



HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Peel Street, Houghton Regis, Bedfordshire, LU5 5EY

Town Mayor: **Cllr M Herber**

Tel: 01582 708540

Town Clerk: **Clare Evans**

e-mail: info@houghtonregis-tc.gov.uk

9th March 2026

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 March 2026 at 7.00pm.

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

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

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.

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

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

8. CORPORATE PLAN REVIEW & UPDATE

Pages 54 - 62

To review and update members on the Corporate Plan.

Recommendation: To note the update on the Corporate Plan.

9. CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE PROGRESS REVIEW REPORT

Pages 63 - 82

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

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

10. FINANCIAL FORECAST

Pages 83 - 95

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

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

11. STRATEGIC POLICIES 2026/27

Pages 96 – 164

To provide information to members to enable a review of the Town Councils strategic policies prior to them being presented at the Town Council meeting to be held on 20th May 2026.

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

Members are advised there are no amendments to Standing Orders.

Financial Regulation 13.3 has been amended to align with section 38 of the Scheme of Delegation.

Members will find revisions have been made to the Committee Functions & Terms of Reference, shown by track changes. These changes include the addition of the Investment Working Group and also to clarify the types of policies to be reviewed by the Corporate Services Committee and Staffing Committee.

Scheme of Delegation has been revised to reflect the change in responsibilities for the Head of Corporate Services and RFO. Track change document attached.

Community Engagement Sub Committee to consider its normal mtg time at its scheduled mtg on 24th March, may change to a day time mtg.

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

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

12. COUNCIL CALENDAR 2026/27

Pages 165 - 172

Members will find attached a draft calendar of meetings and events for 2026/27.

In summary, the following meetings have been diarised:

Town Council: 15th June; 12th October; 14th December 2026, 18th January, 15th March and 19th May 2027

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

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

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

Planning Committee: meetings held every three weeks

Staffing Committee: 21st July; 20th October 2026 19th January and 13th April 2027

Town Partnership Committee: 28th July; 27th October 2026; 26th January and 27th April 2027

13. ANNUAL REVIEW OF COUNCIL ASSETS

Pages 173 - 180

Members will find attached the list of council assets² held on 31st March 2026, as amended by additions and disposals during 2025/26.

This report is presented for information only.

14. UNRECOVERABLE DEBTS

Pages 181 - 182

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

This report is provided for information.

15. BIODIVERSITY POLICY

Pages 183 - 185

Members are requested to adopt the Biodiversity Policy, which was endorsed by the Environment and Leisure Committee at its meeting on 12th January 2026. The policy has been created to comply with legislation and to ensure that the Council meets its biodiversity obligations and aspirations.

The policy will help the town council meet its legal obligations, benefit the community, and allow HRTC to participate in the Local Council Award Scheme run by NALC.

Recommendation: To adopt the Biodiversity Policy.

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

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

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 19th January 2026 7.00pm.

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

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

Public: 1

Apologies Councillor: E Costello

13494 APOLOGIES & SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Cllr Costello.

13495 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

13496 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

None.

13497 MINUTES

To approve the Minutes of the meetings held on 29th September and 15th December 2025.

Resolved: To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 29th September and 15th December 2025 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

13498 COMMITTEE AND SUB-COMMITTEE MINUTES

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

Corporate Services Committee	None
Community Services Committee	None
Environment & Leisure Committee	None
Planning Committee	17 th Nov 2025 and 8 th Dec 2025
Staffing Committee	None
Town Partnership Committee	None

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

New Cemetery Sub-Committee None

Resolved: To receive the Minutes detailed above.

13499 TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor had attended 12 community events including visits to care homes and local schools, and other civic activities.

The Mayor had completed GDPR training in compliance with data protection responsibilities.

13500 REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS & ON TRAINING SESSIONS ATTENDED

Cllr Farrell confirmed that the Memorial Hall was about to take possession of new tables and chairs.

Cllr Jones informed Members that the Hospice at Home Volunteers had been in receipt of generous donations. The charity was operating out of Dunstable once more.

13501 GENERAL RESERVES

Members were advised of the following:

At 1st April 2025 the level of General Reserves was £398,116

During 2025/26 Town Council has agreed the following use of General reserves: £22,499 to cover UKSPF work where expenses were incurred in 2025/26 but the supporting funding was received in 2024/25 (Minute 13464)

£11,000 fund the cost of independent investment advice for 2025/2026 financial year (Minute 13471)

£3,500 fund HR administration software (Minute 13474)

The costs associated with the investment advice and with the HR software would be split across 2025/26 and 2026/27 (prepayment). Accordingly, the required level of use of General Reserves in 2025/26 for these 2 elements would be approximately £2,250 for the investment advice and £875 for the HR software.

The use of general reserves listed above is included in the Projected Spend column of the draft budget.

The Projected 2025/26 budget showed a net contribution to General Reserves of £46,436.

As such projected level of General Reserves at 31st March 2026 was therefore anticipated to be £444,552.

It is considered good practice to have approximately 3 months net revenue expenditure (NRE) in General reserves, calculated by taking the total projected spend and subtracting from expenditure within the capital cost centres of 199, 299 and 399, to provide total revenue expenditure. This was then divided by 12 and multiplied by 3 to give an approximation of 3 months net revenue expenditure.

However, during 2025/26, a significant level of s106 had been received by HRTC for Thorn Park (£3,154,956 in 261-1077). Within the 2025/26 accounts this had been transferred into an EMR (261-4991). A transfer out of this EMR had also taken place to offset unbudgeted for costs (£253,083). In addition, within 261 a number of large purchases have been made to support the management and maintenance of this site. Ordinarily these would have been accounted for with a capital budget but have been coded to 261 to match the s106 income coding. As cost centre 261 was a revenue line within the budget this large transfer into an EMR and the capital purchases have significantly distorted the net revenue calculation. To adjust for this, these 'expenses' have been extracted from the NRE calculation.

Taking into account the above information and based on spend in 2025/26, an approximation of 3 months NRE and consequently the advised level of General Reserves equated to £421,034.

It was not recommended that General Reserves be used for revenue (day to day) expenses and in 2026/27 it was not recommended that the Council uses GR to fund any unbudgeted for expenses.

13502 2026/27 BUDGET AND PRECEPT

Town Council was presented with the 2026/27 draft budget for consideration and requested to approve a budget for 2026/27 and set a precept.

The Town Clerk informed Members that the draft budget showed a deficit of £52,270 which required consideration.

A Member representing the Liberal Democrat Group suggested a precept of £1,798,590 based on the following alterations to the draft budget:

Code Number	Description	Budget Figure	Suggested Figure	Saving	Budget Balance
	From Amended Officer Draft Budget				-52,270
	Proposed Amendments and Allocations				
		-	-		
101-1076	Precept received	1,781,230	1,798,590	17,360	-34,910
190-4011	Rates	9,300	10,500	-1,200	-36,110
190-4022	Postage	6,500	2,500	4,000	-32,110
190-4992	Tfr from EMR 330 (re Professional Fees)	-8,000	0	-8,000	
199-1095	PWLB Loan	0	-326,000	326,000	285,890
199-4805	CAP - New Equipment (incl. IT)	5,000	3,000	2,000	287,890
199-4883	Project H	0	300,000	-300,000	-12,110
199-4991	Tfr to Strategic Projects EMR	118,000	0	118,000	105,890
199-????	New Office Provision	0	45,000	-45,000	60,890
242-4011	Rates	5,000	4,700	300	61,190
271-1084	Burial Fees	-12,000	-10,000	-2,000	59,190
271-4011	Rates	1,500	1,850	-350	58,840
273-4012	Water Rates	600	1,200	-600	58,240
291-4011	Rates	17,000	34,000	-17,000	41,240
291-4040	Tree Maintenance	6,000	11,240	-5,240	36,000
299-4858	Play Areas and Equipment	15,000	50,000	-35,000	1,000
302-4006	Protective Clothing	1,000	2,000	-1,000	0
		-	-		
		1,616,330	1,668,600	52,270	

These suggestions were proposed.

The following areas were discussed:

1. Project H – In order for funding to be recorded, a cost of £300,000 had been suggested with an additional £26,000 for consultancy costs. This figure had been entered against Public Works Loan Board
2. Strategic Projects Ear Marked Reserve – An EMR of £118,000 had been introduced into the budget, although there was little explanation against it. The suggested alterations removed this EMR but showed significant contributions to 2 existing EMRs

3. Rates – these were considered to be difficult to predict and a number of alterations were suggested reflecting on actuals in recent years.

The Town Clerk responded that the capital figures for Project H had been deliberately omitted as a decision was yet to be made whether funding would be via a loan or using existing reserves. The suggested Public Works Loan Board figure needed to match expenditure since retrospective funding could not be included. The £118,000 in strategic projects could then be used to either part fund the capital works of the project or the associated loan repayments.

A Labour representative confirmed that they had suggested minor amendments to the budget which had been included in the Liberal Democrat suggestions.

The Labour representative voiced some concern regarding the Public Works Loans Board and Strategic Projects EMR as there had been no consultation on these items prior to the meeting. There was unease with the creation of an EMR that failed to provide specific detail.

A short recess was requested for political groups to discuss these matters further.

The meeting went into recess.

In light of the discussions that had taken place the representative from the Liberal Democrats withdrew the proposed amendments.

Members addressed suggested amendments individually and agreed for the following to be put forward:

Code Number	Description	Budget Figure	Suggested Figure	ng
190-4011	Rates	9,300	10,500	-1,200
190-4022	Postage	6,500	2,500	4,000
190-4992	Tfr from EMR 330 (re Professional Fees)	-8,000	0	
199-4805	CAP - New Equipment (incl. IT)	5,000	3,000	2,000
242-4011	Rates	5,000	4,700	300
271-1084	Burial Fees	-12,000	-10,000	-2,000
271-4011	Rates	1,500	1,850	-350
273-4012	Water Rates	600	1,200	-600
291-4011	Rates	17,000	34,000	-17,000
291-4040	Tree Maintenance	6,000	11,240	-5,240
302-4006	Protective Clothing	1,000	2,000	-1,000

The Town Clerk acknowledged there was an anomaly in that rates for the proposed new workshop unit were not in the budget, while rent had been included.

Members were of the opinion that the proposed Strategic Projects EMR would need to be dedicated solely to Project H and be renamed to reflect this.

The Town Clerk informed Members that the suggested £326,000 loan and Project H were linked; therefore, it was necessary to either retain both items or for both to be removed.

Councillors voiced concern at the inclusion of a loan that had not yet been agreed. The Town Clerk suggested a vote to determine the preferred option.

Members voted as follows:

In favour of inclusion of Project H expenditure and loan: 4
Against inclusion of Project H expenditure and loan: 9

On being put to the vote it was decided that Project H expenditure and associated loan be omitted from the budget.

Regarding the creation of a Strategic Projects EMR or transferral into existing EMRs, Members were requested to proceed with either: a) New Office Provision of £45,000 and a transfer of £35,000 into play areas; or b) dismiss both.

Members requested figures for both of these options were generated:

The meeting went into recess while officers generated amended figures.

On resuming the meeting, Members were provided with handouts presenting two variations of the budget:

Version A

EMR Project H £118,000
Precept increase of 11.8%
Band D increase of 4.3%

Version B

EMR Project H £80,000
Precept increase of 9.6%
Band D increase of 2.1%

On being put to the vote, Members voted in favour of Version B.

It was proposed that the budget, as amended, be adopted and request a precept for 2026/27 of £1,819,350. All Members voted in favour.

Resolved: To approve the draft budget as amended and set a precept for 2026/27 of £1,819,350.

13503 REVIEW OF EAR MARKED RESERVES

To enable Members to review the status of the Council's Ear Marked Reserves:

1. partway through the current financial year (2025/26)
2. the predicted movements in 2026/27

The Town Clerk highlighted that these figures would require adjusting to reflect the amended budget.

Resolved: To note the amended Schedule of Ear Marked Reserves 2025/26 and the predicted schedule of Ear Marked Reserves 2026/27.

13504 CBC BUDGET CONSULTATION

Members were advised of the CBC Budget Consultation currently underway.

The key milestones in the timetable for CBC to agree its budget in February 2026 were set out as follows:

Date	Body	Outcome
January	All Overview & Scrutiny Committees	Consideration of efficiencies and savings and draft budget proposals.
7 th January 2026	Public	Budget papers made available to Public and Public Consultation commences.
17 th February 2026	Executive	Recommends Final Budget
26 th February 2026	Council	Approves Budget
5 th March 2026	Council	Reserve Council Meeting in case of delay in receiving notification of other precepts.

Members were invited to consider the CBC Budget Consultation and to submit individual responses if desired.

13505 COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW (CGR)

Town Council had deferred consideration of the second stage of the CGR at its meeting on 15th December to enable further consideration of the recommendations (Minute 13470).

The Draft recommendations from CBC were:

1. that the parish name of Houghton Regis should remain unchanged
2. increase the number of parish councillors on Houghton Regis Town Council from 14 to 17
3. create a new parish ward of Thorn with 3 members (see map)
4. reduce Houghton Hall parish ward from 5 to 4, retain Tithe Farm with 5 members
5. increase Parkside Ward from 4 to 5 to accommodate the Linnere Development
6. undertake a further community governance review of the parish within five years to ensure effective community governance arrangements in light of the development at Linnere
7. reject the proposal to extend the parish boundary into the parish of Chalton

The established informal group of Cllrs (D Jones, M Herber, T McMahon, J Carroll and C Slough) met to discuss the draft recommendations from CBC.

Draft Recommendations 1 – 6 were supported by the councillors; however, it was requested that, for clarity, the wording of Draft Recommendation 6 be altered to: *undertake a further community governance review of the parish in 2030 to align with the local elections in 2031.*

With regard to Draft CBC Recommendation 7, Members wished to express disappointment that CBC were minded to reject the proposal to extend the parish boundary into the parish of Chalton.

Members requested an addition to the end of Draft Recommendation 7: *reconsiders its recommendation to reject the proposal to extend the parish boundary into the parish of Chalton.*

Members voted in favour of this addition.

Resolved: In relation to the Stage 2 Community Governance Review consultation to:

Support the draft recommendations as follows:

Draft Recommendation 1: that the parish name of Houghton Regis should remain unchanged

Draft Recommendation 2: increase the number of parish councillors on Houghton Regis Town Council from 14 to 17

Draft Recommendation 3: create a new parish ward of Thorn with 3 members (see map)

Draft Recommendation 4: reduce Houghton Hall parish ward from 5 to 4, retain Tithe Farm with 5 members

Draft Recommendation 5: increase Parkside Ward from 4 to 5 to accommodate the Linmere Development

Request a wording change for clarification to as follows:

Draft Recommendation 6: undertake a further community governance review of the parish in 2030 to align with the local elections in 2031 to ensure effective community governance arrangements in light of the development at Linmere

Express disappointment over Draft Recommendation 7, namely that CBC are minded to reject the proposal to extend the parish boundary into the parish of Chalton.

The rejection of the HRTC proposal would appear to be contrary to provisions within the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's report Guidance on Community Governance Reviews (2010), specifically the points made which consider identities and interests of local communities; effective and convenient local government, the impact on community cohesion of community governance arrangements and the size, population and boundaries of a local community or parish.

In view of this, HRTC respectfully requests that CBC reconsiders its recommendation to reject the proposal to extend the parish boundary into the parish of Chalton.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9.39pm

Dated this 16th day of March 2026

Chairman

DRAFT

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL
Corporate Services Committee
Minutes of the meeting held on
1st December 2025 7.00pm.

Present: Councillors: D Jones Chairman
E Billington
J Carroll
M Herber

Officers: Debbie Marsh Head of Corporate Services
Amanda Samuels Administration Officer

Public: 0

Apologies: Councillors: W Henderson
C Rollins

Absent: Councillor: E Costello

13436 APOLOGIES & SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Cllr Henderson and Cllr Rollins.

13437 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

13438 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

None.

13439 MINUTES

To approve the Minutes of the meetings held on 1st September 2025.

Members requested a minor amendment to Minute 13330 to read December 2024.

**Resolved: To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 1st September 2025
and for these to be signed by the Chairman.**

13440 INCOME AND EXPENDITURE REPORT

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

Members referenced the note from the Finance Officer regarding Professional Fees which indicated an overspend. This could ultimately be attributed to design costs for Project H and capitalised as part of the outfitting; therefore, the impact on general reserves would be limited.

AJJ

13441 BANK AND CASH RECONCILIATION STATEMENTS

Members received the monthly bank and cash reconciliation statements for August, September and October 2025.

Resolved:

- 1. To approve the monthly bank and cash reconciliation statements for August, September and October 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.**

13442 LIST OF PAYMENTS

Members were provided with a list of payments for the period August, September and October 2025 (inclusive).

13443 INVESTMENT REPORT

This report was provided in accordance with the approved Committee Functions, Financial Regulation 12 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.

It was confirmed that a deposit had been made in the Government's Debt Management Account.

Resolved: To note the report.

13444 INVESTMENT WORKING GROUP

Members were provided with the minutes from the Investment Working Group meetings held on the 13th October 2025 and 12th November 2025.

Members were reminded that recommendations arising from draft minutes may be submitted to the Corporate Services Committee for consideration prior to the formal approval of the minutes.

A meeting had taken place with Arlingclose and the Investment Working Group had made a recommendation to Corporate Services to enter into a three-year contract for the provision of investment advice.

Resolved:

- 1) To agree to the Town Council entering into a three-year contract with Arlingclose Treasury Services;**

D.J.

- 2) **To recommend to Council the use of general reserves to fund this service for the remaining 2025/2026 financial year and to ensure suitable budgetary provision is made for future years.**

13445 EXISTING CONTRACTS

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

Members were presented with a list of existing contracts and the following queries were raised:

- There was some question as to the accuracy of the quoted figure for Op Hana. The Head of Corporate Services confirmed this would be checked.
- Confirmation was requested regarding the current number of lone worker devices. The Head of Corporate Services confirmed that a third device had been approved but was yet to be purchased.
- Utilities appeared to have been underbudgeted. Members requested that suitable budget provision would be made in the 2026/2027 budget.

13446 BEDFORDSHIRE PENSION FUND – HRTC EMPLOYER RESULTS SCHEDULE

Members were provided with a summary of the preliminary results of the Bedfordshire Pension Fund actuarial valuation. The purpose of the valuation was to set appropriate pension contribution rates for each employer for the period from 1st April 2026 to 31st March 2029.

Members were requested to note the change to the contribution rates whereby the secondary rate was calculated as a percentage; however, from the 1st April 2026 onwards the secondary percentage rate was being replaced with a fixed sum.

Members were advised this change would be reflected in the draft 2026/2027 budget.

13447 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 quarter 2 for financial year 2025/2026.

13448 HEALTH & SAFETY AT WORK POLICY

Members were provided with the amended Health & Safety at Work Policy. Amendments had been made to reflect changes in line management responsibilities as well as referring to the Kitchen Garden.

OUT

Apart from these minor amendments it was considered this policy remained fit for purpose.

Resolved: To recommend to Town Council the adoption of the Town Councils Health & Safety at Work policy.

13449 SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY & IT POLICY UPDATES

Members were requested to review and recommend for approval the Town Council's Social Media and IT policies.

Members were provided with a report and revised policies.

Members highlighted that the last entry in section 5 'Prohibited Use' appeared to be missing some text. The Head of Corporate Services confirmed this would be amended and Members informed of the additional text.

Resolved:

- 1) To recommend to Town Council the adoption of the Town Councils Social Media Policy**
- 2) To recommend to Town Council the adoption of the Town Councils IT Policy**
- 3) To recommend these policies be presented to Town Council at the meeting to be held on the 15th December 2025**

13450 HR SOFTWARE

Members were provided with a report and requested to consider the purchase of HR administration software.

Members agreed that it was appropriate to invest in HR software considering the growing numbers in HRTC council staff. The Head of Corporate Services advised members that although a number of providers had been approached further due diligence was required. Members agreed the appointment of a provider be delegated to the Head of Corporate Services, for a contract not exceeding £3,500 per annum.

QST
In order to expedite this matter, members requested this item be placed on the Town Council agenda for the meeting to be held on the 15th December 2025.

Resolved:

- 1) To agree to the Town Council entering into a contract for the provision of HR administration software at a current cost of £3500.**
- 2) To request Town Council agrees to the use of General Reserves to fund this service and to request suitable budget provision is made during future budget setting processes.**

QST

13451 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Members voted on the exclusion of the press and public:

Proposed by: Cllr M Herber

Seconded by: Cllr E Billington

Votes in favour: 4

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.

13452 STAFF SALARIES 2026/2027

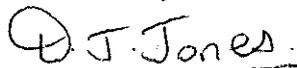
Financial Regulation 4.2 states: Budgets for salaries and wages, including employer contributions shall be reviewed by the relevant committee at least annually by December for the following financial year and the final version shall be evidenced by a hard copy schedule signed by the Clerk and the Chair of the relevant committee.

Members received an appendix containing the Salary Point number for financial year 2026-2027 for all Corporate Services staff.

Resolved: To receive the list of salary point numbers for all Corporate Services staff, along with pension contribution rates for financial year 2026-2027 and to recommend that these be noted and signed by the Chair.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8pm

Dated this 2nd day of March 2026



Chairman

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL
Community Services Committee
Minutes of the meeting held on
3rd November 2025 at 7.00pm

Present: Councillors: T McMahon Chairman
J Carroll (Substitute)
E Cooper
Y Farrell
A Slough
C Slough

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

Public: 1

Apologies: Councillors: P Burgess
D Taylor

13398 APOLOGIES & SUBSTITUTIONS

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

13399 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Cllr Herber attended the meeting to address Members on Op Hana following the earlier distribution of their email. Cllr Herber believed that Op Hana did not represent an effective use of funds and that the budget would be more effective if it was used to purchase additional CCTV/ANPR cameras.

13400 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

None.

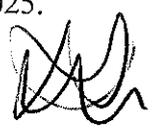
13401 MINUTES

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 21st July 2025.

Resolved: To confirm the minutes of the Community Services Committee meetings held on 21st July 2025 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

13402 TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING WORKING GROUPS AND CONSIDER ANY RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED THEREIN

Community Engagement Sub-Committee 24th June 2025
Combating Crime Working Group 18th June 2025, 16th July 2025, 20th August 2025 and 17th September 2025.



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

13403 COMMITTEE WORKPLAN

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

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

13404 INCOME AND EXPENDITURE REPORT

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

The Head of Environmental and Community Services informed Members that the report was as expected. Income from sponsors had achieved its annual target and income from events was at 82.4% of its target. The public toilets figure was tracking slightly higher as this was technically out of contract and due to go out to tender.

13405 HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL YOUTH SERVICES

Members were updated on the in-house youth services work. Key figures were:

Day	Activity	Sessions	Average Attendance	Individual attendees
Monday	Youth Café	7	20 - 24	40
Tuesday	Open Access and Boxing	14	5 - 12	40
Wednesday (alt)	Youth Council	3	9	12
Thursday	Open Access and Football	14	20 - 30	78

A trip to Southend had been arranged for the young people as a reward for volunteering at a number of local events and activities.

Members responded that the numbers were positive and demonstrated increased engagement by young members of the community. Members expressed their thanks and appreciation for the contribution made by the volunteers.

Members suggested that suitable protective clothing was provided for the young volunteers and were advised that this request could be addressed under the Budget Requests item.

13406 BUDGET REQUESTS 2026/27

Members were provided with the officer draft budget for 2026/27 along with budget forecast figures for financial years 2027 to 2030.

The draft budget reflected ongoing budgetary commitments along with anticipated increase in budgetary commitments arising from an increase in staff resources. The draft budgetary forecast figures had been prepared to support the objectives of the

Town Council's Corporate Plan and to meet the requirements of the Corporate Governance and Accountability Practitioners Guide.

The Head of Environmental and Community Services provided Members with the main points to note:

- The most significant saving would arise from the reduced print number of the Town Crier newsletter.
- A 4% per annum increase had been factored in across the board where possible.
- There was an increased events budget allocation for fireworks and Houghton Rocks.
- The Mayor's Christmas Appeal Fund would be transferred to Corporate Services.

Members reiterated the proposal to provide protective clothing for young people volunteering at events and activities. Members unanimously approved the recommendation.

- Resolved:**
- 1. To consider and comment on the draft budget for the financial year 2026-2027 for the Community Services Committee budget responsibilities.**
 - 2. To note the budget forecast figures for financial years 2027 to 2030.**

13407 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Members voted on the exclusion of the press and public:

Proposed by: Cllr A Slough Seconded by: Cllr Y Farrell

Votes in favour: 6

- 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.**

13408 STAFF SALARIES

Members reviewed the Community Services staff salaries for 2026/2027. The information provided highlighted, the SCP range for each post, the hours worked and the actual salary costs, with on costs broken down for each role.

- Resolved:** **To note the Community Services staff salaries for 2026/2027 and for the Committee Chair to sign that the information provided was a true record.**

13409 OPERATION HANA FOR 2026/27



Members discussed three recommendations proposed by the Combatting Crime Working Group, which was held 15th October 2025, which were

1. Cease the Op Hana agreement after March 2026 and use the budget to fund alternative activities
2. Reduce current Op Hana expenditure by 50% and use remaining budget for additional ANPR/CCTV cameras
3. Cancel the Op Hana budget and invest all funds in ANPR/CCTV cameras according to advice from CBC and Bedfordshire Police

Members discussed and after receiving advice from the Head of Environmental and Community Services. Members proposed the following amended recommendation, which were unanimously agreed upon.

