L. The authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation.			N/A
M. In the year covered by this AGAR, the authority correctly provided for a period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations <i>(during the 2024-25 AGAR period, were public rights in relation to the 2023-24 AGAR evidenced by a notice on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set)</i> .	Yes		
N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2023/24 AGAR <i>(see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes)</i> .	Yes		
O. (For local councils only)	Yes	No	Not applicable
Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.			N/A

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

Date(s) internal audit undertaken

09/06/2024 20/11/2024

Name of person who carried out the internal audit

Kevin Rose ACMA- IAC Audit & Consultancy Ltd

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Date

DD/MM/YYYY 08/06/2025

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

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



HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Peel Street, Houghton Regis, Bedfordshire, LU5 5EY

Telephone: 01582 708540

Email: info@houghtonregis-tc.gov.uk

www.houghtonregis-tc.gov.uk

Confirmation regarding the exercise of public rights

Parish Council name: **Houghton Regis Town Council**

The Parish Council must inform the electorate of an exact 30 working day period during which public rights may be exercised. This is inclusive of the start and finish dates.

You may find the calendar guide overleaf useful.

Please note that because the earliest date to start a compliant public rights period is 3 June 2025 the definition of '*as soon as practical*' excludes any earlier dates than this.

The inspection period **must** commence no later than 1 July 2025 and **must** include the first 10 working days of July.

The elector's rights **must** start exactly one day after the annual return has been published on your website (or other free to access website used by the Council) with the statutory notice at Attachment 3.1. Publication of the annual return must be as soon as practical after the unaudited annual return has been approved by the Parish Council, and in line with the regulatory inspection period.

Working days are defined as Monday – Friday. They do not include Saturdays, Sundays, and Bank Holidays.

The inspection period commences on: 20th June 2025
And ends on: 31st July 2025

Signed

Date: 10th June 2025

Position held: Town Clerk & RFO

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2024/25

We acknowledge as the members of:

Houghton Regis Town Council

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2025, that:

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

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

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

DD/MM/YYYY

and recorded as minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

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

Chair

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Clerk

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

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Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2024/25 for

Houghton Regis Town Council

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2024 £	31 March 2025 £	
1. Balances brought forward	Restated 826,230	633,119	<i>Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of previous year.</i>
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	1,196,781	1,363,800	<i>Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.</i>
3. (+) Total other receipts	2,573,167	1,232,568	<i>Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.</i>
4. (-) Staff costs	-749,067	-855,262	<i>Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.</i>
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	-12,034	-36,103	<i>Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).</i>
6. (-) All other payments	-3,201,958	-1,407,709	<i>Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cash-book less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).</i>
7. (=) Balances carried forward	633,119	930,413	<i>Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).</i>
8. Total value of cash and short term investments	667,405	880,153	<i>The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – To agree with bank reconciliation.</i>
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	6,873,900	6,894,679	<i>The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.</i>
10. Total borrowings	686,554	662,448	<i>The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).</i>

For Local Councils Only	Yes	No	N/A	
11a. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)		✓		<i>The Council, as a body corporate, acts as sole trustee and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets.</i>
11b. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)			✓	<i>The figures in the accounting statements above exclude any Trust transactions.</i>

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2025 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

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

SIGN



REQUIRED

Date

10/06/2025

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

DD/MM/YYYY

as recorded in minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

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

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Restated Explanation

Only Box 10 has been restated.

2023/24 AGAR Box 10 figure £686,557

2024/25 AGAR Box 10 figure £686,554

Difference £3

The Box 10 figure for the 2024/25 AGAR has been restated due to a transcribing error in 2023/24.

Houghton Regis Town Council

Statements of Accounts

For the year ended 31 March 2025

Houghton Regis Town Council

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31 March 2025

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Houghton Regis Town Council

Council Information

31 March 2025

(Information current at 9th June 2025)

Mayor

Cllr M. Herber

Councillors

Cllr E. Billington

Cllr P. Burgess

Cllr J. Carroll

Cllr E. Cooper

Cllr E. Costello

Cllr Mrs Y. Farrell

Cllr W. Henderson

Cllr D. Jones

Cllr T. McMahon

Cllr C. Rollins

Cllr A. Slough

Cllr C. Slough

Cllr D. Taylor

Town Clerk

Mrs Clare Evans

Auditors

Mazars LLP

Salvus House

Aykley Heads

Durham

DH1 5TS

Internal Auditors

IAC Audit & Consultancy Ltd

23 Westbury Rd

Yarnbrook

Wiltshire

BA14 6AG

Houghton Regis Town Council
Statement of Accounting Policies
31 March 2025

Auditors

The name and address of the External Auditors is provided for information only.

These Statements are not subject to audit and the External Auditors have no responsibility for them.

Accounting Convention

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the Accounting Guidance Notes for Local Councils (the Guide) issued by The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) as applicable to a medium sized council.

These accounts have been prepared having regard to the fundamental accounting concepts of: Going Concern, Prudence, Accruals, Relevance, Consistency, Reliability, Comparability, Understandability and Materiality.

The accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

Fixed Assets

All expenditure on the acquisition, creation or enhancement of fixed assets is reported in the notes to the accounts, provided that the fixed asset yields benefits to the authority and the services it provides for a period of more than one year. Fixed assets are valued on the basis recommended by CIPFA. The year end values are stated on the following basis:

land, operational properties and other operational assets are reported in notes to the accounts at cost (where known) or at insurance values current when first reported as approximating to the lower of net replacement cost and net realisable value at that time (previous years at current insurance values).

certain community assets are the subject of restrictive covenants as to their use and/or future disposal. Such assets are therefore considered to have no appreciable realisable value and are included at nominal value only.

Revenue Grants

Revenue grants are credited to income when conditions attached thereto have been fulfilled and/or equivalent expenditure has been incurred. Grants received in respect of which the conditions have not been fulfilled, or expenditure incurred, are carried forward as deferred revenue grants.

Investments

Investments are included in the balance sheet at historic cost and realised gains or losses are taken into the income and expenditure account as realised. Details are given at notes 8 and 9.

Debtors and Creditors

The council reviews the level of its commercial debtors on a regular basis and provisions are made, as required, where the likelihood of amounts proving ultimately collectable is in doubt.

Value Added Tax

Income and Expenditure excludes any amounts related to VAT, as all VAT suffered/collected is recoverable from or payable to HM Revenue and Customs. Any amounts not so recoverable are treated as a separate expense.

Houghton Regis Town Council
Statement of Accounting Policies
31 March 2025

External Loan Repayments

The council is not required by the Guide to incorporate external borrowings in its Balance Sheet. Details are shown at note 14.

Leases

The council is not required by the Guide to incorporate Hire Purchase and/or Finance Lease obligations in its Balance Sheet. Details are shown at note 13.

Reserves

The council maintains certain reserves to meet general and specific future expenditure. The purpose of the council's reserves is explained in notes 15 to 16.

Interest Income

All interest receipts are credited initially to general funds.

Pensions

The pension costs that are charged against precept in the council's accounts, in respect of its employees, are equal to the contributions paid to the funded pension scheme for those employees.

These contributions are determined by the fund's actuary on a triennial basis and are set to meet 100% of the liabilities of the pension fund, in accordance with relevant government regulations.

The next actuarial valuation was due at 31st March 2025 and any change in contribution rates as a result of that valuation will take effect from 1st April 2026.

Houghton Regis Town Council
Income and Expenditure Account
31 March 2025

	Notes	2025 £	2024 £
INCOME			
Precept on Principal Authority		1,363,800	1,196,781
Agency Services	12	-	1,200
Capital Receipts, Grants and Loan Proceeds		265,790	2,628,308
Interest and Investment Income	1	71,704	79,152
Leisure and Recreation		77,706	19,780
Allotments		3,640	4,312
Cemetery & Churchyard		14,020	23,629
Community & Youth		1,132	31,759
Highways - Footpaths and Lighting		240	-
Miscellaneous		8,086	7,880
Community Development		184,091	3,946
Sale of Investments		(19,791)	-
Sale of Assets		25,950	8,000
		<u>1,996,368</u>	<u>4,004,747</u>
EXPENDITURE			
Establishment/General Administration		111,306	849,227
Agency Costs	12	32,059	37,500
Election Expenses		-	30,063
Capital Expenditure incl Capital Grants	7	683,201	2,693,986
Loan Interest and Capital Repayments		68,895	12,034
Operational Expenditure:			
Leisure and Recreation inc. Pavilions		241,508	174,489
Allotments		532	2,496
Cemetery & Churchyard		3,709	5,152
Planning and Development		1,792	6,375
Corporate Services Staff Costs		293,049	-
Democratic Representation and Management		13,108	11,864
Environment & Leisure Staff Costs		375,576	-
Public Toilets		22,200	22,450
Grants Under Specific Powers		30,071	22,347
Community Services Staff Costs		199,325	-
Community Services		222,743	95,076
		<u>2,299,074</u>	<u>3,963,059</u>
General Fund			
Balance at 01 April 2024		485,804	429,251
Add: Total Income		<u>1,996,368</u>	<u>4,004,747</u>
		2,482,172	4,433,998
Deduct: Total Expenditure		<u>2,299,074</u>	<u>3,963,059</u>
		183,098	470,939
Transfer from Earmarked Reserves	16	215,019	14,865
General Reserve Balance at 31 March 2025		<u>398,117</u>	<u>485,804</u>

The notes on pages 8 to 14 form part of these unaudited statements.

Houghton Regis Town Council

Balance Sheet

31 March 2025

	Notes	2025 £	2025 £	2024 £
Long Term Assets				
Investments Other Than Loans	8		-	600,000
Current Assets				
Debtors and prepayments	10	312,925		231,156
Investments	9	869,500		469,500
Cash at bank and in hand		10,653		197,905
		1,193,078		898,561
Current Liabilities				
Creditors and income in advance	11	(288,441)		(291,218)
Net Current Assets			904,637	607,343
Total Assets Less Current Liabilities			904,637	1,207,343
Total Assets Less Liabilities			904,637	1,207,343
Capital and Reserves				
Earmarked Reserves	16		506,520	721,539
General Reserve			398,117	485,804
			904,637	1,207,343

Signed:

Cllr M. Herber

Mayor

.....

Mrs Clare Evans

Responsible Financial Officer

Date:

.....

The notes on pages 8 to 14 form part of these unaudited statements.

Houghton Regis Town Council

Notes to the Accounts

31 March 2025

1 Interest and Investment Income

	2025	2024
	£	£
Interest Income - General Funds	71,704	79,152
	<u>71,704</u>	<u>79,152</u>

2 Publicity

Section 5 of the Local Government Act 1986 requires the council to disclose expenditure on publicity. Details are shown under the following broad categories:

	2025	2024
	£	£
Publicity	75	-
Councils Website	9,125	315
Newsletter	4,942	5,958
	<u>14,142</u>	<u>6,273</u>

3 General Power of Competence

With effect from 28th September 2015 Houghton Regis Town Council acquired the right to exercise the General Power of Competence extended to Town and Parish Councils under the Localism Act 2011 by S.I. 2012 No 965 (The Parish Councils (General Power of Competence) (Prescribed Conditions) Order 2012). Therefore, with effect from 28th September 2015 the council no longer exercises the powers conveyed by Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

4 Tenancies

During the year the following tenancies were held:

Council as landlord

Tenant	Property	Rent p.a. £	Repairing / Non-Repairing
Various	Allotments	3,640	Non-Repairing

Council as tenant

Landlord	Property	Rent p.a. £	Repairing / Non-Repairing
Central Bedfordshire Council	Workshop	15,500	Non-Repairing
Central Bedfordshire Council	Parkside Recreation Ground	50	N/A
Central Bedfordshire Council	Tithe Farm Recreation Ground	5	N/A

5 Pensions

For the year of account the council's contributions equal 26.80% of employees' pensionable pay. These contributions will remain at 26.80%, in future years, in order to provide adequately for future liabilities.

Houghton Regis Town Council

Notes to the Accounts

31 March 2025

6 Fixed Assets

	2025	2024
	£	£
	Value	Value
At 31 March the following assets were held:		
<u>Land and Buildings</u>		
Bowls Green Shed	2,800	2,800
Houghton Regis Memorial Hall	293,000	293,000
Council Offices and Land	260,400	260,400
Sports Pavilion Moore Crescent	340,020	340,020
Leasehold-Tithe Farm Pavilion	138,900	138,900
Leasehold-Tithe Farm Sports Development Project	3,411,385	2,916,552
Leasehold-Parkside Pavilion	154,784	154,784
Leasehold - Orchard Close Pavilion	115,940	115,940
Leasehold-Village Green Pavilion	459,836	459,836
	5,177,065	4,682,232
<u>Vehicles and Equipment</u>		
Recreation Ground Equipment	54,474	50,826
Office Equipment	48,475	48,475
Office Boiler	2,990	2,990
Office Furniture	100,226	100,226
Pavilion Furniture & Equipment	7,446	7,446
Play and Sports Equipment & Safety Surfaces	460,158	288,158
Skate Park	90,306	90,306
M U G A	30,062	30,062
Christmas Decorations	64,269	63,069
Kubota Tractor M9540 - LK09 EPL	35,000	35,000
Ford Ranger EX67 KKW	16,942	16,942
Ford Ranger EN68 VTG	22,520	22,520
Ford Ranger LC69 HCL	18,990	18,990
P7E Trailer	795	795
LT106G Trailer	2,465	2,465
Ifor Williams Trailer	800	800
Work Platform (f/lift)	650	650
Dennis Mower	1,500	1,500
Verticut Mower	1,200	1,200
Ransomes Cylinder Mower	850	850
Hayter Mower	2,137	2,137
Hayter Mower (2018)	535	535
Trimax Snake Mower	-	19,950
Hayter Pro Rotary Mower	1,149	1,149
Pro Virtue SVP Mower x 2	748	748
Verti-Cutter	1,329	1,329
Harrier Grass Cutter x 2	1,400	1,400
Honda Tractor Rotavator	4,300	4,300
Stihl AR300L	1,320	1,320
Stihl RMA765 Mower	1,037	1,037
Kubota Mower LR21 HKO	-	17,000
Sissis Autorake	5,209	5,209
Bomford Kestrel Arm Mower	24,600	24,600
Stihl Battery Brushcutters (6)	6,445	6,445

