



HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Peel Street, Houghton Regis, Bedfordshire, LU5 5EY

Town Mayor: **Cllr D Jones**
Town Clerk: **Clare Evans**

Tel: 01582 708540
e-mail: info@houghtonregis-tc.gov.uk

9th June 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, 15th June 2026 at 7pm.

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

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

All attendees are reminded that this meeting must be conducted in a respectful and considerate manner. Comments should remain appropriate and non-defamatory, as behaviour that undermines dignity, respect, or integrity will not be permitted.

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.

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.

3. SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

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

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

4. MINUTES

Pages 7 - 20

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 20th May 2026.

Recommendation: To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 20th May 2026.

5. COMMITTEE AND SUB-COMMITTEE MINUTES

Pages 21 - 33

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

Corporate Services Committee	2 nd March 2026 Minute number 13554 – AI Policy 1) To recommend to Town Council the adoption of the AI policy. 2) To recommend to Town Council that it formally commits to the Venice Pledge. Minute number 13555 – Communication Policy To recommend to Town Council the adoption of the Town Councils Communication Policy
Community Services Committee	None to present
Environment & Leisure Committee	None to present
Planning Committee	11 th May 2026
Staffing Committee	None to present
Town Partnership Committee	None to present

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

New Cemetery Sub-Committee	None to present
----------------------------	-----------------

Recommendations: To receive the Minutes detailed above and to approve the recommendations and to adopt the policies contained therein:
Minute number 13554 – AI Policy

- To adopt the AI Policy
 - To formally commit to the Venice Pledge
- Minute number 13555 – Communications Policy**
- To adopt the Town Councils Communication Policy

6. TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

A verbal report will be provided.

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

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

8. INDEPENDENCE OF THE TOWN COUNCIL APPOINTED INTERNAL AUDITOR

Pages 34 - 38

D1 of the interim internal audit, undertaken on the 11th November 2025, reported:

- It was noted that the Council had not formally considered the independence of the Internal Auditor as set out in the Practitioner's Guide paragraph 4.11

The report recommended the following:

- The Council to ensure that, on an annual basis, it formally considers the independence of the Internal Auditor. It may be appropriate for this to be done at the same time as the Council considers the Annual Internal Audit Report.

Members will find a report attached.

Recommendation: **To formally consider and confirm the independence of the Town Councils' appointed Internal Auditor for audit work in relation to the 2025-2026 Annual Return.**

9. CONFIRMATION OF APPOINTMENT OF INTERNAL AUDITOR FOR 2026/27

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

For compliance purposes, Members are being requested to confirm the appointment of the Internal Auditor for the financial year 2026/2027.

Recommendation: **To confirm the appointment of IAC Audit & Consultancy Ltd as the Town Council's internal audit provider for the financial year 2026/2027**

10. INTERNAL AUDIT, PLANNING AND REVIEW POLICY

Pages 39 - 45

Members are requested to consider the attached Internal Audit Planning, Reporting and Review Policy for Houghton Regis Town Council.

This policy sets out the framework for the Council's internal audit arrangements, including planning, reporting procedures and the annual review of effectiveness. It ensures compliance with legislative

requirements under the Accounts and Audit Regulations and supports the Council in maintaining a robust system of internal control, risk management and good governance.

Recommendation: **To review and approve the Internal Audit Planning, Reporting and Review Policy, which outlines the Council’s approach to internal audit, risk management, and compliance with statutory requirements.**

11. YEAR END ACCOUNTS

Pages 46 - 48

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

This report is provided for information purposes.

12. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN 2025/2026: ANNUAL INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT 2025/2026

Pages 49 - 61

In accordance with Financial Regulation 3.5, Members are advised that the internal auditor, IAC Audit & Consultancy Ltd, completed an interim internal audit on 11th November 2025 and the year-end internal audit on 30th March and 5th June 2026.

A copy of the Annual Internal Audit Report and supporting paperwork as part of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return, for the year ended 31st March 2026 is attached.

Recommendation: **To receive the Annual Internal Audit Report 2025/26 and to approve the actions detailed in the annotated Observations reports.**

13. DATES FOR THE EXERCISE OF PUBLIC RIGHTS FOR 2025/2026

Page 62

Members are requested to approve the dates for the Exercise of Public Rights in relation to the Annual Governance & Accountability Return, for the year ended 31st March 2026.

Local government electors in the local council’s area and the wider public have statutory rights in respect of a council’s annual accounting statements and external audit under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014. These rights are summarised below:

The rights conferred by the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 may only be exercised within a single period of 30 working days. The local council must inform the public of the exact 30 working day period during which the above public rights may be exercised. This period must include the first 10 working days in July for Category 2 authorities (smaller authorities). A smaller authority is defined as one whose gross annual income or expenditure does not exceed £6.5 million.

Members are advised of the following

1. Date of announcement: 16th June 2026
2. Date of commencement: 17th June 2026
3. End date: 28th July 2026

Recommendation: To approve the dates for the Exercise of Public Rights in relation to the Annual Governance & Accountability Return, for the year ended 31st March 2026 as follows:

1. Date of announcement: 16th June 2026
2. Date of commencement: 17th June 2026
3. End date: 28th July 2026

**14. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN 2025/2026
SECTION 1 - ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT**

Page 63

In accordance with Financial Regulation 3.4, a draft completed version of Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return, for the year ended 31st March 2026 is attached for consideration, approval and signature.

Recommendation: To approve and sign Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return for the year ended 31st March 2026.

**15. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN 2025/2026
SECTION 2 – ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS**

Pages 64 - 79

In accordance with Financial Regulation 3.4, Section 2 – Accounting Statements of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return and the supporting Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2026 is attached for consideration, approval and signature subject to external audit.

Members will note that the column headed Year Ending 31st March 2025 has been headed ‘Restated’ to correct the reporting of loan repayments in 2024/25.

Recommendations:

1. To approve and sign Section 2 – Accounting Statements of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return for the year ended 31st March 2026 subject to external audit;
2. To approve and sign the unaudited Financial Statements

16. REVIEW OF EARMARKED RESERVE MOVEMENTS 2026/27

Page 80

Members will find attached a schedule of earmarked reserves for 2026/27 with predicted movements to and from reserves during the course of the financial year.

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

17. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Pages 81 - 94

At its meeting on 1st June 2026, the Corporate Services Committee agreed (Minute No. 13566) to recommend that Town Council adopt the newly developed Treasury Management Strategy.

The Strategy has been prepared by the Investment Working Group in conjunction with the Council's appointed independent investment adviser, Arlingclose and the Corporate Services Committee.

A copy of the Strategy has also been provided to the Council's Internal Auditor, who has raised no comments.

Recommendation: To adopt the Town Council's Treasury Management Strategy.

18. RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY AND SCHEDULE

Pages 95 – 134

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

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

19. PROJECT H VENUE NAME

As requested by Council, a consultation exercise has been undertaken on the following name options:

1. The Arc
2. HR Link One
3. HR Hive
4. HR Connect
5. 'Other'

At the meeting of the Community Venue Task & Finish Group held on 1st June Members were informed that 98 people had responded to the consultation. Option 3 'HR Hive' had received the most nominations, and Members duly agreed to recommend this venue name to Town Council.

Recommendation: To consider and support the suggestion from the Community Venue Task & Finish Group to rename Project H, once it becomes an operational venue, HR Hive.

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

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 20th May 2026 at 7.00pm

Present: Councillors: E Billington
J Carroll
E Cooper
E Costello
W Henderson
M Herber
D Jones (Chair)
T McMahon
C Rollins
A Slough
C Slough
Vacancy

Officers: Clare Evans Town Clerk
Amanda Samuels Administration Officer

Also present: Public 9 (1 virtual)
L Senior Head of Democratic Services
E Holland Support Officer (Democratic)

Apologies: Councillor: Y Farrell
D Taylor

13538 ELECTION OF THE TOWN MAYOR

The retiring Town Mayor, Cllr Herber, invited nominations for the position of Town Mayor for the period May 2026 to May 2027.

Nominee: Cllr D Jones Nominated by: Cllr E Costello
Seconded by: Cllr E Cooper

There were no other nominations made.

Those in Favour of electing Cllr Jones as Town Mayor: 10.

On being put to the vote Cllr Jones was duly elected as Town Mayor for the municipal year 2026 – 2027.

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

The new Town Mayor adopted the role of Chairman and signed the 'Declaration of Acceptance of Office'.

The new Town Mayor gave an acceptance speech in which they promised to be diligent in representing the community and the town in all spheres. The Mayor hoped to live up to the example of previous mayors fortunate enough to hold the office twice.

The Mayor was touched and honoured by the support received and hoped to satisfy expectations. The coming year would be one of progress for Houghton Regis and they looked forward to playing their part and hoped to be worthy of the support.

A vote of thanks was proposed to the outgoing mayor by Cllr McMahon.

Cllr McMahon highlighted Cllr Herber's dedication and commitment. The mayoral year had been extremely busy with attendance at over 150 council, civic and community events in addition to council obligations.

Through mayoral and council events, Cllr Herber had raised in excess of £13,500 for Hospice at Home Volunteers, Keech Hospice and Houghton Regis Children's Centre. Thanks to Cllr Herber's cake-making skills, fundraising stalls at events had brought crowds and welcomed funds.

Members were requested to take a moment to acknowledge Cllr Herber's consort and family for their support, and to give thanks to Cllr Carroll for carrying out the role of Deputy Mayor.

Sincere thanks were extended to Cllr Herber and all happiness wished for her future.

The outgoing mayor and consort medals were presented.

The outgoing mayor was called upon to reply.

Cllr Herber responded that she had never imagined holding the role of mayor but had been proud, honoured and humbled to hold the position. Any fears about succeeding in the role had been directed into making the best effort possible during her term in office, and especially to raising as many funds as possible for her nominated charities.

Thanks were extended to family, friends, HRTC council officers and staff for all their help. Cllr Herber thanked the volunteer groups for their time and dedication, Deputy Mayor J Carroll and everyone who had joined them on the journey. Special thanks were expressed to support officers Louise Senior and Elizabeth Holland for their guidance and organisation.

A donation of £250 would be made to Houghton Regis Helpers and Friends of Houghton Hall Park as a gesture of thanks for their help; and a cheque for £6,500 had been sent to Hospice at Home Volunteers. The balance of funds would be distributed shortly.

Cllr Herber thanked everyone who had attended events, made donations and volunteered.

Cllr Herber expressed gratitude for the experience and for the honour of representing HRTC. It had been inspirational to meet the people who were the heartbeat of Houghton Regis: the volunteers, fundraisers, community leaders, teachers, caregivers and local heroes, plus the partner organisations, businesses and community groups

The new Town Mayor confirmed that they would continue to support two of the charities supported by the outgoing mayor: Keech Hospice and Hospice at Home Volunteers. The Motor Neurone Disease Association would be their third nominated charity.

13539 ELECTION OF THE DEPUTY MAYOR

The Town Mayor invited nominations for the position of Deputy Mayor for the period May 2026 to May 2027.

Nominee:	Cllr E Cooper	Nominated by:	Cllr E Costello
		Seconded by:	Cllr J Carroll

There were no other nominations made.

Those in favour of electing Cllr Cooper as Deputy Town Mayor: 10

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

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

13540 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chair drew Members attention to the resignation of the councillor for Parkside Ward, Pam Burgess. Houghton Regis Town Council passed on its thanks to Pam for her service, during which she steadfastly put forward the views and concerns of the Parkside residents and ensured that their needs were always taken into consideration.

If requested, a by-election would take place in due course to elect a new councillor. If no by-election was called, the council would be invited to seek co-option.

Apologies were received from Cllr Farrell and Cllr Taylor.

13541 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

13542 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

None.

13543 MINUTES

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

Resolved: To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 14th April 2026 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

13544 COMMITTEE AND SUB-COMMITTEE MINUTES

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

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

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

New Cemetery Sub-Committee None to present.

Resolved: To receive the Minutes detailed above.

13545 COUNCIL CALENDAR FOR 2026-27

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

As usual, the Council Calendar included the date of the Annual Towns' Meeting, for the following year and was shown on 17th May 2027. The meeting had to be held between 1st March and 1st June. As such it would be held in fairly close proximity to the Annual Meeting of Houghton Regis Town Council. These two meetings had a significantly different remit and purpose, yet the meeting names were similar. To help clarify the difference, Members were invited to consider changing the title of the Annual Towns Meeting to the Houghton Regis Annual Town Assembly.

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

Resolved: To approve the Council Calendar for 2026/27 with the alteration to the name of the Annual Towns Meeting to the Houghton Regis Annual Town Assembly.

13546 COMMITTEE FUNCTIONS & TERMS OF REFERENCE

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

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

The approved Committee Functions & Terms of Reference were reviewed at the Town Council meeting held on the 14th April 2026. As detailed under Minute 13495, Strategic Policies 2026/27.

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

13547 COMMITTEE, SUB-COMMITTEE & WORKING GROUP MEMBERSHIP

Members were requested to:

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

The following summarised the committee structure and associated membership:

Standing Committees

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

Joint Committees

<i>Partnership Committee</i>	8 members (4 Town Cllrs & 4 CBC Cllrs)
------------------------------	--

Sub-Committees

Complaints Sub-Committee	3 members
Complaints Appeal Sub-Committee	3 members
Disciplinary, Grievance & Appeals Sub-Committee	3 members
Community Engagement Sub-Committee	5 members
Neighbourhood Plan Implementation Sub-Committee	5 members
Community Safety Sub-Committee	5 members

Working Groups

Pride of Houghton Awards Working Group	5 members
Investment Working Group	3 members Corporate Services + ad hoc members from other standing committees

Task & Finish Groups

Town Centre Community Task & Finish Group	7 Members
---	-----------

Decisions regarding committee membership were agreed as follows:

- Cllr Carroll volunteered to fill the vacancy on Community Services Committee
- Vacancies on Planning Committee and Corporate Services Committee remained to be filled by the councillor who filled the current vacancy.
- Cllr Carroll volunteered to stand down from Staffing Committee which had received an additional nomination
- Cllr C Slough volunteered to withdraw from Community Engagement Sub-Committee, which had received an additional nomination, and hoped to attend as a co-opted member
- Cllr A Slough withdrew from the Pride of Houghton Working Group in order to sit on the Community Engagement Sub-Committee.
- Cllr C Slough and Cllr Billington submitted their names for Pride of Houghton.
- The remaining vacancy on Pride of Houghton would be filled by the new councillor
- Cllr Taylor would join Community Venue Task & Finish Group

The nominations for Chair were agreed as follows:

- Cllr D Taylor Corporate Services Committee
- Cllr A Slough Environment and Leisure Committee
- Cllr T McMahon Community Services Committee
- Cllr D Jones Planning Committee
- Cllr W Henderson Staffing Committee

Members were invited to vote for these nominations.