- Resolved:**
1. To request Council to considered that any underspend of cost centre 306/4059 at year end be transferred to an Earmarked reserve to be used for future Community Safety initiatives.
 2. Instruct the Head of Environmental and Community Services to review CCTV options available to the Town Council.
 3. That the Combatting Crime Working Group be changed into the Community Safety Sub-Committee, as soon as possible.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8:59 pm.

Dated this 10th day of November 2025

Chairman



HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL
Community Services Committee
Minutes of the meeting held on
10th November 2025 at 7.00pm

Present: Councillors: T McMahon Chairman
P Burgess
E Cooper
Y Farrell
A Slough
C Slough
D Taylor

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

Public:

Apologies: Councillors:

Also
present:

13410 APOLOGIES & SUBSTITUTIONS

None.

13411 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

13412 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

None.

13413 MINUTES

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 3rd November 2025

Resolved: To confirm the minutes of the Community Services Committee meetings held on 3rd November 2025 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

13414 KEY PARTNERS - ANNUAL REVIEW OF EXISTING

Representatives from key partners had been invited to the meeting to present their annual review/update.

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

Members were able to inspect supporting information provided by the applicants upon request.

All associated paperwork has been received and reviewed by the Head of Environment and Community Services.

Members received updates from representatives for Keech Hospice Care, Houghton Regis Memorial Hall and Full House Theatre.

The following Key Partner awards were agreed:

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

Members queried whether a funding break could be introduced for these organisations once the Key Partner period expired, thereby providing funding access to other organisations. The Head of Environmental and Community Services responded that the proposal should be put forward in mid-2027, prior to the Key Partner period ending.

Resolved: To approve the release of funding as detailed for the financial year 2026/27 (Funds will be released after 1st April 2026).

13415 PROJECT GRANT SCHEME

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

Applicant	Total project cost	Amount Requested	Brief description
ACL Collective CIC	£1000	£800	To deliver a one-day community event at Houghton Regis Library called The Magical Christmas Library.

CHUMS Charity	£2,730	£500	To help deliver the CHUMS Babyloss Service for up to 3 Houghton Regis families.
Houghton Regis Ladies Group	£800	£640	Summer outing.
Houghton Regis Heritage Society	£1500	£800	To help cover website and archive license costs.

Members were advised that £3,200 remained in the budget for 2025/26.

A representative from the Houghton Regis Ladies Group updated Members on the work of the group and details of their grant application.

13416 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Members voted on the exclusion of the press and public:

Proposed by: Cllr A Slough Seconded by: Cllr Cooper

Votes in favour: 7

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.**

13417 PROJECT GRANT SCHEME DISCUSSION AND AWARD

Members discussed the four grant applications and agreed the sums to be awarded.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.24pm

Dated this 23rd day of February 2026

Chairman



HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL
Environment & Leisure Committee
Minutes of the meeting held on
20th October 2025 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillors: A Slough Chairman
P Burgess
Y Farrell
D Jones
W Henderson
T McMahon
C Rollins

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

Public: 0

Apologies: Councillors: D Taylor

Also present: Councillors: J Carroll

13374 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllr Taylor, Cllr Jones substituted.

13375 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

13376 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

13377 MINUTES

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 28th July 2025.

Resolved: To confirm the minutes of the Environment & Leisure Committee meeting held on 28th July 2025, and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

13378 TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING MEETINGS AND CONSIDER ANY RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED THEREIN

Houghton Hall Park Board

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

MS

13379 COMMITTEE WORKPLAN

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

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

13380 HOUGHTON HALL PARK

Members received a verbal update on the day-to-day operations of Houghton Hall Park (HHP) management.

The Head of Environmental and Community Services informed Members that the Management Advisory Group, and Board continued to meet. HRTC had shared with them the results of the Green Flag Award where banding had attained the highest achievable level.

Interviews for the role of Community Gardener had been conducted and an offer had been made.

13381 INCOME AND EXPENDITURE REPORT

Members were provided with the income and expenditure report, with appropriate commentary.

Following a question from Members, the Head of Environmental and Community Services confirmed that the receipt of an external grant was the last draw down from the Football Foundation.

Members were informed that that the request to charge UKSPF monies to general reserves had been approved.

13382 ANNUAL PLAY AREA INSPECTIONS

Members were updated on the outcomes of the annual play area inspection. The Head of Environmental and Community Services confirmed reports were available if Members wished to read them.

The play areas had been independently assessed and HRTC risk band scoring was predominantly low, with the exception of the skate park.

HRTC carried out any necessary repairs and play areas continued to be as safe as practicably possible.

13383 ENVIRONMENT & LEISURE FEES 2026/27

Members were provided with the schedule of fees for 2026/27, annotated to show the suggested 0% increase. A zero increase in fees had been suggested to support local clubs while considering the economic pressures facing the council.

Members were requested to consider the current year's fee structure and determine a suitable one for 2026/27.

While some caution was recommended in view of inflation levels, Members were in favour of the proposed 0% increase to ensure community accessibility.

Members questioned if figures were available to indicate the demand for sports fields and the Head of Environmental and Community Services confirmed that this information could be made available.

Resolved: To set fees under the control of the Environment & Leisure Committee for 2026/2027 at a zero increase on 2025/26 fees.

13384 MOORE CRESCENT PAVILLION ALTERATIONS

A review to prioritise potential future expenditure had been carried out. This had resulted in the Head of Environmental and Community Services, in conjunction with the Houghton Regis Bowls Club, identifying several alterations which would not only benefit the bowls club but would also improve a town council asset.

It was proposed that: the external bin store, which already had a roof structure, be bricked up and knocked through to the hall and used as a bar facility; the kitchen be extended into the storeroom. Houghton Regis Bowls Club had enjoyed a good level of success, and this would raise the potential to hold bigger events, including blue ribbon regional events, at the pavilion.

The Head of Environmental and Community Services confirmed that funding would be provided solely by HRTC and would benefit older members of the community. While many Members were in favour in principle, reservations were raised regarding security, and that public funds would be seen to finance a private bar. The Head of Environmental and Community Services responded that security was unlikely to be an increased issue, and that the footprint of the community area would be improved for all users.

Members suggested that, in light of these works, it was potentially worth revisiting the rental fee in the upcoming year. It was also suggested that consideration was given to potential uses for the venue when it was not used by the bowls club.

Members voted as follows on the recommendation:

Proposed by: Cllr McMahon

Seconded by: Cllr Farrell

In favour: Cllrs Henderson, Farrell, Jones, Slough, Rollins, McMahon

Against: Cllr Burgess

Resolved: To approve the alterations of the Moore Crescent Pavillion and approve that expenditure be taken from 299/4871.

KJ

13385 TITHE FARM RECREATION GROUND SPORTS PROJECT UPDATE

A verbal update was provided to Members on the Tithe Farm Recreation Ground Sports Project.

The Head of Environmental and Community Services informed Members that the Section 278 Agreement had been agreed. HRTC was now at the stage of agreeing a bond to be put in place and for the work being slotted into the Highways programme. A completion date was still awaited, but Members would be informed as soon as a date was confirmed.

13386 HOUGHTON REGIS IN BLOOM

Members were provided with the results for Houghton Regis in Bloom. These were as follows:

Large Town – Houghton Regis → Silver-Gilt
Historic Parks & Gardens – Houghton Hall Park → Gold
Cemeteries – Houghton Regis Cemetery → Silver
Churchyard – All Saints Parish Church → Silver-Gilt
Public Park – The Village Green → Gold and Joint Category Winner
Public Park – Parkside Recreation Ground → Gold
Public Park – Linnere Park → Gold
Nursing/Care Home – All Saints View Assisted Living (CBC) → Silver-Gilt
Special Award Nominations & Wins

Four Special Award nominations were also received.

Nominations:

Julie at Houghton Regis Memorial Hall – Best Floral Display by an Individual
All Saints View Assisted Living – Best Sheltered Housing/Assisted Living

Winners:

Houghton Hall Park – Best Community Special Award
The Chiltern School – Best Young People's Project (12–18 yrs)

The Head of Environmental and Community Services confirmed that the programme was progressing in an extremely positive manner.

Members were informed that category winners were not eligible to receive the same award the following year; therefore, HHP had been entered for Best Community Special Award, which it had won. It was also a notable achievement to receive Joint Category Winner for the Village Green.

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

13387 BUDGET REQUESTS 2026/27

Members were provided with the draft budget for 2026/27 along with budget forecast figures for financial years 2027 to 2030.

The Head of Environmental and Community Services highlighted the following points:

- A reduction in income would affect net income over expenditure.
- Burial income figures needed to be set at a more pragmatic level.
- The appointment of a project manager would look to raise awareness of the cremated remains vault services.
- The Tithe Farm grass pitch removal would negatively impact figures.
- The HHP budget would have a positive impact. The Board had proposed that the Town Council increase their contribution and under the agreement with Central Bedfordshire Council, HRTC would submit a request to them for £120,000
- Staff members at Thorn Park were funded under the Section 106 payment received. At year end, remaining funds would go into earmarked reserves and be drawn down on annually for maintenance.

An item of note was the rent for the depot, which would have a significant impact on the budget. The possibility of renting the adjacent depot had also been budgeted for and was, therefore, a possible cost saving.

There had been an increase in the budget to cover a full flower display and potentially a winter display; there would be a potential saving if Members decided not to proceed.

Members highlighted that the budget figure for horticultural supplies had been cut this year, with a view to gradually increasing provision for flowers. The proposed £30,000 for the following year's budget would be a 300% increase.

Members highlighted that while not all non-domestic business rates had increased, some had increased quite significantly. It was felt that HRTC should amend its budget to accommodate potential rises:

271-4011	Currently £1,200, should be increased to £1,700
291 4011	£18,800, which would be an increase of over £6,000 on what had been provided this year.

- Resolved:**
1. **To consider and comment on the draft budget for the financial year 2026-2027 for the Environment & Leisure Committee budget responsibilities.**
 2. **To note the budget forecast figures for financial years 2027 to 2030.**

13388 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Members voted on the exclusion of the press and public:

Proposed by: Cllr D Jones
 Seconded by: Cllr W Henderson
 Votes in favour: 7

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.

13389 STAFF SALARIES

Members were provided with a breakdown of staff salaries for 2026/27; these were reviewed and accepted.

Resolved: To approve the staff salaries under the control of the Environment & Leisure Committee for 2026/2027.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8:20 pm

Dated this 12th day of January 2026

Chairman



HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL
Planning Committee
Minutes of the meeting held on
5th January 2026 at 7.00pm

Present: Councillors: M Herber Chairman
 E Billington
 Y Farrell
 D Jones
 A Slough Substitute

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

Public: 0

Apologies: Councillors: E Cooper
 D Taylor
 C Slough

13477 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Cllr Cooper, Cllr C Slough (Cllr A Slough substituted) and Cllr Taylor.

13478 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

The Chair had been contacted by a resident regarding the proposed crossing on Sundon Road. Members agreed to discuss this under the relevant agenda item.

13479 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

13480 MINUTES

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on the 8th December 2025.

Members noted the recommendation showed the incorrect date. It was agreed that this should be amended to 8th December 2025.

Resolved: To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 8th December 2025 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

13481 PLANNING MATTERS

(a) The following planning applications were considered:

[CB/25/03565/FULL](#)
(click for more details)

Single storey side and front extensions. Two storey rear extension and front dormer extension
32 Wilbury Drive, Dunstable, LU5 4TA

Comments: Members noted that while one side of the property sat on the border of Houghton Regis, the property was not situated within the town boundary. Members commented that the extension was likely to impact the light received by the neighbouring property. The application proposed a fourth bedroom but there appeared to be insufficient parking space to meet requirements.

Houghton Regis Town Council raised no objection to this application.

Noted:

[CB/25/03468/DOC](#)
(click for more details)

Discharge of Conditions 2,3,4,5,6 and 7 against planning permission ref. CB/25/01738/LB: Listed Building: roof structure repairs, replacement lead flashing, pointing with lime mortar and stabilisation of timber props. Removal of the side conservatory, windows and doors to be refurbished and glazing upgraded, ground floor replaced with limecrete, chimney hearth repairs with matching brick and lime mortar, defective guttering replaced and installation of a new kitchen and bathroom
Vane Cottage, Park Road North, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5LD

Members noted that of the six conditions to be discharged, only one was considered satisfactory by the Conservation Officer.

[CB/25/03751/GPDE](#)
(click for more details)

Prior Approval of Householder Extension: Single storey rear extension, 5.00m beyond the rear wall of the original dwelling, maximum height of 2.95m & 2.95m to the eaves.
4A Bedford Road, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5DJ

Members noted that no plan was available to illustrate how the extension would be implemented.

[CB/25/03935/DOC](#)
(click for more details)

Discharge of Conditions 24, 25, 32, 33, 35 against planning permission ref. CB/12/03613/OUT Outline planning permission with the details of access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale reserved for later determination. Development to comprise: up to 5,150 dwellings (Use Class C3); up to 202,500 sqm gross of additional development in Use Classes: A1, A2, A3 (retail), A4 (public house), A5 (take away); B1, B2, B8 (offices, industrial and storage and distribution); C1 (hotel), C2 (care home), D1 and D2 (community and leisure); car showroom; data centre; petrol filling station; car parking; primary substation;

energy centre; and for the laying out of the buildings; routes and open spaces within the development; and all associated works and operations including but not limited to: demolition; earthworks; engineering operations. All development, works and operations to be in accordance with the Development Parameters Schedule and Plans.

Parcels 7 & 8, Linnere Houghton Regis North Site, Land on the northern edge of Houghton Regis

CB/25/03917/DOC
 (click for more details)

Discharge of Condition 24 against planning permission ref. CB/12/03613/OUT (Outline planning permission with the details of access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale reserved for later determination. Development to comprise: up to 5,150 dwellings (Use Class C3); up to 202,500 sqm gross of additional development in Use Classes: A1, A2, A3 (retail), A4 (public house), A5 (take away); B1, B2, B8 (offices, industrial and storage and distribution); C1 (hotel), C2 (care home), D1 and D2 (community and leisure); car showroom; data centre; petrol filling station; car parking; primary substation; energy centre; and for the laying out of the buildings; routes and open spaces within the development; and all associated works and operations including but not limited to: demolition; earthworks; engineering operations. All development, works and operations to be in accordance with the Development Parameters Schedule and Plans.)

Parcel 3A, Land at Elmers Gate, off Woodside Link, Houghton Regis North Site 1, Land on the northern edge of Houghton Regis

Permissions / Approvals / Consents

None received.

Refusals:

None received.

Withdrawals:

None received.

13482 PLANNING APPLICATIONS – DELEGATED AUTHORITY

Members were advised that there were no planning applications which had been determined using delegated authority to report at this meeting.

13483 : PROPOSAL TO INSTALL A TOUCAN CROSSING ON SUNDON ROAD, HOUGHTON REGIS

Members were provided with a public notice and road plan concerning the proposed installation of a Toucan Crossing at Sundon Road, positioned at a point approximately 21 metres south-west of the centre of the junction with Silver Birch Avenue.

The Chair advised Members that a resident had raised concerns regarding the pathway on Sundon Road, which they believed was too narrow. The resident had supplied photographs in support of this concern and these were circulated to Members. While there was some uncertainty as to whether the pathway was inadequate, it was agreed that the matter should be referred to CBC Highways Maintenance. The Chair confirmed they would forward the resident's comments and photographs to CBC and would copy in Members.

Members welcomed and supported the proposed crossing.

Resolved: To submit comments to Central Bedfordshire Council in support of the installation of a Toucan Crossing at the proposed site of approximately 21 metres south-west of the centre of the junction with Silver Birch Avenue.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 7.17pm

Dated this 26th day of January 2026

Chairman



HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL
Planning Committee
Minutes of the meeting held on
26th January 2026 at 7.00pm

Present: Councillors: M Herber Chairman
E Cooper
Y Farrell
D Jones
D Taylor

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

Public: 0

Apologies: Councillors: E Billington

Absent: C Slough

Also present: T McMahon (virtual)

13506 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Cllr Billington.

13507 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

13508 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

13509 MINUTES

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on the 5th January 2026.

Resolved: To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 5th January 2026 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

13510 PLANNING MATTERS

(a) The following planning applications were considered:

CB/25/03613/FULL Erect a detached garage to rear of garden, ancillary to the dwelling.
(click for more details) 7 Woodlands Avenue, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5LJ

Comments: Members stated that the issues raised by the Tree and Landscape Officer (Memo 2824614) needed to be addressed by the applicant.

Houghton Regis Town Council raised no objection to this application.

[CB/25/04023/RM](#)
(click for more details)

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

Comments: Members had noted the reports regarding traffic noise, and landscaping and visibility; however, it was agreed that these were technical matters.

Houghton Regis Town Council raised no objection to this application.

Noted:

[CB/25/04031/NMA](#)
(click for more details)

Non-material amendment to planning permission CB/24/01505/RM (Reserved Matters: following Outline Application CB/12/03613/OUT(Outline planning permission with the details of access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale reserved for later determination. Development to comprise: up to 5,150 dwellings (Use Class C3); up to 202,500 sqm gross of additional development in Use Classes: A1, A2, A3 (retail), A4 (public house), A5 (take away); B1, B2, B8 (offices, industrial and storage and distribution); C1 (hotel), C2 (care home), D1 and D2 (community and leisure); car showroom; data centre; petrol filling station; car parking; primary substation; energy centre; and for the laying out of the buildings; routes and open spaces within the

development; and all associated works and operations including but not limited to: demolition; earthworks; engineering operations. All development, works and operations to be in accordance with the Development Parameters Schedule and Plans.). Reserved matters for access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale for 189 dwellings at Parcel 5 pursuant to outline permission CB/12/03613/OUT and details to satisfy conditions; 8 (Surface Water Drainage), 25 (Construction Management Plan), 26 (Landscape Management Plan), 29 (Foul Drainage), 32 (Noise) and 33 (Noise).) Amendment sought to reduce the number of street trees in pits
Parcel 5, Houghton Regis North 1, Sundon Road, LU5 5GX

[CB/25/03873/DOC](#)
(click for more details)

Discharge of Conditions 2, 4, 6, 9, 15 & 19 against planning permission ref. CB/24/00801/FULL (Erection of a Class B8 (self-storage) building on southern boundary and associated works to car park and landscaping)
Former Site of Morrisons, High Street, Houghton Regis

Permissions / Approvals / Consents

None received.

Refusals:

None received.

Withdrawals:

None received.

13511 PLANNING APPLICATIONS – DELEGATED AUTHORITY

Members were advised that there were no planning applications which had been determined using delegated authority to report at this meeting.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 7.07pm

Dated this 16th day of February 2026

Chairman



HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Staffing Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on

24th November 2025 at 7pm

Present: Councillors: W Henderson Chairman
 E Cooper (Substitute)
 M Herber
 D Jones
 T McMahan
 A Slough
 D Taylor

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

Public: 0

Also in Cllr Farrell
 attendance:

Apologies: Councillor: E Costello

13424 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Cllr Costello (Cllr Cooper substituted)

13425 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

13426 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

None.

13427 MINUTES

The Committee received the minutes of the Staffing Committee meeting held on 3rd June 2025 for consideration.

Resolved: That the minutes of the Staffing Committee meeting held on 3rd June 2025 be approved as a correct record and signed accordingly.

13428 TOWN CLERK'S ANNUAL LEAVE, OVERTIME WORKING AND SICKNESS

Annual leave

From July 2025 to September 2025 the Clerk had 12 day's annual leave and 3 days flexi leave.

The following leave was requested:

29th – 31st December 2025

Overtime

Members were advised that due to the last meeting falling mid-way through a quarter, the months of May and June had been included, to re-align with quarterly reporting.

During the months of May and June 2025 the Clerk attended 3 meetings or events outside of the normal working day.

During the period July to September 2025 the Clerk had attended 4 meetings or events outside of the normal working day within the period compared with 6 in the previous quarter.

Sickness

From July 2025 to September 2025 the Clerk had not had any sick leave.

Resolved: To approve the Town Clerk's annual leave requests.

13429 2025 - 2026 PAY AWARD

Members were informed that the 3.2% pay increase (as agreed by the National Joint Council for local government services) was paid to staff in their August salary, backdated to April 2025, as per staff contracts of employment.

13430 STAFF APPRAISALS

Members were advised that the majority of staff Appraisals have been completed with the remaining appraisal meetings booked over the coming weeks.

13431 RECRUITMENT UPDATE

Members were advised of the following recruitment outcomes:

Community Gardener

Following a successful recruitment process, an appointment was made to the post of Community Gardener. The successful candidate commenced employment on 17th November 2025.

Grounds Team

Three new members had joined the Grounds Team. These new staff members were in post.

Project Manager

The recruitment process for the Project Manager position had concluded. Members were advised, however, that no suitable appointment had been made from the available candidates.

The position and recruitment approach would be reviewed with a view to re-advertising and appointing in 2025/26. The timescale for this was dependent on members' consideration of Agenda Item 10.

As an interim measure, an existing part-time employee was providing additional hours in support of the Head of Environmental & Community Services.

Support Officer (Events) - Maternity Cover

A maternity cover position for *Support Officer (Events)* was advertised internally, and an appointment had been successfully made.

13432 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Members voted on the exclusion of the press and public:

Proposed by: Cllr McMahon Seconded by: Cllr Jones

Votes for: 7

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.

13433 STAFFING FORECAST REVIEW – UPDATE FOR 2026-2027

Members were updated on staffing changes within 2025/26 and 2026/27.

Resolved: To support the suggestions made subject to budget provision for 2026/27.

13434 STAFFING FORECAST 2026-2030

Members were provided with a staffing forecast to 2030 for consideration.

Resolved To note the staffing forecast to 2030.

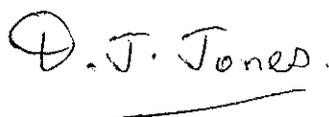
13435 STAFF SICKNESS

Members were provided with a rolling twelve-month record of sickness absence for all members of staff.

Resolved: To note the information.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 7:44 pm

Dated this 2nd day of February 2026


D. J. Jones

Chairman

Houghton Regis
Partnership Committee

Town Mayor: Cllr M Herber
Town Clerk: Clare Evans

Tel: 01582 708540

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF HOUGHTON REGIS PARTNERSHIP
COMMITTEE
HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, PEEL STREET
ON 21st OCTOBER 2025**

Present: Town Cllrs: J Carroll, E Cooper, D Jones, C Slough
CBC Cllrs C Alderman, S Goodchild, P Hamill, T McMahon
CBC Officers: S Hughes, Community Engagement Manager
HRTC Officers: C Evans, Town Clerk
A Samuels, Administration Officer

Co-opted members: J Anderson, D Gibbons, C Regan, T Haines

Also in attendance: B Gaynor, Place Programme Manager, CBC (virtual)

Apologies: Cllr Herber, Cllr Taylor

Members of the public: 1

1099 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

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

Apologies were received from Cllr S Watkins who was unable to attend due to ill health. Cllr Watkins had been scheduled to speak on Agenda Item 5: Houghton Regis Sports Hall.

Stephen Mooring was unable to attend the meeting; Beverley Gaynor attended in his place.

1100 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

1101 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

None.

1102 MINUTES

To approve the Minutes of the meetings held on 29th July 2025.

Resolved: To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 29th July 2025 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

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1103 HOUGHTON REGIS SPORTS HALL

Members had been invited to submit comments relating to the current level of accessibility of the Houghton Sports Hall for consideration by CBC. Cllr Watkins had been due to attend the meeting virtually to provide a verbal response to the points raised but had sent his apologies due to illness.

The Chair and the Town Clerk shared Cllr Watkins' written response which addressed the areas raised by Members (*written response from Cllr Watkins attached*).

Cllr Hamill had composed a letter to Cllr Watkins which he invited Members of the Committee to endorse so that it was from the Partnership Committee. Cllr Hamill requested the opportunity to share the letter with Members so that it was recorded for transparency. It was agreed for the letter to be read by Cllr Hamill and circulated following the meeting.

Members voiced frustration on a number of points: CBC's response, which was not felt to address the points raised satisfactorily; the failure of CBC to send a representative; and the lack of any meaningful data being made available to Members.

It was questioned whether this topic was due to appear on the CBC agenda for Sustainable Communities Committee and when would be the optimum time to provide feedback to that committee. It was highlighted that it was possible to raise the matter at Sustainable Communities, even if it was not scheduled on the agenda; however, the Chair of the Town Partnership Committee could request that it was brought to Sustainable Communities. Members agreed that it would be better to do this once the relevant data was available.

The Town Clerk informed Members that Cllr Watkins had offered to attend a future Town Council or committee meeting in person. Members believed that it was unlikely to be beneficial without access to the usage data and information clarifying whether issues had arisen in respect of the booking system.

Members felt the data should be in the public domain and that that an explanation should be provided if CBC or the management group were unable to supply the information. It was suggested that the data could be accessed via another route, e.g. Sports Plus in the first instance, or make a request under the Freedom of Information Act. Members agreed that the information should not be deemed commercially sensitive since it related to a public provision under the CUA.

The Chair confirmed that they would email Town Partnership a list of actions arising from this discussion (and other items on the agenda) so that these could be followed up by Members.

1104 TOWN CENTRE BENCHMARKING & HIGH STREET RENTAL AUCTION

Beverley Gaynor, Place Programme Manager at CBC, provided an update on town centre benchmarking and High Street Rental Auction.

CBC was conducting a consultation process seeking views to define the area where High Street Rental Auction (HSRA) powers might be applied. The Local Plan

CA

designated High Street, Bedford Square and King Street as the town centre within Houghton Regis.

The new powers would allow local authorities to auction leases for commercial properties that had been vacant in excess of a year, or over 366 days in a two-year period. This was intended to help bring empty units back into use in the designated areas.