Houghton Regis Town Council

Notes to the Accounts

31 March 2025

Kubota Flail Deck	-	7,104
Tomlin Harrows	4,229	4,229
Mitsubishi truck KY64BGK	15,000	15,000
Exac Post Hole Borer	1,500	1,500
Dump Trailer 12' x 6'	4,650	4,650
JCB Mini Excavator	3,476	3,476
Kubota K15 DXU	14,116	14,116
Kubota F3890 (KX68 BDZ)	-	18,368
Kubota F3890 (KX68 BEJ)	18,368	18,368
Kubota XL300 Spreader	1,888	1,888
Rotowash	7,176	7,176
CCTV Equipment	25,041	25,041
Anti-Ram Bollards	5,592	5,592
Gazebos	905	905
Cemetery Earth Augur	670	670
Hot Water Pressure Cleaner	18,219	18,219
Mobile Steam Cleaner	17,999	17,999
Shibarua Tractor LK 17 KTD	19,755	19,755
Sports Equipment (Village Green)	69,999	69,999
Outdoor Gym	4,100	4,100
Kubota RTV KX20 CCJ	15,250	15,250
Defibrillators	10,092	10,092
	<u>1,268,352</u>	<u>1,153,926</u>

Infrastructure Assets

Gates and Fencing	99,769	92,569
Bowls Irrigation System	7,290	7,290
Speed Activated Signs	9,226	9,226
Town Signs & Noticeboards	12,157	12,157
Litter Bins	9,970	9,970
Bollards - Village Green Grnd	7,192	7,192
Benches	5,990	5,990
Flame Beacon	2,204	2,204
Flag Poles	5,875	5,875
Memorial Hall Planter	3,720	3,720
Floodlights (Tithe Farm Skate Park)	15,844	15,844
Bedford Rd Wall (All Saints Gate)	20,018	20,018
Village Green Play Area Resurfacing	48,000	48,000
Resurface Orchard Close Play Area	21,081	21,081
Parkside Family Picnic Area	10,180	10,180
Allotment Shed Bases	6,502	6,502
	<u>285,018</u>	<u>277,818</u>

Houghton Regis Town Council

Notes to the Accounts

31 March 2025

6 Fixed Assets (cont'd)	2025	2024
<u>Community Assets</u>		
Civic Regalia	4,779	4,779
War Memorial	9,363	9,363
Village Green	1	1
Tithe Farm Recreation Ground	1	1
Land rear of Orchard Close	1	1
Houghton Regis Cemetery	104,305	104,305
New Cemetery Development	45,781	41,461
Orchard Close Recreation Ground	1	1
Land rear of Houghton Court	1	1
Land rear of Village Green Pavilion	1	1
Land Adj Chapel Path	1	1
Land off Townsend Farm Road	1	1
All Saints Churchyard	1	1
Land at Moore Crescent	1	1
Land at The Baulk	1	1
Land at Orchard Close	1	1
Parcels within Dog Kennel Down Area	1	1
Parkside Recreation Ground	1	1
Part of The Paddocks	1	1
Former Railway Line	1	1
	<hr/> 164,244	<hr/> 159,924
	<hr/> <hr/> 6,894,679	<hr/> <hr/> 6,273,900

The basis of valuation of the above assets is set out in the Statement of Accounting Policies.

7 Fixed Assets - Additions and Disposals

	2025	2024
	£	£
	Cost	Cost
During the year the following assets were purchased:		
Operational Land and Buildings	494,833	2,628,170
Vehicles and Equipment	176,848	49,205
Infrastructure Assets	7,200	-
Community Assets	4,320	16,611
	<hr/> 683,201	<hr/> 2,693,986
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>
	Proceeds	Proceeds
During the year the following assets were disposed of:		
Vehicles and Equipment	25,950	8,000
	<hr/> 25,950	<hr/> 8,000
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

Houghton Regis Town Council

Notes to the Accounts

31 March 2025

8 Investments

	Investments Other Than Loans £
Cost	
At 01 April 2024	600,000
Disposals	(600,000)
At 31 March 2025	-
Amounts Written Off	
At 31 March 2025	-
Net Book Value	
At 31 March 2025	-
	-
At 01 April 2024	600,000
	600,000

9 Current Asset Investments

	2025 £	2024 £
L A Deposit Fund Account	869,500	469,500
	869,500	469,500

10 Debtors

	2025 £	2024 £
Trade Debtors	154,336	14,533
VAT Recoverable	50,733	179,576
Other Debtors	251	8,459
Prepayments	6,924	17,280
Accrued Income	3,681	11,308
Capital Grant Debtors	97,000	-
	312,925	231,156

Houghton Regis Town Council

Notes to the Accounts

31 March 2025

11 Creditors and Accrued Expenses

	2025	2024
	£	£
Trade Creditors	41,940	166,083
Other Creditors	-	4,299
Payroll Taxes and Social Security	13,120	12,121
Accruals	152,680	35,398
Income in Advance	200	200
Capital Creditors	54,725	47,341
Capital Receipts in Advance	25,776	25,776
	288,441	291,218

12 Agency Work

During the year the Council undertook no agency work on behalf of other authorities.

Commissioning Authority and Nature of Work

	2025	2024
	£	£
Central Bedfordshire Council - Dog Bin Emptying	-	1,200
	-	1,200

During the year the Council commissioned the following agency work to be performed by other authorities:

Performing Authority and Nature of Work

	2025	2024
	£	£
Central Bedfordshire Council - CCTV Monitoring	3,007	4,122
Central Bedfordshire Council - Bulk Waste Collections	-	(3,600)
Police & Crime Commissioner Beds - OP HANA	29,052	36,978
	32,059	37,500

A final claim to 31 March 2025 has been made.

13 Hire Purchase and Lease Obligations

At 31 March the following hire purchase agreement(s) and lease(s) were in operation:

Hire/Lessor	Purpose	Annual Lease/Hire Payable £	Year of Expiry
Grenke Leasing Ltd	Photocopier	511	2025

14 Loans

At the close of business on 31 March 2025 the following loans to the council were outstanding:

Lender	Loan Period	Amount £	Years Remaining
Public Works Loan Board	24 Years from 19 th October 2009	79,210	9
Public Works Loan Board	24 Years from 5 th February 2010	91,025	9
Public Works Loan Board	24 Years from 22 nd November 2023	492,213	23

Houghton Regis Town Council

Notes to the Accounts

31 March 2025

15 Usable Capital Receipts Reserve

	2025	2024
	£	£
Capital receipts (asset sales) during the year	25,950	8,000
<i>Less:</i>		
Capital used to fund expenditure	(25,950)	(8,000)
Balance at 31 March	-	-

The Usable Capital Receipts Reserve represents capital receipts available to finance capital expenditure in future years.

16 Earmarked Reserves

	Balance at 01/04/2024	Contribution to reserve	Contribution from reserve	Balance at 31/03/2025
	£	£	£	£
Other Earmarked Reserves	721,539	24,600	(239,619)	506,520
Total Earmarked Reserves	721,539	24,600	(239,619)	506,520

The Other Earmarked Reserves are credited with amounts set aside from revenue to fund specific known commitments of the council.

The Other Earmarked Reserves at 31 March 2025 are set out in detail at Appendix A.

17 Capital Commitments

The council had no capital commitments at 31 March 2025 not otherwise provided for in these accounts.

18 Contingent Liabilities

The council is not aware of any contingent liabilities at the date of these accounts.

Houghton Regis Town Council

Appendices

31 March 2025

Appendix A

Schedule of Earmarked Reserves

	<u>Balance at</u> <u>01/04/2024</u> £	<u>Contribution</u> <u>to reserve</u> £	<u>Contribution</u> <u>from reserve</u> £	<u>Balance at</u> <u>31/03/2025</u> £
All Saints Churchyard Wall	5,616			5,616
Pavilion Renovation	244,301		(218,112)	26,189
Street Furniture	11,251			11,251
Grounds Machinery Renewal	1,920			1,920
Play Areas	170,651	15,000	(6,395)	179,256
Community Development	20,493		(1,792)	18,701
Elections	1,697	6,000		7,697
Website Development	6,000		(6,000)	-
Cemetery Provision	70,880		(4,320)	66,560
Allotments	32,960			32,960
Former Railway Line	24,489		(3,000)	21,489
CBC Bulk Waste Reserve	3,600	3,600		7,200
Office Provision	122,699			122,699
Houghton Hall Park Project	4,982			4,982
 TOTAL EARMARKED RESERVES	 <u>721,539</u>	 <u>24,600</u>	 <u>(239,619)</u>	 <u>506,520</u>

Agenda Item 13

2025/26							
Committee	Schedule of Earmarked Reserves		Predicted Opening Balance	Transfer In	Transfer Out	Predicted Closing Balance	Notes
			01.04.25			31.03.26	
			£	£	£	£	
Town Council	310	General Reserves - Predicted	485,804	0	0	485,804	This can only be confirmed once the budget for 2025/26 has been set.
E&L	320	All Saints Churchyard Wall	5,616	0	0	5,616	To be used to fund repairs as required.
E&L	322	Pavilion Renovation	26,189	0	0	26,189	This EMR will be used to help fund Tithe Farm Sports project.
E&L	324	Street Furniture	11,251	0	0	11,251	
E&L	326	Grounds Machinery renewal	1,920	0	0	1,920	
E&L	327	Play Areas	179,256	0	177,151	2,105	Typically this fund gets built up over time to fund major improvements to play areas. Projects in 25/26 to be considered and confirmed by E&L
Comm Serv	330	Community Development	18,701	0	8,000	10,701	Suggested to be used to support community asset transfers
Corp Serv	332	Elections	7,697	6,000	0	13,697	Typically this fund gets built up over time to fund any by-election or main election.
E&L	348	Cemetery	66,560	0	0	66,560	
E&L	351	Allotments	32,960	0	8,000	24,960	To be used to fund enhancements to any allotment provision.
E&L	352	Former Railway Line	21,489	0	7,163	14,326	This has to date been an annual transfer out to help fund the ongoing maintenance of this land in accordance with the s106 agreement. To be transferred to 281-4992
Comm Serv	354	CBC Bulk Waste Reserve	7,200	0	7,200	0	Established at year end as CBC not invoice for the service in 2023/24 or 2024/25.
Corp Serv	355	New Office Provision	122,699	0	0	122,699	
E&L	358	Houghton Hall Park Project	4,982	0	0	4,982	Reduced financial contribution required in 23/24, agreed to hold surplus budget in an EMR to assist in funding upkeep of Visitors Centre.
TOTAL EARMARKED RESERVES			506,520	6,000	207,514	305,006	
E&L	S106	Deferred Income	25,776	0	0	25,776	To be used to help fund Tithe Farm Sports project
E&L	S106	* Deferred Income - Bidwell Countryside Recreation Public Open Space	990,726	0	0	990,726	To fund maintainance and upkeep - draw down from this fund to be determined
E&L	S106	* Deferred Income - Bidwell Formal Park	618,266	0	0	618,266	To fund maintainance and upkeep - draw down from this fund to be determined
E&L	S106	* Deferred Income - Bidwell Sports pitches, MUGA, changing rooms and car park	1,487,283	0	0	1,487,283	To fund maintainance and upkeep - draw down from this fund to be determined

* Advice being sort on correct accounting treatment for these funds (deferred income or EMR)



HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY & SCHEDULE

Date of Approval:	Town Council 28 th September 2015
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Risk Management Strategy

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Effective risk management is essential if Houghton Regis Town Council is to deliver its key outcomes and achieve its goals. It supports continuous improvement and good governance.
- 1.2 Risk management is about us: identifying the things that could happen to prevent the delivery of our key outcomes (our risks); assessing how likely it is that these things might happen and what their impact might be; and determining what can be done to reduce the likelihood of those unwanted events or mitigate their impact. Effective risk management requires us to identify our most important risks; record those risks and the actions we plan to take to deal with them; and review, regularly the impact of our actions on our risks.
- 1.3 We cannot avoid risk entirely and it would be impracticable to try to manage away entirely the risks that we are exposed to. What we must do is: decide what level of risk we are prepared, and can afford, to accept; take action that is proportionate and affordable to reduce to an acceptable level as many risks as possible; and keep under review and actively manage those risks that remain unacceptably high.
- 1.4 The Risk Management Strategy has been adopted to help us to manage our risks effectively.

2.0 Scope

- 2.1 The Strategy provides an overview of risk management before examining in more detail the elements critical to successful risk management, i.e.:
- determining our risk appetite
 - the integration of risk management into our decision making
 - linking service planning and performance management with risk management
 - defining responsibilities for risk management
 - processes for identifying, assessing and managing risk

3.0 Strategy Outcomes

- 3.1 The outcomes to be delivered by this strategy are within the approved Town Council Plan:

4.0 Risk Management - Overview

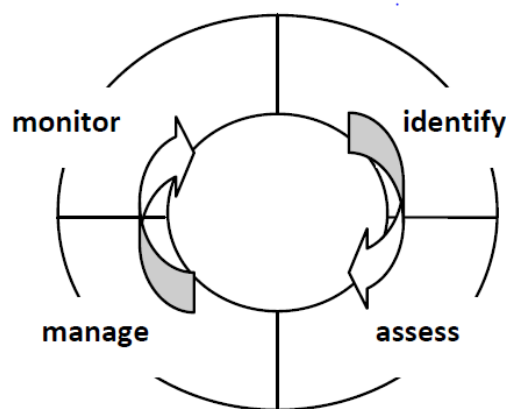
- 4.1 Risk management is the process by which the organisation seeks to identify, assess and manage key risks which might prevent it from achieving its corporate outcomes and goals or from doing so in an effective and efficient manner.
- 4.2 Risk management should not be treated as a standalone process. It should be treated just like budgeting and financial management or service planning and performance management – something that any good manager does as a matter of course. It should be linked to the service and financial planning and management as managers identify both the risks to their plans as they develop them and the risks associated with subsequent actions to keep those plans on track.
- 4.3 Risk management is a continuous process. For known risks, it should operate from the time that each risk is first identified until such time as it no longer represents a significant risk to the organisation. Recorded risks and the controls used to mitigate them should be reviewed on

a regular basis: the frequency of review for each risk should reflect the impact the risk might have and the degree of confidence placed on the controls in place to manage it. In addition, there is a need for constant and ongoing vigilance to ensure that any new risks that may arise are recognised and dealt with before they can impact on the organisation.