Members voted unanimously in favour of the nominations.

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

13548 REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

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

Members were provided with a list of outside organisations to which the Council was invited to appoint representatives for 2026/27 along with councillors who had expressed an interest in being appointed as the Council representative.

Reporting Mechanisms

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

In addition to the draft list, the following councillors also put their names forward:

- BATPC Cllr J Carroll
- Citizens Advice Bureau Cllr T McMahon
- Houghton Regis North Stakeholder Group Cllr J Carroll
- Sorted Vacancy

Resolved: 1. **To appoint the councillor representatives for the listed outside organisations for 2026/27, as attached;**
2. **To note the reporting back mechanism as set out.**

13549 STANDING ORDERS

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

Following this meeting, clarity had been sought and Members were provided with a report stating that non-members of committees, sub-committees, working and other groups only had the same rights as those of the public and as such were not permitted to take part in meetings during private sessions.

Members were happy to accept the ruling but requested that consideration be given to including this restriction in bold in Standing Orders.

Members requested that Standing Order 7a (as set out in point 4 of the report) be added as a footnote for clarification.

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

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

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

Members were satisfied to agree the recommendation with the standing orders in point two to read ‘as amended’ rather than ‘as presented’.

Proposed by: Cllr Henderson Seconded by: Cllr A Slough
Members voted unanimously in favour of the amendment.

Resolved: 1. **To note the advice as provided;**
2. **To approve Standing Orders as amended.**

13550 FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

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

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

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

Resolved: To approve Financial Regulations as presented.

13551 SCHEME OF DELEGATION

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

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

A revised Scheme of Delegation was reviewed at the Town Council meeting held on 14th April 2026 and was recommended for approval.

Resolved: To approve the Scheme of Delegation as presented.

13552 GENERAL POWER OF COMPETENCE

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

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

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

13553 BANKING & SIGNING ARRANGEMENTS

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

Banking Arrangements

To approve the bank mandate be set up as follows:

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

To remove all other signatories.

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

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

Signing Arrangements

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

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

Group A (councillors)

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

Group B (officers)

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

Financial Regulation 6.1 states:

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

Resolved: Bank Mandate

To approve the bank mandate be set up as follows:

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

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

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

Signing Arrangements

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

13554 COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW – ADDITIONAL CONSULTATION

Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) determined to facilitate a further consultation as part of the Community Governance Review (CGR), specifically on the possibility of creating a new ward for the Linnere area.

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

The relevant extract of the HRTC Resolution (Minute 13505) in relation to Linnere was:

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 Linnere

A request had been submitted to CBC seeking an extension to allow the matter to be considered at the next scheduled Town Council meeting. In the event the request was refused, a special meeting of the Town Council would need to be convened.

Members stated that there were fewer residents registered at Linnere than the average for councillor representation at HRTC.

In response to a question from Members, the Town Clerk confirmed that the same number of seventeen councillors would be retained; however, it was to be established whether one of the councillors would represent Linnere or whether Linnere would become part of the Tithe Farm Ward. HRTC had originally stated that at this stage Linnere should remain part of Tithe Farm Ward.

The Chair advised Members that a further response from HRTC was required expanding on the details of its previous rejection. The Town Clerk asked Members if they would agree to extend the recommendation to include the re-establishment of nominated councillors on this matter to construct a more detailed response. Members agreed to providing the nominated councillors with the authority to expand on its reasoning, including points raised at the AGM.

The Town Clerk confirmed that it would be possible for HRTC to share information on the consultation in order to encourage public involvement.

Members of the public in attendance informed the Council that there was some confusion among residents regarding a new ward and enquired whether HRTC could put out an explanatory note to clarify the situation and its implications. The Town Clerk confirmed that it would be possible to do this via social media.

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

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.10pm

Dated this 15th day of June 2026

Chairman



HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP 2026 / 2027

STANDING COMMITTEES – 2026 / 2027

Corporate Services Committee

Cllrs: D Taylor (Chair), E Billington, J Carroll, W Henderson, M Herber, D Jones, W Henderson, [Vacancy](#)

Environment & Leisure Committee

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

Planning Committee

Cllrs: D Jones (Chair), E Billington, J Carroll, E Cooper, M Herber, C Slough, [Vacancy](#)

Community Services Committee

Cllrs: T McMahon (Chair), J Carroll, E Cooper, Y Farrell, C Rollins, A Slough, C Slough

Staffing Committee

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

OTHER COMMITTEES – 2026 / 2027

Town Partnership Committee

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

SUB-COMMITTEES – 2026 / 2027

Complaints Sub-Committee (Reporting to Town Council)

Cllrs: To be appointed as required.

Complaints Appeal Sub-Committee (Reporting to Town Council)

Cllrs: To be appointed as required.

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

Cllrs: To be appointed as required.

Community Engagement Sub Committee (Reporting to Community Services)

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

Community Safety Sub Committee (Reporting to Community Services)

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

Neighbourhood Plan Implementation (Reporting to Planning)

Cllrs: J Carroll, E Cooper, D Jones, C Slough, [Vacancy](#)

*WORKING GROUPS – 2026 / 2027***Pride of Houghton Awards Working Group (Reporting to Community Services)**

Cllrs: E Billington, E Costello, D Jones, C Slough, [Vacancy](#)

Investment Working Group (Reporting to Corporate Services)

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

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

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



HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS **2026 / 2027**

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

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL
Corporate Services Committee
Minutes of the meeting held on
2nd March 2026 7.00pm.

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

13542 APOLOGIES & SUBSTITUTIONS

None.

13543 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

13544 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

None.

13545 MINUTES

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

Members agreed to approve the minutes but requested that 'expediate' be amended to read 'expedite' (Minute 13450).

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

13546 INCOME AND EXPENDITURE REPORT

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

The Chair queried if there was some inconsistency between the report and the budget: the Architectural Fees relating to Project H did not appear to be included under capital in the report. The Head of Corporate Services responded that the final cost of Professional Fees was as yet unknown, and that a PO would be raised once the sum was confirmed. Expenditure under Professional Fees related to items at the early stages of the process.

13547 BANK AND CASH RECONCILIATION STATEMENTS

Members were requested to receive the monthly bank and cash reconciliation statements for November and December 2025 and January 2026.

- Resolved:**
- 1. To approve the monthly bank and cash reconciliation statements for November and December 2025 and January 2026;**
 - 2. For these along with the original bank statements to be signed by the Chair of Corporate Services Committee and the Council's RFO.**

13548 LIST OF PAYMENTS

For information and transparency, Members were provided with a list of payments for the period November and December 2025 and January 2026. (inclusive).

13549 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.

- Resolved: To note the report**

13550 INVESTMENT WORKING GROUP

Members were provided with the minutes from the Investment Working Group meetings held on the 14th January 2026 and 11th February 2026.

Members of the Investment Working Group had reviewed the draft Treasury Management Strategy and the agreed direction and adjustments to be incorporated into the revised Strategy were as follows:

- The Strategy should include flexible parameters to allow officers to manage investments without requiring formal approval for every update;
- Arlingclose to provide an updated Treasury Management Strategy Statement template in November with an updated version being provided in January ready for adoption;
- The External Context to be included as an appendix in order to streamline the main Strategy document;
- The Strategy should be scheduled for annual approval by the Corporate Services committee, ideally after the budget setting process has been completed i.e. March;

QW

- That a revised risk appetite of A- be accepted. A- still represents a very low level of risk;
- The strategy should clarify that the Council does not anticipate borrowing for the purpose of investing;
- To agree that a limit of 3 Money Market Fund accounts can be opened;

The Investment Working Group agreed the maximum period for which funds may be committed should be based on cashflow forecasting.

The Head of Corporate Services informed Members that officers had begun work on the draft Treasury Management Strategy. Members agreed that a special meeting of the Corporate Services Committee might be required once the strategy was finalised.

Resolved: To note the minutes of the Investment Working Group from the meeting held on the 14th January 2026 and 11th February 2026.

13551 FIDELITY GUARANTEE COVER

The Internal Auditor had recommended the Council review the level of its Fidelity Insurance and consider whether it was adequate to cover the value of cash and bank balances held.

The Head of Corporate Services informed Members that the town council's insurer, Zurich, had been approached to establish whether the level of cover could be increased from £5 million. The underwriters had responded that this was not something that could be offered.

Members were advised that enquires had been made with other Town and Parish Council Insurance providers to seek whether a higher level of cover was available; however, no response had been received.

The town council was in a long-term agreement with the current insurance provider until 31st May 2027.

The Head of Corporate Services reminded Members that the risk of misappropriation of funds were minimised by internal controls in place, as follows:

- Funds were placed in multiple accounts
- Any funds transferred from investments were placed straight into the council's bank account
- Dual authorisation was required for payments
- The spread and levels of investments reduced risk

The Head of Corporate Services advised members that the Town Council could possibly tip over the current £5m fidelity level twice a year when the precept was received but only for a short period, around one month, if at all, due to operational costs.

Head of Corporate Services informed Members that the current fidelity guarantee cover limit reflected the total of all the losses in any one year and not per claim.



Members considered this information and agreed that the level of Fidelity Guarantee was sufficient.

Resolved: To agree the level of Fidelity Guarantee Cover was sufficient.

13552 APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT INTERNAL AUDITOR

Members were requested to confirm the appointment of IAC Audit & Consultancy Ltd as the Town Council independent Internal Auditor for work relating to the 2026 Annual Return as per the existing contract.

Members were advised that there was no requirement to rotate auditors however the independence of the appointed person or firm should be reviewed every year with regard to: personal independence, financial independence, and professional independence.

Whilst the Corporate Services Committee entered into a contract for Internal Audit services on behalf of the Council, it was for Council itself to formally acknowledge the independence of the Internal Auditor.

For information the letter of engagement for the 2025/2026 audit was provided for compliance. Members were advised moving forward, letters of engagement would be provided to this Committee for confirmation against the approved contract, together with a recommendation that Council formally acknowledge the Internal Auditor's independence.

It was anticipated letters of engagement would be presented annually at the Corporate Services meetings to be held in December. Including this item on the agenda allowed Members to formally accept the appointment and would henceforth appear annually as an agenda item.

Resolved: To confirm the appointment of IAC Audit & Consultancy Ltd as the Town Council independent Internal Auditor for audit work in relation to the 2026 Annual Return.

13553 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.

Members were provided with a copy of the VAT Returns for quarter 3 for financial year 2025/2026.

13554 AI POLICY

Members were requested to consider the adoption of an Artificial Intelligence Usage Policy and were presented with a report and draft policy. The policy was intended to formalise the Town Council's use of AI.

QJ

The Head of Corporate Services informed Members that officers should use Microsoft Copilot for its AI requirements rather than employing a variety of platforms. It was hoped Copilot provided a greater level of protection and provided an option to prevent data being used for training purposes.

Members were supportive of introducing an AI policy and made the following points:

- The policy should be reviewed annually or in the event of significant technological changes
- It should be stated explicitly in the policy that the Town Council would ensure that data entered into platform would not be used for training purposes
- In the event that Copilot introduced different models, this change should be covered in the policy.

Members were happy to accept the recommendations with the inclusion of these items.

- Resolved:**
- 1) **To recommend to Town Council the adoption of the AI policy.**
 - 2) **To recommend to Town Council that it formally commits to the Venice Pledge.**

13555 COMMUNICATION POLICY

The updated policy aligned with the Town Councils Social Media Policy and IT policy; it did not contain any major changes but brought the current document up to date prior to the production of a new strategy.

The Head of Corporate Services advised Members that, following a recommendation by the Corporate Peer Challenge, Community Services had been working on a more comprehensive Communication Policy which would be presented to Corporate Services on its completion.

- Resolved:** **To recommend to Town Council the adoption of the Town Councils Communication Policy**

13556 CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT

Members were advised of upcoming employment law changes that would take effect in April and October 2026. The Town Council's Contract of Employment would be updated to reflect these changes.

- Resolved:** **To note the updates to the Town Council's Contract of Employment.**

13557 CYBER LIABILITY INSURANCE

Members were advised the Town Council did not have Cyber Liability Insurance cover.

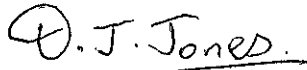
QJT.

The Town Councils insurance provider had confirmed they did not provide this type of cover; therefore, the Head of Corporate Services was undertaking research to enable a report to be brought to the next meeting of the Corporate Services Committee for consideration.

The Head of Corporate Services informed Members that cyber liability cover was not offered by insurance providers, but was a third party add on.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 7.58pm

Dated this 1st day of June 2026



Chairman

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

**Planning Committee
Minutes of the meeting held on
11th May 2026 at 7.00pm**

Present: Councillors: D Jones Chairman
E Billington
J Carroll (Substitute)
E Cooper
Y Farrell
C Slough
D Taylor

Officers: Louise Senior Head of Democratic Services

Public: 0

Also present: S Goodchild (virtual)
T McMahon (virtual)

Apologies: Councillors: M Herber

13530 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Councillor Herber (Councillor Carroll substituted).

13531 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

13532 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

13533 MINUTES

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on the 20th April 2026.

An error was highlighted in the minutes. It was agreed that the minutes would be amended and signed at the end of the meeting.

Resolved: To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 20th April 2026 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

13534 PLANNING MATTERS

(a) The following planning applications were considered:

QJJ

[CB/26/01034/FULL](#)
(click for more details)

Erection of four dwellings
Land north of, Highfield House, Bedford Road, Houghton Regis,
LU5 5EU

Comments: Members stated that, over a number of years, this application had been declined on a variety of issues. Members conceded that development at this location was possible; however, the current application did not address all the problems raised previously.

Members noted the objections made by the Housing Strategy and Implementation Officer regarding the percentage of adaptable homes; and by the Ecologist and BNG officer who highlighted that the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal was out of date and could not be used to support this application.

Members discussed the issue of access: the turning circle, as outlined on the plan, failed to provide adequate allowance for CBC refuse vehicles to access the development; therefore, a hard standing area of adequate dimensions would need to be situated at the highway boundary. It was unclear on the application how a standing area would be accommodated.

Houghton Regis Town Council objected to this application on the following grounds:

- The access arrangements did not appear to meet required standards with the proposed turning circle deemed insufficient to accommodate CBC refuse lorries
- There was insufficient information regarding the placement of a hard standing area by the highway for refuse bins. Potential hazards were likely to arise without adequate and safe provision of a suitable refuse collection site.
- The development did not meet the required percentage of adaptable homes

[CB/26/00932/FULL](#)
(click for more details)

Erection of two dwellings with associated access, parking and landscaping
Vane Cottage, Park Road North, Houghton Regis, Dunstable,
LU5 5LD

Comments: Members emphasised the historic nature of Vane Cottage and its surrounds. It was felt that the land formed part of the historic farmhouse and was integral to the site. An Enforcement Order had been placed on the site following significant damage to the garden by unauthorised works. Members queried whether it was possible to consider the application without knowledge of the current status of the

055.