The Town Clerk confirmed that HRTC had already submitted their response suggesting a more comprehensive area was covered. It was suggested that the Town Centre as designated in the Neighbourhood Plan would be a more accurate reference point.

In response to a question regarding accessibility to the auction process by charities and social enterprises, the CBC officer informed the Partnership that they would seek clarity on this point.

The CBC officer provided an update on the benchmarking surveys that had been conducted. The surveys covered: commercial offer; footfall, car parking; business confidence and user perceptions.

It was notable that 100% of businesses had reported increased turnover and were more optimistic than other nearby towns for the upcoming year. In respect of challenges, the main issues were appearance and safety. A full report was anticipated to be available in November.

1105 COMMITTEE FUNCTIONS & TERMS OF REFERENCE

The HR Partnership Committee had supported a report being presented to the October Partnership meeting on the Committee Functions and Terms of Reference (CF&ToR) (Minute 1092).

The CBC Community Engagement Manager had sought advice on the appetite within CBC to review the CF&ToR and in what form the review should take place: would CBC support an individual CF&ToR or was the intention to roll out a consistent CF&ToR across all committees? CBC had been unable to provide confirmation and in the absence of this information it was felt that the Partnership Committee could not proceed at this time.

It was suggested that contact be made with other joint committees outside of Bedfordshire where the arrangement was working effectively. The Chair confirmed this would be included on the action list.

It was suggested that contact be made with other nearby Partnership Committees to gauge their appetite for changing the CF&ToR as a joint approach to CBC would be supportive.

Resolved: To request that the Partnership Committees in Biggleswade, Dunstable and Leighton Linlade be contacted to explore their views on the suitability of the current Partnership Committee Functions and Terms of Reference.

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1106 SCHOOL ORGANISATIONAL PLAN

At the last meeting it was requested that a report be included on this agenda on the CBC School Organisational Plan. The Community Engagement Manager informed Members that Cllr Watkins had been due to make a statement to the Partnership. The Community Engagement Manager read out the statement which said that the School Place Planning Annual Review was being finalised and that it would not be appropriate to make a response before processes were completed.

Members said that this matter needed to be addressed by an executive member. Members proposed that a message was addressed to CBC Executive expressing disappointment with the lack of executive representation at Partnership, regarding both this matter and the sports hall. The Chair confirmed they would compose a draft for Members to comment on and approve.

Members of the Partnership respected the process but felt that an update on how the School Organisational plan was progressing was not an unreasonable request. There was an acknowledged need for a school by September 2027 in Thorn; however, communities had not received a response to requests for updates and no reassurance of CBC's commitment to the plan. Members were concerned that the commitments to a new school would not be met.

The Chair sought Members opinions on whether to address the sports hall and the School Organisational Plan in the same email or separately. Members agreed that the items should be addressed separately: one expressing disappointment at the lack of CBC representation regarding the sports hall; and the other inviting Cllr Owen to attend the next Partnership meeting to discuss the School Organisational Plan.

1107 TOWN CENTRE MONITORING & MANAGEMENT

Members were advised that it was with the HRTC Corporate Plan that at least 2 key action areas be identified. The Town Council had undertaken various pieces of work to support and enhance the town centre in line with the Action Plan, possibly the most apparent and visual was the planting and hanging baskets along High Street. Other ongoing areas of HRTC work also aligned with the Action Plan.

The Town Clerk advised Members that more detail was available in the update report from the Town Council.

1108 COMMUNITY BUILDINGS IN HOUGHTON REGIS

The Committee's workplan include reference to the following community buildings, an update is provided:

HRN 2 Community Building: Members were informed that work continued with the Houghton Regis Community Development Charity to progress the phased development of a community facility. Heads of Terms were being exchanged, and it was expected that the planning application for phase one would be submitted at the end of November 2025.

Townsend Centre: The works required prior to the relocation of the day service from the Townsend Centre to the leisure centre had been completed. Staff would move to

CA

the new facility in November. No expressions of interest had been made for the Townsend Centre, and the property had been declared surplus; therefore, it would be put on the open market once it was vacant.

Cllr Hamill requested that regular updates were received once the relocation was completed in order to establish how successfully the service functioned at the new site.

1109 PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE WORKPLAN

Members were invited to consider the Partnership Committee workplan for 2025/26. This had been extended to include the following items:

- Sports hall provision
- Review of the Committee Functions & Terms of Reference

At the last meeting it was requested that Health remained on the Workplan; this was confirmed.

The invitation to Cllr Owen had been added to the workplan. The Town Clerk added that items likely to arise for January included a slightly fuller report on the town centre benchmarking exercise and an update from Cllr Watkins regarding the sports hall.

1110 HRTC UPDATE REPORT

Members had received and noted HRTC update report.

1111 PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE CO-OPTION

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

Co-option

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

1112 ITEMS REQUESTING ATTENTION BY CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

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

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

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

CA

The Town Clerk questioned whether a representative from Highways would be attending the November 2025 meeting. The Community Engagement Manager confirmed that a member from Highways would be in attendance.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.59 pm

Dated this 27th day of January 2026

Chairman

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. J. Alderman', written in a cursive style.

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF HOUGHTON REGIS PARTNERSHIP
COMMITTEE
HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, PEEL STREET
ON 26th November 2025**

Present: Town Cllrs: D Jones, M Herber, C Slough, D Taylor
CBC Cllrs Y Farrell (substitute), S Goodchild, P Hamill, T McMahon
CBC Mrs Hughes, Community Engagement Manager (virtual)
Officers: Gary Powell, CBC Service Director for Highways
HRTC C Evans, Town Clerk
Officers:

Co-opted members: D Gibbons, T Haines, C Regan, R Turner

Also in attendance:

Apologies: Cllr Alderman and Co-Optee J Anderson

Members of the public: 2

1113 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Cllr Alderman (Cllr Farrell substituted) and Co-Optee J Anderson.

1114 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

The member of the public present had some specific points they wished to raise in relation to highways. They were invited to put their questions during the agenda item.

1115 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

None.

1116 DRAFT HIGHWAYS CAPITAL PROGRAMME

Gary Powell, CBC Service Director for Highways, attended the meeting to update Members on the draft Highways Capital Programme for Houghton Regis and to receive their comments and feedback.

The Service Director for Highways informed Members of the schemes and works carried out in the current year, which included carriageways, footways, rights of way works.

CA

The CBC budget was not yet confirmed and as such the Capital Highways programme was based on current grant funding from government which covers specific areas such as maintenance and local transport schemes. It is usual for CBC to top up the highways fund however as details of the government's Fairer Funding scheme were still awaited, CBC was not currently in a position to confirm any additional funding which may be available. As such the CBC Highways Capital Programme was more restricted than desired.

CBC operate a data-driven approach which aimed to prolong the life of its assets and ensure the best value for money. Accident data was used to establish hazardous areas and identify the appropriate safety measures to implement. Inspectors and resident feedback also informed the process and feasibility studies were carried out to ascertain where interventions were necessary.

The Houghton Regis schemes currently included: structural maintenance schemes; rights of way; and active travel. The programme of schemes would be followed, but costs would dictate what works would proceed.

Members were requested to provide their feedback by 1st December 2025.

Gary Powell answered questions from Members:

Could HRTC submit a request for alternative work to be carried out, rather than that listed, if it was considered a higher priority?

This was possible and CBC would consider such requests. It was highlighted, however, that in order to accommodate changes the projects would need to fall under the same budget.

How could communication be improved to keep residents informed and to manage their expectations?

CBC was working to improve communication. Ideally, residents would be aware that some works on the programme might not be carried out should circumstances / priorities change. Generally, it was felt that residents needed to be better informed of proposed works and changes to proposed works.

Works were sometimes carried out several times on the same site, which did not appear to make economic sense. Why was this the case and was signage an option?

Sometimes CBC carried out emergency works that as a temporary measure or undertake preparatory works. More than one visit might be required before a permanent solution was in place. Costs meant that it was not feasible to put explanatory signage in place.

*Was CBC's equipment purchase and hire costs capital or revenue funded?
(Cllr Hamill left the meeting)*

CBC owned some of the plant which would be a capital cost while other equipment was supplied under contract. It was thought that it was more economical to invest in the long-term condition of the network rather than equipment.

A member of the public questioned what depth a pothole needed to be for action to be taken. It was also highlighted that humps in the road had been causing problems for vehicles at two sites within Houghton Regis.

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The member of the public left the meeting. The Service Director for Highways requested the Town Clerk to send him details of the question in order to respond directly to the member of public.

Why did reports submitted via Fix My Street sometimes come back as 'non-priority' and were then closed? The issues remained and residents did not receive updates to indicate when they would be given attention.

Even when cases were closed, there was a trail recording issues and CBC continued to monitor the situation. Costs meant there were limitations to what could realistically be achieved.

Did CBC look beyond the 3-year pipeline programme? Was there flexibility in the programme to respond to safety issues?

The current year's plan was in place, in addition to the 3-year pipeline covered by the MTFP. The programme was subject to change during the course of the year. The list of future schemes would go beyond this to indicate what was likely to need attention in future years.

Safety-based schemes were investigated and feasibility studies carried out to prioritise cases. Decisions were based on five years of data.

What S106 funds had been made available for Houghton Regis and how much was left?

It was not possible to respond with a definite amount as funding was linked to development and, while not always specific, some funds could only be used for certain projects. In addition, historic funds might be available but would require supplementary funds before works could begin.

Repairs and improvements were carried out on roads that were seemingly dug up again soon afterwards. Was there a way to diarise works and communicate more effectively to stop this happening?

The Highway Agreements Team and Street Works were responsible for co-ordinating planned works; however, emergency or developer works sometimes meant this was not always possible. External parties were required to advise CBC of proposed works and to complete these prior to any road improvements taking place. Failure to observe this process would mean that the proposed works could not be carried out for two years following road maintenance.

Could residents be informed when visits were scheduled so residents could meet with officers and discuss key concerns before a road was adopted.

(Roger Turner left the meeting)

Plans were assessed from a technical perspective and it was necessary for road designs to pass technical reviews. Roads were expected to be safe in the first instance, built to the correct specification and maintained until the point of adoption. CBC would inspect the road at this point to ascertain if it was fit to be adopted. The process was driven by the developer rather than CBC and, unfortunately, roads did not always meet the correct standard for adoption.

The Chair requested that the Town Clerk send details of the programme to Members and for Members to respond by the end of Friday 28th November 2025.

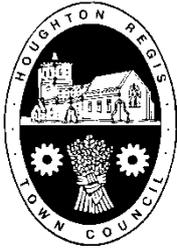
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The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.16pm

Dated this 27th day of January 2026

Chairman

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chloe Alderson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.



Date: 16th March 2026

Title: CORPORATE PLAN REVIEW & UPDATE

Purpose of the Report: To review and update members on the Corporate Plan.

Contact Officer: Clare Evans, Town Clerk

1. RECOMMENDATION

To note the update on the Corporate Plan.

2. BACKGROUND

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

3. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

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

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

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

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

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

B Blue The Project completed or closed

Summary of Initiatives 2024/25:

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

Total: 149

Summary of Initiatives 2025/26:

Red: 0
Amber: 30
Green: 40
Blue: 79
Suggested Discard: 0*

Total: 149

*Converted to Amber

4. HRTC CORPORATE PLAN

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

4.5 Enhance the role of the council.

5. IMPLICATIONS

Corporate Implications

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

Legal Implications

- There are no legal implications arising from the recommendations

Financial Implications

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

Risk Implications

- There are no additional arising risk implications.

Equalities Implications

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

This project / issue does not discriminate.

Climate Change Implications

- There are no climate change implications arising from the recommendations

Press Contact

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

6. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

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

7. APPENDICES

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

Appendix A

Pillar	Objective	Mechanism/ initiative	Type	Delivery Year	Status: Red Amber Green Completed Discard	Committee Workplan	
1	Town and community	Improve integration between existing and new communities.	Continue to provide 'Welcome Packs' for new residents at Linmere, Thorn and Bidwell.	Initiative	2024 onwards	Amber	Community Services
2	Town and community	Improve integration between existing and new communities.	Review pedestrian and cycle links between the town centre and the expansion areas to identify any opportunities to improve the condition and/ or connectivity of these.	Study	2027 / 28	Green	Planning
3	Town and community	Improve integration between existing and new communities.	Strengthen local centres and recreational areas around expansion areas in order to encourage use by new residents and support interaction with existing residents.	Intervention	2024 onwards	Completed	Environment & Leisure
4	Town and community	Improve integration between existing and new communities.	Continue to work with CBC and developers to soften the edges between new and existing development.	Engagement	2024 onwards	Completed	Planning
5	Town and community	Support the sense of arrival and identity.	New, 'Welcome to Houghton Regis – historic market town' signage at important gateways into the Parish. In particular, at Sundon Road (immediately after the roundabout), Poynter's Road, Houghton Road, Watling Street and all A5 intersections. Coordination with CBC to establish the style and placement of new signage (potential use of CBC's Rural Match Funding Scheme in the expansion area/ HRN1&2).	Intervention	2026 / 27	Amber	Community Services
6	Town and community	Support the sense of arrival and identity.	Develop and implement a consistent branding scheme that establishes typical colours, fonts, logos and copy text for use on all signage, street furniture, stationary and in print and social media. These should reflect Houghton's history (royal burgh, agricultural production, etc.), sense of community and semi-rural character.	Initiative	2024 onwards	Completed	Town Council
7	Town and community	Create a stronger, more robust and engaging town centre offer.	Continue to work with CBC and stakeholders to develop a centre that can meet the retail, recreation and social needs of 35,000 residents.	Engagement	2024 onwards	Green	Partnership
8	Town and community	Create a stronger, more robust and engaging town centre offer.	Continue to work with partners to diversify the town centre offer and provide greater variety for residents without needing to travel further afield.	Engagement	2024 onwards	Amber	Partnership
9	Town and community	Create a stronger, more robust and engaging town centre offer.	Work with partners to extend town centre activities along the historic High Street.	Engagement	2024 onwards	Completed	Community Services
10	Town and community	Create a stronger, more robust and engaging town centre offer.	Work with CBC and stakeholders to create additional employment space in and around the town centre for the increasing population.	Engagement	2024 onwards	Amber	Partnership
11	Town and community	Create a stronger, more robust and engaging town centre offer.	Develop at least two key action areas that are identified in the Town Centre Action Plan (2022).	Intervention	2024 onwards	Completed	Partnership
12	Town and community	Create a stronger, more robust and engaging town centre offer.	Work with CBC and stakeholders to improve access to the regional public transport hubs of the Busway terminal and Leagrave Station.	Engagement	2024 onwards	Amber	Partnership
13	Town and community	Create a stronger, more robust and engaging town centre offer.	Temporary seasonal installations at prominent civic spaces, such as the shopping centre, All Saints car park and The Green. Installations might include a summer beach, a winter ice rink and a harvest festival.	Event	2027 / 28	Completed	Community Services
14	Town and community	Create a stronger, more robust and engaging town centre offer.	Engage street performers (local musicians and independent entertainers) to stimulate life, activity and footfall at weekends.	Initiative	2026 / 27	Amber	Community Services
15	Town and community	Create a stronger, more robust and engaging town centre offer.	Continue to provide town centre wardens at peak shopping times.	Initiative		Amber	Community Services
16	Town and community	Create a stronger, more robust and engaging town centre offer.	Promotion of outside hospitality areas to further stimulate life and activity.	Engagement		Amber	Community Services
17	Town and community	Create a stronger, more robust and engaging town centre offer.	Continue to investigate solutions with CBC and stakeholders to provide a regular or specialist market and explore alternatives such as external food stalls, 'pop-up' space and local produce/ craft fairs.	Engagement	2024 onwards	Completed	Community Services
18	Town and community	Create a stronger, more robust and engaging town centre offer.	Provision of bi-annual fair/ market-style events - possibly, a Christmas Wonderland and a Summer Fair.	Event	Link to 13	Completed	Community Services
19	Town and community	Create a stronger, more robust and engaging town centre offer.	Mapping of local facilities for visitors and residents, such as retail, recreation and leisure activities, foot and cycle routes, post boxes, schools, GP and health services, recycling and waste disposal facilities, bus stops and regional transport connections.	Initiative	2024 onwards	Green	Community Services
20	Town and community	Create a stronger, more robust and engaging town centre offer.	Improve signage between key attractions and destinations, for instance, at Houghton Hall Park, The Green/ High Street, the Chiltern Way, Houghton Quarry, the Busway and Sewell/ Maiden Bower.	Intervention	27 / 28	Amber	Environment & Leisure
21	Town and community	Create a stronger, more robust and engaging town centre offer.	The Café on the Green: Develop the cricket pavilion to provide a café/ snack/ local produce take-away outlet with some outdoor seating – in addition to linking The Green and Houghton Hall Park, this could generate a revenue for HRTC and create employment opportunities.	Intervention		Green	Environment & Leisure
22	Town and community	Create a stronger, more robust and engaging town centre offer.	Continue to promote a 'Shop Local' campaign.	Programme	2024 onwards	Green	Community Services
23	Town and community	Create a stronger, more robust and engaging town centre offer.	Work with partners and business owners to develop a stronger, more diverse evening economy that can compete with the offers of neighbouring towns.	Engagement		Amber	Partnership

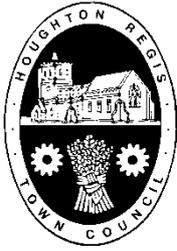
24	Town and community	Create a stronger, more robust and engaging town centre offer.	Work with partners and potential operators to grow a tourism offer with some local allowance of overnight accommodation.	Engagement		Amber	Partnership
25	Town and community	Improve the visual appearance of the town centre - open space and planting.	Develop a town centre planting strategy to ensure a consistent and coordinated approach for the treatment of planters, verges, roundabouts and hard and soft open spaces.	Study	2024 onwards	Completed	Environment & Leisure
26	Town and community	Improve the visual appearance of the town centre - open space and planting.	Houghton Regis in Bloom: determine the requirements of involvement in the competition and if acceptable and of interest, develop a vision and a programme to support a bid.	Event	Ongoing	Completed	Environment & Leisure
27	Town and community	Improve the visual appearance of the town centre - open space and planting.	Installation of planters (hanging and floor mounted) along the High Street, extended up to the Chequers roundabout and Lake View in a 'Phase 2'.	Intervention	2025 26	Completed	Environment & Leisure
28	Town and community	Improve the visual appearance of the town centre - open space and planting.	Trim trees in front of All Saints Church to maintain views of the 13th Century, Grade I listed, Norman tower.	Intervention	2025 26	Green	Environment & Leisure
29	Town and community	Improve the visual appearance of the town centre - open space and planting.	Engagement with regional and national organisations, such as the RHS and English Heritage, to hold events at Houghton Hall Park.	Engagement	2024 onwards	Green	Community Services
30	Town and community	Improve the visual appearance of the town centre - general.	Bedford Square: continue to engage with CBC and the owners of the shopping precinct to identify long and short term solutions to improve the High Street and Tithe Farm Road elevations.	Engagement	2025 26	Amber	Partnership
31	Town and community	Improve the visual appearance of the town centre - general.	Installation of sign boards to screen the current view of the bins at the back of the shopping precinct from the High Street.	Intervention	Link to 30	Amber	Partnership
32	Town and community	Improve the visual appearance of the town centre - general.	Strengthen the space in front of All Saints Church and the current entrance to the shopping precinct (Action Area 4, Town Centre Action Plan) as a new civic space at a highly prominent location.	Intervention		Amber	Partnership
33	Town and community	Improve the visual appearance of the town centre - general.	Relocate/ remove weapon bins.	Intervention		Completed	Partnership
34	Town and community	Improve the visual appearance of the town centre - general.	Renew and replace redundant street furniture along the High Street and at the entrances to the shopping precinct.	Intervention		Amber	Partnership
35	Town and community	Improve the visual appearance of the town centre - general.	Work with partners to refresh the shopping precinct through decluttering street furniture, cleaning surfaces, renewing structural planting and covering blank facades.	Engagement		Amber	Partnership
36	Town and community	Improve the visual appearance of the town centre - general.	Identify and strengthen a series of key views through the town, for example, the historic view from The Green to All Saints Church that is mentioned in the Character Area Assessment and a long view from the top of the Chalk Hills to Houghton Hall Park and All Saints (if visible).	Study		Amber	Environment & Leisure
37	Town and community	Improve the visual appearance of the town centre - general.	Tourist/ heritage information banners on posts at key gateways and/ or along the High Street.	Intervention	2026 27	Amber	Community Services
38	Town and community	Protection and promotion of cultural and heritage assets.	Maintain the integrity of the town centre conservation area and improve this whenever possible.	Programme	2024 onwards	Green	Partnership
39	Town and community	Protection and promotion of cultural and heritage assets.	Assemble an itinerary of the type and condition of key heritage assets and review their signage and branding.	Study	Link to 19	Green	Community Services
40	Town and community	Protection and promotion of cultural and heritage assets.	Improve signage between key attractions and destinations to encourage access and synergy.	Intervention	Link to 20	Green	Environment & Leisure
41	Town and community	Protection and promotion of cultural and heritage assets.	Continue to work with and support partners to identify the need/ opportunity for additional protection of assets and identification of potential funding streams.	Engagement	2024 onwards	Green	Partnership
42	Town and community	Protection and promotion of cultural and heritage assets.	Review access to assets and the links between these to identify any opportunities for improvement.	Study	Link to 20	Green	Partnership
43	Town and community	Protection and promotion of cultural and heritage assets.	Improve access to and awareness of ancient historical sites, such as Maiden Bower, Watling Street, Houghton Quarry and the sites of Roman, Saxon and Iron Age finds across the Parish.	Intervention	Link to 19	Green	Partnership
44	Town and community	Protection and promotion of cultural and heritage assets.	Discuss with partners at CBC, Natural England and the Chilterns the potential to develop the Chalk Hills/ Houghton Quarry as a new destination with protected habitats and sensitively located public facilities.	Engagement	2025 26	Green	Partnership
45	Town and community	Protection and promotion of cultural and heritage assets.	Prepare physical and interactive maps of heritage assets.	Initiative	Link to 19	Green	Community Services
46	Town and community	Protection and promotion of cultural and heritage assets.	Blue plaque schemes: review the interest in applying for Historic England plaques on listed buildings or, a similar local scheme using typical Houghton colours.	Initiative	Link to 19	Green	Community Services
47	Town and community	Protection and promotion of cultural and heritage assets.	Continue discussions with owners and operators to provide a series of open days and guided tours of protected areas and listed buildings.	Engagement	2025 26	Green	Community Services
48	Town and community	Protection and promotion of cultural and heritage assets.	Guided (physical or virtual) tours and trails across the Parish taking in multiple sights and attractions.	Initiative	Link to 47	Green	Community Services
49	Town and community	Protection and promotion of cultural and heritage assets.	Enhance the town's noticeboards, including the possibility of installing digital boards.	Intervention	2024 25	Green	Environment & Leisure
50	Town and community	Protection and promotion of cultural and heritage assets.	Promote the Honorary Freeman and Freewoman award and the Pride of Houghton awards.	Programme	Ongoing	Completed	Community Services