4.4 There are a number of benefits of having an effective risk management process in place and these include:

- Alerting management and other accountable persons to the key risks which might prevent the achievement of the organisation's corporate outcomes and service plan objectives, in order that timely mitigation can be developed to either prevent the risks occurring, or to manage them effectively if they do occur.
- Contributing to better decision making and the process of achieving corporate outcomes and service plan objectives. When embedded within existing business processes such as planning, performance management, project management and budgeting, it provides a basis for ensuring that the implications of decisions are thought through; that the impact of any decision on other decisions, initiatives and projects is considered; and that conflicts within planning and decision making are balanced. It also helps managers to design mitigations that are proportionate to the degree of risk faced.
- Providing assurance to accountable persons and managers on the adequacy of arrangements for the conduct of business. It demonstrates openness and accountability to various regulatory bodies and to all other stakeholders.
- Greater risk awareness and an improved control environment, which should mean fewer incidents and other control failures and better service outcomes.

4.5 The organisation's risk management approach is based on the standard management cycle of:



5.0 Risk Appetite

5.1 Risk appetite or risk tolerance are two terms that mean the same thing – how much risk the organisation is prepared to live with to achieve service goals and reach its strategic objectives. Using the language of the risk management professional, the organisation may be risk averse, risk neutral or risk loving. The organisation's risk appetite may vary depending on which aspect of its activities it is considering but for risk management purposes, it must be capable of expressing its appetite objectively – and numerically.

5.2 Houghton Regis Town Council has determined that it will use a scoring model based on impact and likelihood and will set a single risk tolerance level: any risk that scores 9 or more, using the model will be considered "primary" risks and will be subject to positive action

designed to mitigate the risk and bring its score within the tolerance level. Appendix 1 to the Strategy provides guidance for scoring the impact and likelihood of each risk.

- 5.3 To provide full assurance, those risks scoring less than 9 will also be recorded in the Risk Register – as will be the controls and other mitigations that resulted in a within-tolerance risk score. They will also be subject to monitoring designed to give assurance that controls are operating as expected to keep them within tolerance.

6.0 Embedding Risk Management

- 6.1 Embedding risk management is defined as building risk consistently and uniformly into all operations at every level so that it becomes part of ‘the way we do things’ as a matter of routine.

- 6.2 The key factors for successfully embedding risk management are:

- Sponsorship;
- Ownership;
- Developing linkages with service plans and corporate priorities
- Developing the appropriate knowledge and skills to identify, assess and manage risks

- 6.3 How we will seek to achieve these success factors – and embed risk management - is outlined in sections 7 and 8 of the Strategy and the accompanying appendices and guidance notes.

7.0 Roles and Responsibilities

- 7.1 Houghton Regis Town Council will only succeed in managing its risks if everyone understands their responsibilities in this area. The key message for all of us is that we share responsibility for our risks – and we can’t afford to have anyone shirking their responsibility.

- 7.2 The Town Clerk is specifically responsible for:

- Producing and reviewing the Risk Management Strategy
- Reporting to those charged with governance on the effectiveness of risk management arrangements
- Providing (or obtaining via competent specialists) advice, guidance, support and training to employees and Councillors or other accountable persons
- Reviewing committee reports to ensure risks relating to recommendations /decisions are clearly stated in the report
- Promoting effective risk management across the organisation
- Assisting officers in maintaining the corporate Risk Register

- 7.3 Every risk in the Risk Register will be made the responsibility of a specific employee, manager or Town Clerk. That person will be the Risk Owner.

- 7.4 The organisation’s Corporate Services Committee is responsible for oversight of the risk management processes. The Committee receives 6 monthly reports on overdue risk actions. *Those charged with governance* are involved in the preparation and review of the Annual Governance Statement (*Statement of Internal Control*) which includes reference to the organisation’s risk management arrangements.

- 7.5 The following table identifies other specific roles and responsibilities.

Who	Responsibilities
Accountable persons – those charged with governance (<i>Town Clerk & elected members</i>)	<p>To hold management team (or equivalent) accountable for effective risk management across the organisation</p> <p>To ensure effective risk management arrangements are in place</p> <p>To consider risks when making decisions</p> <p>To raise risk issues and concerns with management team or Risk Manager</p>
Senior management / Clerk (risk manager in this context)	<p>To identify and assess risks to service delivery and instigate actions to mitigate those risks</p> <p>To identify corporate risks and ensure identified actions to mitigate are completed</p> <p>To champion risk management and lead by example</p> <p>Horizon scanning to identify emerging risks</p> <p>To ensure appropriate risk owners are designated for each risk or action</p>
Project Managers (for projects)	<p>To identify and manage project risks</p> <p>To ensure high level project risks are recorded on the Risk Register</p>
Partnership Lead officers	<p>To identify and manage partnership risks from the organisation's perspective</p> <p>To identify and manage risks from the partnership's perspective (where the organisation is the lead authority)</p> <p>To ensure partnership risks are recorded on the Risk Register and in accordance with any partnership agreement.</p>
Clerk and other employees	<p>To identify opportunities or threats to service delivery</p> <p>To take reasonable action to minimise risks in service delivery</p> <p>To report events (materialising of identified risks) to management team</p> <p>To seek advice from the Risk Manager on risk management issues</p>

8.0 Risk Management Processes

8.1 Houghton Regis Town Council uses its Town Council Plan to identify its aims, objectives and desired outcome. Houghton Regis Town Council has determined that, for all outcomes identified in this Plan, Risk Owners must consider the risks that may materialise to prevent delivery of a desired outcome and determine what should be done about them. The following steps are to be followed:

- **Risk identification** – the Risk Owner will determine what might happen that could impact on delivery and establish when, how and why such an event might occur.
- **Risk assessment** – the Risk Owner will apply the guidance set out in Appendix 1 to determine the relevant risk score: if the risk score is outside the tolerance level action will be required. At this point the Risk Owner is assessing the “inherent risk”, that is the risk that the organisation would be exposed to if no mitigating actions were taken.

- **Initial risk mitigation** – the Risk Owner will identify what controls are already in place to reduce the chance of a risk materialising
 - **Initial risk response** – the Risk Owner will determine what to do about a risk in terms of treating, tolerating, transferring or terminating the risky activity in order to reduce the potential impact on the organisation. Alternatively, you might take the risk in order to get an outcome that would not be achievable without taking the risk.
 - **Risk review** – the Risk Owner will review the scoring with the responses and controls in place to come up with the residual risk score.
 - **Future risk mitigation** – the Risk Owner will identify actions that need to be taken to reduce the residual risk score to within the risk appetite.
- 8.2 These steps may be undertaken by officers during a group workshop, or individually with the assistance of the Risk Manager or an external facilitator. Risks, controls and actions can then be recorded in the Risk Register. Risks can be classified as:
- Corporate – cross cutting and affecting all services in the organisation
 - Operational – related to a specific service or activity
 - Strategic – may affect the strategic direction of the organisation
 - Project – time limited and specific to finite projects
- 8.3 Implementation of risk actions are monitored as part of the organisation's regular reporting of budgets, performance and risk management (where such reporting exists). Where actions have not been taken in a timely manner to mitigate risks, this shall be reported to the appropriate committee charged with governance.
- 8.4 Emerging risks identified through regular horizon scanning will be assessed, analysed and recorded on the Risk Register with suitable responses as soon as they are identified.
- 8.5 Risks relating to committee decisions are recorded in each committee report. The Risk Manager provides advice and guidance and will identify if the Risk Register requires updating with any corporate or service risks emerging from report recommendations.
- 8.6 Project risks will be identified at the outset of any project and recorded in the organisation's Project Management approach. Any project risks that have an inherent risk score of 9 or above will be recorded on the Risk Register in a sub-section for the appropriate service area. This will enable monitoring of controls and actions.
- 8.7 Once the project is completed, project risks will be removed from the Risk Register.
- 9.0 Monitoring and Review**
- 9.1 The Strategy will be reviewed annually by Corporate Services Committee and reported to Town Council.
- 9.2 Progress with actions designed to mitigate primary risks will be reported to those charged with governance.
- 9.3 Risk Owners will review their risks on the Risk Register every six months and give assurance that controls are still operating as recorded.
- 9.4 Where appropriate, Internal Audit will review the organisation's risk management processes at least once every two years.

10.0 Glossary of terms

Term	Definition
Risk	The threat that an event or action will adversely affect the organisation's ability to deliver its objectives. The threat is measured in terms of impact and likelihood.
Risk strategy	How the organisation plans to achieve good risk management
Risk appetite	The level of risk the organisation is prepared to accept
Risk averse	A low appetite for risk taking
Risk positive	A high appetite for risk taking to potentially achieve a more favourable outcome
Upside risk	Opportunity to exploit a situation for a positive advantage
Inherent risk	The impact and likelihood of an event occurring before any controls have been applied
Residual risk	The impact and likelihood of an event occurring when controls are operating as designed
Controls	Processes or actions taken to address risks by reducing the likelihood. Usually referred to as treating the risk. Cost of controls should be proportional to the risk
Mitigation	Actions taken or to be taken to reduce the chance of a risk materialising or the impact if it does.
Treat the risk	Operate processes to reduce the risk e.g. password security, spot checks, regular monitoring or reporting
Tolerate the risk	Agree not to take action, usually due to minimal likelihood of occurrence, or cost of controls is disproportional to the risk
Transfer the risk	Often through insurance, where the impact of a risk materialising is reduced. May also occur through outsourcing if a third party takes on the risk.
Terminate the risk	Stop doing the activity / service to which the risk relates
Take the risk	View the risk as an upside risk / opportunity to improve an outcome or deliver an even better service and take the chance

APPENDIX 1

IMPACT DESCRIPTORS (scores) – how big could the impact be?

The following descriptors are designed to assist the scoring of the impact of a risk if it were to occur:

Score	Low (1)	Medium (2)	High (3)	Very High (4)
Legal	Minor civil litigation	Major civil litigation and/or local public enquiry	Major civil litigation setting precedent and/or national public enquiry	Section 151 or government intervention or criminal charges
Financial	Up to £25k	Up to £50k	Up to £100k	Over £100k
Performance / Service Quality	Low level of minor complaints	Material level of minor complaints Service quality impaired	Unacceptable level of complaints. Adequate service level cannot be maintained	Complete failure to deliver service Government intervention
Health and safety of people	Low level of minor injuries	High level of minor injuries	Serious injury	Death of an individual for whom the organisation has a responsibility
Reputation	Little or no impact outside of the organisation	Minimal negative local media reporting	Significant negative front page reports or editorial comment in the local media	Questions raised in Parliament and/or reported in the national media

Financial risk impact levels should be adjusted to fit with the budget of the organisation. As a guide, Very High impact would be 10% of the organisation's net expenditure for the year (or precept and other income if applicable)

LIKELIHOOD DESCRIPTORS (scores) – how soon might it happen?

Low (1)	Once every two to five years or more
Medium (2)	This year or next year
High (3)	Within six months to a year
Very High (4)	Immediate or within a month

RISK SCORING MATRIX

VERY HIGH (4)	4	8	12	16
HIGH (3)	3	6	9	12
MEDIUM (2)	2	4	6	8
LOW (1)	1	2	3	4
IMPACT / LIKELIHOOD	LOW (1)	MEDIUM (2)	HIGH (3)	VERY HIGH (4)

Scores are mapped on the matrix above.

Red scores – Primary risk that exceeds the organisations risk appetite – action needed to redress, monthly monitoring

Amber scores – likely to cause the organisation some difficulties – quarterly monitoring

Green scores – monitor as necessary

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RISK MANAGEMENT SCHEDULE

Corporate Services

Activity	Risk area	Risk event	Likeli- hood (x)	Impact (y)	Total (=)	Existing controls	Likeli- hood	Impact	Total	Actions (who)	Review date
Finance											
• Banking	Failure of banking set up to meet legal, policy & administration requirements	Loss of funds Short term loss of bank services (telephone / internet banking)	1	3	3	Use of national bank Spread of investments Internal controls	1	3	3	RFO	Ongoing
• Borrowing	Failure of borrower to honour loan agreement Failure of lender to honour loan agreement	Financial penalties Damage to reputation	1	3	3	Use of recognised public sector lender Set up for BACS repayments	1	3	3	RFO	Ongoing

Activity	Risk area	Risk event	Likeli- hood (x)	Impact (y)	Total (=)	Existing controls	Likeli- hood	Impact	Total	Actions (who)	Review date
• Audit – external	Failure of audit to provide appropriate assurance and give unqualified opinion	Financial penalties Damage to reputation	1	2	2	Use of national auditors as required by Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd Preparation of accounts by professional accountants	1	2	2	RFO	Ongoing
• Audit – internal	Failure of audit to identify failings Unsuitability of internal audit service	Financial penalties Damage to reputation	1	2	2	Internal auditor is suitably qualified and independent of the Council. Appt made and scope set by Council	1	2	2	RFO	Ongoing

Activity	Risk area	Risk event	Likeli- hood (x)	Impact (y)	Total (=)	Existing controls	Likeli- hood	Impact	Total	Actions (who)	Review date
• Software	Loss of data Failure of software Protection of data from breach of confidentiality	Unable to undertake council functions Unlawful access to data Damage to reputation	2	3	6	Use of qualified IT support Up to date premise security Up to date IT security Off site secure data storage Up to date equipment	2	3	6	Town Clerk	Ongoing
• Investments	Failure of investment company	Loss of funds Restricted access to funds	2	4	8	Good track record Nationally renown Resolution to invest in institutions AA-rating or higher	2	4	8	RFO	Ongoing

• S106 / deferred income	Fraud	Loss of funds Damage to reputation	1	4	4	Use of national bank Spread of investments (factoring in security, liquidity, yield) Internal controls Invested with CCLA Deposit Account – AAA rated	1	4	4	Extend spread of investment Head of Corporate Services	December 2025