Enforcement Order. Members were of the opinion that the garden should be reinstated to restore the integrity of the site.

Members questioned whether there would be sufficient parking available. It was also thought that access was potentially perilous due to the angle of the highway.

Members noted that by increasing the number of houses to two, the room dimensions would be small for 3-bedroom properties

Houghton Regis Town Council strongly objected to this application on the following grounds:

- **The land was in a conservation area and formed part of the historic curtilage of a listed building**
- **Development would be inappropriate and detrimentally impact the historic character, setting and significance of a heritage asset**
- **The placement of two houses on this site constituted overdevelopment and would be visually obtrusive.**
- **The proposed houses appeared to have small internal spaces for 3-bedroom properties.**

Noted:

[CB/26/01149/DOC](#)
(click for more details)

Discharge of Conditions 7 & 29 against planning application ref. CB/12/03613/OUT (Outline planning permission with the details of access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale reserved for later determination. Development to comprise: up to 5,150 dwellings (Use Class C3); up to 202,500 sqm gross of additional development in Use Classes: A1, A2, A3 (retail), A4 (public house), A5 (take away); B1, B2, B8 (offices, industrial and storage and distribution); C1 (hotel), C2 (care home), D1 and D2 (community and leisure); car showroom; data centre; petrol filling station; car parking; primary substation; energy centre; and for the laying out of the buildings; routes and open spaces within the development; and all associated works and operations including but not limited to: demolition; earthworks; engineering operations. All development, works and operations to be in accordance with the Development Parameters Schedule and Plans.

Phase 3B, Parcels 1 and 2, Houghton Regis North site1, Houghton Regis

[CB/26/01152/DOC](#)
(click for more details)

Discharge of Condition 26 against planning application 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.)

Houghton Regis North Site1, land on the northern edge of Houghton Regis

[CB/26/01153/DOC](#)
(click for more details)

Discharge of Conditions 32 & 33 against planning application 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.)

Houghton Regis North Site 1, land on the northern edge of Houghton Regis

[CB/26/01140/DOC](#)
(click for more details)

Discharge of Condition 25 against planning application 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. CB/25/02087/PAPC also refers.

QJJ.

Phase 4, Parcel 1, Houghton Regis North 1, Sundon Road,
Houghton Regis

[CB/26/01047/DOC](#)
[\(click for more details\)](#)

Discharge of Condition 20 against planning application ref. CB/24/00059/FULL (Proposed demolition of existing buildings and redevelopment to provide new employment floorspace for a flexible range of uses (within Classes E(g)(iii), B2 and/or B8) with ancillary offices, together with the rationalisation of accesses and provision of yard area, parking, landscaping, and all other associated works).
Unit 1, Humphrys Road, Dunstable, LU5 4TP

[CB/26/01113/DOC](#)
[\(click for more details\)](#)

Discharge of Conditions 9, 10, 17, 25, 30, 31 & 33 against planning application ref. CB/21/03369/FULL (Residential development of 57 affordable dwellings with associated works including the re-configuration of the roundabout to create a fourth arm and form the vehicular access)
Land at the North side of Bedford Road, Bidwell, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 6QY

[CB/26/01205/DOC](#)
[\(click for more details\)](#)

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

the development; and all associated works and operations including but not limited to: demolition; earthworks; engineering operations. All development, works and operations to be in accordance with the Development Parameters Schedule and Plans.

Phase 3B, Parcels 1 & 2, Houghton Regis North site 1, Houghton Regis, Beds

[CB/26/01109/LDCP](#)
[\(click for more details\)](#)

Certificate of Lawful Development Proposed: Single storey rear extension
108 Leafields, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5LX

[CB/26/00940/LDCP](#)
[\(click for more details\)](#)

Lawful Development Certificate Proposed: Loft conversion with rear dormer and front rooflights
36 Cemetery Road, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5DA

[CB/26/01164/GPDE](#)
[\(click for more details\)](#)

Prior Notification of Householder Extension: Single storey rear extension, 4.50m beyond the rear wall of the original dwelling, maximum height of 4.00m and 3.00m to the eaves
5 Ashwell Walk, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5QA

- [CB/26/01220/LDCP](#) Lawful Development Certificate Proposed: Single storey
(click for more details) outbuilding to rear of site
43 Pantheon Drive, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 6GW
- [CB/26/01248/DOC](#) Discharge of Condition 4 against planning permission
(click for more details) CB/17/05799/RM (Reserved Matters: Appearance. Landscaping.
Layout and Scale relating to the erection of Use Class B8 storage
and distribution facility with ancillary office and associated
development including highways works, parking and servicing
arrangements and landscaping. Site A, Unit A)
Land at Thorn Turn, Thorn Road, Houghton Regis

Permissions / Approvals / Consents

None received.

Refusals:

- [CB/25/02182/FULL](#) Change of use from Class E to Place of Worship Class F1
(click for more details) (retrospective)
23-25 Bedford Square, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5ES

Withdrawals:

None received.

13535 PLANNING APPLICATIONS – DELEGATED AUTHORITY

The following planning applications had been received for consultation and fell within delegated authority. They were recommended for approval:

- [CB/26/00921/FULL](#) Demolition of existing conservatory, erection of part single, part
(click for more details) two storey side extension, and new dopped kerb
46 Leaffields, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5LX
- [CB/26/00592/FULL](#) Removal of rear conservatory and garden store. Two storey side
(click for more details) and single storey rear extensions with roof lights
4 Peel Street, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5EY

13536 CB/26/00217/FULL - 9 WATERVALE, HOUGHTON REGIS, DUNSTABLE, LU5 6FY

Members were advised that an appeal notice had been received for 9 Watervale, Houghton Regis.

Members were reminded that, while CBC had previously refused this application on the basis of scale and design, Houghton Regis Town Council had raised no objection to this application.

This agenda item was provided for information only.

13537 CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE LOCAL PLAN 2050 – SCOPING CONSULTATION NOW OPEN

Members were advised that Central Bedfordshire Council's Local Plan Scoping Consultation was open. Members were invited to note the consultation and to consider whether the HRTC planning consultant should be asked to review and advise on the consultation, particularly in comparison with the existing Neighbourhood Plan.

Members felt that the Neighbourhood Plan required updating to include new developments and open spaces.

The Chair informed Members that they would be able to provide further information after attending the Town and Parish Council Forum.

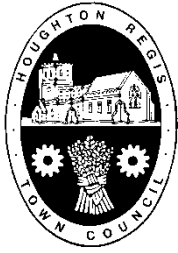
Resolved: **To engage the HRTC planning consultant to review and advise on the consultation, particularly in comparison with the existing Neighbourhood Plan.**

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 7.39pm

Dated this 2nd day of June 2026



Chairman



Date:	15th June 2026
Title:	Independent Internal Auditor Report
Purpose of the Report:	To provide to members a report on the independence of the Council's Internal Auditor
Contact Officer:	Debbie Marsh, Head of Corporate Services

1. RECOMMENDATION

To formally consider and confirm the independence of the Town Councils' appointed Internal Auditor for audit work in relation to the 2025-2026 Annual Return.

2. BACKGROUND

D1 of the interim internal audit, undertaken on the 11th November 2025, reported:

- It was noted that the Council had not formally considered the independence of the Internal Auditor as set out in the Practitioner's Guide paragraph 4.11

The report recommended the following:

- The Council to ensure that, on an annual basis, it formally considers the independence of the Internal Auditor. It may be appropriate for this to be done at the same time as the Council considers the Annual Internal Audit Report.

In response to the above, officers commented that this matter would be considered at the Corporate Services Committee meeting to be held on the 2nd March 2026. Members are referred to minute number 13552 under agenda item 5.

3. INFORMATION

Members are advised that there is no requirement to rotate auditors however the independence of the appointed person or firm should be reviewed every year with regard to: personal independence, financial independence, and professional independence.

Whilst the Corporate Services Committee enters into a contract for Internal Audit services on behalf of the Council, it is the Council itself that must formally acknowledge the independence of the Internal Auditor.

For information, the letter of engagement for the 2025/2026 audit is attached for compliance. Going forward, letters of engagement will be provided, together with a recommendation that Council formally acknowledge the Internal Auditor's independence.

4. HRTC CORPORATE PLAN

Aspirations 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

- Town Council to formally acknowledge the independence of the appointed Internal Auditor

Legal Implications

- Compliance with approved contract.
- Compliance with the Practitioners' Guide
- Compliance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations (2015) as amended

Crime and Disorder Implications

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

Financial Implications

- There are no financial implications of this report.

Risk Implications

- Reputation

Equalities Implications

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

This report does not discriminate.

Climate Change Implications

- There are no climate change implications arising from the recommendations

Press Contact

- There are no press implications.

6. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

In order for the council to meet its statutory obligations and maintain good governance practice, Council are being requested to formally acknowledge the independence of the Town Council's appointed Internal Auditor in relation to the 2025-2026 Annual Return.

7. APPENDICES

Appendix A – 2025-2026 IA Letter of Engagement



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

12 September 2025

Internal Audit Engagement Letter

Roles and responsibilities

IAC Audit & Consultancy Limited will conduct internal audit work for your Council in relation to the 2026 Annual Return, and any subsequent Annual Returns as required by the Council.

The work will specifically support the completion of the Annual Internal Audit Report and assist the Council in fulfilling its obligations under Section 1 of the Annual Return.

In conducting this work, we will comply with the following:

- The Practitioners' Guide (England)
- The Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 (as amended)
- Any other applicable guidance and best practice prevailing at the time.

Additional internal audit work, beyond the scope of the Annual Return, may be undertaken by separate agreement.

Audit planning

We will plan our audit with due care to ensure that an appropriate level of resources is allocated to conduct the work efficiently, enabling the Council to meet its statutory reporting obligations..

Reporting

We will prepare a summary report on areas of non-compliance where such issues are limited in nature and do not warrant a qualification of the Internal Audit Report.

Where it is necessary to qualify the Internal Audit Report, we will prepare a detailed report outlining the areas of non-compliance that led to the qualification.

We may attend Council meetings, or meet with officers or councillors to discuss our findings and reports. We reserve the right to charge an additional fee for such attendance, which will be agreed in advance.

Independence and competence

We will ensure that all audit staff are appropriately trained and qualified for the work undertaken.

We will maintain independence from the Council's day-to-day operations and will not provide additional consultancy or advisory services that could compromise our audit independence.

Access to information, members and officers

In order to complete our audit, we will require access to relevant information, subject to reasonable notice. If we are unable to obtain necessary information, we will notify the Council in writing of the items outstanding.

The records provided must be sufficiently well-organised to allow for a timely and effective audit.

We will also require access to officers or members, as appropriate, to support the completion of our work.

Remuneration

Our fee will be in accordance with the quotation previously provided. The fee includes all travel and out-of-pocket expenses. Any additional audit time required will be discussed and invoiced in accordance with our proposal letter.

PLEASE RETAIN A COPY OF THIS LETTER FOR YOUR RECORDS

Yours sincerely,

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

Kevin Rose ACMA
Director



HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Internal Audit Planning, Reporting & Review Policy

Date of Adoption:	Town Council 18 th May 2011
Date of Review:	22 nd September 2014; 15 th June 2015; 3 rd October 2016; 9 th October 2017; 5 th October 2020; 4 th October 2022; 11 th September 2023; 9 th September 2024; 15 th June 2026
Date of Re-adoption	19 th December 2022; 11 th December 2023; 16 th December 2024

Background

A system of internal control is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level rather than eliminate all risk or failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives. It thus provides a reasonable, not absolute, assurance of effectiveness.

It is the responsibility of Council to determine the scope of internal audit to ensure independence and that planning, reporting and access remain effective and direct,

Legislative Framework

This policy is prepared in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (as amended).

Under this legislation, the Council is required to:

- Maintain an adequate and effective system of internal control
- Conduct, at least annually, a review of the effectiveness of that system
- Maintain an adequate and effective system of internal audit
- Prepare and approve an Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR)

The Council must:

- Review the effectiveness of internal control (Regulation 6)
- Ensure proper internal audit arrangements are in place (Regulation 5)
- Take appropriate action in response to audit findings

Councillors, together with the Town Clerk (Responsible Financial Officer), are responsible for ensuring good governance and accountability to the electorate.

Policy Framework

The Council's governance arrangements include:

- **Standing Orders**
- **Financial Regulations**

These set out:

- Administrative processes
- Segregation of duties
- Financial controls
- Risk management arrangements

Internal controls include:

- Budget monitoring
- Compliance with policies and procedures
- Risk assessment and management
- Legal and regulatory compliance

- Measures to prevent and detect fraud and corruption

The effectiveness of these controls must be subject to regular reviews.

Purpose of Internal Audit

Internal audit is an independent assurance function within the Council's system of internal control.

Its purpose is to:

Review and report on the effectiveness of controls
Ensure compliance with laws, regulations and policies
Identify risks and recommend improvements

The audit provides **reasonable assurance**, not absolute assurance.

The internal audit must:

- Cover key risk areas identified through the AGAR and Council priorities
- Be based on the financial year
- Be proportionate to the size and scope of the Council

Internal Audit Planning

Legislation

Under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, the Council must maintain:
“An adequate and effective system of internal audit of its accounting records and system of internal control.”

Policy

The Council will:

- Prepare an Internal Audit Specification annually
- Base the plan on risk assessment and previous audit findings
- Ensure independence of the internal auditor

Internal Audit Specification

The internal audit specification is produced in draft by the Clerk & the RFO. Other relevant staff members are consulted on its content. The draft is presented to Council annually for approval. The approved document sets out the areas to be covered by the internal audit.

The audit will typically include:

- Legal powers and compliance
- Previous internal audit recommendations
- Proper bookkeeping
- Council policies (Standing Orders & Financial Regulations)

Internal Audit Planning, Reporting & Review Policy

- Risk management
- Budgetary controls
- Income and expenditure controls
- Payroll controls
- Asset management
- Bank reconciliation
- Year-end procedures

Additional areas may be included where risks are identified.

Internal Audit Arrangements

- The internal auditor is appointed by the Council
- The auditor must be competent, independent and objective
- The auditor must have no involvement in financial decision-making

The auditor will be provided with:

- This policy
- The Internal Audit Specification
- Access to relevant records, documentation, Members and staff

Reporting

The internal auditor produces a written report

The report includes:

- Findings
- Recommendations
- Identified risks

An action plan is prepared by the Clerk and the RFO

The report and action plan are:

- Submitted to Council
- Considered formally
- Monitored for implementation

The internal auditor also completes the AGAR internal audit section.