51	Town and community	Strengthen Houghton's landscape character and agricultural heritage.	Strengthen foot and cycle links from the town centre to the Parish's rural areas and beyond this, to the Chiltern Hills AONB.	Intervention		Amber	Partnership
52	Town and community	Strengthen Houghton's landscape character and agricultural heritage.	Work with partners to strengthen the section of the Chiltern Way as it passes through the Parish and any PROWs that connect to this.	Intervention		Amber	Partnership
53	Town and community	Strengthen Houghton's landscape character and agricultural heritage.	New planting at gateways and around the town centre/ Houghton Hall Park.	Intervention	2025 26	Completed	Environment & Leisure
54	Town and community	Strengthen Houghton's landscape character and agricultural heritage.	Review the potential for rewilding in some areas, such as at The Green, Houghton Hall Park, the source of the River Lea, along verges, 'closed' sections of the cemetery and in recreation areas.	Intervention	2025 26	Completed	Environment & Leisure
55	Town and community	Strengthen Houghton's landscape character and agricultural heritage.	Review the potential to reintroduce native species at Houghton Hall Park and informal open spaces close to the Chilterns AONB, including new bird, bat and butterfly boxes, hedgehog routes and houses, bugs hotel etc.	Intervention	2025 26	Green	Environment & Leisure
56	Town and community	Strengthen Houghton's landscape character and agricultural heritage.	Strengthen the existing market garden at Houghton Hall Park and the space between this, the source of the River Lea and the cricket pavilion.	Intervention	2028 29	Completed	Environment & Leisure
57	Town and community	Strengthen Houghton's landscape character and agricultural heritage.	Create a focal area for rewilding and habitats with some accommodation for community involvement and awareness. A section of Houghton Hall Park near to the market garden might be particularly appropriate.	Intervention	Link to 54	Completed	Environment & Leisure
58	Town and community	Strengthen Houghton's landscape character and agricultural heritage.	Support local participation in the RHS 'It's Your Neighbourhood' scheme.	Initiative	2025 26	Completed	Environment & Leisure
59	Town and community	Strengthen Houghton's landscape character and agricultural heritage.	Continue to work with CBC and stakeholders to improve public access to the Marl Lakes and Houghton Quarry SSSI with the potential for dedicated footpaths, structural planting/ Green Infrastructure and some low impact furniture and facilities.	Engagement	2025 26	Green	Partnership
60	Town and community	Strengthen Houghton's landscape character and agricultural heritage.	Review opportunities for additional Green Flag Awards.	Study	2025 26	Completed	Environment & Leisure
61	Town and community	Develop an annual programme of community events across the Parish.	Develop a diverse programme of regular events and activities that would be delivered across the town as a whole to achieve community cohesion and the promotion of local heritage and identity. Suggested themes include; farmer's market, flower show, urban farm, Houghton's Got Talent, Houghton Rocks, ghost tours, medieval event, harvest festival, garden scarecrow festival, silent disco, messy play, uniform swap, park runs and walks,	Event	Link to 13	Completed	Community Services
62	Town and community	Develop an annual programme of community events across the Parish.	Promote a series of community action days (potentially led by rangers), with activities such as planting bulbs, cleaning street signs and furniture, trimming hedges, litter picking/ area blitzes.	Event	2027 28	Green	Environment & Leisure
63	Local services and facilities	Work with partners to improve the quality and accessibility of the public realm in the town centre.	Improved wheelchair and mobility impaired access within the urban area and the wider footpath network.	Intervention		Amber	Partnership
64	Local services and facilities	Work with partners to improve the quality and accessibility of the public realm in the town centre.	Improved pedestrian and cycle connectivity.	Intervention		Amber	Partnership
65	Local services and facilities	Work with partners to improve the quality and accessibility of the public realm in the town centre.	With CBC and stakeholders, review the potential to provide bus stops in front of All Saints Church and All Saints View, connecting to the Busway terminus and Leagrave train station.	Engagement		Amber	Partnership
66	Local services and facilities	Continue to work with key partners to address crime and anti-social behaviour.	Continue to work with Bedfordshire police to deliver Operation Hana as a high visibility policing initiative.	Engagement	Ongoing	Completed	Community Services
67	Local services and facilities	Continue to work with key partners to address crime and anti-social behaviour.	Continue to work with CBC to deliver a bulk waste subsidy initiative to reduce incidences of fly tipping.	Engagement	Ongoing	Completed	Community Services
68	Local services and facilities	Continue to work with key partners to address crime and anti-social behaviour.	Continue to work with CBC to manage mobile CCTV coverage.	Engagement	Ongoing	Completed	Community Services
69	Local services and facilities	Continue to work with key partners to address crime and anti-social behaviour.	Continue to work with CBC to review static CCTV provision.	Engagement	Ongoing	Green	Community Services
70	Local services and facilities	Continue to work with key partners to address crime and anti-social behaviour.	Continue to work with CBC/ Groundwork in delivering youth activities.	Engagement	Ongoing	Completed	Community Services
71	Local services and facilities	Continue to work with key partners to address crime and anti-social behaviour.	Extend the public realm/ Town Ranger scheme to a 5-day per week operation.	Programme	2026 27	Green	Community Services
72	Local services and facilities	Establish a town centre hub for the delivery of centrally based services, such as HRTC's offices, a youth centre and a tourist information/ heritage centre.	Identify potential sites for a community and services hub at a prominent location in the town centre. This could also provide tourist information and a mixed-use space for events and exhibitions. Initial suggestions include, the Red House, ASV, the cricket pavilion on The Green, All Saints Church/ Bedford Square Centre.	Study	2025 26	Green	Community Services
73	Local services and facilities	Establish a town centre hub for the delivery of centrally based services, such as HRTC's offices, a youth centre and a tourist information/ heritage centre.	Determine the space planning requirements and establish connections with potential partners to explore viability.	Study	2025 26	Green	Community Services

74	Local services and facilities	Establish a town centre hub for the delivery of centrally based services, such as HRTC's offices, a youth centre and a tourist information/ heritage centre.	Identify a potential timeline for delivery and potential funding streams.	Study	2026 27	Green	Community Services
75	Local services and facilities	Establish a town centre hub for the delivery of centrally based services, such as HRTC's offices, a youth centre and a tourist information/ heritage centre.	Develop preliminary plans and a schedule of costs.	Study	2026 27	Green	Community Services
76	Local services and facilities	Maximise the value of HRTC assets.	Assemble an itinerary of the type, condition and use of all HRTC assets.	Study		Completed	Environment & Leisure
77	Local services and facilities	Maximise the value of HRTC assets.	Identification of opportunities to improve the use and efficiency of assets.	Study	2025 26	Green	Environment & Leisure
78	Local services and facilities	Maximise the value of HRTC assets.	Explore opportunities to remodel the HRTC office reception area to make it more accessible and visitor friendly.	Study		Completed	Corporate Services
79	Local services and facilities	Maintain and enhance sporting provision both at existing and soon-to-be-adopted sites.	Review the use and function of different open spaces and access to these to identify any opportunities for improvement.	Study	2025 26	Green	Environment & Leisure
80	Local services and facilities	Maintain and enhance sporting provision both at existing and soon-to-be-adopted sites.	Investigate potential provision for other sports and activities, such as tennis, athletics track, outdoor gym, cricket and netball.	Study	2025 26	Green	Environment & Leisure
81	Local services and facilities	Maintain and enhance sporting provision both at existing and soon-to-be-adopted sites.	Complete the Tithe Farm sports project.	Intervention		Completed	Environment & Leisure
82	Local services and facilities	Maintain and enhance sporting provision both at existing and soon-to-be-adopted sites.	Work with partners to investigate the need/ feasibility of a second all weather pitch at Bidwell.	Engagement	2025 26	Completed	Environment & Leisure
83	Local services and facilities	Maintain and enhance sporting provision both at existing and soon-to-be-adopted sites.	Work with existing local clubs to facilitate the self-management of their sporting facilities.	Engagement	2025 26	Completed	Environment & Leisure
84	Local services and facilities	To continue to provide excellent play equipment and expand the range of accessible play equipment available.	Develop a play area replacement programme factoring in a range of accessible equipment.	Study	Ongoing	Completed	Environment & Leisure
85	Local services and facilities	To continue to provide excellent play equipment and expand the range of accessible play equipment available.	Receive and manage new play areas in Bidwell, together with collecting any commuted sums.	Programme	2025 26	Completed	Environment & Leisure
86	Local services and facilities	To continue to provide excellent play equipment and expand the range of accessible play equipment available.	Review the potential to diversify play and recreation provision, such as providing a bike pump track, climbing wall and splash park.	Study	2027 28	Completed	Environment & Leisure
87	Local services and facilities	To continue to provide excellent play equipment and expand the range of accessible play equipment available.	Install outdoor gym equipment at one or two sites within existing recreational areas. Potential spaces should be overlooked, accessible and ideally, with an allowance of street lighting.	Intervention		Completed	Environment & Leisure
88	Local services and facilities	Stimulate local business development and employment and training opportunities.	Work with CBC and stakeholders to realise additional employment space in and around the town centre in order to cater for the increase in population.	Engagement		Completed	Partnership
89	Local services and facilities	Stimulate local business development and employment and training opportunities.	Improve signage to and at employment areas within the Parish.	Intervention		Completed	Partnership
90	Local services and facilities	Stimulate local business development and employment and training opportunities.	Establish a forum of local businesses with regular networking events to stimulate B2B activity.	Programme		Completed	Community Services
91	Local services and facilities	Stimulate local business development and employment and training opportunities.	Engage with local business owners to identify any skills gaps or constraints to growth that might exist.	Engagement		Completed	Partnership
92	Local services and facilities	Stimulate local business development and employment and training opportunities.	At present, the nearest overnight accommodation is in Dunstable and Luton. Review opportunities to improve Houghton's tourism offer through engaging with local stakeholders to develop an allowance of overnight accommodation in the town centre.	Study		Completed	Partnership
93	Local services and facilities	Stimulate local business development and employment and training opportunities.	Seek to strengthen the nighttime economy and assist in promoting awareness to existing food and beverage outlets.	Engagement		Completed	Community Services
94	Local services and facilities	Promote awareness of our town, its assets and opportunities for businesses and investment.	Develop a new, 'Visit Houghton' website or an extension to the existing HRTC site with information about events, attractions, access and hospitality accommodation.	Initiative	2025 26	Green	Community Services
95	Local services and facilities	Promote awareness of our town, its assets and opportunities for businesses and investment.	Work with partners to develop the nighttime economy and tourism offers to compete with those of neighbouring settlements.	Engagement		Amber	Partnership
96	Local services and facilities	Promote awareness of our town, its assets and opportunities for businesses and investment.	Develop a branding programme for consistency in the image of Houghton that is projected on physical installations and print and social media.	Initiative	Ongoing	Completed	Community Services
97	Local services and facilities	Promote awareness of our town, its assets and opportunities for businesses and investment.	Continue to work with local businesses and institutions to promote Houghton regional and nationally.	Programme	Ongoing	Completed	Town Council
98	Local services and facilities	Promote awareness of our town, its assets and opportunities for businesses and investment.	Investigate the potential for 'town twinning' with an accessible European location and the opportunities for synergy this presents.	Initiative	2027 28	Completed	Community Services
99	Local services and facilities	Promote awareness of our town, its assets and opportunities for businesses and investment.	Investigate the potential to develop synergy with other Regis towns and villages, potentially seeking an official Royal involvement in some capacity.	Initiative	2025 26	Completed	Community Services
100	Local services and facilities	Promote awareness of our town, its assets and opportunities for businesses and investment.	Work with partners to strengthen existing cycle routes through the Parish and where possible, develop additional routes.	Engagement	Link to 2	Amber	Environment & Leisure
101	Quality of Life	Improve environmental quality and sustainability.					

102	Quality of Life	Improve environmental quality and sustainability.	Strengthen a primary cycling route across the Parish, connecting to the Town Centre (including the Green and Houghton Hall Park)	Initiative	Link to 2	Amber	Environment & Leisure
103	Quality of Life	Improve environmental quality and sustainability.	Provide new bike stands at key sites – in front of All Saints Church, The Green/ Houghton Hall, the Busway and in recreational areas.	Intervention	Link to 2	Completed	Environment & Leisure
104	Quality of Life	Improve environmental quality and sustainability.	Promote and encourage cycling with information events related to cycle proficiency, security (locks), safety (helmets, bells, lights, Highway Code) and cycle repair and upkeep.	Programme	Link to 2	Completed	Environment & Leisure
105	Quality of Life	Improve environmental quality and sustainability.	Promote initiatives to encourage walking and cycling to school, such as 'walking buses', school crossing patrols and cycle proficiency events.	Programme	Link to 2	Amber	Community Services
106	Quality of Life	Improve environmental quality and sustainability.	Work with CBC and operators to explore opportunities to improve local and regional public transport links.	Engagement		Amber	Environment & Leisure
107	Quality of Life	Improve environmental quality and sustainability.	Deliver an air quality awareness campaign (re: Marlborough TC work incl. media campaign, cut idling, posters, social media GIF, short video).	Programme	2025 26	Green	Community Services
108	Quality of Life	Encourage a healthier lifestyle through healthier eating, smoking & vaping cessation and improved activity levels.	Organise monthly park runs and walks, starting at The Green and extending into Houghton Hall Park.	Event		Completed	Environment & Leisure
109	Quality of Life	Encourage a healthier lifestyle through healthier eating, smoking & vaping cessation and improved activity levels.	Work with partners to deliver a second allotment site.	Engagement	2026 27	Green	Environment & Leisure
110	Quality of Life	Encourage a healthier lifestyle through healthier eating, smoking & vaping cessation and improved activity levels.	Develop the kitchen garden at Houghton Hall Park.	Intervention	Ongoing	Completed	Environment & Leisure
111	Quality of Life	Encourage a healthier lifestyle through healthier eating, smoking & vaping cessation and improved activity levels.	Programme of events to promote awareness of healthy eating, active travel and smoking/ vaping cessation.	Programme	2028 29	Green	Community Services
112	Quality of Life	Encourage a healthier lifestyle through healthier eating, smoking & vaping cessation and improved activity levels.	Work with partners to provide support for school meals/ breakfast clubs, including identifying potential funding schemes and initiatives.	Engagement	2025 26	Completed	Environment & Leisure
113	Quality of Life	Encourage a healthier lifestyle through healthier eating, smoking & vaping cessation and improved activity levels.	Improve awareness of existing community leisure facilities and events.	Programme	Link to 19	Green	Community Services
114	Quality of Life	Improve access to services and support through the provision of a network of Parish-wide community hubs.	Services for families, young people, older people, health, community, drop-in, advice, support/ signposting, safe space/ warm space.	Programme	Link to 72	Completed	Community Services
115	Quality of Life	Improve access to services and support through the provision of a network of Parish-wide community hubs.	Look for SMART locations in TF, PS, town centre, OC, Bidwell and Linmere.	Study	Link to 72	Completed	Community Services
116	Quality of Life	Improve access to services and support through the provision of a network of Parish-wide community hubs.	Facilitate an annual or bi-annual community conference/ networking event.	Event	2025 26	Completed	Community Services
117	Quality of Life	Improve existing and develop new opportunities for young people across the Parish.	Youth outreach/ detached work.	Programme	Ongoing	Completed	Community Services
118	Quality of Life	Improve existing and develop new opportunities for young people across the Parish.	Youth centre/ youth groups.	Programme	Ongoing	Completed	Community Services
119	Quality of Life	Improve existing and develop new opportunities for young people across the Parish.	Use of proposed community hubs for town wide delivery.	Engagement	Ongoing	Completed	Community Services
120	Quality of Life	Improve existing and develop new opportunities for young people across the Parish.	Conduct engagement with school leavers and young adults to identify what they would want to see in the future.	Engagement	Ongoing	Completed	Community Services
121	Quality of Life	Improve existing and develop new opportunities for young people across the Parish.	Consultation with local businesses to encourage awareness of training schemes and apprenticeships.	Engagement		Amber	Community Services
122	Quality of Life	Improve existing and develop new opportunities for young people across the Parish.	Work with stakeholders to deliver advice and information about careers and training opportunities for school-leavers, including events by representatives of Cranfield University, the University of Bedfordshire and local technical/ Higher Education colleges to promote and encourage local enrolment.	Programme		Amber	Community Services
123	Quality of Life	Continue to explore options for a new cemetery.	Complete Grendall Lane investigations and determine the 'next steps'.	Study		Completed	Environment & Leisure
124	Quality of Life	Continue to explore options for a new cemetery.	Explore further options for sites and initiate discussions with CBC and other stakeholders.	Study	Ongoing	Completed	Environment & Leisure
125	Quality of Life	Continue to provide a Town Council Community Grant Scheme.	Through Cost of Living Support Grants to partner organisations.	Engagement	Ongoing	Completed	Community Services
126	Management and operations	Develop a 5-year financial & staffing plan.	Create a 10-year planned maintenance programme for HRTC-owned assets to inform the financial planning process. These include pavilions, recreation grounds, play areas, street furniture and signage, vehicles and equipment.	Study	Link to 77	Completed	Corporate Services

127	Management and operations	Develop a 5-year financial & staffing plan.	Develop a 5-year financial plan, factoring in the delivery of the Town Council Corporate Plan.	Study	2024 25	Completed	Corporate Services
128	Management and operations	Develop a 5-year financial & staffing plan.	Develop a supporting staffing plan (possibly including expanding the grounds team, the ranger service, project officer, youth workers, community / events officer, administration assistant).	Study	2024 25	Completed	Corporate Services
129	Management and operations	Develop a 5-year financial & staffing plan.	Improve access to training and career development for staff and members.	Programme		Completed	Corporate Services
130	Management and operations	Develop a 5-year financial & staffing plan.	Organise a series of bi-annual visits to other towns and councils within the wider region to expand connections and awareness of 'best practices' – physically, socially and environmentally.	Programme		Completed	Corporate Services
131	Management and operations	Develop a 5-year financial & staffing plan.	Organise a series of quarterly CPD events for staff and members based around a particular theme, for instance, community cohesion, engagement, tourism growth, urban design, biodiversity.	Programme	Ongoing	Completed	Corporate Services
132	Management and operations	Develop a 5-year financial & staffing plan.	Undertake a succession planning exercise.	Study		Completed	Corporate Services
133	Management and operations	Develop a 5-year financial & staffing plan.	Investigate options to create a social value budget, factoring in volunteer input, non- cash items, payments in kind, environmental savings, etc.	Study	2025 26	Green	Corporate Services
134	Management and operations	Identify external/ partnership funding sources for council projects.	Continue to monitor traditional funding streams - Government/ CBC grants, S106 and commuted sums.	Study	Ongoing	Completed	Corporate Services
135	Management and operations	Identify external/ partnership funding sources for council projects.	Explore additional revenue generation opportunities, such as the delivery of commissioned services, corporate services, community fundraising, crowd funding etc.	Study	Ongoing	Completed	Corporate Services
136	Management and operations	Identify external/ partnership funding sources for council projects.	Review the potential for revenue creation through community cafes at Houghton Hall, the cricket pavilion and potentially, at a new destination at Maiden Bower or Houghton Quarry.	Study		Green	Community Services
137	Management and operations	Extend IT infrastructure and software to better support the council.	Improve IT cabling at the council offices.	Initiative		Completed	Corporate Services
138	Management and operations	Extend IT infrastructure and software to better support the council.	Move to Cloud based services for future proofing, increased security, hybrid working.	Initiative		Completed	Corporate Services
139	Management and operations	Extend IT infrastructure and software to better support the council.	Extend Rialtas software to incorporate other useful modules.	Initiative		Completed	Corporate Services
140	Management and operations	Work with CBC and other stakeholders to explore opportunities for the transfer of community assets.	Recreation grounds, the Red House, shopping precinct, Bidwell and any other areas of public open space.	Study		Green	Town Council
141	Management and operations	Work with CBC and other stakeholders to explore opportunities for the transfer of community assets.	Explore the cost/ benefits/ opportunities for a freehold depot.	Study		Completed	Environment & Leisure
142	Management and operations	Work with CBC and other stakeholders to explore opportunities for the transfer of community assets.	Engagement with CBC to return the Community Centre at Bedford Square for community activities.	Study	Link to 72	Completed	Town Council
143	Management and operations	Enhance the role of the council.	'Local Council Award Scheme' and 'Investors in People' accreditations.	Initiative	2025 26	Green	Corporate Services
144	Management and operations	Enhance the role of the council.	Review membership of outside organisations and consider additional membership such as Locality and LGA.	Initiative		Completed	Corporate Services
145	Management and operations	Enhance the role of the council.	Promote the daily efforts of the town council and the services offered to local residents and businesses.	Initiative		Completed	Community Services
146	Management and operations	Enhance the role of the council.	Clearly define the responsibilities of HRTC and if the nature of an enquiry is outside of this, ensure that residents are redirected to the appropriate service.	Initiative		Completed	Community Services
147	Management and operations	Enhance the role of the council.	Develop a mechanism for residents to provide feedback on HRTC enquiries.	Initiative	2025 26	Completed	Community Services
148	Management and operations	Enhance the role of the council.	Conduct targeted engagement to develop a greater understanding of what residents want from their town and council in the future. For instance, school leavers, job seekers, town centre shoppers, new residents to the expansion area, school children, etc.	Study	2026 27	Completed	Community Services
149	Management and operations	Enhance the role of the council.	Improve public accessibility to the existing council offices and continue to provide a regular presence at community events.	Intervention	Link to 72	Completed	
150	Management and operations	To actively consider and weight the impact of new and existing initiatives and services.	In terms of environmental impact, dementia friendly aspects, inclusivity and branding.	Study		Completed	



Date: 16th March 2026

Title: CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE PROGRESS REVIEW REPORT

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

Contact Officer: Clare Evans, Town Clerk

1. RECOMMENDATION

To endorse the updated Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan.

2. BACKGROUND

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

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

3. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

CPC Requirements

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

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

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

The Progress Review Report has been published on the Town Council website.

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

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

The Action Plan has been adjusted as follows:

Actions have been updated using the RAG status where progress has been made. Of note are the following areas of progress since the report in March 2025:

- HRTC has established a Staffing Committee
- A maintenance plan has been developed for key assets
- A 3 year financial plan has been developed
- HRTC has initiated a significant project to develop a town centre community space, Project H, to improve the openness and transparency of the council, to support local partners and stakeholders and to provide community space

Given that the majority of actions have been completed with only a few classified as Green (Project on track) it is suggested that this Action Plan has been concluded.

4. HRTC CORPORATE PLAN

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

4.5 Enhance the role of the council.

5. IMPLICATIONS

Corporate Implications

- There are no additional arising corporate implications.

Legal Implications

- There are no legal implications arising from the recommendations

Financial Implications

- There are no additional arising financial implications.

Risk Implications

- There are no additional arising risk implications.

Equalities Implications

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

This project / issue does not discriminate.

Climate Change Implications

- There are no climate change implications arising from the recommendations

Press Contact

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

6. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

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

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

7. APPENDICES

Appendix A: Updated CPC Action Plan

What is an Action Plan?

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

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

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

What is the Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan?

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

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

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

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

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

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

What HRTC currently does well

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

CPC Report Recommendations²

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

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

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

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

² Pages 5-7 of the CPC Report

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

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

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

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

CPC Ref :	CPC Recommendations	Action / Response	Risks & mitigation	Budget required ³	Timeline	Monitoring & Evaluation	Accountability
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> confirms the desired level of general reserves. steers the council away from using reserves to fund revenue costs. 					
		Develop and approve a reserves strategy which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> allocates funding to long-term projects. allocates funding for long-term maintenance and refurbishment (linking to the asset lifecycle plan). 	Staff resource	£0	Spring / Summer 2025	Town Council	RFO / Head of Corporate Services
3.5	Reset your relationship with Central Bedfordshire Council at a strategic level to agree and prioritise shared objectives	Seek to meet/link in regularly with CBC’s Chief Executive and SMT.	Staff resource	£0	Summer 2024	Town Council	Clerk
		Seek to meet/link in regularly with CBC’s senior cllrs.	Staff resource	£0	Summer 2024	Town Council	Clerk
		Seek to meet regularly with CBC’s Communications Manager, especially in shaping the Partnership Agenda.	Staff resource	£0	Summer 2024	Town Council	Clerk
3.6	Develop a plan to improve further and/or move your offices, including immediately making the reception area more	Consider options for new/refurbished office space.	Budget Staff resource	Option dependent	March 2025	Corporate Services Committee	Head of Corporate Services

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

⁴ This Recommendation has the potential to be high cost.

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

⁵ This Recommendation has the potential to be high cost.

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

CPC Report Suggestions⁶

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

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

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

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

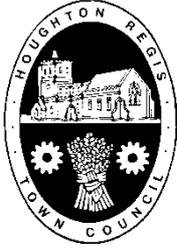
CPC Report Section 5 Feedback	Action / Response	Risks & mitigation	Budget required	Timeline	Monitoring and evaluation	Accountability
Engage more widely with Houghton Regis communities	Use demographic data (e.g. national census, CBC Local Insight and Oxford Consultants for Social Inclusion) to better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

CPC Report Section 5 Feedback	Action / Response	Risks & mitigation	Budget required	Timeline	Monitoring and evaluation	Accountability
	Review the terms of reference for the Partnership Committee.	CBC engagement Staff resource	£0	Autumn / Winter 2024	Partnership Committee	Clerk
	Ensure that the Partnership agenda has a strategic focus and is attended by relevant officers and members.	CBC engagement Staff resource	£0	Autumn / Winter 2024	Partnership Committee	Clerk
Ensure the lease with the Beds FA for the Tithe Farm sports project is robust and comprehensive.	Review the draft lease to ensure that it covers the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • timing of the Football Association's obligations to refurbish pitches. • clarity on related finances and responsibilities of both partners. • length of lease, review periods and scope for extension of the lease. 	Staff resource	£0	Autumn 2024	Head of Corporate Services	Head of E&C
Provide, support and encourage engagement for councillor training and development.	Re-shape / Extend the Member Open Sessions to provide an annual training and support programme.	Staff resource	£0	Autumn 2024	Town Council	Clerk & SMT
	Continue to promote external cllr training opportunities, especially those opportunities relating to training around finance.	Staff resource	£0	Summer 2024	Clerk	Head of Democratic Services

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

Acronyms

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



Date: 16th March 2026

Title: FINANCIAL FORECAST

Purpose of the Report: To provide to members a 3-year budget forecast to 2030.

Contact Officer: Clare Evans, Town Clerk

1. RECOMMENDATION

To receive the 3-year financial forecast to 2030.

2. BACKGROUND

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

SAPPP¹ (Smaller Authorities' Proper Practices Panel) in Section 5 (Supporting information for Officers) advises:

For larger authorities, it is prudent to develop a multi-year medium-term financial plan as well as the basic precept budget. This should include consideration of projected reserve levels, particularly of the general reserve.

Financial Regulations Section 3, para 3.1:

3. ANNUAL ESTIMATES (BUDGET) AND FORWARD PLANNING

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

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

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

¹ SAPPP (Formerly Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance) Practitioners Guide, March 2025

The appropriate extract from this forecast will be presented to each Standing Committee not later than November each year to enable each committee to consider its budget requirements for the following year. The financial forecast which will be presented in the autumn to each committee may be adjusted to reflect changes which may take place in the interim.

It is hoped that this will enable more focused and earlier consideration of the draft budget, although it is highlighted that the tax base information is normally received from CBC early November.

3. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Members will find attached at *Appendix A*, a financial forecast to March 2031 as the software facilitates this extra year.