Activity	Risk area	Risk event	Likeli- hood (x)	Impact (y)	Total (=)	Existing controls	Likeli- hood	Impact	Total	Actions (who)	Review date
• Financial management	Poor financial decisions	Damage to reputation	3	3	9	Financial policy controls in place	3	3	9	RFO	Ongoing
	Non compliance with legislation & policy	Unable to meet financial commitments				<p>Council appoints an RFO</p> <p>Staff and Councillor training provided</p> <p>Internal and external audit undertaken</p> <p>Use of professional accountancy support</p> <p>Use of council specific accounts software</p>					

Activity	Risk area	Risk event	Likeli- hood (x)	Impact (y)	Total (=)	Existing controls	Likeli- hood	Impact	Total	Actions (who)	Review date
• Income generation	Predicted income doesn't match budgeted income Threat to service provision	Damage to reputation Unable to meet service commitments	3	2	6	Council sets balanced budget 3-9 months general reserves maintained Regular budget monitoring Main income from Precept and is governed by Legislation	3	2	6	RFO	Ongoing
• Tax base changes	Reduce income from precept arising from reduction in parish area	Reduced income	1	3	3	Active engagement by HRTC in governance reviews	1	3	3	RFO	Ongoing
	Slower than predicted increase in tax base arising from slower build out	Reduced income	1	3	3	None	1	3	3	RFO	Ongoing

Activity	Risk area	Risk event	Likeli- hood (x)	Impact (y)	Total (=)	Existing controls	Likeli- hood	Impact	Total	Actions (who)	Review date
Democracy											
• Elections	Not contested Insufficient Cllr's Suitability of candidates Not run according to statute	Damage to reputation Reduced democratic mandate Poor decisions	2	2	4	Elections promoted Information provided Elections run by principal authority	2	2	4	Head of Democratic Services	Ongoing
• Councillors	Cllr vacancies though resigning, leaving or disqualification Suitability of skills and experience Quality of guidance / decisions	Insufficient numbers to support the democratic process Damage to reputation Financial costs	2	3	6	Cllr training and support provided Cllr's agree to Code of Conduct Cllr complete Declarations of Interest forms and declare interests at meetings	2	3	6	Head of Democratic Services	Ongoing

						<p>Cllr workload shared among 14 Cllr's</p> <p>Council staff provide guidance, knowledge and support</p> <p>Council and Cllr's work under approved policies</p>					
Activity	Risk area	Risk event	Likelihood (x)	Impact (y)	Total (=)	Existing controls	Likelihood	Impact	Total	Actions (who)	Review date
• Subscriptions	<p>Loss of outside professional bodies who provide guidance and support</p> <p>Withdrawal of budget to fund subscriptions</p>	<p>Poor actions</p> <p>Damage to reputation</p>	2	2	4	<p>Long history of subscriptions</p> <p>Budget provision made annually</p> <p>Cllr's aware of benefits of subscriptions</p>	2	2	4	Town Clerk	Ongoing

Activity	Risk area	Risk event	Likeli- hood (x)	Impact (y)	Total (=)	Existing controls	Likeli- hood	Impact	Total	Actions (who)	Review date
Central services											
• Utilities	Supply fails Cut off Supplier fails	Operation of council services ceases Damage to reputation	2	2	4	Use of national suppliers Accounts settled promptly	2	2	4	Town Clerk	Ongoing
• Unplanned work	Unbudgeted costs / use of general reserves Non compliance with council policy	Damage to reputation Financial costs	2	3	6	Council policies guide for unplanned financial decisions Special mtgs can be held as required	2	3	6	Town Clerk	Ongoing
• Non compliance with legislation	Council acting unlawfully	Damage to reputation Financial costs Legal proceedings	3	3	9	Trained staff Cllr training offered Use of outside professional services to	2	2	4	Promotion of training to cllrs - Head of Democratic Services Council to consider if training	Ongoing

						support council				should / could be mandatory – Town Clerk	
						Membership of professional bodies					
Activity	Risk area	Risk event	Likelihood (x)	Impact (y)	Total (=)	Existing controls	Likelihood	Impact	Total	Actions (who)	Review date
• Communication systems inc. email, post, telephone, social media	Failure of systems Council uncontactable	Damage to reputation Financial costs Cessation of work of council	2	2	4	Variety of communication methods available Use of nationally recognised suppliers	2	2	4	Town Clerk	Ongoing
• Insurance	Failure of insurance company Insufficient insurance cover	Damage to reputation Financial costs	1	4	4	Use of nationally recognised provider Annual review of insurance arrangements	1	4	4	Town Clerk	Ongoing
• Contracts	Company failure	Damage to reputation	2	3	6	Use of recognised &	2	3	6	Town Clerk	Ongoing

	Termination of contract Insufficient / unsuitable monitoring	Financial costs Cessation / disruption of service Dissatisfied customers				competent providers Annual review of contracts All contracts are signed Financial statements provided					
Activity	Risk area	Risk event	Likelihood (x)	Impact (y)	Total (=)	Existing controls	Likelihood	Impact	Total	Actions (who)	Review date
• Professional support inc legal, hr, occ health, payroll, accounts / year end	Insufficient cover Incorrect advice	Damage to reputation Financial costs Dissatisfied customers / staff / contractors etc	2	3	6	Use of competent providers	2	3	6	Town Clerk	Ongoing
• IT & copier / equipment	Security Failure	Damage to reputation Financial costs	1	2	2	Routine maintenance provided	1	2	2	Town Clerk	Ongoing

	Replacement Maintenance contracts fail	Cessation / disruption of service Dissatisfied customers				Up to date equipment & security					
Activity	Risk area	Risk event	Likeli- hood (x)	Impact (y)	Total (=)	Existing controls	Likeli- hood	Impact	Total	Actions (who)	Review date
• Staff	Competence Resignation Unplanned extended leave Fraud Misconduct Policy compliance	Poor / disrupted service delivery Damage to reputation Financial costs Dissatisfied customers	2	2	4	Qualified staff Ongoing training provided Contracts of employment Policy guidance Staff aware of colleagues work and processes Cllr monitor Appraisals Insurance in place	2	2	4	Town Clerk	Ongoing Develop a succession plan for key members of staff – Dec 24

Activity	Risk area	Risk event	Likelihood (x)	Impact (y)	Total (=)	Existing controls	Likelihood	Impact	Total	Actions (who)	Review date
• Health & Safety	Non compliance with legislation	Damage to reputation	2	2	4	H&S policy in place	2	2	4	Town Clerk	Ongoing
	Accidents, injury & death	Financial costs				<p>Trained staff inc NEBOSH</p> <p>Day to day H&S practices completed</p> <p>Insurance in place</p> <p>Use of first aiders at events</p> <p>H&S equipment provided</p> <p>Employee Assistance Programme provided</p>					

Activity	Risk area	Risk event	Likeli- hood (x)	Impact (y)	Total (=)	Existing controls	Likeli- hood	Impact	Total	Actions (who)	Review date
• Service continuity	Disruption to / cessation of services	Damage to reputation Financial costs	2	3	6	Premises security measures in place Data backed up off site Remote working available Staff and Cllr training to be provided	2	3	6	Town Clerk	Ongoing
• Senior Staff and Member leadership	Disruption to / cessation of services Failure to meet statuary requirements	Damage to reputation Financial costs	2	3	6	Senior leadership team with breadth of knowledge and expertise Availability of external support	2	2	4	Share external support options - Town Clerk	Ongoing

						Regular leadership meetings held					
						Availability of political group leaders					
Activity	Risk area	Risk event	Likelihood (x)	Impact (y)	Total (=)	Existing controls	Likelihood	Impact	Total	Actions (who)	Review date
• General risk management	Poor controls	Damage to reputation Financial costs Accidents and emergencies	2	2	4	Risk assessments completed for all areas of work and events Staff aware Staff training May 2017 Member training and briefing programme summer 2019 completed.	2	2	4	Town Clerk	Ongoing

Environment & Leisure

Activity	Risk area	Risk event	Likelihood (x)	Impact (=)	Total	Existing controls	Likelihood	Impact	Total	Actions (who)	Review date
Public open spaces / recreation grounds / pavilions / play areas / sport provision	Service delivery	Poor / disrupted service delivery	2	3	6	Competent staff	2	3	6	Head of Grounds	Ongoing
	Health & safety					Insurance in place					
	Equipment suitability / safety	Damage to reputation				Regular checks					
	Replacement	Financial costs				Up to date and maintained equipment					
	Vandalism	Dissatisfied customers				Process in place to manage illegal traveller encampments					
	Lease expiring	Liability claims									
	Land needed for other purposes	Non compliance with relevant legislation									
	Unauthorised access (trespass, travellers)										
	Adequate maintenance										
Acts of God	Harm to person	Poor / disrupted	1	3	3	Good management	1	3	3	Clerk	Ongoing

	Removal of service or facility	service delivery				and maintenance					
	Environmental damage	Damage to reputation				Engagement in local authority disaster recover planning					
		Financial costs									
		Dissatisfied customers									
		Liability claims									
		Non compliance with relevant legislation									
Activity	Risk area	Risk event	Likelihood (x)	Impact (=)	Total	Existing controls	Likelihood	Impact	Total	Actions (who)	Review date
• Allotments	Service delivery	Poor / disrupted service delivery	2	3	6	Insurance in place	2	3	6	Head of Grounds	Ongoing
	Health & safety					Access codes provided to allotment holders only					
	Vandalism	Damage to reputation									
	Unauthorised access (trespass, travellers)	Financial costs				Allotment Agreement (contracts) Regular inspections					

		Dissatisfied customers				Land registered					
		Liability claims									
		Non compliance with relevant legislation									
Activity	Risk area	Risk event	Likelihood (x)	Impact (=)	Total	Existing controls	Likelihood	Impact	Total	Actions (who)	Review date
• Cemetery	Service delivery	Poor / disrupted service delivery	2	3	6	Competent staff	2	3	6	Head of Grounds	Ongoing
	Health & safety					Insurance in place					
	Equipment suitability / safety	Damage to reputation				Regular checks					
	Vandalism	Financial costs				Up to date and maintained equipment					
	Unauthorised access (trespass, travellers)	Dissatisfied customers				Active work taking place to extend useful working life					
	Lack of space	Liability claims									
		Non compliance									

		with relevant legislation				of current cemetery. Active work taking place to identify site for a new cemetery.					
Activity	Risk area	Risk event	Likelihood (x)	Impact (y)	Total (=)	Existing controls	Likelihood	Impact	Total	Actions (who)	Review date
• All Saints churchyard	Service delivery Health & safety Equipment suitability / safety Vandalism Unauthorised access (trespass, travellers) Wall stability Not the land owner (church)	Poor / disrupted service delivery Damage to reputation Financial costs Dissatisfied customers Liability claims Non compliance with relevant legislation	2	3	6	Competent staff Insurance in place Regular checks Up to date and maintained equipment Work completed on wall repairs re stability	2	3	6	Head of Grounds	Ongoing

Activity	Risk area	Risk event	Likeli- hood (x)	Impact (y)	Total (=)	Existing controls	Likeli- hood	Impact	Total	Actions (who)	Review date
• Street furniture	Health & safety	Lack of facility	2	2	4	Competent staff	2	2	4	Head of Grounds	Ongoing
	Equipment suitability / safety / replacement	Damage to reputation				Insurance in place					
		Financial costs				Regular checks					
	Vandalism	Dissatisfied customers				Up to date and maintained equipment					
	Land needed for other purposes	Liability claims									
		Non compliance with relevant legislation									
Activity	Risk area	Risk event	Likeli- hood (x)	Impact (y)	Total (=)	Existing controls	Likeli- hood	Impact	Total	Actions (who)	Review date
• Machinery and equipment	Failure	Poor / disrupted service delivery	2	2	4	Competent staff	2	2	4	Head of Grounds	Ongoing
	Replacement					Insurance in place					
	Suitability	Damage to reputation				Regular checks					
	Competence of staff to use	Financial costs									

		Dissatisfied customers				Up to date and maintained equipment					
		Liability claims									
		Non compliance with relevant legislation									
Activity	Risk area	Risk event	Likelihood (x)	Impact (y)	Total (=)	Existing controls	Likelihood	Impact	Total	Actions (who)	Review date
• Unregistered land	Evidence of right to manage Right of ownership challengeable False claim of ownership by a third party Insurance claims	Legal challenge: Ownership Injury Responsibilities	2	1	2	On work programme to check and complete where needed	2	1	2	Corporate Services Manager	Ongoing
• Tithe Farm Sports Project	Financial affordability Contractor financial stability	Poor / disrupted delivery Damage to reputation	2	2	4	Tender process followed Grants secured	2	2	4	Town Clerk	Ongoing until build complete and facility up and running

	Future site management	Increase in financial costs Liability claims				Contingency included					
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Community Services

Activity	Risk area	Risk event	Likelihood (x)	Impact (=)	Total	Existing controls	Likelihood	Impact	Total	Actions (who)	Review date
• Provision of services to young people	Cessation of services	Poor service delivery	2	2	4	Regular reports to committee	2	2	4	Town Clerk	Ongoing
	Disruption to services	Damage to reputation				Disclosure and Barring checks					
	Suitability of contractor or staff	Financial costs				Trained staff					
		Dissatisfied customers				Reliable staff					
		Liability claims									
		Non-compliance with relevant legislation									

Activity	Risk area	Risk event	Likeli- hood (x)	Impact (y)	Total (=)	Existing controls	Likeli- hood	Impact	Total	Actions (who)	Review date
• Provision of community events	Cessation of events	Poor service delivery	2	2	4	Regular reports to committee	2	2	4	Town Clerk	Ongoing
	Disruption to events	Damage to reputation				Monitoring of contracts					
	Suitability of contractor or staff	Financial costs				Insurance in place					
		Dissatisfied customers				Risk assessments undertaken and checked					
		Liability claims				Calendar of events agreed at the beginning of a new Council year					
		Non compliance with relevant legislation				Sufficient budget provision to cover staff overtime costs					
		Impact on staff capacity									

Activity	Risk area	Risk event	Likeli- hood (x)	Impact (y)	Total (=)	Existing controls	Likeli- hood	Impact	Total	Actions (who)	Review date
• Provision of town centre public toilets	Cessation of services	Poor service delivery	1	3	3	Use of reputable contractor	1	3	3	Town Clerk	Ongoing
	Disruption to services	Damage to reputation				Annual monitoring					
	Suitability of contractor or staff	Financial costs				Contract in place					
		Dissatisfied customers									
		Liability claims									
		Non compliance with relevant legislation									
• Christmas lights	Cessation of services	Poor service delivery	1	2	2	Use of reputable contractor	1	2	2	Town Clerk	Ongoing
	Disruption to services	Damage to reputation				Annual monitoring					
	Installation/ Maintenance/ Removal	Financial costs				Insurance					
	Vandalism	Dissatisfied customers				Up to date equipment					
	Weather	Liability claims				Agreement in place					