Review

Policy

Council will review annually:

- This policy
- Internal Audit Specification **APPENDIX A**

Reports

Internal Audit Planning, Reporting & Review Policy

Council will review as soon as reasonably practicable the following reports:

- Internal audit report and action plan
- External audit report and action plan (if applicable)

Annual Return

The Council will:

- Review governance arrangements throughout the year
- Approve the Annual Governance Statement within the AGAR



HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Internal Audit Specification & Terms of Reference

Purpose of Internal Audit

Internal Audit is a function of management and forms part of the Council's internal control mechanisms. By the use of an independent internal audit service, assurance is gained regarding the areas examined.

Internal Audit Process

1. Internal Auditor to be appointed by Town Council;
2. The internal auditor is to be advised of;
 - the Internal Audit Specification;
 - the Internal Audit Planning, Reporting and Review Policy;
 - contact details for Town Council Members and staff.
3. Timely arrangements to be made with the appointed Internal Auditor to visit the Council offices and inspect the specified documents;
4. The Internal Auditor prepares an independent report which is to be submitted in writing to the Clerk to the Council in their own name;
5. The Internal Auditor completes and signs the statement within the Annual Return as legally required to do so.

Internal Audit Specification

The following areas are required to be examined:

Legal basis including; Council has been acting legally and fulfilling its duties within statutory powers.

Previous internal audit report including; review of report undertaken by Council and formulation of an action plan to address any issues raised.

Proper bookkeeping (accuracy and completeness) including; appropriate books of account have been properly kept throughout the year, payments were supported by invoices, expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.

Council policy specifically Standing Orders and Financial Regulations including compliance and annual review.

Risk management including; review of Minutes to identify any unusual activity, review of risk assessments, provision of adequate and appropriate insurance cover, systems of internal control are sufficient in terms of minimising the risk of fraud including Council policy and procedures and practice.

Budgetary controls including; the annual precept requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process, progress against the budget was regularly monitored, reserves were appropriate, any significant variances from budget noted.

Income controls including; petty cash controls, suitability of recording mechanisms, suitability of banking procedures, security and effectiveness of cash controls, expected income have been fully received.

Payroll controls including; salaries and allowances paid to employees were paid in accordance with council approval and comply with HMRC requirements.

Asset controls including; asset and investment registers were complete, accurate, properly maintained and align with insurance schedule.

Bank reconciliation including; periodic and year-end bank account reconciliations were completed accurately and in a timely manner.

Year-end procedures including; year-end accounts were prepared to the correct accounting and audit trail.

Terms of Reference

The audit covers the full financial year.

The auditor must act with:

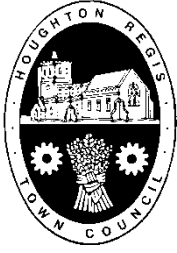
- Integrity
- Objectivity
- Independence

The internal audit report must be:

- Submitted in writing
- Reviewed by Council annually

The Council must:

- Respond to findings
- Implement agreed actions
- Monitor progress



TOWN COUNCIL

Agenda Item 11

Date:	15th June 2026
Title:	YEAR END ACCOUNTS PROCESS
Purpose of the Report:	To advise members of the year end accounting processes.
Contact Officer:	Debbie Marsh, Head of Corporate Services

1. RECOMMENDATION

The report is provided for information only.

2. BACKGROUND

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

There are 3 elements to the Council's accounts:

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

The report provides guidance on each of these elements.

3. DAY TO DAY ACCOUNTS ADMINISTRATION

For financial year 2025/2026 the administration of the council's accounts was undertaken by the Town Clerk / RFO with support from the Head of Corporate Services and the Finance Manager.

4. YEAR END CLOSE DOWN

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

BC&A Accounting Solutions then undertake the following:

1. Check prepayment, accrual and adjustments journals

2. Complete any outstanding journals over which there was a query
3. Make recommendations as appropriate to RFO & Finance Manager
4. Check the proposed EMR transfers, make necessary amendments and input the appropriate journal entries
5. Print the journal report for HRTC officers to check
6. Close the year
7. Open new live company for the subsequent year's accounts.

5. PREPARATION OF THE ANNUAL GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN

The Annual Governance & Accountability Return comprises:

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

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

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

BC&A Accounting Solutions do not prepare the following for submission with the Annual Return:

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

These are completed by the RFO.

6. HRTC CORPORATE PLAN

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

- 4.5 Enhance the role of the council.

7. IMPLICATIONS

Corporate Implications

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

Legal Implications

Smaller authorities must

- Approve and publish the unaudited AGAR by 30th June 2026
- Must commence the period of public rights on or before 1st July 2026
- Submit the AGAR to the external auditor by 30th June 2026
- Publish the audited AGAR and notice of completion by 30th September 2026

Financial Implications

- There are no budget implications.

Risk Implications

- Failure to submit the Annual Governance & Accountability Return by 30th June 2026 would result in the external auditor issuing Qualified Accounts. This may result in reputational damage to the council.

Equalities Implications

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

This report does not discriminate.

Climate Change Implications

There are no climate change implications arising from the recommendations

Press Contact

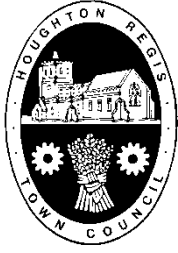
The decision relating to this agenda item will be communicated to the press, via the council's website and social media.

8. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

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

9. APPENDICES

None.



Date:	15th June 2026
Title:	INTERNAL AUDIT 2025/26
Purpose of the Report:	To present to members to internal auditors' findings for the financial year 2025/26.
Contact Officer:	Debbie Marsh, Head of Corporate Services

1. RECOMMENDATION

To receive the Annual Internal Audit Report 2025/26 and to approve the actions detailed in the annotated Observations reports.

2. BACKGROUND

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

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

The scope of the internal audit is set out in the Internal Audit Planning & Review Policy.

In accordance with Financial Regulation 3.5, Members are advised that the internal auditor, IAC Audit & Consultancy Ltd, completed an interim internal audit on 11th November 2025 and the year-end internal audit on 30th March 2026.

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

3. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

The year-end internal audit was completed in 2 phases, 30th March and 5th June. Accordingly, there are 2 related sets of paperwork being presented to members.

Members will find attached from the internal auditor the following:

- Cover letters dated 5th April 2026 and 8th June 2026 (Appendix A).
- Observations reports annotated to show responses (Comments column) (Appendix B)
- Summary reports including an explanation of the ‘Not Covered’ response in relation to Control Objective K and P (Appendix C)
- Annual Internal Audit Report 2025/2026 (Appendix D)

The Observations reports (Appendix B), as annotated, are the suggested council’s response to the internal audit.

4. HRTC CORPORATE PLAN

Aspirations

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

4.5 Enhance the role of the council.

5. IMPLICATIONS

Corporate Implications

- Internal Audit report to be presented to Town Council in October or December 2026 and June 2027

Legal Implications

- There are no legal implications arising from the recommendations

Financial Implications

- There are no financial implications arising from the recommendations

Risk Implications

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

Equalities Implications

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

This project/issue does not discriminate.

Climate Change Implications

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

Press Contact

- There are no press implications arising from the recommendations.

6. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

The internal audit for 2025/26 has been carried out by an independent and suitably qualified company. A number of observations have been made, and an action plan to address these observations is presented to members for consideration and approval.

7. APPENDICES

Appendix A – Cover Letters dated 5th April 2026 and 8th June 2026

Appendix B – Observations reports annotated

Appendix C - Summary reports including an explanation of the ‘Not Covered’ response in relation to Control Objective K and P

Appendix D – Annual Internal Audit Report 2025/26



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

5th April 2026

Pre Year End Internal Audit

An audit was carried out by Kevin Rose on Monday 30 March 2026. This was the second internal audit, following on from previous audit on 11 November 2025

The audit was undertaken using the standard IAC Audit Checklist, that we use for all Local Councils, which has 211 items. A total of 46 items were tested during this audit in addition to the 106 tested at the first audit and pre-audit. The balance of 59 items will be checked during the Year End audit.

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

-Exemption from External Audit (Box K)

-Trust Funds (Box P)

Areas subject to audit were;

-the Payment system (Box B)

-Risk and insurance (Box C)

-Income billing, collection and VAT (Box E)

-Payroll(Box G)

-the Transparency Code (for Smaller Authorities) (Box L)

-the Publication of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (Box N)

Of the 33 applicable items tested a Positive response was obtained in respect of 31 tests. There were 2 Negative responses identified. There were 3 Observations made, details of which are set out in the attached Interim Internal Audit Observations.

Summary of tests undertaken during this audit

Positive response	31
Negative response	2
Not Applicable to your Council	13
Total tests carried out	46

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

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

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "K. Rose". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "K" and a stylized "Rose".

Kevin Rose ACMA
Director

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

8th June 2026

Dear Clare,

Year End Internal Audit Report

An audit was carried out by Kevin Rose on Friday 5 June 2026. This was the Year End audit following on from the interim audits carried out on 11 November 2025 and 30 March 2026.

The audit was undertaken using the standard IAC Audit Checklist, which we use for all Local Councils, which has 211 items. A total of 59 items were tested during this audit in addition to the 152 items tested and checked during the interim audit process. All items on the checklists were tested during the year.

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

-Exemption from External Audit (Box K)

-Trust Funds (Box P)

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

Areas subject to audit were;

- the Payment system (Box B)
- Risk and insurance (Box C)
- Budget and precept setting and monitoring (Box D)
- Income billing, collection and VAT (Box E)
- Payroll(Box G)
- Assets and investments (Box H)
- Bank reconciliations (Box I)
- Accounting Statements (Box J)
- Exemption from External Audit (Box K)
- the Publication of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (Box N)
- Trust Funds (Box P)

Summary of tests undertaken during this audit

Positive response	33
Negative response	1
Not Applicable to your Council	25
Total tests carried out	59

Of the 34 applicable items tested a Positive response was obtained in respect of 33 tests. There was 1 Negative response identified and 1 Observation was made, details of which are set out in the attached Year End Internal Audit Observations.

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

Positive response	157
Negative response	9
Not Applicable to your Council	45
Total tests carried out	211
Tests not carried out	Nil

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

Based on the audit testing carried out I am satisfied that the Council's internal controls were effective during the 2025/26 financial year.

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

Yours sincerely,



Kevin Rose ACMA
Director

Internal Audit 'Not Covered' Responses

Internal Control Objective	Reason for Not Covered Response
K: If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2024/25, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. (If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2024/25 AGAR tick “not covered”	The reason for the “Not Covered” response for Objective K is that it is not applicable to your Council as the Council did not certify itself exempt from a limited assurance review for the relevant financial year.
P: (For local councils only) Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee	The reason for the Not Covered response for Objective P as it is our understanding that the Council does not act as Trustee.

Houghton Regis Town Council

Financial Year 2025-26



Audit date: 30 March 2026

Visit 2 Internal Audit Observations

Date considered by Council _____

Minute Reference _____

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

No.	Audit Test	Response	Observation	Recommendation	Priority	Comments
1	If the Council is a tenant under leases, are the lease agreements current?	No	<i>It was noted that the Council occupies two pieces of land and two workshop units all from Central Bedfordshire Council with a tenancy at will on another piece of land. It is not clear that there is a formal rental or lease agreement for the two units.</i>	Council to review and update its lease agreements. The Council to provide the internal auditor with relevant contractual records for its occupation of the workshop units.	Medium	At the E&L committee meeting held on the 28th July 2025 (minute number 13301) members agreed to enter into a three year contract with CBC from the 1st January 2026 following a notice from CBC to terminate the existing lease as of 1st January 2026.

L The authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation.

No.	Audit Test	Response	Observation	Recommendation	Priority	Comments
1	The authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation.	Yes	<i>It was noted that the External Auditor, in their 2024/25 Completion Letter stated that "We regard the relevant legislation in this area to be the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015." The 2026 version of The Practitioner's Guide now confirms that ICO L relates to the legislation in respect or the Transparency Code (as was tested in prior years) but has now been extended to include the requirement of the Freedom of Information Act - specifically the need for the Council to have adopted a Publication Scheme. There is no requirement in respect of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.</i>	The Council to note that the 2026 Practitioner's Guide has now clarified the specific legislation to be considered under Internal Control Objective L. With the inclusion of the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act in the 2026 guide, the Internal Audit response will now be either 'Yes' or 'No' rather than 'Not Applicable' as in prior years.	Low	Town Council to note

O The authority complied with laws, regulations & proper practices relating to digital and data compliance.

No.	Audit Test	Response	Observation	Recommendation	Priority	Comments
1	The Council has conducted a data audit in accordance with GDPR practice.	No	<i>This is pending as at the date of the pre year end audit.</i>	The Council note the requirement to complete an audit of personal data held.	High	A data audit is currently underway and is expected to be completed by end of October 2026.

Houghton Regis Town Council
Financial Year 2025-26



Audit date: 5 June 2026

Year End Internal Audit Observations

Date considered by Council 15th June 2026

Minute Reference TBC

J

Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.

No.	Audit Test	Response	Observation	Recommendation	Priority	Comments
1	Any changes to prior year Accounting Statement values have been correctly recorded	No	<p><i>It was noted that the restated Box 5 number of the prior year (2024-25) did not agree to the Rialtas accounting system. This was due to the wrong classification of the loan costs on Tithe Farm Pavillion.</i></p> <p><i>This was subsequently amended</i></p>	Council to note.	Medium	Council to note.