Members are requested to note the following:

1. On standard items of expenditure such as utility costs, maintenance costs etc a 3% inflation increase has been applied.
2. A 3% increase has been applied to the Precept.
3. A static figure for Investments Realised due to the unpredictability of interest rates is included.
4. The Financial Forecast reflects the following approved documents:
 - HRTC Corporate Plan
 - CPC Action Plan
 - 5-year staffing forecast
5. The Financial Forecast factors in outcomes of the asset management review, as received by the Environment & Leisure Committee, the forecast continues to include £50,000 in 299 4871 for Pavilion Renovations.
6. In 2027/28 a sum of £200,000 has been included to fund an enhancement to play provision as included in the Corporate Plan. At the time members may choose to fund this project using borrowing instead of funding upfront. This would be a decision of Council at that point in time.
7. Employers Superannuation is showing a 3% increase year on year increase however, members are advised that due to the recent valuation results, this figure will be reduced to reflect the change in the Primary and Secondary Pension Contribution rates applicable 26/27, 27/28 & 28/29. Proposed figures are yet to be calculated.
8. 199-4991 (Trs to Earmarked Reserve) – This contribution to reserves is continued in subsequent years as a means for HRTC to set aside funds arising from investment income.
9. 261-4991, 261- 4992, 262-4992 (Thorn Park & Pavilion) – the expenditure relating to this area continues to be off set by transfers in from the EMR.
10. 263-1069 & 1070 (HHP) The contribution from CBC is shown as increasing by 3%, however the café contribution is static as this contract is under the control of CBC.
11. 271-1084 Burial Income – the forecast applies a 3% increase. At the time of fee setting the E&L Committee will be reminded.

12. Allotment income 273-1082 the forecast applies a 3% increase from 2027/28 (12 month notice of fee increases required). At the time of fee setting the E&L Committee will be reminded.
13. Outside Services 291-5002 transfer in from EMR Former Railway line shown until 2027/28 at which point the EMR completes.
14. Democratic Rep'n & Mgmt 102-4008 & 102-4104 have been increased to accommodate 17 cllrs from financial year 27/28.
15. Central Services 190-4025 Insurance –increased 2027/28 figure to £20k plus 3% year on year to cover any increase due to Project H.

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

Next year – 2026/27

Year 2 – 2027/28

Year 3 – 2028/29

Year 4 – 2029/30

Year 5 – 2030-31

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

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

The Forecast shows a slight surplus in 2027/28 (£1473), followed by marginal deficit budgets in subsequent years.

The new council in May 2027 will be facilitated to form a new Corporate Plan, the aspirations of this plan will need to be factored into the financial forecast.

4. HRTC CORPORATE PLAN

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

4.5 Enhance the role of the council.

5. IMPLICATIONS

Corporate Implications

- There are no additional arising corporate implications.

Legal Implications

- There are no legal implications arising from the recommendations

Financial Implications

- There are no additional arising financial implications.

Risk Implications

- There are no additional arising risk implications.

Equalities Implications

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

This project / issue does not discriminate.

Climate Change Implications

- There are no climate change implications arising from the recommendations

Press Contact

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

6. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

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

7. APPENDICES

Appendix A: Financial Forecast

09/03/2026

Houghton Regis Town Council Current Year

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Forward Budget Detail - By Centre

	Current Year Budget	Next Year Budget	Year 2 Budget	Year 3 Budget	Year 4 Budget	Year 5 Budget	
101 Corporate Management							
1076	Precept received	1,660,722	1,819,350	1,873,931	1,930,149	1,988,053	2,047,695
1096	Interest & Dividends Received	50,000	181,200	186,636	192,235	198,002	203,942
	Total Income	1,710,722	2,000,550	2,060,567	2,122,384	2,186,055	2,251,637
4051	BANK & LOAN CHARGES	1,000	800	824	849	874	900
4056	AUDIT FEES	3,200	3,200	3,296	3,395	3,497	3,602
4057	ACCOUNTANCY &	8,500	11,000	11,330	11,670	12,020	12,381
4061	Financial Management Fees	0	11,000	11,330	11,670	12,020	12,381
	Total Overhead Expenditure	12,700	26,000	26,780	27,584	28,411	29,264
	Net Income over Expenditure	1,698,022	1,974,550	2,033,787	2,094,800	2,157,644	2,222,373
102 Democratic Rep'n & Mgmt							
4008	TRAINING/COURSES	1,000	1,000	1,030	1,061	1,093	1,126
4009	TRAVEL	350	400	412	424	437	450
4020	MISC. ESTABLISH.COST	400	400	412	424	437	450
4024	SUBSCRIPTIONS	3,503	4,000	4,120	4,244	4,371	4,502
4101	MAYORS ALLOWANCE	0	4,500	4,635	4,774	4,917	5,065
4104	HOSPITALITY ALLNCE	250	300	309	318	328	338
4106	Mayors Civic Events	0	4,000	4,120	4,244	4,371	4,502
4121	CIVIC REGALIA	0	800	824	849	874	900
4122	Civic Fund Expenses	0	200	206	212	218	225
4131	ELECTION COSTS	6,000	6,400	6,592	6,790	6,994	7,204
4203	MAYORS CHRISTMAS	0	5,720	5,892	6,069	6,251	6,439
	Total Overhead Expenditure	11,503	27,720	28,552	29,409	30,291	31,201
	Net Income over Expenditure	(11,503)	(27,720)	(28,552)	(29,409)	(30,291)	(31,201)
103 Project H							
4011	RATES	0	10,000	10,300	10,609	10,927	11,255
4012	WATER RATES	0	3,000	3,090	3,183	3,278	3,376
4013	RENT	0	28,375	29,226	30,103	31,006	31,936
4014	ELECTRICITY	0	3,500	3,605	3,713	3,824	3,939
4015	GAS	0	3,500	3,605	3,713	3,824	3,939
4020	MISC. ESTABLISH.COST	0	1,000	1,030	1,061	1,093	1,126
4036	PROPERTY MAINTENANCE	0	11,000	11,330	11,670	12,020	12,381
4038	MAINTENANCE CONTRACTS	0	2,000	2,060	2,122	2,186	2,252
	Total Overhead Expenditure	0	62,375	64,246	66,174	68,158	70,204
	Net Income over Expenditure	0	(62,375)	(64,246)	(66,174)	(68,158)	(70,204)
190 Central Services							
4007	CONFERENCE COSTS	1,300	1,200	1,236	1,273	1,311	1,350
4008	TRAINING/COURSES	3,400	4,000	4,120	4,244	4,371	4,502
4009	TRAVEL	350	100	103	106	109	112
4011	RATES	8,950	10,500	10,815	11,139	11,473	11,817
4012	WATER RATES	1,144	1,000	1,030	1,061	1,093	1,126
4014	ELECTRICITY	2,080	2,300	2,369	2,440	2,513	2,588

Continued over page

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Forward Budget Detail - By Centre

	Current Year Budget	Next Year Budget	Year 2 Budget	Year 3 Budget	Year 4 Budget	Year 5 Budget
4015 GAS	728	1,000	1,030	1,061	1,093	1,126
4017 HEALTH & SAFETY	500	500	515	530	546	562
4020 MISC. ESTABLISH.COST	750	700	721	743	765	788
4021 COMMUNICATIONS COSTS	10,000	10,000	10,300	10,609	10,927	11,255
4022 POSTAGE	1,500	2,500	2,575	2,652	2,732	2,814
4023 STATIONERY	400	400	412	424	437	450
4025 INSURANCE	17,000	19,000	19,570	20,157	20,762	21,385
4026 COMPUTER COSTS	8,500	8,500	8,755	9,018	9,289	9,568
4027 PHOTOCOPIER CHARGES	1,600	1,800	1,854	1,910	1,967	2,026
4031 ADVERTISING	500	500	515	530	546	562
4036 PROPERTY MAINTENANCE	1,000	1,000	1,030	1,061	1,093	1,126
4038 MAINTENANCE CONTRACTS	700	700	721	743	765	788
4042 Equipment Repairs	500	500	515	530	546	562
4059 OTHER PROFESSIONAL	13,250	5,000	5,150	5,305	5,464	5,628
4992 Trs from Earmarked Reserve	(8,000)	0	0	0	0	0
Total Overhead Expenditure	66,152	71,200	73,336	75,536	77,802	80,135
Net Income over Expenditure	(66,152)	(71,200)	(73,336)	(75,536)	(77,802)	(80,135)
192 Corp Serv Staff Costs						
4001 STAFF SALARIES	252,000	252,400	259,972	267,771	275,804	284,078
4002 EMPLOYERS N.I	30,240	31,600	32,548	33,524	34,530	35,566
4003 EMPLOYERS SUPERANN.	67,536	55,100	56,753	58,456	60,210	62,016
4005 STAFF OVERTIME	2,500	2,750	2,833	2,918	3,006	3,096
4059 OTHER PROFESSIONAL	7,500	7,625	7,854	8,090	8,333	8,583
Total Overhead Expenditure	359,776	349,475	359,960	370,759	381,883	393,339
Net Income over Expenditure	(359,776)	(349,475)	(359,960)	(370,759)	(381,883)	(393,339)
199 Corp Serv Capital and Projects						
4805 CAP - New Equipment (incl IT)	0	3,000	3,090	3,183	3,278	3,376
4991 Trs to Earmarked Reserve	0	80,000	80,000	82,400	84,872	87,418
Total Overhead Expenditure	0	83,000	83,090	85,583	88,150	90,794
Net Income over Expenditure	0	(83,000)	(83,090)	(85,583)	(88,150)	(90,794)
201 Village Green Rec Gd						
1082 INC-LETTINGS	2,869	2,500	2,575	2,652	2,732	2,814
Total Income	2,869	2,500	2,575	2,652	2,732	2,814
4037 GROUNDS MAINTENANCE	2,500	2,500	2,575	2,652	2,732	2,814
Total Overhead Expenditure	2,500	2,500	2,575	2,652	2,732	2,814
Net Income over Expenditure	369	0	0	0	0	0
202 Village Green Pavilion						
1082 INC-LETTINGS	150	150	155	160	165	170
Total Income	150	150	155	160	165	170
4011 RATES	2,800	2,800	2,884	2,971	3,060	3,152

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Forward Budget Detail - By Centre

		Current Year Budget	Next Year Budget	Year 2 Budget	Year 3 Budget	Year 4 Budget	Year 5 Budget
4012	WATER RATES	1,500	2,500	2,575	2,652	2,732	2,814
4014	ELECTRICITY	1,500	1,500	1,545	1,591	1,639	1,688
4036	PROPERTY MAINTENANCE	2,000	2,000	2,060	2,122	2,186	2,252
4038	MAINTENANCE CONTRACTS	943	900	927	955	984	1,014
	Total Overhead Expenditure	8,743	9,700	9,991	10,291	10,601	10,920
	Net Income over Expenditure	(8,593)	(9,550)	(9,836)	(10,131)	(10,436)	(10,750)
211	Parkside Rec Gd						
1082	INC-LETTINGS	3,000	3,000	3,090	3,183	3,278	3,376
	Total Income	3,000	3,000	3,090	3,183	3,278	3,376
4013	RENT	50	50	52	54	56	58
4037	GROUND MAINTENANCE	1,500	1,400	1,442	1,485	1,530	1,576
	Total Overhead Expenditure	1,550	1,450	1,494	1,539	1,586	1,634
	Net Income over Expenditure	1,450	1,550	1,596	1,644	1,692	1,742
212	Parkside Pavilion						
4012	WATER RATES	300	250	258	266	274	282
4014	ELECTRICITY	600	550	567	584	602	620
4015	GAS	150	400	412	424	437	450
4036	PROPERTY MAINTENANCE	1,000	1,000	1,030	1,061	1,093	1,126
	Total Overhead Expenditure	2,050	2,200	2,267	2,335	2,406	2,478
	Net Income over Expenditure	(2,050)	(2,200)	(2,267)	(2,335)	(2,406)	(2,478)
221	Tithe Farm Rec Grd						
1082	INC-LETTINGS	2,115	0	0	0	0	0
	Total Income	2,115	0	0	0	0	0
4013	RENT	5	5	5	5	5	5
4037	GROUND MAINTENANCE	1,000	0	0	0	0	0
	Total Overhead Expenditure	1,005	5	5	5	5	5
	Net Income over Expenditure	1,110	(5)	(5)	(5)	(5)	(5)
222	Tithe Farm Store						
4012	WATER RATES	200	200	206	212	218	225
4014	ELECTRICITY	800	1,000	1,030	1,061	1,093	1,126
4036	PROPERTY MAINTENANCE	1,000	1,000	1,030	1,061	1,093	1,126
	Total Overhead Expenditure	2,000	2,200	2,266	2,334	2,404	2,477
	Net Income over Expenditure	(2,000)	(2,200)	(2,266)	(2,334)	(2,404)	(2,477)
231	Orchard Close Rec Grd						
1082	INC-LETTINGS	1,800	1,000	1,030	1,061	1,093	1,126
	Total Income	1,800	1,000	1,030	1,061	1,093	1,126

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Forward Budget Detail - By Centre

		Current Year Budget	Next Year Budget	Year 2 Budget	Year 3 Budget	Year 4 Budget	Year 5 Budget
4037	GROUNDS MAINTENANCE	1,000	1,000	1,030	1,061	1,093	1,126
	Total Overhead Expenditure	1,000	1,000	1,030	1,061	1,093	1,126
	Net Income over Expenditure	800	0	0	0	0	0
232 Orchard Close Pavilion							
4012	WATER RATES	500	500	515	530	546	562
4014	ELECTRICITY	800	800	824	849	874	900
4036	PROPERTY MAINTENANCE	1,000	1,000	1,030	1,061	1,093	1,126
	Total Overhead Expenditure	2,300	2,300	2,369	2,440	2,513	2,588
	Net Income over Expenditure	(2,300)	(2,300)	(2,369)	(2,440)	(2,513)	(2,588)
241 Moore Crescent Rec Grd							
1082	INC-LETTINGS	2,115	2,115	2,178	2,243	2,310	2,379
	Total Income	2,115	2,115	2,178	2,243	2,310	2,379
4037	GROUNDS MAINTENANCE	1,100	1,000	1,030	1,061	1,093	1,126
	Total Overhead Expenditure	1,100	1,000	1,030	1,061	1,093	1,126
	Net Income over Expenditure	1,015	1,115	1,148	1,182	1,217	1,253
242 Moore Crescent Pavilion							
1082	INC-LETTINGS	200	200	206	212	218	225
	Total Income	200	200	206	212	218	225
4011	RATES	4,700	4,700	4,841	4,986	5,136	5,290
4012	WATER RATES	2,700	2,700	2,781	2,864	2,950	3,039
4014	ELECTRICITY	2,200	2,000	2,060	2,122	2,186	2,252
4015	GAS	1,400	1,400	1,442	1,485	1,530	1,576
4036	PROPERTY MAINTENANCE	2,000	1,500	1,545	1,591	1,639	1,688
4038	MAINTENANCE CONTRACTS	1,000	500	515	530	546	562
	Total Overhead Expenditure	14,000	12,800	13,184	13,578	13,987	14,407
	Net Income over Expenditure	(13,800)	(12,600)	(12,978)	(13,366)	(13,769)	(14,182)
243 Moore Crescent Bowling Gn							
1082	INC-LETTINGS	6,489	6,489	6,684	6,885	7,092	7,305
	Total Income	6,489	6,489	6,684	6,885	7,092	7,305
4037	GROUNDS MAINTENANCE	6,000	6,000	6,180	6,365	6,556	6,753
	Total Overhead Expenditure	6,000	6,000	6,180	6,365	6,556	6,753
	Net Income over Expenditure	489	489	504	520	536	552
261 Thorn Park							
1082	INC-LETTINGS	2,215	2,500	2,575	2,652	2,732	2,814
	Total Income	2,215	2,500	2,575	2,652	2,732	2,814
4036	PROPERTY MAINTENANCE	0	1,000	1,030	1,061	1,093	1,126

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Forward Budget Detail - By Centre

	Current Year Budget	Next Year Budget	Year 2 Budget	Year 3 Budget	Year 4 Budget	Year 5 Budget
4037 GROUNDS MAINTENANCE	1,100	1,000	1,030	1,061	1,093	1,126
4042 Equipment Repairs	0	20,000	20,600	21,218	21,855	22,511
4992 Trs from Earmarked Reserve	0	(20,000)	(20,600)	(21,218)	(21,855)	(22,511)
Total Overhead Expenditure	1,100	2,000	2,060	2,122	2,186	2,252
Net Income over Expenditure	1,115	500	515	530	546	562
262 Thorn Park Pavilion						
4011 RATES	0	5,400	5,562	5,729	5,901	6,078
4012 WATER RATES	400	400	412	424	437	450
4014 ELECTRICITY	400	1,900	1,957	2,016	2,076	2,138
4015 GAS	1,000	1,000	1,030	1,061	1,093	1,126
4036 PROPERTY MAINTENANCE	1,000	1,000	1,030	1,061	1,093	1,126
4038 MAINTENANCE CONTRACTS	500	500	515	530	546	562
4992 Trs from Earmarked Reserve	0	(10,325)	(10,635)	(10,954)	(11,283)	(11,621)
Total Overhead Expenditure	3,300	(125)	(129)	(133)	(137)	(141)
Net Income over Expenditure	(3,300)	125	129	133	137	141
263 Houghton Hall Park						
1069 CBC JVA Contribution	0	120,000	123,600	127,308	131,127	135,061
1070 Catering Income	0	20,000	20,000	20,600	21,218	21,855
1091 Income Miscellaneous	136,185	0	0	0	0	0
1097 Income - Council Events	0	5,500	5,665	5,835	6,010	6,190
Total Income	136,185	145,500	149,265	153,743	158,355	163,106
4001 STAFF SALARIES	50,622	75,031	77,282	79,600	81,988	84,448
4002 EMPLOYERS N.I	6,399	9,504	9,789	10,083	10,385	10,697
4003 EMPLOYERS SUPERANN.	13,708	13,355	13,756	14,169	14,594	15,032
4005 STAFF OVERTIME	1,422	3,000	3,090	3,183	3,278	3,376
4006 PROTECTIVE CLOTHING	3,038	2,700	2,781	2,864	2,950	3,039
4017 HEALTH & SAFETY	780	1,410	1,452	1,496	1,541	1,587
4020 MISC. ESTABLISH.COST	128	1,000	1,030	1,061	1,093	1,126
4022 POSTAGE	50	0	0	0	0	0
4024 SUBSCRIPTIONS	291	500	515	530	546	562
4034 WEBSITE COSTS	700	1,000	1,030	1,061	1,093	1,126
4036 PROPERTY MAINTENANCE	409	1,000	1,030	1,061	1,093	1,126
4037 GROUNDS MAINTENANCE	5,087	2,000	2,060	2,122	2,186	2,252
4039 HORTICULTURAL SUPPLIES	6,714	11,000	11,330	11,670	12,020	12,381
4042 Equipment Repairs	1,733	2,000	2,060	2,122	2,186	2,252
4059 OTHER PROFESSIONAL	16,760	2,000	2,060	2,122	2,186	2,252
4217 HHP Project Contribution	29,000	30,000	30,900	31,827	32,782	33,765
4222 COMMUNITY EVENTS	29,011	20,000	20,600	21,218	21,855	22,511
Total Overhead Expenditure	165,852	175,500	180,765	186,189	191,776	197,532
Net Income over Expenditure	(29,667)	(30,000)	(31,500)	(32,446)	(33,421)	(34,426)
271 Houghton Regis Cemetery						
1084 Income Burial Fees	20,000	10,000	10,300	10,609	10,927	11,255

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Forward Budget Detail - By Centre

		Current Year Budget	Next Year Budget	Year 2 Budget	Year 3 Budget	Year 4 Budget	Year 5 Budget
	Total Income	20,000	10,000	10,300	10,609	10,927	11,255
4011	RATES	1,200	1,850	1,906	1,963	2,022	2,083
4012	WATER RATES	300	300	309	318	328	338
	Total Overhead Expenditure	1,500	2,150	2,215	2,281	2,350	2,421
	Net Income over Expenditure	18,500	7,850	8,085	8,328	8,577	8,834
273	Allotments						
1082	INC-LETTINGS	3,700	3,700	3,700	3,811	3,925	4,043
	Total Income	3,700	3,700	3,700	3,811	3,925	4,043
4012	WATER RATES	700	1,200	1,236	1,273	1,311	1,350
4037	GROUNDS MAINTENANCE	1,000	1,000	1,030	1,061	1,093	1,126
	Total Overhead Expenditure	1,700	2,200	2,266	2,334	2,404	2,476
	Net Income over Expenditure	2,000	1,500	1,434	1,477	1,521	1,567
281	Public Open Spaces						
4037	GROUNDS MAINTENANCE	500	0	0	0	0	0
4992	Trs from Earmarked Reserve	(7,163)	0	0	0	0	0
	Total Overhead Expenditure	(6,663)	0	0	0	0	0
	Net Income over Expenditure	6,663	0	0	0	0	0
282	Play Areas (all)						
4037	GROUNDS MAINTENANCE	2,000	2,000	2,060	2,122	2,186	2,252
4042	Equipment Repairs	12,000	12,000	12,360	12,731	13,113	13,506
	Total Overhead Expenditure	14,000	14,000	14,420	14,853	15,299	15,758
	Net Income over Expenditure	(14,000)	(14,000)	(14,420)	(14,853)	(15,299)	(15,758)
283	Street Furniture						
4036	PROPERTY MAINTENANCE	1,000	1,000	1,030	1,061	1,093	1,126
	Total Overhead Expenditure	1,000	1,000	1,030	1,061	1,093	1,126
	Net Income over Expenditure	(1,000)	(1,000)	(1,030)	(1,061)	(1,093)	(1,126)
291	Outside Services						
1091	Income Miscellaneous	3,800	0	0	0	0	0
	Total Income	3,800	0	0	0	0	0
4006	PROTECTIVE CLOTHING	1,500	2,000	2,060	2,122	2,186	2,252
4008	TRAINING/COURSES	3,000	3,500	3,605	3,713	3,824	3,939
4011	RATES	12,553	34,000	35,020	36,071	37,153	38,268
4012	WATER RATES	800	800	824	849	874	900
4013	RENT	15,500	43,100	44,393	45,725	47,097	48,510
4014	ELECTRICITY	2,500	2,400	2,472	2,546	2,622	2,701
4015	GAS	200	200	206	212	218	225

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Forward Budget Detail - By Centre

	Current Year Budget	Next Year Budget	Year 2 Budget	Year 3 Budget	Year 4 Budget	Year 5 Budget
4017 HEALTH & SAFETY	1,000	1,000	1,030	1,061	1,093	1,126
4018 REFUSE DISPOSAL	28,000	30,000	30,900	31,827	32,782	33,765
4020 MISC. ESTABLISH.COST	600	500	515	530	546	562
4036 PROPERTY MAINTENANCE	1,400	1,400	1,442	1,485	1,530	1,576
4037 GROUNDS MAINTENANCE	0	500	515	530	546	562
4038 MAINTENANCE CONTRACTS	850	800	824	849	874	900
4039 HORTICULTURAL SUPPLIES	7,500	20,000	20,600	21,218	21,855	22,511
4040 Tree maintenance	6,000	6,000	6,180	6,365	6,556	6,753
4041 Tree Survey	0	8,000	8,240	8,487	8,742	9,004
4042 Equipment Repairs	10,000	10,000	10,300	10,609	10,927	11,255
4044 VEHICLE FUEL	12,500	15,000	15,450	15,914	16,391	16,883
4045 VEHICLE TAX & INSURANCE	1,200	2,000	2,060	2,122	2,186	2,252
4059 OTHER PROFESSIONAL	2,200	5,600	5,768	5,941	6,119	6,303
5002 Tr from EMR Former Railway	0	(7,163)	(7,163)	0	0	0
Total Overhead Expenditure	107,303	179,637	185,241	198,176	204,121	210,247
Net Income over Expenditure	(103,503)	(179,637)	(185,241)	(198,176)	(204,121)	(210,247)
292 E&L Staff Costs						
4001 STAFF SALARIES	283,795	405,800	417,974	430,513	443,428	456,731
4002 EMPLOYERS N.I	34,055	50,568	52,085	53,648	55,257	56,915
4003 EMPLOYERS SUPERANN.	76,057	88,000	90,640	93,359	96,160	99,045
4005 STAFF OVERTIME	2,000	3,000	3,090	3,183	3,278	3,376
4992 Trs from Earmarked Reserve	0	(118,000)	(121,540)	(125,186)	(128,942)	(132,810)
Total Overhead Expenditure	395,907	429,368	442,249	455,517	469,181	483,257
Net Income over Expenditure	(395,907)	(429,368)	(442,249)	(455,517)	(469,181)	(483,257)
299 E&L Capital & Projects						
4053 Loan payments- Moore Cres.	24,069	24,069	24,791	25,535	26,301	27,090
4066 Loan payments - Tithe Farm	32,792	35,280	36,338	37,428	38,551	39,708
4851 CAP-Machinery Renewals	20,000	20,000	20,600	21,218	21,855	22,511
4856 CAP - Street Furniture	1,000	0	0	0	0	0
4858 CAP - PLAY AREAS & EQPT	15,000	15,000	15,450	15,914	16,391	16,883
4871 CAP - Pavilion Renovations	50,000	50,000	51,500	53,045	54,636	56,275
Total Overhead Expenditure	142,861	144,349	148,679	153,140	157,734	162,467
Net Income over Expenditure	(142,861)	(144,349)	(148,679)	(153,140)	(157,734)	(162,467)
302 Community Services						
1091 Income Miscellaneous	2,500	500	515	530	546	562
Total Income	2,500	500	515	530	546	562
4006 PROTECTIVE CLOTHING	0	2,000	2,060	2,122	2,186	2,252
4042 Equipment Repairs	5,000	0	0	0	0	0
4221 SUMMER PLAYScheme	6,000	5,000	5,150	5,305	5,464	5,628
4226 Youth services	28,500	29,600	30,488	31,403	32,345	33,315
4227 Community Services	6,000	5,000	5,150	5,305	5,464	5,628
4230 Public Toilets	22,000	27,000	27,810	28,644	29,503	30,388
4232 Christmas Lights	13,000	13,500	13,905	14,322	14,752	15,195

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Forward Budget Detail - By Centre