Activity	Risk area	Risk event	Likelihood (x)	Impact (y)	Total (=)	Existing controls	Likelihood	Impact	Total	Actions (who)	Review date
• Communications inc town crier, town guide, website, social media	Cessation of services	Poor service delivery	2	2	4	Compiled by all staff	2	2	4	Head of Democratic Services	Ongoing
	Disruption to services	Damage to reputation				Delivered by various distributors					
	Quality of communications	Financial costs				Use of reputable print & design company					
	Suitability of contractors	Dissatisfied customers									
		Non compliance with relevant legislation									
• Civic events	Absence of mayor	Damage to reputation	3	1	3	Provision of established events	3	1	3	Town Clerk	Ongoing
	Absence of support staff	Poor quality event				Use of regular providers & venues					
	Health & safety issues	Personal injury				Availability of deputy mayor / cllrs					
	Event not financially viable	Financial implications									
	Not supported by attendees					Supported by staff					

• Corporate events	Absence of support staff	Damage to reputation	3	1	3	Provision of established events	3	1	3	Town Clerk	Ongoing
	Health & safety issues	Poor quality event				Use of regular providers & venues					
	Not supported by attendees	Personal injury				Availability of deputy mayor / cllrs / other staff					
	Weather	Financial implications									
	Disaster / terrorism etc	Reduce value for money / low community benefit									
	Poor attendance										
• Community grants	Failure to provide appropriate support to Community Groups	Damage to reputation	2	1	2	Budget provision	2	1	2	Town Clerk	Ongoing
		Lack of service delivery				Cllr support					
	Public perception					Advertising availability					
	Service delivery	Insufficient funds				Robust application process					
	Poor uptake					Budget advice provided					

	Excessive uptake										
Activity	Risk area	Risk event	Likelihood (x)	Impact (y)	Total (=)	Existing controls	Likelihood	Impact	Total	Actions (who)	Review date
• Community safety	Community support Public perception Service delivery	Damage to reputation Lack of community support	2	2	4	Monthly contract review Use of Beds Police Budget provision Cllr support Regular Combating Crime meetings attended by the police	2	2	4	Town Clerk	Ongoing
Mayor and deputy mayor	Civic face of Council Resignation from position	Damage to reputation	2	1	2	Cllr and staff support Regular reviews	2	1	2	Town Clerk	Ongoing

Planning

Activity	Risk area	Risk event	Likeli- hood (x)	Impact (=)	Total	Existing controls	Likeli- hood	Impact	Total	Actions (who)	Review date
• Consultation responses	In house expertise Professional advice	Damage to reputation Poor / ineffective response	2	2	4	Use of consultant to guide on more significant applications	2	2	4	Corporate Services Manager	Ongoing

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HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Safeguarding children and young people policy

Date of Approval:	
Reviewed:	
Date of Re approval:	

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IN ORDER TO FULFIL THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE SAFEGUARDING POLICY STATEMENT. THE FOLLOWING PROCEDURES WILL BE FOLLOWED BY ALL EMPLOYEES AND VOLUNTEERS WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OF HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL.

1.	POLICY STATEMENT
1.1	<p>The purpose of this policy statement is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ To protect children and young people who receive Houghton Regis Town Council's services from harm. ➤ To provide staff and volunteers, children and young people and their families, with the overriding principles guiding our approach to child protection. <p>This policy applies to anyone working on behalf of Houghton Regis Town Council, including senior managers, Councillors, paid staff, volunteers, sessional workers, agency staff and students.</p>
1.2	<p>Legal Framework</p> <p>This policy is based on legislation, policy, and guidance designed to safeguard children in England.</p>
1.3	<p>Supporting Documents</p> <p>This policy should be read alongside related organisational policies, procedures, and guidance, including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Role description for the designated safeguarding officer. 2. Procedures for handling disclosures and concerns regarding children or young people. 3. Managing allegations against staff and volunteers. 4. Guidelines on recording concerns and information sharing. 5. Child protection records retention and storage. 6. Code of conduct for staff and volunteers. 7. Behavioural guidelines for children and young people. 8. Guidance on photography and image sharing. 9. Safer recruitment policies. 10. Online safety policies. 11. Anti-bullying policies. 12. Complaints management. 13. Whistleblowing procedures. 14. Health and safety measures. 15. Induction, training, supervision, and support protocols. 16. Adult-to-child supervision ratios.
1.4	<p>Our Beliefs</p> <p>We firmly believe that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Children and young people must never experience abuse of any kind. ➤ We are responsible for promoting the welfare of all children and young people, ensuring their safety, and practising in a manner that protects them from harm.
1.5	<p>Our Commitment</p> <p>We recognise that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The welfare of children is paramount in every decision we make and action we take. All children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation, are equally entitled to protection from harm and abuse. ➤ Some children may face additional vulnerabilities due to factors such as past experiences, dependency, communication needs, or other circumstances. ➤ Collaboration with children, young people, their parents, carers, and other agencies is essential for safeguarding and promoting welfare.
1.6	How We Protect Children and Young People

	<p>We are committed to safeguarding children and young people by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Valuing, listening to, and respecting them. ➤ Appointing a designated safeguarding officer for safeguarding. ➤ Adopting and adhering to best practices in safeguarding through robust policies, procedures, and staff and volunteer codes of conduct. ➤ Developing and enforcing an effective online safety policy. ➤ Providing staff and volunteers with supervision, training, support, and quality assurance to ensure they are confident and competent in following our policies and procedures. ➤ Recruiting staff and volunteers safely, including conducting all necessary checks. ➤ Recording, storing, and handling information securely and professionally in line with data protection laws and guidance. ➤ Sharing safeguarding information and promoting good practices with children and families through various channels, such as leaflets, posters, group sessions, and one-to-one discussions. ➤ Ensuring children, young people, and their families are aware of how to seek help or raise concerns. ➤ Using established safeguarding procedures to share concerns and relevant information with appropriate agencies while involving children, young people, parents, carers, and families as necessary. ➤ Managing allegations against staff and volunteers appropriately through our safeguarding procedures. ➤ Promoting an anti-bullying environment supported by a clear policy and effective responses to incidents of bullying. ➤ Implementing effective complaints and whistleblowing mechanisms. ➤ Ensuring a safe physical environment for children, young people, staff, and volunteers by adhering to health and safety laws and guidance. <p>Cultivating a safeguarding culture where , including staff, volunteers, children, young people, and their families, treats each other with respect, and the families treat each other respectfully and feel empowered to raise concerns.</p>
2.	STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT
2.1	<p>Houghton Regis Town Council is fully committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and young people. We firmly believe that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Every child and young person has the right to feel safe, valued, and protected from harm. ➤ Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and we are dedicated to fostering a culture of vigilance and care. ➤ All concerns regarding the safety and wellbeing of children and young people will be taken seriously and dealt with in line with our safeguarding policies and procedures.
2.2	<p>To demonstrate this commitment, we will:</p> <p>Ensure all staff, volunteers, and associates understand their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding children and young people through comprehensive training and clear guidance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Implement effective policies, procedures, and practices that comply with legal and regulatory requirements to protect children and young people from abuse, neglect, exploitation, and harm. ➤ Promote a safe environment where children and young people feel empowered to speak up about concerns or abuse, confident they will be listened to and supported. ➤ Work collaboratively with families, communities, and external agencies to ensure the safety and welfare of all children and young people in our care. ➤ Regularly review and improve our safeguarding measures to ensure they remain effective and appropriate. <p>Houghton Regis Town Council is steadfast in safeguarding children and young people. It will act decisively to uphold their rights to safety, dignity, and well-being.</p>

3.	INTRODUCTION
3.1	Houghton Regis Town Council (HRTC) is committed to safeguarding children and young people. All individuals working within HRTC, regardless of their specific role, share the collective responsibility for ensuring the welfare and protection of these individuals. The following outlines the responsibilities of Senior Managers, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Staff, and Trustees in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of those at risk.
3.1	<p>Responsibilities of Tier 1 and 2 Management Managers are responsible for safeguarding children, young people, and vulnerable adults within HRTC. Their duties include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ensuring Safeguarding Policies are in Place: Senior managers must establish and enforce safeguarding policies and procedures to comply with statutory requirements, including Section 11 of the Children Act 2004. ➤ Promoting a Culture of Safeguarding: They are responsible for embedding a safeguarding culture across the organisation, ensuring that safeguarding is prioritised in all aspects of HRTC's activities. ➤ Ensuring Staff Awareness: Senior managers must ensure that all staff members and volunteers are trained and fully aware of their responsibilities in safeguarding, including how to respond to concerns and make appropriate referrals. ➤ Monitoring and Reviewing Safeguarding Practices: They are tasked with regularly reviewing and evaluating safeguarding practices to ensure that all activities comply with legal requirements and best practices. ➤ Liaising with External Agencies: Senior managers will work closely with local safeguarding authorities and external organisations to ensure safeguarding criteria thresholds are upheld.
3.2	<p>Responsibilities of the Designated Safeguarding Lead</p> <p>The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) plays a pivotal role in ensuring the protection and well-being of children and young people. Their responsibilities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Central Point of Contact: The DSL is the first point of contact for any safeguarding concerns within HRTC. They are responsible for managing and overseeing the safeguarding processes. ➤ Monitoring Safeguarding Concerns: The DSL must ensure that any allegations or suspicions of abuse, neglect, or poor practice are dealt with promptly and appropriately. ➤ Making Referrals to Authorities: The DSL is responsible for making referrals to the local authority or police when necessary, ensuring that concerns are addressed in accordance with local safeguarding protocols as identified in APPENDIX A safeguarding procedure. ➤ Ensuring Staff Training: The DSL is responsible for ensuring all staff members are trained on safeguarding procedures, including recognising signs of abuse and knowing how to report concerns. Staff to attend annual safeguarding training that is relevant to their role and responsibilities, and the context of delivery. ➤ Record Keeping and Confidentiality: The DSL ensures that all records related to safeguarding are maintained accurately and stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act, the Freedom of Information Act, and Information Sharing Protocols as outlined in Houghton Regis Town Councils Data Retention Policy and Data Protection Act 2018 Policy.
3.3	<p>Responsibilities of Staff</p> <p>All staff members at HRTC have a direct and legal responsibility to protect children, young people, and vulnerable adults under their care. Their responsibilities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Understanding and Following Safeguarding Policies: Staff must understand and follow HRTC's safeguarding policy and procedures, knowing what actions to take if they have concerns about a child or young person. ➤ Reporting Concerns: Staff must report any suspicions or allegations of abuse or neglect promptly to the DSL as outlined in APPENDIX A Safeguarding procedure or other appropriate authorities, ensuring that concerns are addressed in a timely manner.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Protecting Vulnerable Individuals: Staff are responsible for providing a safe and supportive environment for young people and vulnerable adults, ensuring that they are protected from harm, including neglect, physical, sexual, and emotional abuse. ➤ Maintaining a Safe Environment: Staff must ensure that children and young people are participating in a safe, enjoyable environment, free from abuse, neglect, or discrimination. ➤ Participating in Training: Staff members must complete mandatory safeguarding training and stay informed about best practices and new safeguarding requirements.
3.4	<p>Responsibilities of the Councillors</p> <p>As the corporate governing body of HRTC, Councillors hold ultimate accountability for ensuring that safeguarding is integrated throughout the organisation. Their responsibilities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Strategic Oversight: Councillors are responsible for ensuring that safeguarding policies and procedures are developed, reviewed, and implemented effectively across HRTC's activities. ➤ Ensuring Legal Compliance: Councillors must ensure that HRTC complies with all statutory safeguarding duties, including those under the Children Act 2004 and other relevant legislation. ➤ Providing Support to Senior Managers and DSL: Councillors should provide strategic direction and support to senior managers and the DSL in the implementation of safeguarding policies. ➤ Reviewing Safeguarding Effectiveness: Councillors are responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of safeguarding practices within HRTC, ensuring that safeguarding issues are addressed at the highest level. ➤ Ensuring Resources are Allocated: Councillors must ensure that adequate resources, including staff training and external support, are allocated to maintain and enhance safeguarding efforts across HRTC. <p>Councillor responsibilities to safeguarding to be discussed at the Corporate Services meeting</p>
3.5	<p>Key Safeguarding Principles for All</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Everyone's Responsibility: Safeguarding children and young people is everyone's responsibility within HRTC. All staff, Councillors, and volunteers must remain vigilant and proactive in ensuring the safety and well-being of those at risk. ➤ No Assumptions: No one should assume that someone else will act if they have a concern. All concerns should be raised immediately with the appropriate person or authority. ➤ Right to Protection: All children and young people regardless of their background or identity, have the right to be protected from all forms of abuse. They also have the right to participate in activities in a safe and supportive environment. ➤ Confidentiality and Data Protection: All safeguarding information should be treated confidentially, and shared only with appropriate external agencies, ensuring compliance with relevant data protection laws and protocols.
3.6	<p>HRTC recognises its statutory responsibility to work with the Local Safeguarding Children's Partnership (LSCP) to ensure the safety and well-being of young people and vulnerable adults in all its activities. Everyone working within HRTC must understand and adhere to these safeguarding responsibilities, working together to create a protective environment for those at risk.</p>
4.	<p>LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE</p>
4.1	<p>Our safeguarding practices are underpinned by key UK legislation and statutory guidance designed to protect children and young people from harm. These include:</p> <p>Children Act 1989</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Establishes the duty of local authorities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in need.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Introduces the concept of parental responsibility and provides mechanisms for emergency protection and care orders. https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents <p>Children Act 2004</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Strengthens safeguarding frameworks introduced by the 1989 Act. ➤ Establishes Safeguarding Partnerships to oversee multi-agency practices. ➤ Created the role of the Children's Commissioner for England to advocate for children's rights. https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/31/contents <p>Children and Social Work Act 2017</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Strengthens local arrangements for safeguarding children. ➤ Requires local authorities, clinical commissioning groups, and police to collaborate on safeguarding. https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2017/16/contents <p>Working Together to Safeguard Children</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A statutory guidance document outlining the responsibilities of all organisations working with children. ➤ Emphasises the importance of collaboration between agencies to safeguard children effectively. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2 <p>Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Establishes the framework for the vetting and barring of individuals who pose a risk to children. ➤ Supports the work of the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to ensure safe recruitment. https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/47/contents <p>Children and Families Act 2014</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Enhances support for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and strengthens services for vulnerable children. https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/6/contents <p>The Human Rights Act 1998 and Equality Act 2010</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Protect children and young people from discrimination and uphold their right to safety and well-being. ➤ Imposes duties on public authorities to act in accordance with these Acts. https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/42/contents <p>Prevent Duty (Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Requires organisations to prevent children and young people from being drawn into terrorism. ➤ Outlines the need for staff training to identify and support at-risk individuals. https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/counter-terrorism-and-security-bill <p>Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (Amended in 2015 as part of the Serious Crime Act 2015)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Criminalises the act of carrying out, assisting, or failing to prevent female genital mutilation (FGM). ➤ Introduces a mandatory reporting duty for professionals. https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2003/31/contents <p>Serious Crime Act 2015</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Includes provisions to protect children from sexual exploitation, grooming, and online abuse.
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	<p>➤ Recognises coercive and controlling behaviour as a criminal offence. https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/9/contents</p> <p>Domestic Abuse Act 2021 Recognises children exposed to domestic abuse as victims in their own right, strengthening their protection. https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/17/contents</p> <p>Online Safety Legislation ➤ Frameworks such as the Digital Economy Act 2017 and the forthcoming Online Safety Bill aim to protect children from harmful online content and behaviours. https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2017/30/contents</p> <p>These legislative measures guide our safeguarding approach, ensuring the safety, well-being, and rights of children and young people are central to everything we do</p>
5.	SERVICES DELIVERED TO CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE
5.1	HRTC staff and volunteers have regular contact with children and young people. The Council provides youth work sessions up to four evenings a week, along with various events and activities for families. In these settings, staff and volunteers may find themselves in situations where they become aware of potential child neglect or abuse or where a child or young person may disclose that they or someone else is at risk or in harm's way.
5.2	<p>The sessions delivered by HRTC include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Events and Activities: Children and young people attend a variety of events and activities throughout the year, usually accompanied by parents or guardians. ➤ Youth Council: Meets every other week and has volunteering opportunities for young people aged 12-18 years old. ➤ Youth Work: Up to four youth work sessions each week, including open access, outreach, detached work, holiday activities, and residentials, for young people aged 12-18 years.
5.3	Additionally, HRTC regularly organises ad-hoc activities and events and provides a reception service at the main office. These services could create situations where children or young people disclose abuse or neglect or present themselves as being at risk.
6.	SCOPE OF THE POLICY
6.1	<p>This safeguarding policy applies to everyone involved with HRTC, including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Staff and Employees <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All full-time, part-time, and temporary employees. • Contractors, consultants, and agency staff engaged by the organisation. ➤ Volunteers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals providing unpaid support to the organisation. ➤ Councillors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those with governance responsibilities. ➤ Service Users <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals who access or benefit from the organisation's services, programmes, or activities. ➤ Partners and Third-Party Organisations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External organisations or entities collaborating or partnering with Houghton Regis Town Council to deliver services. ➤ Visitors and Participants <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals attending events, programmes, or premises associated with Houghton Regis Town Council.