Interim audit summary Houghton Regis Town Council

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

Audit 2 Date

30 March 2026

Internal Control Objective		N/A	Tested	Positive	Negative	Observations	Non Compliance
Box A	<i>Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.</i>	-	-	-	-	-	
Box B	<i>This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.</i>	-	5	4	1	1	
Box C	<i>This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.</i>	1	3	2	-	-	
Box D	<i>The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.</i>	-	-	-	-	-	
Box E	<i>Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.</i>	3	8	5	-	-	
Box F	<i>Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.</i>	-	-	-	-	-	
Box G	<i>Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.</i>	2	17	15	-	-	
Box H	<i>Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.</i>	-	-	-	-	-	
Box I	<i>Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.</i>	-	-	-	-	-	
Box J	<i>Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.</i>	-	-	-	-	-	
Box K	<i>If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2024/25, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. (If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2024/25 AGAR tick "not covered")</i>	-	-	-	-	-	
Box L	<i>The authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation.</i>	7	8	1	-	1	
Box M	<i>The authority, during the previous year (2024/25) correctly provided for the period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations (evidenced by the notice published on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set).</i>	-	-	-	-	-	
Box N	<i>The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2024/25 AGAR (see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes).</i>	-	1	1	-	-	
Box O	<i>The authority complied with laws, regulations & proper practices relating to digital and data compliance.</i>	-	4	3	1	1	
Box P	<i>(For local councils only) Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee</i>	-	-	-	-	-	
Totals		13	46	31	2	3	-

Year End audit summary Houghton Regis Town Council

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



Year End Audit Date

5 June 2026

Internal Control Objective	N/A	Tested	Positive	Negative	Observations	Non Compliance
Box A <i>Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.</i>	-	-	-	-	-	
Box B <i>This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.</i>	1	1	-	-	-	
Box C <i>This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.</i>	-	2	2	-	-	
Box D <i>The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.</i>	-	2	2	-	-	
Box E <i>Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.</i>	2	4	2	-	-	
Box F <i>Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.</i>	-	-	-	-	-	
Box G <i>Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.</i>	6	9	3	-	-	
Box H <i>Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.</i>	4	12	8	-	-	
Box I <i>Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.</i>	-	9	9	-	-	
Box J <i>Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.</i>	1	9	7	1	1	
Box K <i>If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2024/25, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. (If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2024/25 AGAR tick "not covered")</i>	3	3	-	-	-	
Box L <i>The authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation.</i>	-	-	-	-	-	
Box M <i>The authority, during the previous year (2024/25) correctly provided for the period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations (evidenced by the notice published on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set).</i>	-	-	-	-	-	
Box N <i>The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2024/25 AGAR (see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes).</i>	1	1	-	-	-	
Box O <i>The authority complied with laws, regulations & proper practices relating to digital and data compliance.</i>	-	-	-	-	-	
Box P <i>(For local councils only) Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee</i>	7	7	-	-	-	
Totals	25	59	33	1	1	-

Houghton Regis Town Council

ENTER PUBLICLY AVAIL houghtonregis-tc.gov.uk WEBPAGE ADDRESS

During the financial year ended 31 March 2026, this authority's internal auditor acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with the relevant procedures and controls in operation and obtained appropriate evidence from the authority.

The internal audit for 2025/26 has been carried out in accordance with this authority's needs and planned coverage. On the basis of the findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in this table. Set out below are the objectives of internal control and alongside are the internal audit conclusions on whether, in all significant respects, the control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of this authority.

Internal control objective	Yes	No*	Not covered**
	A. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.	Yes	
B. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	Yes		
C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	Yes		
D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	Yes		
E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	Yes		
F. Cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.	Yes		
G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	Yes		
H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	Yes		
I. Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.	Yes		
J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	Yes		
K. If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2024/25, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. <i>(If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2024/25 AGAR tick "not covered")</i>			N/A
L. The authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation.	Yes		
M. In the year covered by this AGAR, the authority correctly provided for a period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations <i>(during the 2025/26 AGAR period, were public rights in relation to the 2024-25 AGAR evidenced by a notice on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set)</i> .	Yes		
N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2024/25 AGAR <i>(see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes)</i> .	Yes		
O. The authority has complied with laws, regulations & proper practices relating to digital and data compliance.	Yes		
P. (For local councils only) Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.	Yes	No	Not applicable
			N/A

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

Date(s) internal audit undertaken

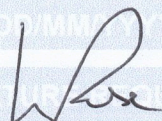
Name of person who carried out the internal audit

08/06/2025 11/11/2025 30/03/2026

Kevin Rose ACMA- IAC Audit & Consultancy Ltd

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit

SIGNATURE REQUIRED



Date

08/06/2026

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

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



HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Peel Street, Houghton Regis, Bedfordshire, LU5 5EY

Telephone: 01582 708540

Email: info@houghtonregis-tc.gov.uk

www.houghtonregis-tc.gov.uk

Confirmation regarding the exercise of public rights

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

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

You may find the calendar guide overleaf useful.

Please note that because the earliest date to start a compliant public rights period is 03 June 2026 and the definition of 'as soon as practical' excludes any earlier dates than this.

The inspection period **must** commence no later than 1 July 2026 and **must** include the first 10 working days of July.

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

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

The inspection period commences on: 17th June 2026

And ends on: 28th July 2026

Signed

Date: 16th June 2026

Position held: RFO

Town Mayor: **Cllr D Jones** Town Clerk: **Ms Clare Evans**

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2025/26

We acknowledge as the members of:

Houghton Regis Town Council

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2026, that:

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

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

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

15/06/2026

and recorded as minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

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

Chair

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Clerk

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

www.houghtonregis-tc.gov.uk LICLY AVAILABLE WEBSITE/WEBPAGE ADDRESS

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2025/26 for

Houghton Regis Town Council

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2025 £	31 March 2026 £	
1. Balances brought forward	621,085	930,413	Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of previous year.
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	1,363,800	1,660,722	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.
3. (+) Total other receipts	1,232,568	3,571,029	Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.
4. (-) Staff costs	-855,262	-1,115,832	Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	-56,861	-59,349	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).
6. (-) All other payments	-1,374,917	-887,014	Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).
7. (=) Balances carried forward	930,413	4,099,969	Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. must equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).
8. Total value of cash and short term investments	880,153	4,155,934	The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – To agree with bank reconciliation.
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	6,894,679	7,096,350	The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.
10. Total borrowings	662,448	637,207	The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).

For Local Councils Only	Yes	No	
11 Do the figures in the accounting statements above exclude any trust transactions?	✓		For guidance refer to the Practitioners' Guide sections 2.31 to 2.33.

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2026 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

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

SIGNATURE REQUIRED
DB Marsh

Date 04/06/2026

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

15/06/2026

as recorded in minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

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

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Houghton Regis Town Council

Unaudited Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 March 2026

Houghton Regis Town Council

Table of Contents

31 March 2026

	Page
Table of Contents.....	2
Council Information.....	3
Statement of Accounting Policies.....	4
Income and Expenditure Account.....	6
Balance Sheet.....	7
Notes to the Accounts.....	8
1 Interest and Investment Income.....	8
2 Publicity.....	8
3 General Power of Competence.....	8
4 Tenancies.....	8
5 Pensions.....	8
6 Fixed Assets.....	9
6 Fixed Assets (cont'd).....	9
6 Fixed Assets (cont'd).....	11
7 Fixed Assets - Additions and Disposals.....	12
8 Current Asset Investments.....	12
9 Debtors.....	12
10 Creditors and Accrued Expenses.....	13
11 Agency Work.....	13
12 Hire Purchase and Lease Obligations.....	13
13 Loans.....	14
14 Usable Capital Receipts Reserve.....	14
15 Earmarked Reserves.....	14
16 Capital Commitments.....	14
17 Contingent Liabilities.....	14
Appendices.....	15

Houghton Regis Town Council

Council Information

31 March 2026

(Information current at 15th June 2026)

Mayor

Cllr D. Jones

Councillors

Cllr E. Billington
Cllr J. Carroll
Cllr E. Cooper
Cllr E. Costello
Cllr Mrs Y. Farrell
Cllr W. Henderson
Cllr M. Herber
Cllr T. McMahon
Cllr C. Rollins
Cllr A. Slough
Cllr C. Slough
Cllr D. Taylor
Vacancy

Town Clerk

Mrs Clare Evans

Responsible Financial Officer (R.F.O.)

Mrs Debbie Marsh

Auditors

Mazars LLP
Salvus House
Aykley Heads
Durham
DH1 5TS

Internal Auditors

IAC Audit & Consultancy Ltd
23 Westbury Rd
Yarnbrook
Wiltshire
BA14 6AG

Houghton Regis Town Council
Statement of Accounting Policies
31 March 2026

Auditors

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

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

Accounting Convention

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

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

The accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

Fixed Assets

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

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

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

Revenue Grants

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

Investments

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

Debtors and Creditors

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

Value Added Tax

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

Houghton Regis Town Council
Statement of Accounting Policies
31 March 2026

External Loan Repayments

The council is not required by the Guide to incorporate external borrowings in its Balance Sheet. Details are shown at note 13.

Leases

The council is not required by the Guide to incorporate Hire Purchase and/or Finance Lease obligations in its Balance Sheet. Details are shown at note 12.

Reserves

The council maintains certain reserves to meet general and specific future expenditure. The purpose of the council's reserves is explained in notes 14 to 15.

Interest Income

All interest receipts are credited initially to general funds.

Pensions

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

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

The next actuarial valuation is due at 31st March 2028 and any change in contribution rates as a result of that valuation will take effect from 1st April 2029.

Houghton Regis Town Council
Income and Expenditure Account
31 March 2026

	Notes	2026 £	2025 £
INCOME			
Precept on Principal Authority		1,660,722	1,363,800
Capital Receipts, Grants and Loan Proceeds		64,128	265,790
Interest and Investment Income	1	160,898	71,704
Leisure and Recreation		3,316,367	77,706
Allotments		3,825	3,640
Cemetery & Churchyard		15,097	14,020
Community & Youth		5,699	1,132
Highways - Footpaths and Lighting		640	240
Miscellaneous		61	8,086
Community Development		4,314	184,091
Sale of Investments		-	(19,791)
Sale of Assets		-	25,950
		5,231,751	1,996,368
EXPENDITURE			
Establishment/General Administration		102,150	111,306
Agency Costs	11	41,510	32,059
Capital Expenditure incl Capital Grants	7	201,671	683,201
Loan Interest and Capital Repayments		59,349	68,895
Operational Expenditure:			
Leisure and Recreation inc. Pavilions		379,912	241,508
Allotments		2,718	532
Cemetery & Churchyard		2,300	3,709
Planning and Development		850	1,792
Corporate Services Staff Costs		326,502	293,049
Democratic Representation and Management		14,794	13,108
Environment & Leisure Staff Costs		441,852	375,576
Public Toilets		24,375	22,200
Grants Under Specific Powers		28,898	30,071
Community Services Staff Costs		287,528	199,325
Community Services		147,786	222,743
		2,062,195	2,299,074
General Fund			
Balance at 01 April 2025		398,117	485,804
Add: Total Income		5,231,751	1,996,368
		5,629,868	2,482,172
Deduct: Total Expenditure		2,062,195	2,299,074
		3,567,673	183,098
Transfer (to)/from Earmarked Reserves	15	(2,979,775)	215,019
General Reserve Balance at 31 March 2026		587,898	398,117

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

Houghton Regis Town Council

Balance Sheet

31 March 2026

	Notes	2026 £	2026 £	2025 £
Current Assets				
Debtors and prepayments	9	92,360		312,925
Investments	8	4,119,500		869,500
Cash at bank and in hand		<u>36,434</u>		<u>10,653</u>
		4,248,294		1,193,078
Current Liabilities				
Creditors and income in advance	10	<u>(174,101)</u>		<u>(288,441)</u>
Net Current Assets			4,074,193	904,637
Total Assets Less Current Liabilities			4,074,193	904,637
Total Assets Less Liabilities			<u>4,074,193</u>	<u>904,637</u>
Capital and Reserves				
Earmarked Reserves	15		3,486,295	506,520
General Reserve			<u>587,898</u>	<u>398,117</u>
			<u>4,074,193</u>	<u>904,637</u>

Signed:

Cllr D. Jones

Mayor

.....

Mrs Debbie Marsh

Responsible Financial Officer

Date:

.....

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

Houghton Regis Town Council

Notes to the Accounts

31 March 2026

1 Interest and Investment Income

	2026	2025
	£	£
Interest Income - General Funds	160,898	71,704
	<u>160,898</u>	<u>71,704</u>

2 Publicity

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

	2026	2025
	£	£
Recruitment Advertising	210	-
Publicity	-	75
Councils Website	1,395	9,125
Newsletter	1,612	4,942
	<u>3,217</u>	<u>14,142</u>

3 General Power of Competence

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

4 Tenancies

During the year the following tenancies were held:

Council as landlord

Tenant	Property	Rent p.a. £	Repairing / Non-Repairing
Various	Allotments	3,825	Non-Repairing

Council as tenant

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

5 Pensions

For the year of account the council's contributions equal 26.80% of employees' pensionable pay. These contributions will decrease to 17.80%, plus a lump sum of £29,300, in future years, which will provide adequately for future liabilities.

Houghton Regis Town Council

Notes to the Accounts

31 March 2026

6 Fixed Assets

	2026	2025
	£	£
	Value	Value
At 31 March the following assets were held:		
<u>Land and Buildings</u>		
Bowls Green Shed	2,800	2,800
Houghton Regis Memorial Hall	293,000	293,000
Council Offices and Land	260,400	260,400
New Community venue with council chamber	16,877	-
Sports Pavilion Moore Crescent	340,020	340,020
Thorn Park Pavilion	1	-
Leasehold-Tithe Farm Grounds Store	138,900	138,900
Leasehold-Tithe Farm all weather pitch and pavilion	3,413,366	3,411,385
Leasehold-Parkside Pavilion	154,784	154,784
Leasehold - Orchard Close Pavilion	115,940	115,940
Leasehold-Village Green Pavilion	459,836	459,836
	5,195,924	5,177,065

6 Fixed Assets (cont'd)

Vehicles and Equipment

	2026	2025
Recreation Ground Equipment	54,474	54,474
Office Equipment	52,073	48,475
Office Boiler	2,990	2,990
Office Furniture	100,226	100,226
Pavilion Furniture & Equipment	7,446	7,446
Play and Sports Equipment & Safety Surfaces	460,158	460,158
Skate Park	90,306	90,306
M U G A	30,062	30,062
Christmas Decorations	64,269	64,269
Kubota Tractor M9540 - LK09 EPL	35,000	35,000
Iseki Tractor OY26 FTC	71,445	-
Ford Ranger EX67 KKW	16,942	16,942
Ford Ranger EN68 VTG	22,520	22,520
Ford Ranger LC69 HCL	18,990	18,990
Ford Transit Tipper LC23 YMJ	26,990	-
Karcher Street Sweeper LB21 YSM	25,000	-
P7E Trailer	795	795
LT106G Trailer	2,465	2,465
Ifor Williams Trailer	800	800
Work Platform (f/lift)	650	650
Dennis Mower	1,500	1,500
Verticut Mower	1,200	1,200
Ransomes Cylinder Mower	850	850
Hayter Mower	2,137	2,137
Hayter Mower (2018)	535	535
Hayter Pro Rotary Mower	1,149	1,149
Pro Virtue SVP Mower x 2	748	748
Verti-Cutter	1,329	1,329
Harrier Grass Cutter x 2	1,400	1,400