	Current Year Budget	Next Year Budget	Year 2 Budget	Year 3 Budget	Year 4 Budget	Year 5 Budget
Total Overhead Expenditure	80,500	82,100	84,563	87,101	89,714	92,406
Net Income over Expenditure	(78,000)	(81,600)	(84,048)	(86,571)	(89,168)	(91,844)
303 Communications						
4029 Promotional Material	5,000	3,200	3,296	3,395	3,497	3,602
4033 NEWSLETTER	7,000	1,500	1,545	1,591	1,639	1,688
Total Overhead Expenditure	12,000	4,700	4,841	4,986	5,136	5,290
Net Income over Expenditure	(12,000)	(4,700)	(4,841)	(4,986)	(5,136)	(5,290)
304 Events						
1094 Income from Sponsors	1,000	1,000	1,030	1,061	1,093	1,126
1097 Income - Council Events	4,000	4,000	4,120	4,244	4,371	4,502
Total Income	5,000	5,000	5,150	5,305	5,464	5,628
4222 COMMUNITY EVENTS	64,500	67,000	69,010	71,080	73,212	75,408
Total Overhead Expenditure	64,500	67,000	69,010	71,080	73,212	75,408
Net Income over Expenditure	(59,500)	(62,000)	(63,860)	(65,775)	(67,748)	(69,780)
305 Community Grants						
4203 MAYORS CHRISTMAS	5,500	0	0	0	0	0
4218 Grants (WB) Project Scheme	4,000	4,000	4,120	4,244	4,371	4,502
4220 Grants (WB) Key Partners	15,000	15,600	16,068	16,550	17,047	17,558
4235 Cost Of Living Crisis Donation	7,200	7,200	7,416	7,638	7,867	8,103
Total Overhead Expenditure	31,700	26,800	27,604	28,432	29,285	30,163
Net Income over Expenditure	(31,700)	(26,800)	(27,604)	(28,432)	(29,285)	(30,163)
306 Community Safety						
4046 Enviro - Crime	10,000	10,400	10,712	11,033	11,364	11,705
4059 OTHER PROFESSIONAL	40,000	41,000	42,230	43,497	44,802	46,146
Total Overhead Expenditure	50,000	51,400	52,942	54,530	56,166	57,851
Net Income over Expenditure	(50,000)	(51,400)	(52,942)	(54,530)	(56,166)	(57,851)
307 Civic Services						
4101 MAYORS ALLOWANCE	4,500	0	0	0	0	0
4106 Mayors Civic Events	4,000	0	0	0	0	0
4121 CIVIC REGALIA	1,400	0	0	0	0	0
4122 Civic Fund Expenses	200	0	0	0	0	0
Total Overhead Expenditure	10,100	0	0	0	0	0
Net Income over Expenditure	(10,100)	0	0	0	0	0
392 Comm Serv Staff Costs						
4001 STAFF SALARIES	221,000	238,700	245,861	253,237	260,834	268,659

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Forward Budget Detail - By Centre

	Current Year Budget	Next Year Budget	Year 2 Budget	Year 3 Budget	Year 4 Budget	Year 5 Budget
4002 EMPLOYERS N.I	27,120	28,700	29,561	30,448	31,361	32,302
4003 EMPLOYERS SUPERANN.	60,568	52,200	53,766	55,379	57,040	58,751
4005 STAFF OVERTIME	10,000	12,000	12,360	12,731	13,113	13,506
Total Overhead Expenditure	318,688	331,600	341,548	351,795	362,348	373,218
Net Income over Expenditure	(318,688)	(331,600)	(341,548)	(351,795)	(362,348)	(373,218)
399 Community Capital & Projects						
4034 WEBSITE COSTS	1,000	1,000	1,030	1,061	1,093	1,126
4228 Community Facilities	6,800	0	0	0	0	0
4804 CAP-New Christmas Lights	6,000	6,000	6,180	6,365	6,556	6,753
Total Overhead Expenditure	13,800	7,000	7,210	7,426	7,649	7,879
Net Income over Expenditure	(13,800)	(7,000)	(7,210)	(7,426)	(7,649)	(7,879)
401 Growth Area						
4059 OTHER PROFESSIONAL	1,000	800	824	849	874	900
4062 Neighbourhood Plan	1,000	800	824	849	874	900
Total Overhead Expenditure	2,000	1,600	1,648	1,698	1,748	1,800
Net Income over Expenditure	(2,000)	(1,600)	(1,648)	(1,698)	(1,748)	(1,800)
Total Budget Income	1,902,860	2,183,204	2,247,990	2,315,430	2,384,892	2,456,440
Expenditure	1,903,527	2,183,204	2,246,517	2,321,294	2,390,936	2,462,675
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(667)	0	1,473	(5,864)	(6,044)	(6,235)



Houghton Regis Town Council

Standing Orders

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

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

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Appendix A – Procedure for Recording Meetings

PREFACE

This is a set of Standing orders based on the model set of Standing orders produced by NALC (April 2018), revised 2020, updated April 2022 & 31 March 2025. Standing Orders that are in **bold type** contain legal and statutory requirements and are to be adopted without changing them or their meaning. Standing Orders not in bold are designed to help councils operate effectively but do not contain statutory requirements therefore they may be adopted or amended to suit a council's needs.

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

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

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

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

Notes:

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

STANDING ORDERS

1. MEETINGS

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

Smoking is not permitted at any meeting of the Council.

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

-  a **Meetings shall not take place in premises which at the time of the meeting are used for the supply of alcohol, unless no other premises are available free of charge or at a reasonable cost.**
-  b **The minimum three clear days for notice of a meeting does not include the day on which notice was issued, the day of the meeting, a Sunday, a day of**

the Christmas break, a day of the Easter break or of a bank holiday or a day appointed for public thanksgiving or mourning.

- c The minimum three clear days' public notice for a meeting does not include the day on which the notice was issued or the day of the meeting unless the meeting is convened at shorter notice**
- d Meetings shall be open to the public unless their presence is prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for other special reasons. The public's exclusion from part or all of a meeting shall be by a resolution which shall give reasons for the public's exclusion.**
- e Members of the public may make representations, ask questions and give evidence at a meeting which they are entitled to attend in respect of the business on the agenda.
- f The period of time designated for public participation at a meeting in accordance with standing order 1(e) above shall not exceed 15 minutes unless directed by the chair of the meeting.
- g Subject to standing order 1(f) above, a member of the public shall not speak for more than 3 minutes.
- h In accordance with standing order 1(e) above, a question shall not require a response at the meeting nor start a debate on the question. The chair of the meeting may direct that a written or oral response be given.
- i A person shall raise his hand when requesting to speak.
- j A person who speaks at a meeting shall direct his comments to the chair of the meeting.
- k Only one person is permitted to speak at a time. If more than one person wants to speak, the chair of the meeting shall direct the order of speaking.
- l Subject to standing order 1(m), a person who attends a meeting is permitted to report on the meeting whilst the meeting is open to the public. To "report" means to film, photograph, make an audio recording of meeting procedures, use any other means for enabling persons not present to see or hear the meeting as it takes place or later or to report or to provide oral or written commentary about the meeting so that the report or commentary is available as the meeting takes place or later to persons not present.**

See Appendix A for the Procedure for Recording Meetings

- m **A person present at a meeting may not provide an oral report or oral commentary about a meeting as it takes place without permission.**
- n **The press shall be provided with reasonable facilities for the taking of their report of all or part of a meeting at which they are entitled to be present.**
- o **Subject to standing orders which indicate otherwise, anything authorised or required to be done by, to or before the Chair of the Council may in his absence be done by, to or before the Vice-Chair of the Council (if there is one).**
- p **The Chair of the Council, if present, shall preside at a meeting. If the Chair is absent from a meeting, the Vice-Chair of the Council, (if there is one) if present, shall preside. If both the Chair and the Vice-Chair are absent from a meeting, a councillor as chosen by the councillors present at the meeting shall preside at the meeting.**
- q **Subject to a meeting being quorate, all questions at a meeting shall be decided by a majority of the councillors and non-councillors with voting rights present and voting.**
- r **The chair of a meeting may give an original vote on any matter put to the vote, and in the case of an equality of votes may exercise his casting vote whether or not he gave an original vote.**
See standing orders 4(h) and (i) for the different rules that apply in the election of the Chair of the Council at the annual meeting of the council.
- s **Unless standing orders provide otherwise, voting on a question shall be by a show of hands. At the request of a councillor, the voting on any question shall be recorded so as to show whether each councillor present and voting gave his vote for or against that question.** Such a request shall be made before moving on to the next item of business on the agenda.
- t The minutes of a meeting shall include an accurate record of the following:
 - i. the time and place of the meeting;
 - ii. the names of councillors who are present (virtually or in person) and the names of councillors who are absent, with or without apologies;
 - iii. interests that have been declared by councillors and non-councillors with voting rights;
 - iv. the grant of dispensations (if any) to councillors and non-councillors with

voting rights;

- v. whether a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights left the meeting when matters that they held interests in were being considered;
- vi. if there was a public participation session; and
- vii. the resolutions made.

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

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

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

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

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

2 PROPER OFFICER

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

b The Proper Officer shall:

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

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

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

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

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

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

without a resolution to that effect.

See also standing order 20.

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

3 RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER

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

4 ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETINGS

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

new Chair of the Council but must give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.

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

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

5 DISORDERLY CONDUCT AT MEETINGS

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

- b If person(s) disregard the request of the chair of the meeting to moderate or improve their conduct, any councillor or the chair of the meeting may move that the person be no longer heard or excluded from the meeting. The motion, if seconded, shall be put to the vote without discussion.

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

6 COMMITTEES & SUB-COMMITTEES

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

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

7 PRESENCE OF NON-MEMBERS OF COMMITTEES AT COMMITTEE MEETINGS

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

8 WORKING GROUPS

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

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

- a **The Chair of the Council may convene an extraordinary meeting of the council at any time.**
- b **If the Chair of the Council does not call an extraordinary meeting of the**

council within seven days of having been requested in writing to do so by two councillors, any two councillors may convene an extraordinary meeting of the council. The public notice giving the time, place and agenda for such a meeting must be signed by the two councillors.

- c The chair of a committee or a sub-committee may convene an extraordinary meeting of the committee or the sub-committee at any time.
- d If the chair of a committee or a sub-committee does not call an extraordinary meeting within 3 days of having been requested by to do so by 2 members of the committee or the sub-committee, any 2 members of the committee or the sub-committee may convene an extraordinary meeting of a committee and a sub-committee.

10 QUESTIONS

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

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

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

until the mover of the motion resubmits it, in writing to the Proper Officer, so that it can be understood at least 8 clear days before the meeting.

- e If the wording or subject of a proposed motion is considered improper, the Proper Officer shall consult with the chair of the forthcoming meeting or, as the case may be, the councillors who have convened the meeting, to consider whether the motion shall be included in the agenda or rejected.
- f The decision of the Proper Officer as to whether or not to include the motion on the agenda shall be final.
- g Motions received shall be recorded and numbered in the order that they are received.
- h Motions rejected shall be recorded with an explanation by the Proper Officer for their rejection.

12 MOTIONS NOT REQUIRING WRITTEN NOTICE

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

13 RULES OF DEBATE AT MEETINGS

- a Motions on the agenda shall be considered in the order that they appear unless the order is changed at the discretion of the chair of the meeting.
- b A motion (including an amendment) shall not be progressed unless it has been moved and seconded.
- c A motion on the agenda that is not moved by its proposer may be treated by the chair of the meeting as withdrawn.
- d If a motion (including an amendment) has been seconded, it may be withdrawn by the proposer only with the consent of the seconder and the meeting.
- e An amendment is a proposal to remove or add words to a motion. It shall not negate the motion.
- f If an amendment to the original motion is carried, the original motion (as amended) becomes the substantive motion upon which further amendment(s) may be moved.
- g An amendment shall not be considered unless early verbal notice of it is given at the meeting and, if requested by the chair of the meeting, is expressed in writing to the chair.
- h A councillor may move an amendment to his own motion if agreed by the meeting. If a motion has already been seconded, the amendment shall be with the consent of the seconder and the meeting.
- i If there is more than one amendment to an original or substantive motion, the amendments shall be moved in the order directed by the chair of the meeting.
- j Subject to standing order 13(k), only one amendment shall be moved and debated at a time, the order of which shall be directed by the chair of the meeting.
- k One or more amendments may be discussed together if the chair of the meeting considers this expedient but each amendment shall be voted upon separately.
- l A councillor may not move more than one amendment to an original or substantive motion.
- m The mover of an amendment has no right of reply at the end of debate on it.

- n Where a series of amendments to an original motion are carried, the mover of the original motion shall have a right of reply either at the end of debate on the first amendment or at the very end of debate on the final substantive motion immediately before it is put to the vote.
- o Unless permitted by the chair of the meeting, a councillor may speak once in the debate on a motion except:
 - i. to speak on an amendment moved by another councillor;
 - ii. to move or speak on another amendment if the motion has been amended since he last spoke;
 - iii. to make a point of order;
 - iv. to give a personal explanation; or
 - v. to exercise a right of reply.
- p During the debate of a motion, a councillor may interrupt only on a point of order or a personal explanation and the councillor who was interrupted shall stop speaking. A councillor raising a point of order shall identify the standing order which he considers has been breached or specify the other irregularity in the proceedings of the meeting he is concerned by.
- q A point of order shall be decided by the chair of the meeting and his decision shall be final.
- r When a motion is under debate, no other motion shall be moved except:
 - i. to amend the motion;
 - ii. to proceed to the next business;
 - iii. to adjourn the debate;
 - iv. to put the motion to a vote;
 - v. to ask a person to be no longer heard or to leave the meeting;
 - vi. to refer a motion to a committee or sub-committee for consideration;
 - vii. to exclude the public and press;
 - viii. to adjourn the meeting; or
 - ix. to suspend particular standing order(s) excepting those which reflect mandatory statutory or legal requirements.
- s Before an original or substantive motion is put to the vote, the chair of the meeting shall be satisfied that the motion has been sufficiently debated and that the mover of the motion under debate has exercised or waived his right of reply.

- t Excluding motions moved under Standing Order 13(r), the contributions or speeches by a councillor shall relate only to the motion under discussion and shall not exceed 3 minutes without the consent of the chair of the meeting.

14 RULES OF DEBATE – RESOLUTIONS

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

15 PREVIOUS RESOLUTIONS

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

16 DRAFT MINUTES

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

- a If the draft minutes of a preceding meeting have been served on councillors with the agenda to attend the meeting at which they are due to be approved for accuracy, they shall be taken as read.
- b There shall be no discussion about the draft minutes of a preceding meeting except in relation to their accuracy. A motion to correct an inaccuracy in the draft minutes shall be moved in accordance with standing order 12(a)(i).

- c The accuracy of draft minutes, including any amendment(s) made to them, shall be confirmed by resolution and shall be signed by the chair of the meeting and stand as an accurate record of the meeting to which the minutes relate.
- d If the chair of the meeting does not consider the minutes to be an accurate record of the meeting to which they relate, he shall sign the minutes and include a paragraph in the following terms or to the same effect:

“The chair of this meeting does not believe that the minutes of the meeting of the () held on [date] in respect of () were a correct record but his view was not upheld by the meeting and the minutes are confirmed as an accurate record of the proceedings.”
-  e **If the Council’s gross annual income and expenditure (whichever is higher) does not exceed £25,000, it shall publish draft minutes on a website which is publicly accessible and free of charge not later than one month after the meeting has taken place.**
- f Subject to the publication of draft minutes in accordance with standing order 16(e) and standing order 30(a) and following a resolution which confirms the accuracy of the minutes of a meeting, the draft minutes or recordings of the meeting for which approved minutes exist shall be destroyed.

17. ACCOUNTS AND ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS

- a “Proper practices” in standing orders refer to the most recent version of “Governance and Accountability for Local Council’s – a Practitioners’ Guide”.
- b All payments by the council shall be authorised, approved and paid in accordance with the law, proper practices and the council’s financial regulations.
- c The Responsible Financial Officer shall supply to each member a list of all receipts and payments.
- d The Responsible Financial Officer shall provide to each Standing Committee meeting a statement to summarise:
 - i. the committees’ income and expenditure for the year to date;
 - ii the committee’s aggregate income and expenditure for the year to date;
 - iii the balances held which includes a comparison with the budget for the financial year and highlights any actual or potential overspends.
- e As soon as possible after the financial year end at 31 March, the Responsible

Financial Officer shall provide:

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

18 FINANCIAL CONTROLS AND PROCUREMENT

- a The Council's financial regulations may make provision for the authorisation of the payment of money in exercise of any of the Council's functions to be delegated to a committee, sub-committee or to an employee.
- b The council shall consider and approve financial regulations drawn up by the Responsible Financial Officer, which shall include detailed arrangements in respect of the following:
 - i. the keeping of accounting records and systems of internal controls;
 - ii. the assessment and management of financial risks faced by the council;
 - iii. the work of the independent internal auditor in accordance with proper practices and the receipt of regular reports from the internal auditor, which shall be required at least annually;
 - iv. the inspection and copying by councillors and local electors of the council's accounts and/or orders of payments; and
 - v. whether contracts with an estimated value below **£100,000** due to special circumstances are exempt from a tendering process or procurement exercise.
- c Financial regulations shall be reviewed regularly and at least annually for fitness of purpose.
- d Subject to additional requirements in the financial regulations of the council, the tender process for contracts for the supply of goods, materials, services or the execution of works shall include, as a minimum, the following steps:
 - i. a specification for the goods, materials, services or the execution of works

- shall be drawn up;
- ii. an invitation to tender shall be drawn up to confirm (i) the council's specification (ii) the time, date and address for the submission of tenders (iii) the date of the council's written response to the tender and (iv) the prohibition on prospective contractors contacting councillors or staff to encourage or support their tender outside the prescribed process;
 - iii. tenders are to be submitted in writing in a sealed marked envelope addressed to the Proper Officer;
 - iv. tenders shall be opened by the Proper Officer in the presence of at least one councillor after the deadline for submission of tenders has passed;
 - v. tenders are to be reported to and considered by the appropriate meeting of the council or a committee or sub-committee with delegated responsibility.
- e Neither the council, nor a committee or a sub-committee with delegated responsibility for considering tenders, is bound to accept the lowest value tender.
- f Where the value of a contract is likely to exceed the threshold specified by the Government from time to time, the Council must consider whether the contract is subject to the requirements of the current procurement legislation and if so, the Council must comply with procurement rules. NALC's procurement guidance contains further details.**

19 ESTIMATES / PRECEPTS

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

20 EXECUTION AND SEALING OF LEGAL DEEDS

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

21 MANAGEMENT OF INFORMATION

See also standing order 31.

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

22 HANDLING STAFF MATTERS

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

written record of it. The Chair of the Council and the Chair of Corporate Services Committee or in their absence, the Vice-Chair of the Council shall conduct an appraisal of the Clerk and shall keep a written record of it. Significant outcomes of the appraisals shall be reported to the Corporate Services Committee.

- f Any grievance shall be handled in accordance with the Council's approved Grievance policy.
- g Any disciplinary matter shall be handled in accordance with the Council's approved Disciplinary policy.
- h Any staff sickness shall be handled in accordance with the Council's approved Sickness Management policy.

23 VOTING ON APPOINTMENTS

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

24 CANVASSING OF AND RECOMMENDATIONS BY COUNCILLORS

- a. Canvassing of members of the Council or of any committee, directly or indirectly, for any appointment under the Council shall disqualify the candidate for such appointment. The Proper Officer shall disclose the requirements of this standing order to every candidate.
- b. A councillor or a member of a committee or sub-committee shall not solicit a person for appointment to or by the Council or recommend a person for such appointment or for promotion; but, nevertheless, any such person may give a written testimonial of a candidate's ability, experience or character for submission to the Council with an application for appointment.
- c. This standing order shall apply to tenders as if the person making the tender were a candidate for an appointment.

25 CODE OF CONDUCT AND DISPENSATIONS

See also standing order 1(u).

- a All councillors and non-councillors with voting rights shall observe the code of conduct adopted by the council.
- b Unless he has been granted a dispensation, a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights shall withdraw from a meeting when it is considering a matter in

- which he has a disclosable pecuniary interest. He may return to the meeting after it has considered the matter in which he had the interest.
- c Unless he has been granted a dispensation, a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights shall withdraw from a meeting when it is considering a matter in which he has another interest if so required by the council's code of conduct. He may return to the meeting after it has considered the matter in which he had the interest.
- d **Dispensation requests shall be in writing and submitted to the Proper Officer** as soon as possible before the meeting, or failing that, at the start of the meeting for which the dispensation is required.
- e A decision as to whether to grant a dispensation shall be made by a meeting of the council, or committee or sub-committee for which the dispensation is required and that decision is final.
- f A dispensation request shall confirm:
- i. the description and the nature of the disclosable pecuniary interest or other interest to which the request for the dispensation relates;
 - ii. whether the dispensation is required to participate at a meeting in a discussion only or a discussion and a vote;
 - iii. the date of the meeting or the period (not exceeding four years) for which the dispensation is sought; and
 - iv. an explanation as to why the dispensation is sought.
- g Subject to standing orders 25(d) and (f), dispensations requests shall be considered at the beginning of the meeting of the council, or committee or a sub-committee for which the dispensation is required.
- h **A dispensation may be granted in accordance with standing order 25(e) if having regard to all relevant circumstances the following apply:**
- i. **without the dispensation the number of persons prohibited from participating in the particular business would be so great a proportion of the meeting transacting the business as to impede the transaction of the business or**
 - ii. **granting the dispensation is in the interests of persons living in the council's area or**
 - iii. **it is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation.**

26 CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINTS

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

27 RESTRICTIONS ON COUNCILLOR ACTIVITIES

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

28 COMMUNICATING WITH DISTRICT AND COUNTY OR UNITARY COUNCILLORS

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

29 RELATIONS WITH THE PRESS/MEDIA

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

30 RESPONSIBILITIES TO PROVIDE INFORMATION

See also standing order 31.

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

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

See also standing order 21

- a The Council may appoint a Data Protection Officer.

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

32 STANDING ORDERS GENERALLY

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

33. VIRTUAL ATTENDANCE

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

APPENDIX A

Procedure for recording meetings

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

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

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

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



Houghton Regis Town Council

Financial Regulations

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

Based on NALC Financial Regulations 2024 updated March 2025

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1. General

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

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

1.6 The council must not delegate any decision regarding:

- **setting the final budget or the precept (council tax requirement);**
- **the outcome of a review of the effectiveness of its internal controls**
- **approving accounting statements;**
- **approving an annual governance statement;**
- **borrowing;**
- **declaring eligibility for the General Power of Competence; and**
- **addressing recommendations from the internal or external auditors**

1.7 In addition, the council shall:

- determine and regularly review the bank mandate for all council bank accounts;
- authorise any grant or single commitment in excess of the revenue budget provided.

2. Risk management and internal control

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

- **allow the reconstitution of any lost records;**
 - **identify the duties of officers dealing with transactions and**
 - **ensure division of responsibilities.**
- 2.6. At least once in each quarter, and at each financial year end, a member other than the Chair shall be appointed to verify bank reconciliations (for all accounts) produced by the RFO. The member shall sign and date the reconciliations and the original bank statements (or similar document) as evidence of this. This activity, including any exceptions, shall be reported to and noted by the council.
- 2.7. Regular back-up copies shall be made of the records on any council computer and stored either online or in a separate location from the computer. The council shall put measures in place to ensure that the ability to access any council computer is not lost if an employee leaves or is incapacitated for any reason.
- 3. Accounts and audit**
- 3.1 All accounting procedures and financial records of the council shall be determined by the RFO in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 3.2 The accounting records determined by the RFO must be sufficient to explain the council's transactions and to disclose its financial position with reasonably accuracy at any time. In particular, they must contain:**
- **day-to-day entries of all sums of money received and expended by the council and the matters to which they relate;**
 - **a record of the assets and liabilities of the council;**
- 3.3 The accounting records shall be designed to facilitate the efficient preparation of the accounting statements in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return.
- 3.4 The RFO shall complete and certify the annual Accounting Statements of the council contained in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with proper practices, as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year. Having certified the Accounting Statements, the RFO shall submit them (with any related documents) to the council, within the timescales required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 3.5 The council must ensure that there is an adequate and effective system of internal audit of its accounting records and internal control system in accordance with proper practices.**
- 3.6 Any officer or member of the council must make available such documents and records as the internal or external auditor consider necessary for the purpose of the audit** and shall, as directed by the

council, supply the RFO, internal auditor, or external auditor with such information and explanation as the council considers necessary.

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

4. Budget and precept

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

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

5. Procurement

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

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

- 5.3 Every contract shall comply with these the council’s Standing Orders and these Financial Regulations and no exceptions shall be made, except in an emergency.
- 5.4 **For a contract for the supply of goods, services or works where the estimated value will exceed the thresholds set by Parliament, the full requirements of The Procurement Act 2023 and The Procurement Regulations 2024 or any superseding legislation (“the Legislation”), must be followed in respect of the tendering, award and notification of that contract.**
- 5.5 Where the estimated value is below the Government threshold, the council shall (with the exception of items listed in paragraph 5.12) obtain prices as follows:
- 5.6 For contracts estimated to exceed £100,000 including VAT, the Clerk shall advertise an open invitation for tenders in compliance with any relevant provisions of the Legislation. Tenders shall be invited in accordance with Appendix 1.
- 5.7 **For contracts estimated to be over £30,000 including VAT, the council must comply with any requirements of the Legislation¹ regarding the publication of invitations and notices.**
- 5.8 For contracts greater than £5,000 excluding VAT the Clerk or Head of Service shall seek at least 3 fixed-price quotes;
- 5.9 where the value is between £500 and £5,000 excluding VAT, the Clerk or Head of Service shall try to obtain 3 estimates which might include evidence of online prices, or recent prices from regular suppliers.
- 5.10 For smaller purchases, all officers shall seek to achieve value for money.
- 5.11 **Contracts must not be split to avoid compliance with these rules.**
- 5.12 The requirement to obtain competitive prices in these regulations need not apply to contracts that relate to items (i) to (iv) below:
- i. specialist services, such as legal professionals acting in disputes;
 - ii. repairs to, or parts for, existing machinery or equipment;
 - iii. works, goods or services that constitute an extension of an existing contract;
 - iv. goods or services that are only available from one supplier or are sold at a fixed price.