6.2	This policy is designed to ensure the safety and well-being of all individuals, particularly those who are vulnerable or at risk, by outlining the responsibilities of everyone involved in the organisation. All individuals covered by this policy are expected to understand and adhere to its principles and guidelines.
7.	MONITORING PROCEDURES
7.1	Houghton Regis Town Council's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy will be monitored annually, with a full policy review conducted every two years to ensure it remains robust, compliant with legislation, and effective in practice. The following situations may also trigger an immediate review of the policy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Any changes in legislation that impact safeguarding or child protection protocols. ➤ Any changes in youth governance, including updates to council programmes involving children and young people. ➤ The outcome of a significant safeguarding incident, either locally or nationally, which may necessitate changes to strengthen procedures.
7.2	Staff Training and Feedback: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ All staff and volunteers will undergo safeguarding training, with their understanding regularly assessed through follow-up sessions and feedback forms. ➤ Feedback from staff and volunteers will also be collected to identify potential improvements or concerns in day-to-day safeguarding practices.
7.3	Incident Reporting and Analysis: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A log of all safeguarding incidents and concerns will be maintained, ensuring they are reviewed regularly to detect trends or patterns that may highlight procedural weaknesses. Lessons learned from incidents will inform updates to the policy and training sessions.
7.4	Engagement with Stakeholders: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Regular consultation with parents, carers, young people, and external safeguarding agencies to ensure the policy is responsive to the needs of the community.
7.5	The council is committed to maintaining a culture of continuous improvement in safeguarding and will ensure that all monitoring activities are documented and reviewed by the relevant committees.
8.	SAFEGUARDING FLOWCHART (APPENDIX A)
8.1	The safeguarding flowchart, which can be found in Appendix A, is a practical guide to ensure that all concerns regarding the safety and wellbeing of children and young people are addressed consistently and effectively. It forms an integral part of the council's safeguarding policy, providing clear steps for staff, volunteers, and youth workers to follow when identifying, reporting, and addressing safeguarding concerns. Using this flowchart, the council ensures compliance with statutory safeguarding responsibilities and demonstrates its commitment to creating a safe and inclusive environment for all young people engaging with its services and activities.
9.	SAFER RECRUITMENT
9.1	HRTC is committed to creating a safe environment for all individuals, including children, young people, and vulnerable adults. As part of this commitment, we follow a robust safer recruitment process to ensure that only those suitable to work with vulnerable individuals are employed or engaged with our organisation, regardless of whether their role involves direct contact with children and young people.
9.2	Recruitment and Selection Procedures

	<p>1. Job Advertisements and Role Descriptions All job advertisements and role descriptions will include a statement confirming our commitment to safeguarding and the requirement for the successful candidate to undergo background checks as part of the recruitment process. For roles involving direct contact with children, young people, or vulnerable adults, safeguarding responsibilities will be clearly outlined.</p> <p>2. Application Forms We require all candidates to complete an application form and provide accurate personal information, employment history, qualifications, and relevant experience. Candidates expected to work directly with children and young people will also be asked to declare any criminal convictions, cautions, or disciplinary actions related to safeguarding concerns.</p> <p>3. Interviews All candidates, including those applying for roles that do not involve direct contact with children or vulnerable adults, will undergo a thorough interview. Interview questions for roles involving children, young people, or vulnerable adults will assess the candidate's understanding of safeguarding principles, their ability to recognise and respond to safeguarding concerns, and their personal values with respect to the safety and welfare of others.</p> <p>4. Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Checks We require candidates for roles involving direct contact with children, young people, or vulnerable adults to undergo a DBS check at an appropriate level (e.g., enhanced check). This check will confirm whether the individual has any criminal convictions or is on the barred list that would prohibit them from working with vulnerable groups.</p> <p>5. References We will request references from at least two previous employers or relevant professional sources who can verify the candidate's character, work ethic, and suitability for the role. One of these references should be from the candidate's most recent employer, specifically regarding their work with children or vulnerable adults, where relevant.</p> <p>6. Right to Work Checks We will verify candidates' legal right to work in the UK. We will check all necessary documents, such as passports, visas, or work permits, and securely store photocopies.</p> <p>7. Ongoing Safeguarding Training All staff and volunteers working directly and indirectly with children and young people will receive safeguarding training as part of their induction and regularly thereafter. This will include understanding the signs and symptoms of abuse, how to report concerns, and the organisation's safeguarding policies and procedures.</p> <p>8. Probationary Period New employees and volunteers will be subject to a six-month probationary period. During this time, their performance, conduct, and adherence to safeguarding policies will be closely monitored. Any concerns raised during this period will be addressed immediately.</p>
9.3	<p>Commitment to Continuous Review Our safer recruitment process is regularly reviewed to ensure that it reflects best practices, relevant legislation, and any changes to safeguarding standards. We aim to continually improve our recruitment practices to effectively safeguard vulnerable individuals.</p>
10.	<p>GUIDELINES FOR BEST PRACTICE</p>

10.1	<p>All staff, associates, and volunteers must demonstrate exemplary behaviour to protect young people and themselves. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Adopting and adhering to Houghton Regis Town Council's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures. ➤ Promoting the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy to those they manage, including their teams, associates, and volunteers. ➤ Ensuring that one-to-one sessions with young people are held in open, public spaces, where others are present, where possible. ➤ Treating all young people fairly, with respect and dignity. ➤ Always prioritising the welfare of young people over organisational objectives. ➤ Building and maintaining safe, professional, and appropriate relationships with young people. ➤ Encouraging young people to be involved in decision-making processes. ➤ Attending training as required. ➤ Acting as a positive role model for young people. ➤ Respecting the confidentiality of sensitive information and complying with data protection regulations. ➤ Maintaining clear professional boundaries with young people and avoiding any form of inappropriate communication or behaviour. ➤ Reporting any safeguarding concerns or incidents immediately to the designated safeguarding officer or relevant authority. ➤ Receiving appropriate supervision and support to ensure staff, associates, and volunteers are confident and competent in safeguarding practices. ➤ Carrying out appropriate risk assessments to ensure the safety of young people in all activities and settings. ➤ Ensuring all young people are treated inclusively, fairly, and with respect, regardless of their background, ethnicity, gender, or disability.
11.	RELATIONSHIP OF TRUST
11.1	<p>The power and influence a member of staff or someone in a leadership role has over someone attending a group activity cannot be underestimated. Therefore, staff are expected to act within appropriate boundaries with young people, in relation to all forms of communication. Staff should be mindful of any physical contact and should not have intimate or sexual relationships with young people.</p> <p>“It is an offence for a person aged 18 or over to involve a child under that age in sexual activity, where he or she is in a specified position of trust in relation to that child. This includes those who care for, advise, supervise or train children and young people.” (Sexual Offences Act 2003).</p>
12.	CODE OF CONDUCT (APPENDIX B)
12.1	<p>This Code of Conduct in Appendix B outlines the behavioural expectations for all staff and volunteers involved in activities with young people. Its purpose is to ensure a safe, respectful, and professional environment that fosters positive relationships and safeguards the welfare of all participants.</p>
13.	SUPERVISION RATIOS
13.1	<p>HRTC recognises the importance of assessing staffing requirements as part of the Risk Assessment to ensure young people are effectively supervised, and any associated risks are appropriately managed during youth work programmes.</p>
13.2	<p>General Guidance</p> <p>There are no statutory staffing or supervision ratios specifically mandated for youth work. Consequently, it is neither possible nor appropriate to provide fixed ratios for every group or activity.</p>

	<p>Instead, staffing decisions should be based on the specific needs of each programme, taking into account factors such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The competence and experience of staff or workers in relation to the planned activities. ➤ The location and nature of the environment where the programme will take place. ➤ Characteristics of the group, including its size, and the age, gender, abilities, and behavioural, medical, emotional, or educational needs of the young people involved. ➤ The nature and duration of the planned activities. ➤ The potential impact of a staff member being unavailable unexpectedly, and the feasibility of contingency plans to ensure ongoing supervision.
13.3	<p>Specific Considerations</p> <p>Those delivering youth work should take note of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Activity-Specific Ratios: Certain activities, particularly those considered adventurous, are subject to minimum supervision ratios set by National Governing Bodies. These should be treated as baseline requirements, which may need to be adjusted to meet the specific needs of the group. ➤ Worker Participation: If staff or workers lack experience in a specific activity (e.g., kayaking), they may need to be counted as part of the group when determining supervision levels.
13.4	<p>Gender Considerations</p> <p>While there is no legal requirement for staff to be of the same gender as the young people, safeguarding and privacy needs should be carefully considered in advance. For younger groups, particularly those in residential settings, it is generally good practice to have staff of each gender available to address any potential concerns effectively.</p>
13.5	<p>Contingency Planning</p> <p>For activities in remote locations or abroad, robust contingency plans must be in place to ensure adequate supervision continues in the event of a staff member becoming unavailable (e.g., due to illness, injury, or accompanying a young person to hospital). This may involve making significant adjustments to the itinerary or planned activities.</p> <p>HRTC prioritises safeguarding and risk management in all youth work activities. To ensure the safety and well-being of young people, all supervision arrangements must reflect these principles.</p>
14	<p>CONSENT TO PARTICIPATION</p>
14.1	<p>HRTC is committed to safeguarding children and young people while respecting their rights and ensuring their voices are heard in all youth work activities. To support informed and appropriate participation, the following consent procedures are in place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Parental/Guardian Consent Children under 18 must have written consent from a parent or guardian to participate in youth work activities organised by the Council. Consent forms will provide key details, including the purpose, location, duration of the activity, and any associated risks. ➤ Young Person's Consent for Ages 12 and Above While parental or guardian consent is legally required for those under 18, the Council will also seek the agreement of young people aged 12 and over before their participation. This approach recognises their ability to understand and make informed decisions about their involvement, promoting respect and empowerment. ➤ Higher-Risk Activities Additional consent may be required for activities considered higher-risk (e.g., overnight stays, adventurous activities, or those involving significant commitments). In such cases, parents/guardians and young people will be provided with detailed information and may be invited to discuss the activity with the Council before giving consent.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Photo and Media Consent The Council may take photographs or videos during youth work activities for use in promotional materials, reports, or on its website and social media platforms. Parental or guardian consent will be sought for any young person under 18 before their image is used. Young people aged 12 and over will also be asked for their agreement to ensure they are comfortable with how their image may be used. Any refusal will be respected, and pictures of that individual will not be used. ➤ Data Protection and Privacy All consent-related documents will be managed per the Council's Data Protection Policy. Information will only be accessed by authorised personnel to ensure the safety and wellbeing of participants. ➤ Clear and Accessible Information Information about activities will be provided clearly and age-appropriately, ensuring that both young people and their parents/guardians fully understand the activity before giving consent.
14.2	By implementing these measures, Houghton Regis Town Council ensures that all youth work activities are conducted with the highest standards of safeguarding while encouraging young people to take an active role in their participation.
15	SAFEGUARDING AND THE USE OF THE INTERNET (E-SAFETY) (APPENDIX C)
15.1	The internet is a powerful tool but also presents risks, including the distribution of harmful content such as indecent images of children and young people. Adults may also use the internet to make contact with minors to groom them for inappropriate or abusive relationships.
16.	DEFINITIONS OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT (APPENDIX D)
16.1	Children can experience more than one type of abuse, which can have serious, severe, and long-lasting impacts on their lives. The main categories of abuse include neglect, physical abuse, emotional abuse, and sexual abuse including sexual exploitation.