Houghton Regis Town Council

Notes to the Accounts

31 March 2026

6 Fixed Assets (cont'd)	2026	2025
Honda Tractor Rotavator	4,300	4,300
Stihl AR300L	1,320	1,320
Stihl RMA765 Mower	1,037	1,037
Sissis Autorake	5,209	5,209
Bomford Kestrel Arm Mower	24,600	24,600
Stihl Battery Brushcutters (6)	6,445	6,445
Tomlin Harrows	4,229	4,229
Mitsubishi truck KY64BGK	15,000	15,000
Exac Post Hole Borer	1,500	1,500
Dump Trailer 12' x 6'	4,650	4,650
JCB Mini Excavator	3,476	3,476
Kubota K15 DXU	14,116	14,116
Kubota F3890 (KX68 BEJ)	18,368	18,368
Kubota XL300 Spreader	1,888	1,888
Elait Mega Prof Shredder D1105T	20,998	-
HP440P Grteen Water Bowser	4,595	-
Rotowash	7,176	7,176
CCTV Equipment	25,041	25,041
Anti-Ram Bollards	5,592	5,592
Gazebos	905	905
Cemetery Earth Augur	670	670
Hot Water Pressure Cleaner	18,219	18,219
Mobile Steam Cleaner	17,999	17,999
Shibarua Tractor LK 17 KTD	19,755	19,755
Sports Equipment (Village Green)	69,999	69,999
Outdoor Gym	4,100	4,100
Kubota RTV KX20 CCJ	15,250	15,250
Defibrillators	10,092	10,092
	<hr/> <hr/> 1,420,978	<hr/> <hr/> 1,268,352
<u>Infrastructure Assets</u>		
Gates and Fencing	99,769	99,769
Bowls Irrigation System	7,290	7,290
Speed Activated Signs	9,226	9,226
Town Signs & Noticeboards	23,673	12,157
Litter Bins	9,970	9,970
Bollards - Village Green Grnd	7,192	7,192
Benches	5,990	5,990
Flame Beacon	2,204	2,204
Flag Poles	5,875	5,875
Memorial Hall Planter	3,720	3,720
Floodlights (Tithe Farm Skate Park)	15,844	15,844
Bedford Rd Wall (All Saints Gate)	20,018	20,018
Village Green Play Area Resurfacing	48,000	48,000
Resurface Orchard Close Play Area	21,081	21,081
Parkside Family Picnic Area	10,180	10,180
Allotment Shed Bases	6,502	6,502
Houghton Hall Park Borehole	18,666	-
	<hr/> <hr/> 315,200	<hr/> <hr/> 285,018

Houghton Regis Town Council

Notes to the Accounts

31 March 2026

6 Fixed Assets (cont'd)	2026	2025
<u>Community Assets</u>		
Civic Regalia	4,779	4,779
War Memorial	9,363	9,363
Village Green	1	1
Tithe Farm Recreation Ground	1	1
Land rear of Orchard Close	1	1
Houghton Regis Cemetery	104,305	104,305
New Cemetery Development	45,781	45,781
Orchard Close Recreation Ground	1	1
Land rear of Houghton Court	1	1
Land rear of Village Green Pavilion	1	1
Land Adj Chapel Path	1	1
Land off Townsend Farm Road	1	1
All Saints Churchyard	1	1
Land at Moore Crescent	1	1
Land at The Baulk	1	1
Land at Orchard Close	1	1
Parcels within Dog Kennel Down Area	1	1
Parkside Recreation Ground	1	1
Part of The Paddocks	1	1
Former Railway Line	1	1
Thorn Park (4 parcels of land)	4	-
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	164,248	164,244
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	7,096,350	6,894,679
	<hr/>	<hr/>

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

Houghton Regis Town Council

Notes to the Accounts

31 March 2026

7 Fixed Assets - Additions and Disposals

	2026	2025
	£	£
	Cost	Cost
During the year the following assets were purchased:		
Operational Land and Buildings	18,859	494,833
Vehicles and Equipment	152,626	176,848
Infrastructure Assets	30,182	7,200
Community Assets	4	4,320
	<u>201,671</u>	<u>683,201</u>
	Proceeds	Proceeds
During the year the following assets were disposed of:		
Vehicles and Equipment	-	25,950
	<u>-</u>	<u>25,950</u>

8 Current Asset Investments

	2026	2025
	£	£
L A Deposit Fund Account	3,869,500	869,500
Debt Management Deposit Account	250,000	-
	<u>4,119,500</u>	<u>869,500</u>

9 Debtors

	2026	2025
	£	£
Trade Debtors	24,690	154,336
VAT Recoverable	41,500	50,733
Other Debtors	250	251
Prepayments	9,255	6,924
Accrued Income	16,665	3,681
Capital Grant Debtors	-	97,000
	<u>92,360</u>	<u>312,925</u>

Houghton Regis Town Council

Notes to the Accounts

31 March 2026

10 Creditors and Accrued Expenses

	2026	2025
	£	£
Trade Creditors	38,869	41,940
Payroll Taxes and Social Security	19,549	13,120
Accruals	34,852	152,680
Income in Advance	330	200
Capital Creditors	54,725	54,725
Capital Receipts in Advance	25,776	25,776
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	174,101	288,441
	<hr/>	<hr/>

11 Agency Work

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

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

Performing Authority and Nature of Work

	2026	2025
	£	£
Central Bedfordshire Council - CCTV Monitoring	3,467	3,007
Police & Crime Commissioner Beds - OP HANA	38,043	29,052
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	41,510	32,059
	<hr/>	<hr/>

A final claim to 31 March 2026 has been made.

12 Hire Purchase and Lease Obligations

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

Hire/Lessor	Purpose	Annual Lease/Hire Payable	Year of Expiry
		£	
Grenke Leasing Ltd	Photocopier	511	2029

Houghton Regis Town Council

Notes to the Accounts

31 March 2026

13 Loans

At the close of business on 31 March 2026 the following loans to the council were outstanding:

Lender	Loan Period	Amount £	Years Remaining
Public Works Loan Board	24 Years from 19 th October 2009	71,215	8
Public Works Loan Board	24 Years from 5 th February 2010	82,001	8
Public Works Loan Board	24 Years from 22 nd November 2023	483,991	22

14 Usable Capital Receipts Reserve

	2026 £	2025 £
Capital receipts (asset sales) during the year	-	25,950
<i>Less:</i>		
Capital used to fund expenditure	-	(25,950)
Balance at 31 March	-	-

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

15 Earmarked Reserves

	Balance at 01/04/2025 £	Contribution to reserve £	Contribution from reserve £	Balance at 31/03/2026 £
Other Earmarked Reserves	506,520	3,287,492	(307,717)	3,486,295
Total Earmarked Reserves	506,520	3,287,492	(307,717)	3,486,295

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

The Other Earmarked Reserves at 31 March 2026 are set out in detail at Appendix A.

16 Capital Commitments

The council had no capital commitments at 31 March 2026 not otherwise provided for in these accounts.

17 Contingent Liabilities

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

Houghton Regis Town Council

Appendices

31 March 2026

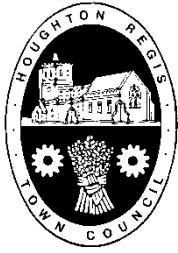
Appendix A

Schedule of Earmarked Reserves

	<u>Balance at</u> <u>01/04/2025</u>	<u>Contribution</u> <u>to reserve</u>	<u>Contribution</u> <u>from reserve</u>	<u>Balance at</u> <u>31/03/2026</u>
	£	£	£	£
All Saints Churchyard Wall	5,616			5,616
Bidwell Countryside Recreation Open Space	-	990,726	(82,649)	908,077
Pavilion Renovation	26,189	99,647		125,836
Street Furniture	11,251	1,000	(11,516)	735
Bidwell Formal Park	-	618,267	(51,656)	566,611
Grounds Machinery Renewal	1,920	4,088		6,008
Play Areas	179,256	15,000		194,256
Bidwell Sports Pitches	-	1,487,283	(123,973)	1,363,310
Community Development	18,701	6,800	(8,000)	17,501
Elections	7,697	6,000		13,697
Bidwell SUDS	-	58,681		58,681
Cemetery Provision	66,560			66,560
Allotments	32,960			32,960
Former Railway Line	21,489		(7,163)	14,326
CBC Bulk Waste Reserve	7,200			7,200
Office Provision	122,699		(17,778)	104,921
Houghton Hall Park Project	4,982		(4,982)	-
TOTAL EARMARKED RESERVES	506,520	3,287,492	(307,717)	3,486,295

2026/27						
Committee	Schedule of Earmarked Reserves	Predicted Opening Balance	Predicted Transfer In	Predicted Transfer Out	Predicted Closing Balance	Notes
		01.04.26			31.03.27	
		£	£	£	£	
Town Council	310 General Reserves - Predicted	587,897			587,897	
E&L	320 All Saints Churchyard Wall	5,616	0	0	5,616	
E&L	321 Thorn Park Countryside Recreation Public Open Space s106 (Bidwell)	908,077	0	47,563	860,514	To fund maintenance and upkeep (261 & 262) plus additional drawdown to cover salaries (292) - draw down from this element 32%
E&L	322 Pavilion Renovation	125,836	0	0	125,836	
E&L	324 Street Furniture	735	0	0	735	
E&L	325 Thorn Park Formal Park s106 (Bidwell)	566,611	0	29,727	536,884	To fund maintenance and upkeep (261 & 262) plus additional drawdown to cover salaries (292) - draw down from this element 20%
E&L	326 Grounds Machinery renewal	6,008	0	0	6,008	
E&L	327 Play Areas	194,256	0	0	194,256	Typically this fund gets built up over time to fund major improvements to play areas.
E&L	329 Thorn Park Sports pitches, MUGA, changing rooms and car park s106 (Bidwell)	1,363,310	0	71,345	1,291,965	To fund maintenance and upkeep (261 & 262) plus additional drawdown to cover salaries (292) - draw down from this element 48%
Comm Serv	330 Community Development	17,501	0	0	17,501	
E&L	335 Thorn SUDS Maintaiance (Bidwell)	58,681	0	0	58,681	
Corp Serv	332 Elections	13,697	0	0	13,697	Typically this fund gets built up over time to fund any by-election or main election.
E&L	348 Cemetery	66,560	0	0	66,560	
E&L	351 Allotments	32,960	0	0	32,960	To be used to fund enhancements to any allotment provision.
E&L	352 Former Railway Line	14,326	0	7,163	7,163	This has to date been an annual transfer out to help fund the ongoing maintenance of this land in accordance with the s106 agreement. To be transferred to 291-4992
Comm Serv	354 CBC Bulk Waste Reserve	7,200	0	0	7,200	
Corp Serv	355 New Office Provision	104,921	0	0	104,921	
Town Council	* Project H	0	80,000	0	80,000	To fund fit out costs for Project H
TOTAL EARMARKED RESERVES		3,486,295	80,000	155,798	3,410,497	
E&L	S106 Deferred Income	25,775	0	0	25,775	Tithe Farm car park

* EMR number to be allocated



Date:	15th June 2026
Title:	Treasury Management Strategy
Purpose of the Report:	To provide to members a report on the work undertaken by the Investment Working Group.
Contact Officer:	Debbie Marsh, Head of Corporate Services

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) To recommend the adoption of the Town Councils Treasury Management Strategy.**
- 2) To support the continuation of the Investment Working Group for a period beyond the original 12month period.**

2. BACKGROUND

The Corporate Services Committee at the meeting held on the 1st September 2025 members resolved (minute number 13324) to establish an Investment Working Group. The which would seek to evaluate new investment opportunities and provide recommendations to the Corporate Services Committee.

members of the working group completed its review of the Town Councils Treasury Management Strategy and recommended the Strategy be adopted.

Members discussed the Investment Working Group Terms of Reference. Although it had been assumed that the Working Group would disband following adoption of the Treasury Management Strategy, members agreed that the Working Group had not completely fulfilled the Terms of Reference and therefore recommended that Corporate Services approve its continuation.

It was anticipated that once these responsibilities had been fulfilled that oversight would return to the Corporate Services Committee.

3. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

A copy of the Town Council's Treasury Management Strategy is attached for members' consideration and discussion.

4. HRTC CORPORATE PLAN

Aspirations 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

- Amendments to the Town Council current Banking Arrangements, Investment Strategy & Investment Arrangements Policy

Legal Implications

- Compliance with the guidance issued by the Secretary of State under Section 15(1) (a) of the Local Government Act 2003

Crime and Disorder Implications

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

Financial Implications

- There are no financial implications arising from the recommendations.

Risk Implications

- As with any type of investment there is always an element of risk. Officers' supervision of the accounts and monitoring their environments as well as the UK's economy climate, helps to regulate and assess any potential risks.
- Reputation should monies be lost from poor investment decisions.
- The Town Council currently has an investment risk appetite comparable to at least an AA-rating or higher (minute number 12731)
- Although there is a national Financial Services Compensation Scheme which provides compensation should a bank or investment company fail. An individual is covered up to an investment level of £120k. For councils, this compensation is only available if your income is under £500k per year. Therefore, Houghton Regis Town Council is not eligible to compensation under this scheme.

Equalities Implications

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

This report does not discriminate.

Climate Change Implications

There are no climate change implications arising from the recommendations

Press Contact

- There are no press implications.

6. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

The Investment Working Group has completed its review of the Treasury Management Strategy and supports its adoption however members felt it should continue to operate as it has not yet fully delivered on its Terms of Reference.

Members are being requested to note the minutes of the Investment Working Group meeting held on 18th May 2026 and recommend to Council that the Treasury Management Strategy be adopted.

7. APPENDICES

Appendix A - Minutes of the Investment Working Group meeting held on the 18th May 2026

Appendix B – HRTC Draft Treasury Management Strategy

Houghton Regis Town Council
Investment Working Group
Minutes of the meeting held on
Monday 18th May 2026 at 10am

Present:	Councillors:	D Jones J Carroll M Herber	(Chair)
	Officers:	Debbie Marsh	Head of Corporate Services
Apologies:	Councillors:	T McMahon	
Also in attendance:		Joe Scott-Soane Paul Roberts	Arlingclose Treasury Services Arlingclose Treasury Services

IWG28 APOLOGIES & SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Councillor M Herber.

IWG29 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

None.

IWG30 MINUTES

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on the 11th February 2026.

Resolved: To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 11th February 2026 and for these to be signed by the Chair.

IWG31 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY - DRAFT

Members of the Working Group received and considered a final draft version of the Town Councils Treasury Management Strategy.