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

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

6. Banking and payments

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

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

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

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

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

7. Electronic payments

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

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

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

8. Cheque payments

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

9. Payment cards

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

10. Petty Cash

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

11. Payment of salaries and allowances

- 11.1 **As an employer, the council must make arrangements to comply with the statutory requirements of PAYE legislation.**
- 11.2 **Councillors allowances (where paid) are also liable to deduction of tax under PAYE rules and must be taxed correctly before payment.**
- 11.3 Salary rates shall be agreed by the council, or a duly delegated committee. No changes shall be made to any employee's gross pay, emoluments, or terms and conditions of employment without the prior consent of the Staffing committee.
- 11.4 Payment of salaries shall be made, after deduction of tax, national insurance, pension contributions and any similar statutory or discretionary deductions, on the dates stipulated in employment contracts.

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

12. Loans and investments

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

13. Income

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

- 13.2 The council will review all fees and charges for work done, services provided, or goods sold at least annually as part of the budget-setting process, following a report of the Clerk. The RFO shall be responsible for the collection of all amounts due to the council.
- 13.3 Any sums, [over £1000](#), found to be irrecoverable and any bad debts shall be reported to the council by the RFO and shall be written off in the year. The council's approval shall be shown in the accounting records.
- 13.4 All sums received on behalf of the council shall be deposited intact with the council's bankers, with such frequency as the RFO considers necessary. The origin of each receipt shall clearly be recorded on the paying-in slip or other record.
- 13.5 Personal cheques shall not be cashed out of money held on behalf of the council.
- 13.6 The RFO shall ensure that VAT is correctly recorded in the council's accounting software and that any VAT Return required is submitted from the software by the due date.

14. Payments under contracts for building or other construction works

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

15. Stores and equipment

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

16. Assets, properties and estates

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

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

17. Insurance

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

18. Charities

- 18.1 Where the council is sole managing trustee of a charitable body the Clerk and RFO shall ensure that separate accounts are kept of the funds held on charitable trusts and separate financial reports made in such form as shall be appropriate, in accordance with Charity Law and legislation, or as

determined by the Charity Commission. The Clerk and RFO shall arrange for any audit or independent examination as may be required by Charity Law or any Governing Document.

19. Suspension and revision of Financial Regulations

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

Appendix 1 - Tender process

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

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Houghton Regis Town Council

Scheme of Delegation

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

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

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

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

The Town Clerk shall exercise these powers in accordance with:

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

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

GENERAL		
1	To exercise any statute, regulation or order which confers functions or duties of the Proper Officer	Town Clerk
2	To sign, or where appropriate, have sealed on behalf of the Town Council any Orders, Deeds or Documents necessary to give effect to any of the matters contained in reports or in any resolution passed by the Town Council	Town Clerk
3	To take any proceedings or other steps as may be necessary to enforce and recover any debt owing or other obligation to the Council	Town Clerk
4	To institute and appear in legal proceedings authorised by the council	Town Clerk
5	To appear or make representations to any tribunal or public Inquiry into any matter in which the Council has an interest (in its own right or on behalf of the citizens of Houghton Regis)	Town Clerk
6	To alter the date or time of a Council, Committee, Sub-Committee, Working Group meeting but, before doing so shall consult the Mayor, Group Leaders or Committee Chairsmen	Town Clerk
7	To decide arrangements for the closure of the council offices in the Christmas/New Year period, subject to consultation with the Mayor	Town Clerk
8	To deal with the day-to-day matters relating to the use and hiring of Council Buildings	Head of Democratic Services Head of Environmental and Community Services
9	To negotiate and enter into contractual arrangements for artistes/promoters in relation to events held in Houghton Regis organised by the Town Council	Civic & Events Manager Head of Environmental and Community Services
10	To act as the Council's Designated Officer for the purposes of the Freedom of Information Act 2000	Town Clerk
11.	To apply for planning consent for the carrying out of development by the Town Council.	Town Clerk
12.	To respond to consultations on planning applications/highway matters/rights of way matters/street naming and other matters subject to the comments of the Planning Committee	Head of Democratic Services
13	To respond to complaints made under the Council's complaints procedure and to make such ex-gratia payments in settlement of such complaints as are considered justified, subject to ratification by the Corporate Services Committee	Town Clerk
14	To manage, monitor and review the Council's internal control procedures	Town Clerk

15	To manage, monitor and review the Council's Corporate Risk Management Strategy	Town Clerk
16	To arrange all civic ceremonies and ancillary events in consultation with the Mayor	Civic & Events Manager Head of Democratic Services
17	To maintain the Council's Standing Orders	Town Clerk
FINANCIAL		
18	To be the Responsible Financial Officer for the purposes of s151 Local Government Act 1972	Town Clerk Head of Corporate Services
19	To determine the financial management and accounting procedures and extent of financial records	Town Clerk
20	To operate the Council's banking arrangements	Town Clerk Head of Corporate Services
21	To pay all accounts properly incurred	Town Clerk Head of Corporate Services
22	To pay all subscriptions to organisations to which Council belongs.	Town Clerk Head of Corporate Services
23	To pay salaries and allowances	Town Clerk Head of Corporate Services
24	To act as the Council's Administrator for the Bedfordshire Pension Fund	Town Clerk
25	To collect all income due to the Council including appropriate interest and costs	Town Clerk Head of Corporate Services
26	To make all necessary arrangements for the provision of internal and external audit service for the Council	Town Clerk Head of Corporate Services
27	To negotiate settlements in connection with claims made by and against the Council in consultation with the Council's Insurers where appropriate.	Town Clerk
28	To incur expenditure on revenue items with the approved estimates and budgets	Town Clerk Heads of Service
29	To incur expenditure on capital schemes within the Council's approved Capital Programme	Town Clerk Heads of Service

30	To use the Repairs & Maintenance Budgets for the maintenance, replacement or repair of existing buildings, plant, vehicles or equipment	Head of Environmental and Community Services
31	To enter into leasing and/or contract hire agreements for the acquisition of vehicles, machinery and equipment on such items as are considered appropriate	Head of Environmental and Community Services
32	To accept quotations or tenders for work, supplies or services (where tenders are required by the Council's Financial Regulations) subject to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The cost not exceeding the approved budget • The tender being the most economically advantageous to the Council according to the criteria set out in the tender documentation • All the requirements of the Council's Financial Regulations being complied with 	Town Clerk
33	To carry out virements of sums between cost centres in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations	Heads of Service
34	To exercise the powers of the Council to borrow and invest	Town Clerk
35	To manage investments. Apply for and repay loans as appropriate in accordance with the Financial Regulations.	Town Clerk <u>Head of Corporate Services</u>
<u>36</u>	<u>Apply for and repay loans as appropriate in accordance with the Financial Regulations.</u>	<u>Town Clerk</u>
37	To authorise action for the recovery of debts	Town Clerk <u>Head of Corporate Services</u>
38	To write-off debts up to £1000 where the sum is considered irrecoverable.	Town Clerk
39	To maintain a Register of Assets and Inventory of Equipment	Town Clerk <u>Head of Corporate Services</u>
40	To determine the Council's insurance requirements on behalf of the Council	Town Clerk
41	To make all necessary arrangements for the Council's insurances.	Town Clerk <u>Head of Corporate Services</u>
<u>41</u> 2	To enter into contracts for the purchase and supply of goods and services for the use in their respective services within estimates	Town Clerk <u>Heads of Service</u>
<u>42</u> 3	To prepare a draft budget for consideration by the Council	Town Clerk

		Head of Corporate Services
434	To prepare the final accounts for each financial year	Town Clerk Head of Corporate Services
445	To pay full compensation for loss where the Council is likely to be legally liable to pay compensation, where sued	Town Clerk
456	To pay any proved out of pocket expenses of complaints where complaint is upheld	Town Clerk
467	To provide banking facilities for the Mayor's Charity Fund and to pay the Mayor's Annual Allowance as may be determined from time to time	Town Clerk
478	To maintain the Council's Financial Regulations	Town Clerk
EMPLOYMENT		
489	To exercise the functions of the Council's Head of Paid Service under S4 Local Government & Housing Act 1989	Town Clerk
4950	To manage the Council staff in accordance with the Council's Policies, Procedures and Budget	Town Clerk
501	To appoint posts including apprentices	Town Clerk
512	To appoint temporary employees as and when required within the budget estimates	Town Clerk
523	To prepare job description and person specifications, placing of advertisements and short-listing	Town Clerk Heads of Service
534	To approve individual salary grading within any job evaluation grading structure approved by Council	Town Clerk
545	To manage staff performance	Town Clerk
556	To control discipline and performance, including power of suspension and dismissal	Town Clerk
567	To exercise Disciplinary & Grievance Procedures in accordance with the Council's Procedures	Town Clerk
578	To determine approved duties for payment of travel, subsistence and car allowances to Officers where they represent the Council	Town Clerk
589	To approve/refuse applications for re-grading, remove any bars in salary scales and to authorise salary increments and accelerated increments.	Town Clerk
5960	To approve the payment of overtime	Town Clerk Heads of Service
601	To agree minor variations to the conditions of employment	Town Clerk
612	To implement and monitor arrangements for annual leave, flexi-time, sickness absence, flexible/hybrid working, maternity and paternity leave in accordance with the Council's Policies	Town Clerk
623	To approve changes to Council policies reflecting changes to legislation, to correct grammatical / typographical errors, and to basic / non fundamental updates such as changes to line management titles, job titles etc.	Head of Corporate Services

		Heads of Service
634	To authorise training in line with Council's Policies	Head of Service Town Clerk
645	To authorise the provision of branded clothing & PPE	Town Clerk
656	To approve the payment of claims from employees for compensation for loss or damage to personal property	Town Clerk
667	To negotiate and agree settlements on behalf of the Council in relation to any proceedings in the Employment Tribunal	Town Clerk
678	To agree to premature retirement on the grounds of duly certified ill health	Town Clerk
689	To terminate employment during probation and to review salary on completion of probationary periods.	Town Clerk
6970	To commission legal and professional advice on staffing matters	Town Clerk
701	To represent the Council at any conference, meeting, or inquiry to which the Council is invited unless the Council has indicated otherwise and to exercise any voting rights conferred by the corporate membership of any body	Town Clerk
712	To offer training to Councillors	Town Clerk Head of Democratic Services
723	To exercise any functions delegated to the Town Clerk in his/her absence	Head of Corporate Services & Head of Environmental and Community Services
PROPERTY		
734	To manage land and property of the Council	Head of Environmental and Community Services
745	To agree the terms of any lease, licence, conveyance or transfer	Town Clerk
756	To sell surplus materials, vehicles, plant, equipment and goods, salvage scrap and other waste	Head of Environmental and Community Services
767	To grant easements, wayleaves and licence over Council land	Town Clerk
778	To initiate legal action or proceedings against unauthorised encampments or encroachments on Council land	Town Clerk
789	To direct the custody of Council property and documents in accordance with s226 Local Government Act 1972	Town Clerk

7980	To exercise responsibility for the safe custody and maintenance of the Civic Regalia	Town Clerk
801	To place architectural, quantity surveying, civil engineering and other similar specialist work with outside agencies within the appropriate fee scale and the Council's relevant estimates, standing orders and financial regulations	Town Clerk
842	To appoint the Principal Contractor and Planning Supervisors for the purposes of the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations.	Town Clerk
823	To requisition off site services in respect of any construction contract approved by the Council for which they act as Architect or Contract Administrator	Town Clerk
834	To make applications for all statutory consents necessitated by any approved Council proposal or development	Head of Environmental and Community Services
845	To engage valuers or selling agents on behalf of the Council	Town Clerk
HEALTH AND SAFETY		
856	To oversee the discharge of the Council's responsibilities under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974	Town Clerk
LEGAL PROCEEDINGS		
867	To take and discontinue legal proceedings in any court or at any tribunal	Town Clerk
878	To take Counsel's advice or instruct Counsel to represent the Council	Town Clerk
889	To seek injunctions and commence proceedings for the purposes of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enforcement in accordance with the Council's Policies • Recovering Money due to the Council • Recovering or otherwise preserving possession of the Council's land or property • Defending the interests of the Council • Appealing against a decision affecting the interests of the Council and responding to appeals against action taken by the Council 	Town Clerk
8990	To represent the Council at Court or any tribunal or to make arrangements for appropriate representation	Town Clerk
901	To negotiate and settle the terms of documents to give effect to a decision of the Council or any of the Committees or any officer acting under delegated powers	Town Clerk
942	To be the responsible officer for the co-ordination and operation of the legal requirements under the Data Protection Act and the Freedom of Information Act	Town Clerk
923	To serve requisitions for information	Town Clerk
934	To authorise any member of staff to swear affidavits as to matter within their knowledge in any court proceedings involving the Council	Town Clerk
945	To authorise any member of staff to appear on behalf of the Council before a Magistrate's Court	Town Clerk

RECREATION & EVENTS		
956	To grant permissions for the use of recreational open space in accordance with Council Policy and statutory requirements	Head of Environmental and Community Services
967	To organise sporting, recreational, cultural events and entertainments in accordance with approved budget provision and the Council's Financial Regulations	Civic & Events Manager Community Services Manager Head of Environmental and Community Services
978	To liaise with the Safety Advisory Group and carry out any necessary actions arising from recommendations from that body.	Civic & Events Manager Community Services Manager Head of Environmental and Community Services



Houghton Regis Town Council

Committee Functions & Terms of Reference

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

1. Introduction

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

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

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

1.3 The days and times of meetings will be set as far as possible on the following basis:

Town Council & Standing Committees – Mondays or Tuesdays, at 7pm

Annual General Meeting (AGM) - Wednesdays

Partnership – Tuesdays at 7pm

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

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

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

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

3. Functions & Terms of Reference

Town Council

Terms of Reference

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

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

At other meetings of the Council:

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

Corporate Services as to any policy matters arising from them.

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

Functions

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

Corporate Services Committee

Terms of Reference

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

received by the Clerk

- ~~Reviewing policies of the Council as required by legislation. To review and maintain legislative policies relating to Council governance, compliance, finance, data protection, health & safety, equality, and other statutory obligations.~~
- To oversee and manage the financial obligations of the Council, including:
 - To receive quarterly reports on investments containing a forecast of capital expenditure, investment opportunities and a recommendation for further investment including where, length and amount
 - To receive bank and cash reconciliation statements.
 - To receive an annual report (based on the previous financial year) on loans taken out, repayments made and outstanding liability.
 - To confirm the use of direct debits, standing orders, BACS, CHAPS
- Review and confirmation of arrangements for insurance cover in respect of all insured risks.
- To recommend to Council the writing off of irrecoverable amounts.
- To assemble and submit to the Town Council estimates of income and expenditure for each financial year in respect of all the services of this Committee no later than 30th November each year.
- To review annually (Spring / Summer) the staffing structure and staffing forecast in relation to this Committee for consideration by the Staffing Committee late Autumn to feed into the budget process.
- To monitor periodically the income and expenditure of the Committee.
- To consider and determine any proposed expenditure or reduction in income for which no provision has been made in the approved budget.
- To set the level of charges for facilities in respect of all the services of this Committee.

Functions

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

Environment & Leisure Committee

Terms of Reference

- To consider any matters referred to it by the Council or other Committees.
- To respond on behalf of the Council to initiatives from other organisations relating to matters under the Committee's jurisdiction.
- To exercise management of health and safety issues in respect of all the services of this Committee.
- To consider and determine any new contracts and any renewals of existing contracts under the jurisdiction of this committee.

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

Functions

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

Community Services Committee

Terms of Reference

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

30th November each year.

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

Functions

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

Planning Committee

Terms of Reference

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

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

Delegated Powers to Officers – Planning

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

Functions

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

membership and terms of reference.

Staffing Committee

Terms of Reference

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

Functions

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

Investment Working Group Reports to the Corporate Services Committee

Terms of Reference

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

Functions

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

Meetings

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

Houghton Regis Town Partnership

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

Complaints Sub-Committee (reporting to Town Council)

Terms of Reference

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

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

Functions

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

Complaints Appeals Sub-Committee (reporting to Town Council)

Terms of Reference

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

Functions

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

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

Terms of Reference

1. To consider any matters referred to it by the Town Council or any other Committee
2. To consider and determine matters surrounding the development of a new

cemetery for Houghton Regis, including but not restricted to:

- Environmental matters
 - Policy matters
 - Visual impact matters
 - Design matters
 - Public consultation matters
 - Future operation and management of the cemetery
3. To commission specialist services such as may be deemed appropriate in progressing options for future cemetery provision.
 4. To report and to make such recommendations to Town Council as appropriate.

Functions

- The Proposed New Cemetery Sub Committee shall function and operate in accordance with the Council's approved Standing Orders.
- The Proposed New Cemetery Sub Committee shall consist of 5 members. The quorum shall be half of its members (three).

Neighbourhood Plan Implementation Sub Committee (reporting to Planning Committee)

Terms of Reference

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

Functions

- The Sub-committee shall function and operate in accordance with the Council's approved Standing Orders.
- The Sub-committee shall consist of five Councillors and shall include the Chair of the HRTC Planning Committee. The quorum shall be half of its members (three)
- The Sub-committee shall meet at least twice each year.
- The Sub-committee shall report to the Planning Committee

- The draft minutes shall be presented to the HRTC Planning Committee to enable the Planning Committee to consider the work of the Sub Committee in a timely fashion.

Community Engagement Sub Committee (reporting to Community Services Committee)

Terms of Reference

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

Functions

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

Co-option

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

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

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

Terms of Reference

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

Functions

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

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

Terms of Reference

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

Functions

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

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

Terms of Reference

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

Functions

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

APPENDIX A

Houghton Regis Town Partnership Committee ¹

Purpose

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

Objectives

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

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

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

Membership

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

Who must be elected representatives of the wards.

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

Meetings and Quorum

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

Chairman and Vice Chairman

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

Secretariat

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

Decision making arrangements

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

Co-option

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

Governance

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

Calendar of Meetings, Briefings and Events 2026 / 2027

Colour Key	Bank Holiday	No Scheduled Meeting	Events Manager Event	Youth & Community Manager Event
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Date	Month		Day	Committee meeting	Event	Venue	Time	Lead Officer
16th	May	2026	Saturday		Arts and Cultural Event	TBC	Daytime	Events Manager
20th	May	2026	Wednesday	Community Safety Sub-Committee		Chamber	11am	Community Services Manager
20th	May	2026	Wednesday	Town Council (AGM)		Council Chamber	7pm	Town Clerk
23rd	May	2026	Saturday		Dog Shgow	Houghton Hall Park	Daytime	Events Manager
25th	May	2026	Monday	Spring Bank Holiday				
26th	May	2026	Tuesday	Neighbourhood Plan Implementation Sub-Committee		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Democratic Services
27th/ 28th	May	2026	Wednesday/ Thursday		Half Term Holidays		TBC	Events Manager
1st	June	2026	Monday	Leaders Briefing		Virtual meeting via Teams	11am	Town Clerk
1st	June	2026	Monday	Corporate Services		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Corporate Services
2nd	June	2026	Tuesday	Councillor Briefing		Hybrid meeting	6pm	Town Clerk
2nd	June	2026	Tuesday	Planning		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Democratic Services
6th	June	2026	Sunday		Classics in the Park	Houghton Hall Park	Afternoon	Events Manager
8th	June	2026	Monday	XXXXXX				
9th	June	2026	Tuesday	Community Engagement Sub-Committee		Council Chamber	TBC	Events Manager

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

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

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

Date	Month		Day	Committee meeting	Event	Venue	Time	Lead Officer
18th	August	2026	Tuesday		Open Air Theatre		Daytime	Events Manager
19th	August	2026	Wednesday	Community Safety Sub-Committee		Chamber	11am	Community Services Manager
24th	August	2026	Monday	Planning		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Democratic Services
29th	August	2026	Saturday		Houghton Rocks	Parkside	All Day	Events Manager
31st	August	2026	Monday	<i>Bank holiday Summer</i>				
7th	September	2026	Monday	<i>Leaders Briefing</i>		<i>Virtual meeting via Teams</i>	<i>11am</i>	<i>Town Clerk</i>
7th	September	2026	Monday	Corporate Services		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Corporate Services
8th	September	2026	Tuesday	Community Engagement Sub-Committee		Council Chamber	TBC	Events Manager
14th	September	2026	Monday	Planning		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Democratic Services
15th	September	2026	Tuesday	<i>Councillor Briefing</i>		<i>Hybrid meeting</i>	<i>6pm</i>	<i>Town Clerk</i>
16th	September	2026	Wednesday	Community Safety Sub-Committee		Chamber	11am	Community Services Manager
19th	September	2026	Saturday		Heritage Open Day		Daytime	Events Manager
21st	September	2026	Monday	New Cemetery Sub-Committee		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Environmental and Community Services
28th	September	2026	Monday	XXXXXX				
5th	October	2026	Monday	<i>Leaders Briefing</i>		<i>Virtual meeting via Teams</i>	<i>11am</i>	<i>Town Clerk</i>
5th	October	2026	Monday	Planning		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Democratic Services
12th	October	2026	Monday	Town Council		Council Chamber	7pm	Town Clerk

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

Date	Month		Day	Committee meeting	Event	Venue	Time	Lead Officer
19th	October	2026	Monday	Environment & Leisure		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Environmental and Community Services
20th	October	2026	Tuesday	Staffing Committee		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Democratic Services
21st	October	2026	Wednesday	Community Safety Sub-Committee		Chamber	11am	Community Services Manager
26th	October	2026	Monday	Planning		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Democratic Services
27th	October	2026	Tuesday	Town Partnership		Council Chamber	7pm	Town Clerk
2nd	November	2026	Monday	Leaders Briefing		Virtual meeting via Teams	11am	Town Clerk
2nd	November	2026	Monday	Community Services		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Environmental and Community Services
6th	November	2026	Saturday		Fireworks Display		Afternoon/ Evening	Events Manager
8th	November	2026	Sunday		Remembrance Sunday	All Saints Church	Morning	Events Manager
9th	November	2026	Monday	Community Services (Grants)		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Environmental and Community Services
10th	November	2026	Tuesday	Neighbourhood Plan Implementation Sub-Committee		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Democratic Services
11th	November	2026	Wednesday		Armistice Day	All Saints Church	Morning	Events Manager
16th	November	2026	Monday	Planning		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Democratic Services
17th	November	2026	Tuesday	Councillor Briefing		Hybrid meeting	6pm	Town Clerk
18th	November	2026	Wednesday	Community Safety Sub-Committee		Chamber	11am	Community Services Manager
23rd	November	2026	Monday	XXXXXX				
24th	November	2026	Tuesday	Community Engagement Sub-Committee		Council Chamber	TBC	Events Manager

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

Date	Month		Day	Committee meeting	Event	Venue	Time	Lead Officer
30th	November	2026	Monday	XXXXXX				
5th	December	2026	Saturday		Carol Service and Christmas Light Switch on		Afternoon/ Evening	Events Manager
7th	December	2026	Monday	Leaders Briefing		Virtual meeting via Teams	11am	Town Clerk
7th	December	2026	Monday	Corporate Services		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Corporate Services
8th	December	2026	Tuesday	Planning		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Democratic Services
12th	December	2026	Saturday		Santa's Grotto			Events Manager
14th	December	2026	Monday	Town Council		Council Chamber	7pm	Town Clerk
16th	December	2026	Wednesday	Community Safety Sub-Committee		Chamber	11am	Community Services Manager
21st	December	2026	Monday	XXXXXX				
25th	December	2026	Friday	Bank Holiday Christmas Day				
28th	December	2026	Monday	Bank Holiday Boxing Day				
28th	December	2026	Monday	XXXXXX				
1st	January	2027	Friday	Bank Holiday New Year's Day				
4th	January	2027	Monday	Leaders Briefing		Virtual meeting via Teams	11am	Town Clerk
4th	January	2027	Monday	Planning		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Democratic Services
11th	January	2027	Monday	Environment & Leisure		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Environmental and Community Services
12th	January	2027	Tuesday	Councillor Briefing		Hybrid meeting	5pm	Town Clerk

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

Date	Month		Day	Committee meeting	Event	Venue	Time	Lead Officer
12th	January	2027	Tuesday	Community Engagement Sub-Committee		Council Chamber	TBC	Events Manager
18th	January	2027	Monday	Town Council		Council Chamber	7pm	Town Clerk
19th	January	2027	Tuesday	Staffing Committee		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Democratic Services
20th	January	2027	Wednesday	Community Safety Sub-Committee		Chamber	11am	Community Services Manager
25th	January	2027	Monday	Planning		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Democratic Services
26th	January	2027	Tuesday	Town Partnership		Council Chamber	7pm	Town Clerk
1st	February	2027	Monday	Leaders Briefing		Virtual meeting via Teams	11am	Town Clerk
8th	February	2027	Monday	XXXXXX				
15th	February	2027	Monday	Planning		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Democratic Services
16th	February	2027	Tuesday	Councillor Briefing		Hybrid meeting	6pm	Town Clerk
17th	February	2027	Wednesday	Community Safety Sub-Committee		Chamber	11am	Community Services Manager
22nd	February	2027	Monday	Community Services		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Environmental and Community Services
1st	March	2027	Monday	Leaders Briefing		Virtual meeting via Teams	11am	Town Clerk
1st	March	2027	Monday	Corporate Services		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Corporate Services
8th	March	2027	Monday	Planning		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Democratic Services
15th	March	2027	Monday	Town Council		Council Chamber	7pm	Town Clerk
17th	March	2027	Wednesday	Community Safety Sub-Committee		Chamber	11am	Community Services Manager

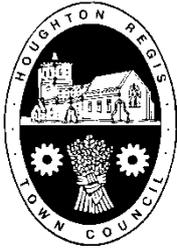
Meetings, briefings, events and training sessions may be subject to change, please check the website and social media for updates.