APPENDIX A

SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURE

The safeguarding flowchart is a practical guide to ensure that all concerns regarding the safety and well-being of children and young people are addressed consistently and effectively. It forms an integral part of the council's safeguarding policy, providing clear steps for staff, volunteers, and youth workers to follow when identifying, reporting, and addressing safeguarding concerns. Using this flowchart, the council ensures compliance with statutory safeguarding responsibilities. It demonstrates its commitment to creating a safe and inclusive environment for all young people engaging with its services and activities.

Step 1: Recognise a Concern

What to Look For: Signs of harm, abuse, neglect, or any situation where a young person's safety or wellbeing is at risk.

Your Role:

- Stay calm, listen carefully, and take what the child or young person says seriously.
- Record factual information only (include date, time, observations, and the child or young person's exact words where possible).
- Do not promise to keep information confidential, explain that it may need to be shared to ensure their safety.

Step 2: Report the Concern

Who to Inform:

- Immediately report your concern to a lead youth worker or manager who will then report to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
- If the Young Person is in Immediate Danger:
 - Call **999** for emergency services.
 - Contact Central Bedfordshire Children's Services directly if urgent.
 - Share your recorded information with the DSL as soon as possible.

Step 3: Action by the DSL

Assessment and Next Steps:

- The DSL will review the concern, follow the organisation's safeguarding policies, and decide on the appropriate course of action.
- The DSL may consult the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) for guidance.

Possible Actions:

- Speak to the child or young person or their family if appropriate (and if it does not increase the risk).
- Refer the concern to Children's Services or the LADO for further investigation.

Step 4: Referral to External Agencies

If a Referral is Made:

- The DSL will provide detailed information to Children's Services (including the recorded concern and observations).
- Ensure written confirmation of the referral is obtained.

Follow Guidance:

- Collaborate with external agencies to ensure the young person receives appropriate support.

Step 5: Monitor and Support

Within the Organisation:

- Continue to support the young person through youth work activities in a safe and inclusive environment.
- Monitor their well-being and maintain communication with external agencies if required.

Record Keeping:

Ensure all safeguarding records are kept secure, confidential, and up to date.

Key Contacts:

- Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Ian Haynes, 07961668688, ian.haynes@houghtonregis-tc.gov.uk
- Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Tara Earnshaw, 07498 026370, tara.earnshaw@houghtonregis-tc.gov.uk
- Central Bedfordshire Council Children's Services: , 0300 300 8585 immediately (office hours). For out-of-hours reports call 0300 300 8123.
- Emergency Services: 999

APPENDIX B

CODE OF CONDUCT

Introduction

This Code of Conduct sets out the behavioural expectations for all staff and volunteers involved in activities with young people. Its purpose is to ensure a safe, respectful, and professional environment that fosters positive relationships and safeguards the welfare of all participants.

General Behaviour

- **Respect for Young People:** Treat all young people with dignity, respect, and fairness, regardless of their background, beliefs, or identity.
- **Professionalism:** Maintain a professional attitude at all times. Staff and volunteers must avoid behaviour or conduct that could be seen as unprofessional or inappropriate.
- **Boundaries:** Establish and maintain appropriate boundaries in all interactions with young people. This includes ensuring that physical contact, conversations, and all forms of communication are respectful and appropriate.
- **Confidentiality:** Respect the confidentiality of young people, staff, and volunteers. Personal information must not be shared unless there is a safeguarding concern, in which case the appropriate procedures should be followed.
- **Equality and Diversity:** Create an inclusive environment where all young people feel valued. Discrimination, harassment, or bullying on the grounds of race, gender, sexuality, disability, religion, or any other personal characteristic will not be tolerated.

Communication

- **Appropriate Communication:** Ensure communication with young people is professional and relevant. Avoid developing personal relationships, and ensure that all communication, whether verbal, written, or online, is related to the organisation's activities.

Social Media and Online Communication:

- **Professional Use Only:** Staff and volunteers should not engage with young people on personal social media accounts or any online platforms unless directly related to the organisation's work and approved by leadership.
- **Official Channels:** Communication with young people via social media should only take place through official, organisation-approved accounts or platforms (e.g., group pages for activities, organisational email accounts).
- **No Private Messaging:** Private messaging with young people on personal accounts is strictly prohibited. Communication should occur in public or group settings that can be monitored by relevant staff.
- **Online Content:** Avoid sharing or engaging with inappropriate or unprofessional content online. Ensure that all posts and interactions align with the organisation's values and policies.

No Inappropriate Content:

- Do not share, request, or tolerate any inappropriate or explicit content in any form of communication, whether verbal, written, or online.

Physical Contact

- **Respect Personal Space:** Avoid unnecessary physical contact with young people. If physical contact is essential (e.g., administering first aid or during sports), it must be carried out respectfully and professionally.
- **No Intimate Contact:** Under no circumstances should staff or volunteers engage in intimate or sexual behaviour with young people.

Relationships

- **Maintaining Professional Relationships:** Staff and volunteers must not develop personal or intimate relationships with young people. All relationships must remain professional at all times.
- **Power Dynamics:** Be mindful of the power dynamics inherent in staff/young people relationships. Staff must never exploit their position of trust or authority for personal gain.

Safeguarding and Reporting

- **Duty of Care:** Staff and volunteers are responsible for ensuring the safety and well-being of young people during activities. Any unsafe or inappropriate behaviour must be addressed and reported immediately to the designated safeguarding officer.
- **Reporting Concerns:** If you suspect or become aware of safeguarding concerns, including abuse, neglect, or exploitation, it is your responsibility to report them promptly, following the organisation's safeguarding procedures.
- **Zero Tolerance for Abuse:** Houghton Regis Town Council operates a zero-tolerance policy for any form of abuse, including physical, emotional, sexual, or neglect. Anyone found to be engaging in such behaviour will face disciplinary action and, where appropriate, legal consequences.

Conduct During Activities

- **Supervision:** Young people must be adequately supervised during all activities, both indoors and outdoors. Appropriate staff-to-young-people ratios must be maintained as per organisational policy.
- **Safe Environment:** All activities should be conducted in a safe environment that complies with health and safety regulations. Risk assessments should be completed before any activity takes place.
- **Respect for Property:** Staff and volunteers must respect the property of Houghton Regis Town Council, young people, and others involved in activities.

Compliance and Accountability

- **Adherence to the Code:** All staff and volunteers must agree to and follow this Code of Conduct. Failure to comply may result in disciplinary action, including suspension or termination of employment or volunteering duties.
- **Ongoing Training:** Staff and volunteers are required to participate in regular safeguarding training to stay informed of best practices and any changes in the law or policies.

Conclusion

The well-being and safety of young people is the highest priority. By adhering to this Code of Conduct, staff and volunteers contribute to a positive, safe, and supportive environment for all participants.

APPENDIX C

SAFEGUARDING AND USE OF THE INTERNET (E-SAFETY)

The internet is a powerful tool but also presents risks, including the distribution of harmful content such as indecent images of children and young people. Adults may also use the internet to make contact with minors with the intention of grooming them for inappropriate or abusive relationships.

If an employee or volunteer is found to have posted or accessed child exploitation material, law enforcement will typically investigate whether the individual is involved in the active abuse of children. Special consideration must be given to the individual's access to young people, and appropriate measures must be taken to protect their safety.

For any project or service providing internet access to users, clear protocols must be in place to ensure safe and responsible usage. Internet access should be monitored to prevent exposure to inappropriate material, including:

- Sexually explicit content or related material
- Promotion of illegal activities
- Content that encourages intolerance, hate speech, or discrimination

Staff Responsibilities:

- Employees and volunteers who are authorised to use the internet must not download, store, or share illegal, pornographic, or otherwise inappropriate material on any Town Council technical equipment.
- Staff must not upload or share any content that could be considered offensive, harmful, or disrespectful towards others.
- If harmful content is unintentionally accessed, the user must immediately exit the website and delete any inappropriate material. Breaches of this policy will be considered gross misconduct and will result in disciplinary action.
- If a staff member needs to access content that is outside regular guidelines due to the nature of their work, written permission from a manager is required in advance.

Young People's Internet Access:

- Any service or project allowing young people access to the internet must have strong measures in place to ensure their online safety. This includes using appropriate filtering software to block access to harmful websites.
- Regular checks and monitoring must be carried out to ensure young people are not exposed to inappropriate content or targeted by online predators.
- It is essential to provide clear guidelines to young people about the appropriate use of the internet, including what to do if they encounter inappropriate or harmful content or come into contact with strangers online.
- Staff should also engage in ongoing education for young people about online safety, emphasising the importance of privacy, responsible behaviour, and reporting any concerns.

Incident Reporting and Response:

- Any incidents of inappropriate content being accessed or shared must be immediately reported to the designated safeguarding lead, who will take the necessary actions to investigate and address the situation.
- Any suspected abuse or inappropriate behaviour should be treated with the utmost seriousness and reported according to the Town Council's safeguarding procedures.

By establishing a culture of safe internet use, the Town Council aims to protect both staff and young people from the dangers of the online world, ensuring that all interactions remain respectful, safe, and appropriate.

APPENDIX D

DEFINITIONS OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Children can experience more than one type of abuse which can have serious and long-lasting impacts on their lives. The main categories of abuse include neglect, physical abuse, emotional abuse, and sexual abuse including sexual exploitation.

The definitions for the various types of child abuse and neglect shown below have been adapted from the NSPCC's website for the purpose of this document. Additional information can be found on: <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-abuse-and-neglect>.

Neglect
<p>Introduction</p> <p>Neglect is not meeting a child's basic physical and psychological needs.</p> <p>It is a form of child abuse that can have serious and long-lasting impacts on a child's life - it can cause serious harm and even death.</p> <p>The four main types of neglect are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Physical neglect: not meeting a child's basic needs, such as food, clothing, or shelter; not supervising a child adequately or providing for their safety.2. Educational neglect: not making sure a child receives an education.3. Emotional neglect: not meeting a child's needs for nurture and stimulation, for example by ignoring, humiliating, intimidating, or isolating them.4. Medical neglect: not providing appropriate health care (including dental care), refusing care or ignoring medical recommendations <p>Neglect can happen at any age, sometimes even before a child is born. If a mother has mental health problems or misuses substances during pregnancy, for example, she may neglect her own health and this can damage a baby's development in the womb.</p>
Child Sexual Abuse
<p>Child sexual abuse (CSA) is when a child is forced or persuaded to take part in sexual activities. This may involve physical contact or non-contact activities and can happen online or offline. Children and young people may not always understand that they are being sexually abused.</p> <p>Contact abuse: Involves activities where an abuser makes physical contact with a child. It includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sexual touching of any part of the body, whether the child is wearing clothes or not.• Forcing or encouraging a child to take part in sexual activity.• Making a child take their clothes off or touch someone else's genitals.• Rape or penetration by putting an object or body part inside a child's mouth, vagina or anus. <p>Non-contact abuse: Involves activities where there is no physical contact. It includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Flashing at a child.• Encouraging or forcing a child to watch or hear sexual acts.• Not taking proper measures to prevent a child being exposed to sexual activities by others.

- Making a child masturbate while others watch.
- Persuading a child to make, view or distribute child abuse images (such as performing sexual acts over the internet, sexting or showing pornography to a child).
- Making, viewing or distributing child abuse images.
- Allowing someone else to make, view or distribute child abuse images.
- Meeting a child following grooming with the intent of abusing them (even if abuse did not take place).
- Sexually exploiting a child for money, power or status (child sexual exploitation).

Sexual exploitation

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a type of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity.

Children and young people in sexually exploitative situations and relationships are persuaded or forced to perform sexual activities or have sexual activities performed on them in return for gifts, drugs, money or affection.

CSE can take place in person, online, or using a combination of both.

Perpetrators of CSE use a power imbalance to exploit children and young people. This may arise from a range of factors including:

- Age
- Gender
- Sexual identity
- Cognitive ability
- Physical strength
- Status
- Access to economic or other resources.

Sexual exploitation is a hidden crime. Young people have often been groomed into trusting their abuser and may not understand that they're being abused. They may depend on their abuser and be too scared to tell anyone what's happening because they don't want to get them in trouble or risk losing them. They may be tricked into believing they're in a loving, consensual relationship.

Some children and young people are trafficked into or within the UK for sexual exploitation.

Child sexual exploitation online

When sexual exploitation happens online, young people may be persuaded or forced to:

- Have sexual conversations by text or online.
- Send or post sexually explicit images of themselves.
- Take part in sexual activities via a webcam or smartphone .

Abusers may threaten to send images, video, or copies of conversations to the young person's friends and family unless they take part in further sexual activity. Images or videos may continue to be shared long after the sexual abuse has stopped.

Trafficking and modern slavery

Child trafficking is child abuse. It's defined as recruiting, moving, receiving and harbouring children for the purpose of exploitation (HM Department for Education (DfE) and Home Office, 2011; Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety and Police Service of Northern Ireland, 2011; Scottish Government, 2013; Wales Safeguarding Procedures Project Board, 2020).

Child trafficking is a form of modern slavery .

Many children are trafficked into the UK from overseas, but children can also be trafficked from one part of the UK to another.

Children are trafficked for:

- Child sexual exploitation.
- Criminal activity, including:
 - Cannabis cultivation
 - Street crime - such as pickpocketing, begging and bag theft
 - Moving drugs
 - Benefit fraud
 - Immigration fraud
 - Selling pirated goods, such as DVDs
- Forced marriage
- Domestic servitude, including:
 - Cleaning
 - Childcare
 - Cooking
- Forced labour, including working in:
 - Restaurants
 - Nail bars
 - Factories
 - Agriculture
- Illegal adoption
- Unreported private fostering arrangements (for any exploitative purpose).