Following discussions Members:

- Agreed that although the Town Council does not currently include Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) scoring when evaluating investment opportunities, it will prioritise banks that are signatories to the UN Principles for Responsible banking;
- Finalised the counterparty table which included UK Government, Local Authorities, Secured Investments – Government Colateral, Secured Investments – other collateral, Banks, Building Societies, Money Market Funds (MMF)
- Set counterparty limits and sector limits;
- Reiterated the council risk appetite which included a minimum credit rating of A- as previously agreed;
- Agreed the number of providers (four), that the council would spread its liquid cash over. For example, bank accounts and money market funds. Of those (four) at least two will be UK domiciled to ensure that access to cash is maintained in the event of operational difficulties at any one provider.

IWG32 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Members discussed the Investment Working Group Terms of Reference. Although it had been assumed that the Working Group would disband following adoption of the Treasury Management Strategy, members agreed that the Working Group had not completely fulfilled the Terms of Reference and therefore recommended that Corporate Services approve its continuation.

Once these responsibilities had been fulfilled, it was anticipated that oversight would return to the Corporate Services Committee.

Resolved: To agree to call a meeting of the Investment Working Group as required.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 11.10am

Dated this XX XXXXX 2026

Chairman



HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2026/27

Introduction

Treasury management is the management of the Authority's cash flows, borrowing and investments, and the associated risks. The Authority has invested substantial sums of money and is therefore exposed to financial risks including the loss of invested funds and the revenue effect of changing interest rates. The successful identification, monitoring and control of financial risk are therefore central to the Authority's prudent financial management.

Treasury risk management at the Authority is conducted within the framework of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's *Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice 2021 Edition* (the CIPFA Code).

Treasury Investment Strategy

The Authority holds significant invested funds, representing income received in advance of expenditure plus balances and reserves held. In the past 12 months, the Authority's treasury investment balance has ranged between £1.2 and £4.2 million. Levels maintained for the forthcoming year are expected to be between £3m and £5m. The investment balance for the previous 12 months saw an inflated increase in June following receipt of a s106 commuted sum contribution of £3,096,275.82.

Objectives: The CIPFA Code requires the Authority to invest its treasury funds prudently, and to have regard to the security and liquidity of its investments before seeking the highest rate of return, or yield. The Authority's objective when investing money is to strike an appropriate balance between risk and return, minimising the risk of incurring losses from defaults and the risk of receiving unsuitably low investment income. Where balances are expected to be invested for more than one year, the Authority will aim to achieve a total return that is equal or higher than the prevailing rate of inflation, in order to maintain the spending power of the sum invested. The Authority aims to be a responsible investor and will consider environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues when investing.

Strategy: The Authority expects to be a long-term investor and treasury investments will therefore include both short-term low risk instruments to manage day-to-day cash flows and longer-term

instruments where limited additional risk is accepted in return for higher investment income to support local public services.

The CIPFA Code does not permit local authorities to both borrow and invest long-term for cash flow management. But the Authority may make long-term investments for treasury risk management purposes, including to manage interest rate risk by investing sums borrowed in advance for the capital programme for up to three years; to manage inflation risk by investing usable reserves in instruments whose value rises with inflation; and to manage price risk by adding diversification to the strategic pooled fund portfolio.

ESG policy: Environmental, social and governance (ESG) considerations are increasingly a factor in global investors' decision making, but the framework for evaluating investment opportunities is still developing and therefore the Authority does not currently include ESG scoring or other real-time ESG criteria at an individual investment level. When investing in banks and funds, the Authority will prioritise banks that are signatories to the UN Principles for Responsible Banking and funds operated by managers that are signatories to the UN Principles for Responsible Investment, the Net Zero Asset Managers Alliance and/or the UK Stewardship Code.

Approved counterparties: The Authority may invest its surplus funds with any of the counterparty types in table 3 below, subject to the limits shown.

Table 3: Treasury investment counterparties and limits

Sector	Time limit †	Counterparty limit	Sector limit
The UK Government	50	Unlimited	n/a
Local authorities & other government entities	25 years	£1.5m	Unlimited
Secured investments – government collateral	25 years	£1.5m	Unlimited
Secured investments – other collateral*	10 years	£1.5m	Unlimited
Banks (unsecured) *	13 months	£1.5m	Unlimited
Building societies (unsecured) *	13 months	£250,000	£500,000
Money market funds *	n/a	£3m	Unlimited

This table must be read in conjunction with the notes below

* **Minimum credit rating:** Treasury investments in the sectors marked with an asterisk will only be made with entities whose lowest published long-term credit rating is no lower than A-. Where available, the credit rating relevant to the specific investment or class of investment is used, otherwise the counterparty credit rating is used. However, investment decisions are never made solely based on credit ratings, and all other relevant factors including external advice will be taken into account. For entities without published credit ratings, investments may be made where external advice indicates the entity to be of similar credit quality.

† **Time limits:** These start on the earlier of date that the Authority is committed to make the investment and the date that cash is transferred to the counterparty

UK Government: Sterling-denominated investments with or explicitly guaranteed by the UK Government, including the Debt Management Account Deposit Facility, treasury bills and gilts. These are deemed to be zero credit risk due to the government's ability to create additional currency and therefore may be made in unlimited amounts for up to 50 years.

Local authorities and other government entities: Loans to, and bonds and bills issued or guaranteed by, other national governments, regional and local authorities and multilateral development banks. These investments are not subject to bail-in, and there is generally a lower risk of insolvency, although they are not zero risk.

Secured investments: Investments secured on the borrower's assets, which limits the potential losses in the event of insolvency. The amount and quality of the security will be a key factor in the investment decision. Covered bonds, secured deposits and reverse repurchase agreements with banks and building societies are exempt from bail-in. Where there is no investment specific credit rating, but the collateral upon which the investment is secured has a credit rating, the higher of the collateral credit rating and the counterparty credit rating will be used. The combined secured and unsecured investments with any one counterparty will not exceed the cash limit for secured investments.

Banks and building societies (unsecured): Accounts, deposits, certificates of deposit and senior unsecured bonds with banks and building societies, other than multilateral development banks. These investments are subject to the risk of credit loss via a bail-in should the regulator determine that the bank is failing or likely to fail. See below for arrangements relating to operational bank accounts.

Money market funds: Pooled funds that offer same-day or short notice liquidity and very low or no price volatility by investing in short-term money markets. They have the advantage over bank accounts of providing wide diversification of investment risks, coupled with the services of a professional fund manager in return for a small fee. Although no sector limit applies to money market funds, the Authority will take care to diversify its liquid investments over a variety of providers to ensure access to cash at all times.

Operational bank accounts: The Authority may incur operational exposures, for example through current accounts, collection accounts and merchant acquiring services, to any UK bank with credit

ratings no lower than BBB- and with assets greater than £25 billion. These are not classed as investments but are still subject to the risk of a bank bail-in, and balances will therefore be kept below £1.5m per bank. The Bank of England has stated that in the event of failure, banks with assets greater than £25 billion are more likely to be bailed-in than made insolvent, increasing the chance of the Authority maintaining operational continuity.

Risk assessment and credit ratings: Credit ratings are obtained and monitored by the Authority's treasury advisers, who will notify changes in ratings as they occur. The credit rating agencies in current use are listed in the Treasury Management Practices document. Where an entity has its credit rating downgraded so that it fails to meet the approved investment criteria then:

- no new investments will be made,
- any existing investments that can be recalled or sold at no cost will be, and
- full consideration will be given to the recall or sale of all other existing investments with the affected counterparty.

Where a credit rating agency announces that a credit rating is on review for possible downgrade (also known as "negative watch") so that it may fall below the approved rating criteria, then only investments that can be withdrawn on the next working day will be made with that organisation until the outcome of the review is announced. This policy will not apply to negative outlooks, which indicate a long-term direction of travel rather than an imminent change of rating.

Other information on the security of investments: The Authority understands that credit ratings are good, but not perfect, predictors of investment default. Full regard will therefore be given to other available information on the credit quality of the organisations in which it invests, including credit default swap prices, financial statements, information on potential government support, reports in the quality financial press and analysis and advice from the Authority's treasury management adviser. No investments will be made with an organisation if there are substantive doubts about its credit quality, even though it may otherwise meet the above criteria.

Reputational aspects: The Authority is aware that investment with certain counterparties, while considered secure from a purely financial perspective, may leave it open to criticism, valid or otherwise, that may affect its public reputation, and this risk will therefore be taken into account when making investment decisions.

When deteriorating financial market conditions affect the creditworthiness of all organisations, as happened in 2008, 2020 and 2022, this is not generally reflected in credit ratings, but can be seen in other market measures. In these circumstances, the Authority will restrict its investments to those organisations of higher credit quality and reduce the maximum duration of its investments to maintain the required level of security. The extent of these restrictions will be in line with prevailing financial market conditions. If these restrictions mean that insufficient commercial organisations of high credit quality are available to invest the Authority's cash balances, then the surplus will be deposited with the UK Government or other local authorities. This will cause investment returns to fall but will protect the principal sum invested.

Investment limits: A group of entities under the same ownership will be treated as a single organisation for limit purposes. In order to minimise the amount of reserves that would be put at risk in the case of a single default, the maximum that will be lent to any one organisation (other than the UK Government) will be £3m. A group of entities under the same ownership will be treated as a single organisation for limit purposes. Limits are also placed on fund managers and foreign countries.

Liquidity management: The Authority uses cash flow forecasting to determine the maximum period for which funds may prudently be committed. The forecast is compiled on a prudent basis to minimise the risk of the Authority being forced to borrow on unfavourable terms to meet its financial commitments. Limits on long-term investments are set by reference to the Authority's medium-term financial plan and cash flow forecast.

The Authority will spread its liquid cash over at least four providers (e.g. bank accounts and money market funds), of which at least two will be UK domiciled to ensure that access to cash is maintained in the event of operational difficulties at any one provider.

Appendix A – Arlingclose Economic & Interest Rate Forecast – 6th May 2026

Underlying assumptions:

- The impact of the Iran conflict creates inherent uncertainty for the economic outlook and path for policy rates and bond yields. More frequent changes to our interest rate forecast are highly likely as the situation evolves.
- The Iran conflict continues, with neither side apparently ready to compromise despite the cease fire. The restricted passage through the Strait of Hormuz has maintained upward pressure on energy prices, with repercussions for both UK growth and inflation.
- April's monetary policy decision and related documents underlined the difficult decision facing MPC members. Presenting alternative scenarios based on persistence of higher energy prices and second round effects, there remained a range of views on the Committee. Tighter financial market conditions have allowed policymakers more time to assess developments, but the meeting minutes suggested the MPC is ready to act on signs of second round inflationary pressure.
- Inflation will rise, but there is a question over its persistence. The UK economic situation is in a different position to that of the last energy price shock. There is spare capacity in the labour market amid a decline in labour demand - this should dampen wage demands; cautious spending remains the norm for households and consumer confidence has started to deteriorate; strained government finances cannot support household spending. Some activity data has surprised to the upside, but underlying GDP growth is soft and likely to weaken further, monetary policy is starting from restrictive territory and markets have already tightened financial conditions.
- From a policymaker perspective, lessons from 2022 could influence decisions in the months ahead and make near-term rate increases a possible scenario. The cost would be more significant in terms of economic growth and employment, but it may prompt an easing in inflation expectations and dampen the recent rise in yields.
- The key uncertainty is the war's duration. A longer war leading to higher energy prices will crystallise worst-case scenarios for both inflation and economic growth, damaging both demand and supply. The BoE suggested Bank Rate could rise to 5.25% in such a scenario. The underlying issues affecting the UK economy prior to the start of the war remain, so lower rates in the future remain probable.
- Gilt yields may remain high due to political uncertainty. The results of upcoming local elections will possibly determine the future of the Prime Minister and Chancellor.

Forecast:

- Arlingclose expects Bank Rate to be held at 3.75% for the foreseeable future. There are a range of possible scenarios outside this central case, dependent on the duration of the Iran war, post-war conduct, and temporary or lasting damage to energy infrastructure.
- In the short term, the forecast is heavily weighted to the upside – i.e. there may be Bank Rate hikes. This largely reflects policymakers' desire to avoid Ukraine-war style secondary outcomes, but this would be at the expense of activity.

- Gilt yields/swap rates will remain high without early monetary tightening or signs of deteriorating activity, which would argue against the need for rate increases. The risks around Arlingclose's gilt yield forecasts are weighted to the upside given the risks around Bank Rate.
- Monetary tightening, or delayed monetary loosening, over the short term increase the downside risks for rates over the medium term.

	Current	Jun-26	Sep-26	Dec-26	Mar-27	Jun-27	Sep-27	Dec-27	Mar-28	Jun-28	Sep-28	Dec-28	Mar-29
Official Bank Rate													
Upside risk	0.00	0.75	1.00	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.25	1.25	1.00	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75
Central Case	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75
Downside risk	0.00	0.00	0.00	-0.25	-0.25	-0.50	-0.50	-0.75	-1.00	-1.25	-1.50	-1.50	-1.50
3-month money market rate													
Upside risk	0.00	0.75	1.00	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.25	1.25	1.00	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75
Central Case	3.90	3.90	3.85	3.80	3.80	3.80	3.80	3.80	3.80	3.80	3.80	3.80	3.80
Downside risk	0.00	-0.05	-0.05	-0.25	-0.25	-0.50	-0.50	-0.75	-1.00	-1.25	-1.50	-1.50	-1.50
5yr gilt yield													
Upside risk	0.00	0.75	1.00	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.25	1.25	1.00	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75
Central Case	4.59	4.50	4.45	4.40	4.35	4.30	4.30	4.30	4.30	4.30	4.30	4.30	4.30
Downside risk	0.00	-0.40	-0.40	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.75	-0.85	-0.95	-1.20	-1.25	-1.25	-1.25
10yr gilt yield													
Upside risk	0.00	0.75	1.00	1.25	1.25	1.25	1.25	1.25	1.00	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75
Central Case	5.06	5.00	4.95	4.90	4.85	4.80	4.80	4.80	4.80	4.80	4.80	4.80	4.80
Downside risk	0.00	-0.40	-0.40	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.75	-0.85	-0.95	-1.20	-1.25	-1.25	-1.25
20yr gilt yield													
Upside risk	0.00	0.75	1.00	1.25	1.25	1.25	1.25	1.25	1.00	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75
Central Case	5.68	5.60	5.55	5.50	5.45	5.40	5.40	5.40	5.40	5.40	5.40	5.40	5.40
Downside risk	0.00	-0.40	-0.40	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.75	-0.80	-0.90	-1.00	-1.20	-1.20	-1.20
50yr gilt yield													
Upside risk	0.00	0.75	1.00	1.25	1.25	1.25	1.25	1.25	1.00	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75
Central Case	5.29	5.25	5.20	5.15	5.10	5.05	5.05	5.05	5.05	5.05	5.05	5.05	5.05
Downside risk	0.00	-0.40	-0.40	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.75	-0.80	-0.90	-1.00	-1.20	-1.20	-1.20

PWLB Standard Rate = Gilt yield + 1.00%

Appendix B – External Context

Economic background: The most significant impacts on the Authority’s treasury management strategy for 2026/27 are expected to include: the influence of the government’s 2025 Autumn Budget, lower short-term interest rates alongside higher medium- and longer-term rates, slower economic growth, together with ongoing uncertainties around the global economy, stock market sentiment, and geopolitical issues.