Date	Month		Day	Committee meeting	Event	Venue	Time	Lead Officer
20th	March	2027	Saturday		Easter Egg Hunt	Houghton Hall Park		Events Manager
22nd	March	2027	Monday	New Cemetery Sub-Committee		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Environmental and Community Services
22nd	April	2027	Monday	Annual Towns Meeting		Council Chamber	7pm	Town Clerk
23rd	March	2027	Tuesday	Community Engagement Sub-Committee		Council Chamber	TBC	Events Manager
26th	March	2027	Friday	Bank Holiday Good Friday				
29th	March	2027	Monday	Bank Holiday Easter Monday				
30th	March	2027	Tuesday	Planning		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Democratic Services
5th	April	2027	Monday	Leaders Briefing		Virtual meeting via Teams	11am	Town Clerk
5th	April	2027	Tuesday	Environment & Leisure		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Environmental and Community Services
11th	April	2027	Sunday	Civic Service		All Saints	3pm	Head of Democratic Services
13th	April	2027	Tuesday	Staffing Committee		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Democratic Services
19th	April	2027	Monday	Planning		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Democratic Services
20th	April	2027	Tuesday	Councillor Briefing		Hybrid meeting	6pm	Town Clerk
21st	April	2027	Wednesday	Community Safety Sub-Committee		Chamber	11am	Community Services Manager
26th	April	2027	Monday	Community Services		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Environmental and Community Services
27th	April	2027	Tuesday	Town Partnership		Council Chamber	7pm	Town Clerk
3rd	May	2027	Monday	Bank holiday Early May				

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

Date	Month		Day	Committee meeting	Event	Venue	Time	Lead Officer
10th	May	2027	Monday	Leaders Briefing		Virtual meeting via Teams	11am	Town Clerk
10th	May	2027	Monday	Planning		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Democratic Services
17th	May	2027	Monday	XXXXXX				
19th	May	2027	Wednesday	Community Safety Sub-Committee		Chamber	11am	Community Services Manager
19th	May	2027	Wednesday	Town Council (AGM)		Council Chamber	7pm	Town Clerk
1st	June	2027	Tuesday	Planning		Council Chamber	7pm	Head of Democratic Services

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



Date: 16th March 2026

Title: ANNUAL REVIEW OF COUNCIL ASSETS

Purpose of the Report: To review and update members on the Corporate Plan.

Contact Officer: Clare Evans, Town Clerk

1. RECOMMENDATION

This report is presented for information only.

2. BACKGROUND

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

3. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Members will find attached the list of council assets¹ held on 31st March 2026, as amended by additions and disposals during 2025/26.

4. HRTC CORPORATE PLAN

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

5. IMPLICATIONS

Corporate Implications

- There are no corporate implications arising from the recommendations.

Legal Implications

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

- There are no legal implications arising from the recommendations

Financial Implications

- There are no financial implications arising from the recommendations.

Risk Implications

- There are no additional arising risk implications.

Equalities Implications

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

This project / issue does not discriminate.

Climate Change Implications

- There are no climate change implications arising from the recommendations

Press Contact

- There are no press implications arising from the recommendations.

6. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

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

7. APPENDICES

- Appendix A:** Asset Register 2025/26
Appendix B: Asset Purchase List 2025/26
Appendix C: Asset Sales List 2025/26

Appendix A

Asset ID	Status	Asset Name	Description	Notes	Brand	Category	Type	Ownership	Rent/Purchase date	Current value	Purchase value
407041	Active	Dell Latitude Notebook	Grounds tablet for play area inspections?		Dell	Vehicles & Equipment	IT	Owned.	01/04/2019	1024.05	1024.05
407056	Active	MC Pav Viessman Boiler	Boiler		Viessman	Vehicles & Equipment	Building equipment	Owned.	01/04/2019	3255	3255
407061	Active	Kubota Flail Deck	FLAIL ATTACHMENT	MODEL TEG 1601	Kubota	Vehicles & Equipment	Grounds equipment	Owned.	01/04/2019	3551.79	3551.79
407074	Active	Stihl Shellcordless			Stihl	Vehicles & Equipment	Grounds equipment	Owned.	01/04/2020	1019.32	1019.32
407082	Active	Rotary mower	Hayter pro48 rotary mower	model Pro 48 formally 0005	Hayter	Vehicles & Equipment	Grounds equipment	Owned.	01/04/2020	1149.17	1149.17
407083	Active	Rotary mower	Hayter pro48 rotary mower	model Pro 48 formally 0006	Hayter	Vehicles & Equipment	Grounds equipment	Owned.	01/04/2020	1149.17	1149.17
407084	Active	Rotary mower	Hayter pro48 rotary mower	model Pro 48 formally 0007	Hayter	Vehicles & Equipment	Grounds equipment	Owned.	01/04/2020	1149.17	1149.17
407085	Active	Rotary mower	Hayter pro48 rotary mower	model Pro 48 formally 0008	Hayter	Vehicles & Equipment	Grounds equipment	Owned.	01/04/2020	1149.17	1149.17
407086	Active	Rotary mower	Hayter pro48 rotary mower	model Pro 48 formally 0009	Hayter	Vehicles & Equipment	Grounds equipment	Owned.	01/04/2020	1149.17	1149.17
407131	Active	Stihl brushcutter	brushcutter	previously 0026 model FS91R	Stihl	Vehicles & Equipment	Grounds equipment	Owned.		1020	1020
407138	Active	Sisis Autorake	Combi cricket rake & brush	previously 0110	Sisis	Vehicles & Equipment	Grounds equipment	Owned.		5209	5209
407139	Active	Tractor rotavator	rotavator unit 80cm	previously 0108	BCS	Vehicles & Equipment	Grounds equipment	Owned.		4300	4300
407144	Active	Ashes vaults	Ashes vaults	includes multiple vaults (poss no. 25)	Greenbridge	Infrastructure assets	Vaults	Owned.	01/04/2020	11850	11850
407146	Active	Allotment shed bases	shed bases			Infrastructure assets	Surfacing	Owned.	03/02/2023	10000	10000
407149	Active	Orchard Close Pavilion refurb				Community Asset	Buildings	Owned.		27088.2	27088.2
407150	Active	Ford Ranger	Grds vehicle	Reg: EN68VTG	Ford	Vehicles & Equipment	Road vehicles	Owned.		22520	22520
407151	Active	Orchard Close Play area resurfacing	Play area resurfacing		Wetpore	Community Asset	Land	Owned.		21081	21081
407152	Active	Parkside Family Area furniture	Parkside Family Area furniture			Infrastructure assets	Play equipment	Owned.		1465	1465
407155	Active	Parkside pergola		Parkside pergola as part of family area	Custom made	Infrastructure assets	Fences	Owned.		6276	6276
413152	Active	Bowls Green Shed	Bowls Green Shed	Purchased 2012		Infrastructure assets	Street furniture	Owned.	27/02/2023	2800	2800
413153	Active	Houghton Regis Memorial Hall	Houghton Regis Memorial Hall			Operational Land & Buildings	Building	Owned.	01/04/1958	293000	293000
413154	Active	HRTC Premises	HRTC Offices and land			Operational Land & Buildings	Building	Owned.	01/04/1975	260400	260400
413155	Active	Moore Crescent Sports Pavilion	Moore Crescent Sports Pavilion			Operational Land & Buildings	Building	Owned.	01/04/1993	340020	340020
413156	Active	Tithe Farm Pavilion	Tithe Farm Pavilion			Operational Land & Buildings	Building	Owned.	01/04/1980	165988	165988

413157	Active	Parkside Pavilion	Parkside Pavilion			Operational Land & Buildings	Building	Owned.	01/04/1980	154784	154784
413159	Active	Village Green Pavilion	Village Green Pavilion			Operational Land & Buildings	Building	Owned.	01/04/1980	459836	459836
413164	Active	Orchard Close Pavilion	Orchard Close Pavilion	Pavilion owned but land under leasehold		Operational Land & Buildings	Building	Owned.	01/04/1985	112100	112100
413165	Active	Boiler	Office heating boiler			Vehicles & Equipment	Office Furniture	Owned.	01/04/2019	2990	2990
413166	Active	Skate Park	Concrete skate park			Infrastructure assets	Play equipment	Owned.	01/04/2011	90306	90306
413167	Active	Multi Use Games Area (MUGA)	Multi Use Games Area (MUGA)			Infrastructure assets	Play equipment	Owned.	01/04/2012	30062	30062
413168	Active	Tractor	Tractor		Kubota	Vehicles & Equipment	Road vehicles	Owned.	01/04/2005	35000	35000
413169	Active	Transit	Ford transit tipper		Ford	Vehicles & Equipment	Road vehicles	Owned.	01/04/2019	22620	22620
413170	Active	Ford Ranger	Grds Vehicle	Reg. EX67KKW	Ford	Vehicles & Equipment	Road vehicles	Owned.	01/04/2019	16942	16942
413172	Active	Trailer	Grds trailer			Grounds equipment	Vehicle accessories	Owned.	01/04/2015	2465	2465
413175	Active	Mower	Mower		Dennis	Grounds equipment	Grounds maintenance equipment	Owned.	01/04/2015	1500	1500
413178	Active	Verticut mower	Mower			Grounds equipment	Grounds maintenance equipment	Owned.	01/04/2015	1200	1200
413180	Active	Mower			Hayter	Grounds equipment	Grounds maintenance equipment	Owned.	04/04/2015	2137	2137
413183	Active	Mower	Haytor Pro Rotary Mower		Haytor	Grounds equipment	Grounds maintenance equipment	Owned.	04/04/2021	1149	1149
413186	Active	Verti-cutter				Grounds equipment	Grounds maintenance equipment	Owned.	04/04/2015	1329	1329
413190	Active	Stihl AR300L			Stihl	Grounds equipment	Grounds maintenance equipment	Owned.	01/04/2010	1320	1320
413191	Active	Stihl RMA765 mower			Stihl	Grounds equipment	Grounds maintenance equipment	Owned.	01/04/2010	1037	1037
413193	Active	Autorake			Sissis	Grounds equipment	Grounds maintenance equipment	Owned.	01/04/2021	5209	5209
417186	Active	Rotavator	Honda tractor unit rotavator		Honda	Grounds equipment	Vehicle accessories	Owned.	06/03/2023	4300	4300
417505	Active	Ranger LC69HCL	2.0 XL Ecoblue 2D 170PS 4WD		Ford	Vehicles & Equipment	Road vehicles	Owned.	27/03/2023	18990	18990
418709	Active	Van	Mitsubishi truck		Mitsubishi	Vehicles & Equipment	Road vehicles	Owned.	01/04/2020	15000	15000
418710	Active	Exac post hole borer				Grounds equipment	Grounds maintenance equipment	Owned.		1500	1500
418711	Active	Dump trailer				Grounds equipment	Vehicle accessories	Owned.		4650	4650
418712	Active	Mini excavator			JCB	Grounds equipment	Grounds maintenance equipment	Owned.		3476	3476
418713	Active	Kubota				Vehicles & Equipment	Road vehicles	Owned.		14116	14116
418715	Active	Kubota F3890			Kubota	Vehicles & Equipment	Road vehicles	Owned.		18368	18368
418717	Active	CCTV Equipment	redeployable cameras			Infrastructure assets	Street furniture	Owned.		18028	18028
418718	Active	Anti ram bollards				Infrastructure assets	Gates	Owned.		5592	5592
418722	Active	Tractor			Shibarua	Vehicles & Equipment	Road vehicles	Owned.		19755	19755
418723	Active	Village Green Family Games Area	Fitness equipment and family games equipment		Proludic	Infrastructure assets	Outdoor Gym equipment	Owned.		69999	69999
418724	Active	Orchard Close Outdoor Gym	Fitness equipment		Proludic	Infrastructure assets	Outdoor Gym equipment	Owned.		4100	4100
418726	Active	Community Defibrillators	Community Defibrillators	Community Heartbeat trust		Infrastructure assets	Street furniture	Owned.		10092	10092
418727	Active	Gates & fencing				Infrastructure assets	Fences	Owned.		92569	92569

418728	Active	Bowls Irrigation System				Grounds equipment	Grounds maintenance equipment	Owned.		7290	7290
418729	Active	Speed activated sign				Infrastructure assets	Signs	Owned.		9226	9226
418730	Active	Town Signs & Noticeboards				Infrastructure assets	Signs	Owned.		10685	10685
418731	Active	Litterbins				Infrastructure assets	Litter bins	Owned.		5941	5941
418732	Active	Bollards				Infrastructure assets	Fences	Owned.		7192	7192
418733	Active	Benches				Infrastructure assets	Benches	Owned.		4991	4991
418734	Active	Flame beacon				Infrastructure assets	Street furniture	Owned.		2204	2204
418735	Active	Flag poles x2				Infrastructure assets	Flags	Owned.		5875	5875
418736	Active	Floodlights	Skate Park			Infrastructure assets	Play equipment	Owned.		15844	15844
418737	Active	All Saints Churchyard Gate				Infrastructure assets	Gates	Owned.		20018	20018
418738	Active	Play Area surfacing				Infrastructure assets	Play area surfacing	Owned.		48000	48000
418739	Active	Play area surfacing				Infrastructure assets	Play area surfacing	Owned.	01/04/2021	21081	21081
418740	Active	Seating & Pergola	Parkside Family Picnic area			Infrastructure assets	Benches	Owned.	01/04/2021	8975	8975
418741	Active	Allotment Shed bases				Infrastructure assets	Surfacing	Owned.	01/04/2021	10000	10000
418742	Active	Civic Regalia	Mayors and Deputy Mayors chains			Community Asset	Civic regalia	Owned.	01/04/2021	4779	4779
418743	Active	War memorial				Community Asset	War memorial	Owned.		9363	9363
418744	Active	Village Green				Community Asset	Land	Owned.		1	1
418745	Active	Tithe Farm Recreation Ground	Rec grd, car park, pavilion, play area, skate park			Community Asset	Land	Owned.		1	1
418746	Active	Land to rear of Orchard Close	Forms part of wider rec grd	forms part of wide rec grd		Community Asset	Land	Owned.		1	1
418747	Active	Cemetery				Community Asset	Land	Owned.		109635	109635
418748	Active	Orchard Close Recreation Ground	Land, pavilion, play area, exercise equipment			Community Asset	Land	Owned.		1	1
418749	Active	Land rear of Houghton Court	Land			Community Asset	Land	Owned.		1	1
418750	Active	Land rear of Village Green Pavilion	Land			Community Asset	Land	Owned.		1	1
418751	Active	Land adj to Chapel Path	Land			Community Asset	Land	Owned.		1	1
418752	Active	Land off Townsend Farm Road	Land			Community Asset	Land	Owned.		1	1
418753	Active	All Saints Churchyard		Closed Churchyard		Community Asset	Land	Owned.		1	1
418754	Active	Moore Crescent Recreation Ground		Land, pavilion, bowls green, car park		Community Asset	Land	Owned.		1	1
418755	Active	Land at The Bauk		Land		Community Asset	Land	Owned.		1	1
418756	Active	Land at Orchard Close				Community Asset	Land	Owned.		1	1
418757	Active	Dog Kennel Down open space		Open space, county wildlife site		Community Asset	Land	Owned.		1	1
418758	Active	Parkside Recreation Ground		Open space, pavilion, 2 x play areas, MUGA, family picnic area		Community Asset	Land	Owned.		1	1
418759	Active	Land at The Paddocks, Dunstable		Open space		Community Asset	Land	Owned.		1	1
418760	Active	Former Railway Line		Open space		Community Asset	Land	Owned.		1	1
418835	Active	Balance junction / wobble bridge		Replaced equipment as damage by car accident in July 2022	Protudic	Infrastructure assets	Play equipment	Owned.	01/04/2022	1205	1205

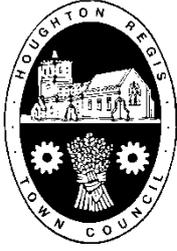
418841	Active	Town Sign Planter				Infrastructure assets	Street furniture	Owned.	01/04/2022	3720	3720
418852	Active	Ashes vaults			Greenbridge	Infrastructure assets	Vaults	Owned.	01/04/2022	6520	6520
420327	Active	Ford Ranger	Pick up		Ford	Vehicles & Equipment	Road vehicles	Owned.	28/03/2023	20000	20000
478262	Active	Tithe Farm 3G Artificial Grass Pitch (AGP)			FieldTurf	Infrastructure assets	Play equipment	Owned.	22/12/2023	937915.32	937915.32
478263	Active	Adult Outdoor Gym for Parkside Recreation Ground	Big Rig		Fresh Air Fitness T/A Hugh Harris Ltd	Infrastructure assets	Play equipment	Owned.	22/02/2024	15950	15950
478270	Active	Trafalgar single Axle Street washing trailer			Trafalgar Cleaning Equipment Ltd	Grounds equipment	Grounds maintenance equipment	Owned.	26/06/2023	9999	9999
540367	Active	RMX 620 - G2 Roller Mower	6.2m Triple Deck Roller Mower		Wessex	Grounds equipment	Grounds maintenance equipment	Owned.	06/08/2024	34586.5	34586.5
581714	Active	New Tithe Farm Sports Pavilion	New Tithe Farm Sports Pavilion, plus additional car park			Operational Land & Buildings	Building	Owned.		2438337.56	2438337.56
581768	Active	Roberine F302	three-unit ride on flail mower	Reg- LK74AKO	Roberine	Vehicles & Equipment	Grounds equipment	Owned.		55790	55790
581929	Active	Kubota G26	Ride-on mower with integrated rear discharge and grass collection		Kubota	Grounds equipment	Grounds maintenance equipment	Owned.		2000	2000
669958	Active	H440P Green Water Bowser	2000L Water Bowser	Twin-Axle, baffled stabilised tank	Tank Express	Grounds equipment	Grounds maintenance equipment	Owned.	03/07/2025	4595	4595
669959	Active	Transit	Ford Transit Tipper	Reg - LC23 YMJ	Ford	Vehicles	Vans	Owned.	12/08/2025	26990	26990
669960	Active	Borehole	Kitchen Garden (Houghton Hall Park)	Drilling a 30m Borehole, installation of pump	WB &AD Morgan Ltd t/a Igne	Grounds equipment	Grounds maintenance equipment	Owned.	24/09/2025	18666.2	18666.2
669961	Active	Street Sweeper	Karcher MIC35	Reg LB21 YSM, with 3rd arm and WRS200		Vehicles	Other	Owned.	12/11/2025	25000	25000
669962	Active	Eliet Mega Prof	Shredder	Diesel Towed Std (Trailer Mtd) C/W 25HP Kubota D1105T	Eliet	Grounds equipment	Grounds maintenance equipment	Owned.		20998	20998
669963	Active	Thorn Park	Public Open Space	Four parcels of land that make up Thorn Park		Community Asset	Land	Owned.	28/03/2025	1	1
Total:										6353857.35	

Appendix B

Asset ID	Status	Asset Name	Description	Notes	Brand	Category	Type	Ownership	Rent/Purchase date	Current value	Purchase value
669958	Active	H440P Green Water Bowser	2000L Water Bowser	Twin-Axle, baffled stabilised tank	Tank Express	Grounds equipment	Grounds maintenance equipment	Owned.	03/07/2025	4595	4595
669959	Active	Transit	Ford Transit Tipper	Reg - LC23 YMJ	Ford	Vehicles	Vans	Owned.	12/08/2025	26990	26990
669960	Active	Borehole	Kitchen Garden (Houghton Hall Park)	Drilling a 30m Borehole, installation of pump	WB &AD Morgan Ltd t/a Igne	Grounds equipment	Grounds maintenance equipment	Owned.	24/09/2025	18666.2	18666.2
669961	Active	Street Sweeper	Karcher MIC35	Reg LB21 YSM, with 3rd arm and WRS200		Vehicles	Other	Owned.	12/11/2025	25000	25000
669962	Active	Eliet Mega Prof	Shredder	Diesel Towed Std (Trailer Mtd) C/W 25HP Kubota D1105T	Eliet	Grounds equipment	Grounds maintenance equipment	Owned.		20998	20998
669963	Active	Thorn Park	Public Open Space	Four parcels of land that make up Thorn Park		Community Asset	Land	Owned.	28/03/2025	1	1
Total:										96250.2	

Appendix C

Asset ID	Status	Asset Name	Description	Notes	Brand	Category	Type	Ownership	Rent/Purchase date	Current value	Purchase value
None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None
Total:										0	



Date: 16th March 2026

Title: UNRECOVERABLE DEBTS

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

Contact Officer: Clare Evans, Town Clerk

1. RECOMMENDATION

This report is provided for information.

2. BACKGROUND

On an annual basis members are provided with a report on the position of debts and if necessary are requested to write off debts deemed to be unrecoverable.

3. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

To date the debtors list totals £4,329.20, of which £359 comprises outstanding invoices within 2024/25. This debt is being pursued.

Officers anticipate that all debts from 2025/26 will be settled.

4. HRTC CORPORATE PLAN

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

4.5 Enhance the role of the council.

5. IMPLICATIONS

Corporate Implications

- There are no additional arising corporate implications.

Legal Implications

- There are no legal implications arising from the recommendations

Financial Implications

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

Risk Implications

- There are no additional arising risk implications.

Equalities Implications

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

This project / issue does not discriminate.

Climate Change Implications

- There are no climate change implications arising from the recommendations

Press Contact

- There are no additional arising risk implications.

6. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

The Finance Manager and Finance Officer have completed a considerable amount of work on the debtors position and actively ensure all debts are followed up in a timely way. This is reflected in the minimal value of the debtors list.

7. APPENDICES

None.



HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

BIODIVERSITY POLICY

Date of Approval:	TBC
Date of Review:	.
Date of Re-approval Town Council	

1. BACKGROUND

In accordance with the duty imposed on town and parish councils by Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, updated by Section 102 of the Environment Act 2021, Houghton Regis Town Council (hereinafter referred to as the Council), which has any functions exercisable in relation to England, must from time to time consider what action the authority can properly take, consistently with the proper exercise of its functions, to further the general biodiversity objective.

This duty also means that town and parish councils can spend funds on conserving biodiversity.

2. DEFINITION

According to Defra (Biodiversity 2020), biodiversity is the variety of all life on Earth. It includes all species of animals and plants – everything that is alive on our planet.

Biodiversity is essential for its own sake and has its own intrinsic value. A number of studies have shown that this value also goes further. Biodiversity is the building block of our ‘ecosystems’ that in turn provide us with a wide range of goods and services that support our economic and social wellbeing. These include essentials such as food, fresh water, and clean air, as well as less obvious services such as protection from natural disasters, regulation of our climate, purification of our water, and pollination of our crops. Biodiversity also provides critical cultural services, enriching our lives.

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The object of this policy is to work towards conserving and enhancing the biodiversity of the Council’s area.

Town Council and any committees of the Council will consider sustainability, environmental impact and biodiversity when making decisions and will develop and implement policies and strategies as required.

In particular, the Council will aim to improve the biodiversity of the area in the following ways:

- consider the potential impact on biodiversity represented by planning applications.
- manage its land and property using environmentally friendly practices that will promote biodiversity.
- support local businesses and council operations in the adoption of low-impact / nature-positive practices.
- encourage and support other organisations within Houghton Regis to manage their areas of responsibility with biodiversity in mind.
- support residents and local organisation activities to enhance and promote biodiversity.

4. ACTIONS

4.1 Planning applications

The Council will:

- when commenting on planning applications, support site and building design that benefits biodiversity through the conservation and integration of existing habitats or the provision of new habitats.
- support protection of sensitive habitats from development and will consider whether the development would mean the loss of critical habitats for wildlife with respect to all applications.
- consider what each proposed development might make in terms of biodiversity net gain.
- include policies in support of biodiversity within the neighbourhood plan.

4.2 Land and property management

The Council will:

- carry out a biodiversity audit of its landholdings.
- consider the conservation and promotion of local biodiversity in the management of its open spaces. This will include adopting beneficial practices regarding vegetation cutting and removal, chemical application, and maintenance timing, and paying attention to the Government's [regulations for plant protection products](#).
- source sustainable materials when procuring supplies for the Council's use
- consider biodiversity issues and the implementation of changes when managing its buildings.

4.2 Local community

The Council will:

- raise public awareness of biodiversity issues, including through its website and newsletters.
- engage with local businesses and residents regarding biodiversity in the community and how members of the community can assist and make a difference.
- where feasible, involve the community in biodiversity projects on its land, including, for example, tree planting, wildflower meadows, and birdbox making.

4.3 Partners

The Council will work in partnership with other organisations to protect, promote and enhance biodiversity within the council area.

It will review any local nature recovery, species conservation, or protected site strategies with respect to local Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and consider how it may become more involved in implementing the strategies' recommendations.

5. MONITORING

This policy will be reviewed by the Environment and Leisure Committee every two years, or sooner if required by legislation.

DRAFT