This list is not exhaustive and children who are trafficked are often exploited in more than one way.

How child trafficking happens

Traffickers may use grooming techniques to gain the trust of a child, family or community. They may trick, force or persuade children to leave their homes.

Child trafficking can involve a network of organised criminals who recruit, transport and exploit children and young people within or across borders. Some people in the network might not be directly involved in trafficking a child but play a part in other ways, such as falsifying documents, bribery, owning or renting premises, or money laundering. Child trafficking can also be organised by individuals and children's own families.

Grooming

Grooming is a process by which a person prepares a child, significant adults and the environment for the abuse of the child. Grooming can happen anywhere, including:

- Online
- In organisations
- In public spaces (also known as street grooming)

Children and young people can be groomed by a stranger or by someone they know – such as a family member, friend or professional. The age gap between a child and their groomer can be relatively small.

Grooming techniques can be used to prepare children for sexual abuse and exploitation, radicalisation and criminal exploitation.

Harmful sexual behaviour (HSB)

What is harmful sexual behaviour?

Harmful sexual behaviour (HSB) is developmentally inappropriate sexual behaviour which is displayed by children and young people and which may be harmful or abusive. It may also be referred to as sexually harmful behaviour or sexualised behaviour.

HSB encompasses a range of behaviour, which can be displayed towards younger children, peers, older children or adults. It is harmful to the children and young people who display it, as well as the people it is directed towards.

Technology assisted HSB

Technology assisted HSB (TA-HSB) is sexualised behaviour which children or young people engage in using the internet or technology such as mobile phones. This might include:

- Viewing pornography (including extreme pornography or viewing indecent images of children)
- Sexting

Physical abuse

Physical abuse is defined as deliberately hurting a child and causing physical harm. It includes injuries such as:

- Bruises
- Broken bones
- Burns
- Cuts.

It may involve:

- Hitting
- Kicking
- Shaking
- Throwing
- Poisoning
- Burning
- Scalding
- Drowning
- Any other method of causing non-accidental harm to a child.

Physical abuse may also happen when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child. This is known as Fabricated or Induced Illness.

Breast ironing or breast flattening, a practice of using hard or heated objects to suppress or reverse the growth of breasts, is a recognised form of child abuse.

Domestic abuse

Domestic abuse is any type of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between people who are, or who have been in a relationship, regardless of gender or sexuality. It can include physical, sexual, psychological, emotional or financial abuse.

Each UK nation has its own definition of domestic abuse for professionals who are working to prevent domestic abuse and protect those who have experienced it. Domestic abuse can include:

- Sexual abuse and rape (including within a relationship)
- Punching, kicking, cutting, hitting with an object
- Withholding money or preventing someone from earning money
- Taking control over aspects of someone's everyday life, which can include where they go and what they wear
- Not letting someone leave the house
- Reading emails, text messages or letters
- Threatening to kill or harm them, a partner, another family member or pet.

Witnessing and experiencing domestic abuse

Children never just 'witness' domestic abuse; it always has an impact on them. Exposure to domestic abuse or violence in childhood is child abuse.

Children may experience domestic abuse directly, but they can also experience it indirectly by:

- Hearing the abuse from another room
- Seeing a parent's injuries or distress afterwards
- Finding disarray like broken furniture
- Being hurt from being nearby or trying to stop the abuse
- Experiencing a reduced quality in parenting as a result of the abuse.

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is emotional maltreatment of a child, which has a severe and persistent negative effect on the child's emotional development. It's also known as psychological abuse.

Most forms of abuse include an emotional element, but emotional abuse can also happen on its own.

Children can be emotionally abused by anyone:

- Parents or carers
- Family members
- Other adults
- Other children.

There are several categories of emotional abuse.

Denying emotional responsiveness (also known as emotional neglect)

- Ignoring the child
- Not showing affection.

Rejection

- Verbal humiliation
- Name-calling

- Criticism
- Physical abandonment
- Excluding the child from activities.

Isolating

Putting unreasonable limitations on a child's freedom of movement, restricting social interaction and not communicating with the child.

Exploiting or corrupting

Encouraging a child to take part in criminal activities, forcing a child to take part in activities that are not appropriate for their stage of development.

Terrorising

- Threatening violence
- Bullying
- Deliberately frightening a child
- Deliberately putting a child in a dangerous situation

Bullying and cyberbullying

Bullying is when individuals or groups seek to harm, intimidate or coerce someone who is perceived to be vulnerable.

It can involve people of any age and can happen anywhere – at home, school or using online platforms and technologies (cyberbullying). This means it can happen at any time.

Bullying encompasses a range of behaviours which may be combined and may include the behaviours and actions we have set out below.

Verbal abuse:

- Name-calling
- Saying nasty things to or about a child or their family.

Physical abuse:

- Hitting a child
- Pushing a child
- Physical assault.

Emotional abuse:

- Making threats
- Undermining a child
- Excluding a child from a friendship group or activities.

Cyberbullying/online bullying:

- Excluding a child from online games, activities or friendship groups
- Sending threatening, upsetting or abusive messages
- Creating and sharing embarrassing or malicious images or videos
- 'trolling' - sending menacing or upsetting messages on social networks, chat rooms or online games
- Voting for or against someone in an abusive poll
- Setting up hate sites or groups about a particular child
- Creating fake accounts, hijacking or stealing online identities to embarrass a young person or cause trouble using their name.

Bullying can be a form of discrimination, particularly if it is based on a child's disability, race, religion or belief, gender identity or sexuality.

Online abuse

Online abuse is any type of abuse that happens on the internet, facilitated through technology like computers, tablets, mobile phones and other internet-enabled devices. It can happen anywhere online that allows digital communication, such as:

- Social networks
- Text messages and messaging apps
- Email and private messaging
- Online chats
- Comments on live-streaming sites
- Voice chat in games.

Children and young people can be re-victimised (experience further abuse) when abusive content is recorded, uploaded, or shared by others online. This could happen if the original abuse happened online or offline.

Children and young people may experience several types of abuse online:

- Bullying/cyberbullying
- Emotional abuse (this includes emotional blackmail, for example pressuring children and young people to comply with sexual requests via technology)
- Sexting (pressure or coercion to create sexual images)
- Sexual abuse
- Sexual exploitation.

Children and young people can also be groomed online: perpetrators may use online platforms to build a trusting relationship with the child in order to abuse them. This abuse may happen online or the perpetrator may arrange to meet the child in person with the intention of abusing them.

Female genital mutilation (FGM)

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is the partial or total removal of the external female genitalia for non-medical reasons. It's also known as female circumcision or cutting.

FGM is often performed by someone with no medical training who uses instruments such as a knife, scalpel, scissors, glass or razor blade. Children are rarely given anaesthetic or antiseptic treatment and are often forcibly restrained.

The age at which FGM is carried out varies. It may take place:

- When a female baby is newborn
- During childhood or adolescence
- Just before marriage
- During pregnancy.

There are four main types of FGM:

- Type 1 (clitoridectomy) – removing part or all of the clitoris.
- Type 2 (excision) – removing part or all of the clitoris and cutting the inner and/or outer labia.
- Type 3 (infibulation) – narrowing the vaginal opening.

- Type 4 – other harmful procedures to the female genitals including pricking, piercing, cutting, scraping or burning.

Labia elongation (also referred to as labia stretching or labia pulling) involves stretching the labia minora, sometimes using sticks, harnesses or weights.

FGM is child abuse and is illegal in the UK. It can be extremely dangerous and can cause:

- Severe pain
- Shock
- Bleeding
- Infections such as tetanus, HIV and hepatitis B and C
- Organ damage
- Blood loss and infections
- Death in some cases.

Sometimes religious, social and cultural reasons are given to justify FGM, however it's a dangerous practice and can cause long-lasting health problems that continue throughout a child's life, including:

- Incontinence or difficulties urinating
- Frequent or chronic vaginal, pelvic or urinary infections
- Menstrual problems
- Kidney damage and possible kidney failure
- Cysts and abscesses
- Pain during sex
- Infertility
- Complications during pregnancy and childbirth
- Emotional and mental health problems.

Sexting: advice for professionals

Sexting is when people share a sexual message and/or a naked or semi-naked image, video or text message with another person. It's also known as nude image sharing.

Children and young people may consent to sending a nude image of themselves. They can also be forced or coerced into sharing images by their peers or adults online.

If a child or young person originally shares the image consensually, they have no control over how other people might use it.

If the image is shared around peer groups, it may lead to bullying and isolation. Perpetrators of abuse may circulate a nude image more widely and use this to blackmail a child and/or groom them for further sexual abuse.

It's a criminal offence to create or share explicit images of a child, even if the person doing it, is a child. If sexting is reported to the police, they will make a record but may decide not to take any formal action against a young person.

It's important that anyone working or volunteering with children and young people understands the dynamics of sexting. You should know what to do if you ever need to help a young person who has received or sent an explicit image, video or message; or had an image shared without their consent.

Peer-on-peer sexual abuse

Introduction

Peer-on-peer sexual abuse is sexual abuse that happens between children of a similar age or stage of development. It can happen between any number of children and can affect any age group.

It can be harmful to the children who display it as well as those who experience it.

Children can experience peer-on-peer sexual abuse in a wide range of settings, including:

- At school
- At home or in someone else's home
- In public spaces
- Online

It can take place in spaces which are supervised or unsupervised. Within a school context, for example, peer-on-peer sexual abuse might take place in spaces such as toilets, the playground, corridors and when children are walking home.

As children develop healthily, it's normal for them to display certain types of sexualised behaviour. It's important that adults who work or volunteer with children can identify if any sexualised behaviour has become harmful or abusive and respond proportionally to keep all the children involved safe.

County lines

What is county lines?

County lines are a form of criminal exploitation where urban gangs persuade, coerce or force children and young people to store drugs and money and/or transport them to suburban areas, market towns and coastal towns. It can happen in any part of the UK and is against the law and a form of child abuse.

Children and young people may be criminally exploited in multiple ways. Other forms of criminal exploitation include child sexual exploitation, trafficking, gang and knife crime.

County lines gangs are highly organised criminal networks that use sophisticated, frequently evolving techniques to groom young people and evade capture by the police.

Perpetrators use children and young people to maximise profits and distance themselves from the criminal act of physically dealing drugs. Young people do the majority of the work and take the most risk.

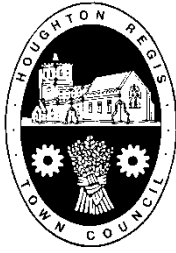
Dedicated mobile phone lines or "deal lines" are used to help facilitate county lines drug deals. Phones are usually cheap, disposable and old fashioned, because they are changed frequently to avoid detection by the police.

Gangs use the phones to receive orders and contact young people to instruct them where to deliver drugs. This may be to a local dealer or drug user, or a dealer or drug user in another county.

Phrases that young people may use to refer to county lines include:

- 'running a line',
- 'going OT/out there'
- 'going country'
- 'going cunch'.

These all refer to going out of town to deliver drugs or money.



Date: 16th June 2025

Title: REQUEST TO SITE A CABIN ON PARKSIDE RECREATION GROUND TO SERVE AS A LOCAL COMMUNITY SPACE

Purpose of the Report: To enable members to consider a request from Parkside Action Group to site a cabin on Parkside recreation ground to serve as a local community space.

Contact Officer: Clare evans, Town Clerk

1. RECOMMENDATION

1. To provide permission in principle for Parkside Action Group to site a cabin on Parkside recreation ground to serve as a local community space;
2. To request that Parkside Action Group provide detail on the following matters: planning and building control, legal issues including a lease, safety & technical matters, utilities, operational details and finance.

2. BACKGROUND

As members are aware from informal discussions the Parkside Action Group are keen to see established a local community space within Parkside. The Group have been progressing this project internally and are now formally approaching the council to seek permission in principle for a cabin to be sited on Parkside recreation ground to serve as a local community hub.

3. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Parkside Action Group have made the following request:

‘Parkside Action Project are seeking permission from the Houghton Regis Town Council to site a jack leg cabin 40ft x 12ft on the Parkside Recreation Ground next to the Pavillion. Parkside Action are also requesting permission to link the jack leg cabin to the utilities of the Pavilion All this would be subject to Planning permission from Central Bedfordshire Council.’

There is support for extended community facilities within both the HRTC Corporate Plan and the CPC Action Plan. This proposal from Parkside Action Group supports the aspirations within these approved documents.

Following on from the submission of the above request, a conversation was held between the clerk and a representative of Parkside Action Group who was keen to emphasise that permission in principle to use the land was being sought and that the group were fully aware of the need for further work around planning and building control, legal issues including a lease, safety & technical requirements, utilities, operational details and finance. This would be provided as the project progresses.

4. HRTC CORPORATE PLAN

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

- 1.1 Improve integration between existing and new communities.
- 1.2 Support the sense of arrival and identity.

2 Local Services and Facilities: To provide a broad range of high quality services and facilities for our residents, visitors and businesses

- 2.4 Maximise the value of HRTC assets.

3 Quality of Life: To enhance the quality of life of our residents

- 3.3 Improve access to services and support through the provision of a network of Parish-wide community hubs.

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

- 4.6 To actively consider and weight the impact of new and existing initiatives and services.

6. IMPLICATIONS

Corporate Implications

- Implications for other committees – E&L
- Staff implications –engagement with Parkside Action Group

Legal Implications

- Lease will be required in due course

Financial Implications

- There are no financial implications arising from the recommendations

Risk Implications

- A potential reputational risk should the facility not succeed would be reduced through a legally binding lease

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

- Should the project proceed, the group would be encouraged to introduce sustainable features into the design and build relating to materials / product origin / recyclable / longevity of product

Press Contact

- There are no press implications arising from the recommendations

7. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

There is support for extended community facilities within both the HRTC Corporate Plan and the CPC Action Plan. The proposal from Parkside Action Group supports the aspirations within these approved documents.

Although it is not known if the Group are experienced in the delivery of a project of the nature, there may be some personal expertise within the Group that will be utilised to aid its successful delivery.

The recommendations also set out additional matters for the group to provide. As it is intended that this project will take place on HRTC land, it is anticipated that the Group will work alongside council officers in developing the project, enabling a mutual support and guidance from beginning to end.

8. APPENDICES

None