The Bank of England’s Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) cut Bank Rate to 3.75% in December 2025, as expected. The vote to cut was 5-4, with the minority instead favouring holding rates at 4.0%. Those members wanting a cut judged that disinflation was established while those preferring to hold Bank Rate argued that inflation risks remained sufficiently material to leave rates untouched at this stage.

Figures from the Office for National Statistics showed that the UK economy expanded by 0.1% in the third quarter of the calendar year, this was unrevised from the initial estimate. The most recent Monetary Policy Report (November) projected modest economic growth, with GDP expected to rise by 0.2% in the final calendar quarter of 2025. Annual growth is forecast to ease from 1.4% before improving again later, reflecting the delayed effects of lower interest rates, looser monetary conditions, stronger global activity, and higher consumer spending. The view of modest economic growth going forward was echoed by the Office for Budget Responsibility in its Economic and fiscal outlook published in line with the Autumn Statement which revised down its estimate of annual real GDP to around 1.5% on average between 2025 and 2030.

CPI inflation was 3.2% in November 2025, down from 3.6% in the previous month and below the 3.5% expected. Core CPI eased to 3.2% from 3.4%, contrary to forecasts of remaining at 3.6%. Looking forward, the MPC continues to expect inflation to fall, to around 3% in calendar Q1 2026, before steadily returning to the 2% target by late 2026 or early 2027.

The labour market continues to ease with rising unemployment, falling vacancies and flat inactivity. In the three months to October 2025, the unemployment rate increased to 5.1%, higher than the level previously expected by the BoE, while the employment rate slipped to 74.9%. Pay growth for the same period eased modestly, with total earnings (including bonuses) growth at 4.7% and while regular pay was 4.6%.

The US Federal Reserve also continued to cut rates, including reducing the target range for the Federal Funds Rate by 0.25% at its December 2025 meeting, to 3.50%-3.75%, in line with expectations. The minutes of the meeting noted that most Fed policymakers judged that further rate cuts would be likely in 2026 if inflation continues to ease, however they were still divided in their assessment of the risks between inflation and unemployment.

The European Central Bank (ECB) kept its key interest rates unchanged in December for a fourth consecutive meeting, maintaining the deposit rate at 2.0% and the main refinancing rate at 2.15%. The ECB maintained that future policy decisions will remain data-dependent, that inflation is close

to its 2% target and that the euro area economy continues to expand despite a challenging global environment, including heightened geopolitical risks and trade tensions.

Credit outlook: Credit Default Swap (CDS) prices, which spiked in April 2025 following President Trump's 'Liberation Day' tariff announcements, have since trended lower, returning to levels broadly consistent with their 2024 averages. Although CDS prices rose modestly during October and November, the overall credit outlook remains stable, and credit conditions are expected to remain close to the range seen over the past two years.

While lower interest rates may weigh on banks' profitability, strong capital positions, easing inflation, steady economic growth, low unemployment, and reduced borrowing costs for households and businesses all support a favourable outlook for the creditworthiness of institutions on (the authority's treasury management advisor) Arlingclose's counterparty list. Arlingclose's advice on approved counterparties and recommended investment durations is kept under continuous review and will continue to reflect prevailing economic and credit conditions.

Interest rate forecast (6th May 2026): Arlingclose, the Authority's treasury management adviser, expects Bank Rate to be held at 3.75% for the foreseeable future. There are a range of possible scenarios outside this central case, dependent on the duration of the Iran war, post-war conduct, and temporary or lasting damage to energy infrastructure.

In the short term, the forecast is heavily weighted to the upside (i.e. there may be Bank Rate hikes). This largely reflects policymakers' desire to avoid Ukraine-war style secondary outcomes, but this would be at the expense of activity.

Gilt yields, and therefore interest rates on longer term borrowing, will remain high without early monetary tightening or signs of deteriorating activity, which would argue against the need for rate increases. The risks around Arlingclose's gilt yield forecasts are weighted to the upside given the risks around Bank Rate. Monetary tightening, or delayed monetary loosening, over the short term increase the downside risks for rates over the medium term.

For the purpose of setting the budget, it has been assumed that new treasury investments will be made at an average rate/yield of 3%, and that new long-term loans will be borrowed at an average rate of 6.5%.



HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY & SCHEDULE

Date of Approval:	Town Council 28 th September 2015
Date of Review:	26 th September 2016; 25 th September 2017; 24 th September 2018; 23 rd September 2019; 14 th September 2020; 21 st September 2021; 28 th November 2022. No longer reviewed by Corporate Services, as per IA recommendation.
Date of Re-approval Town Council	5 th December 2016; 11 th December 2017; 8 th October 2018; 9 th December 2019; 14 th December 2020; 13 th December 2021; 20 th March 2023; 18 th March 2024, 15 th May 2024; 16 th May 2025; 15 th December 2025; 15 th June 2026

Risk Management Strategy

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Scope
- 3.0 Strategy Outcomes
- 4.0 Risk Management Overview
- 5.0 Risk Appetite
- 6.0 Embedding Risk Management
- 7.0 Roles and Responsibilities
- 8.0 Risk Management Processes
- 9.0 Monitoring and Review
- 10.0 Glossary of Terms

Appendix 1 - Impact and Likelihood Descriptors and Risk Scoring Matrix

Risk Management Schedule

- Corporate Services
- Environment & Leisure
- Planning
- Community Services

1.0 Introduction

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

2.0 Scope

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

3.0 Strategy Outcomes

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

4.0 Risk Management - Overview

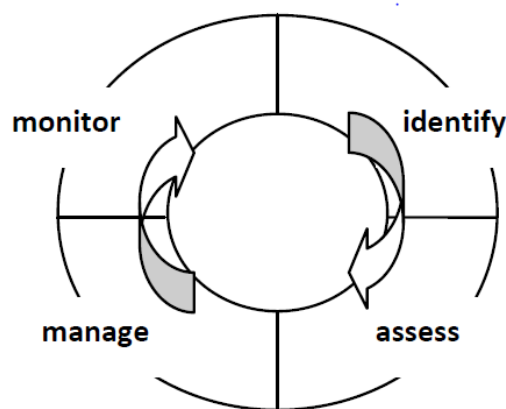
- 4.1 Risk management is the process by which the organisation seeks to identify, assess and manage key risks which might prevent it from achieving its corporate outcomes and goals or from doing so in an effective and efficient manner.
- 4.2 Risk management should not be treated as a standalone process.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

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

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

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

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



5.0 Risk Appetite

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

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

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

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

6.0 Embedding Risk Management

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

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

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

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

7.0 Roles and Responsibilities

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

- 7.2 The Town Clerk is specifically responsible for:

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

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

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

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

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

8.0 Risk Management Processes

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

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

- **Initial risk mitigation** – the Risk Owner will identify what controls are already in place to reduce the chance of a risk materialising
- **Initial risk response** – the Risk Owner will determine what to do about a risk in terms of treating, tolerating, transferring or terminating the risky activity in order to reduce the potential impact on the organisation. Alternatively, you might take the risk in order to get an outcome that would not be achievable without taking the risk.
- **Risk review** – the Risk Owner will review the scoring with the responses and controls in place to come up with the residual risk score.
- **Future risk mitigation** – the Risk Owner will identify actions that need to be taken to reduce the residual risk score to within the risk appetite.

8.2 These steps may be undertaken by officers during a group workshop, or individually with the assistance of the Risk Manager or an external facilitator. Risks, controls and actions can then be recorded in the Risk Register. Risks can be classified as:

- Corporate – cross cutting and affecting all services in the organisation
- Operational – related to a specific service or activity
- Strategic – may affect the strategic direction of the organisation
- Project – time limited and specific to finite projects

8.3 Implementation of risk actions are monitored as part of the organisation's regular reporting of budgets, performance and risk management (where such reporting exists). Where actions have not been taken in a timely manner to mitigate risks, this shall be reported to the appropriate committee charged with governance.

8.4 Emerging risks identified through regular horizon scanning will be assessed, analysed and recorded on the Risk Register with suitable responses as soon as they are identified.

8.5 Risks relating to committee decisions are recorded in each committee report. The Risk Manager provides advice and guidance and will identify if the Risk Register requires updating with any corporate or service risks emerging from report recommendations.

8.6 Project risks will be identified at the outset of any project and recorded in the organisation's Project Management approach. Any project risks that have an inherent risk score of 9 or above will be recorded on the Risk Register in a sub-section for the appropriate service area. This will enable monitoring of controls and actions.

8.7 Once the project is completed, project risks will be removed from the Risk Register.

9.0 Monitoring and Review

9.1 The Strategy will be reviewed annually by Corporate Services Committee and reported to Town Council.

9.2 Progress with actions designed to mitigate primary risks will be reported to those charged with governance.

9.3 Risk Owners will review their risks on the Risk Register every six months and give assurance that controls are still operating as recorded.

9.4 Where appropriate, Internal Audit will review the organisation's risk management processes at least once every two years.

10.0 Glossary of terms

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

APPENDIX 1

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

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

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

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

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

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

RISK SCORING MATRIX

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

Scores are mapped on the matrix above.

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

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

Green scores – monitor as necessary

PAGE LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK

RISK MANAGEMENT SCHEDULE

Corporate Services

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

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

Activity	Risk area	Risk event	Likelihood (x)	Impact (y)	Total (=)	Existing controls	Likelihood	Impact	Total	Actions (who)	Review date
• Software including AI use	Loss of data Failure of software Protection of data from breach of confidentiality	Unable to undertake council functions Unlawful access to data Damage to reputation	2	3	6	Use of qualified IT support Up to date premise security Up to date IT security Off-site secure data storage Up to date equipment AI policy adopted Training & awareness provided to staff	2	3	6	Town Clerk	Ongoing

• Investments	Failure of investment company	Loss of funds Restricted access to funds	2	4	8	Good track record Nationally renown Resolution to invest in institutions AA rating A-rating or higher following adoption of the Town Councils Treasury Management Strategy.	2	4	8	RFO	Ongoing
• S106 / deferred income	Fraud	Loss of funds Damage to reputation	1	4	4	Use of national bank Spread of investments (factoring in security, liquidity, yield) Internal controls	1	4	4	Extend spread of investment Head of Corporate Services	December 2025 Ongoing

						Invested with CCLA Deposit Account – AAA rated					
--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

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

Activity	Risk area	Risk event	Likelihood (x)	Impact (y)	Total (=)	Existing controls	Likelihood	Impact	Total	Actions (who)	Review date
						Use of council specific accounts software					
• Income generation	Predicted income doesn't match budgeted income Threat to service provision	Damage to reputation Unable to meet service commitments	3	2	6	Council sets balanced budget 3-9 months general reserves maintained Regular budget monitoring Main income from Precept and is governed by Legislation	3	2	6	RFO	Ongoing
• Tax base changes	Reduce income from precept arising from reduction in parish area	Reduced income	1	3	3	Active engagement by HRTC in governance reviews	1	3	3	RFO	Ongoing

	Slower than predicted increase in tax base arising from slower build out	Reduced income	1	3	3	None	1	3	3	RFO	Ongoing
Activity	Risk area	Risk event	Likelihood (x)	Impact (y)	Total (=)	Existing controls	Likelihood	Impact	Total	Actions (who)	Review date
Democracy											
• Elections	Not contested Insufficient Cllr's Suitability of candidates Not run according to statute	Damage to reputation Reduced democratic mandate Poor decisions	2	2	4	Elections promoted Information provided Elections run by the principal authority Budget allocated.	2	2	4	Head of Democratic Services	Ongoing
• Councillors	Cllr vacancies though resigning, leaving or disqualification	Insufficient numbers to support the democratic process	2	3	6	Cllr training and support provided	2	3	6	Head of Democratic Services	Ongoing

	Suitability of skills and experience Quality of guidance / decisions	Damage to reputation Financial costs				<p>Cllr's agree to Code of Conduct</p> <p>Cllr complete Declarations of Interest forms and declare interests at meetings</p> <p>Cllr workload shared among 14 Cllr's</p> <p>Council staff provide guidance, knowledge and support</p> <p>Council and Cllr's work under approved policies</p> <p>Chairmanship training offered to Councillors</p>					
Activity	Risk area	Risk event	Likeli-	Impact	Total	Existing controls	Likeli-hood	Impact	Total	Actions (who)	Review date

			hood (x)	(y)	(=)						
Activity	Risk area	Risk event	Likeli- hood (x)	Impact (y)	Total (=)	Existing controls	Likeli- hood	Impact	Total	Actions (who)	Review date
• Subscriptions	Loss of outside professional bodies who provide guidance and support Withdrawal of budget to fund subscriptions	Poor actions Damage to reputation	2	2	4	Long history of subscriptions Budget provision made annually Cllr's aware of benefits of subscriptions	2	2	4	Town Clerk	Ongoing
Central services											
• Utilities	Supply fails Cut off Supplier fails	Operation of council services ceases Damage to reputation	2	2	4	Use of national suppliers Accounts settled promptly	2	2	4	Town Clerk	Ongoing
• Unplanned work	Unbudgeted costs / use of general reserves	Damage to reputation Financial costs	2	3	6	Council policies guide for unplanned	2	3	6	Town Clerk	Ongoing

	Non-compliance with council policy					financial decisions Special mtgs can be held as required					
• Non-compliance with legislation	Council acting unlawfully	Damage to reputation Financial costs Legal proceedings	3	3	9	Trained staff Cllr training offered Use of outside professional services to support council Membership of professional bodies	2	2	4	Promotion of training to Cllrs - Head of Democratic Services Council to consider if training should / could be mandatory – Town Clerk	Ongoing
Activity	Risk area	Risk event	Likelihood (x)	Impact (y)	Total (=)	Existing controls	Likelihood	Impact	Total	Actions (who)	Review date
• Communication systems inc. email, post,	Failure of systems Council uncontactable	Damage to reputation Financial costs	2	2	4	Variety of communication methods available	2	2	4	Town Clerk	Ongoing

telephone, social media		Cessation of work of council				Use of nationally recognised suppliers					
• Insurance	Failure of insurance company Insufficient insurance cover	Damage to reputation Financial costs	1	4	4	Use of nationally recognised provider Annual review of insurance arrangements Budget allocated	1	4	4	Town Clerk	Ongoing
• Contracts	Company failure Termination of contract Insufficient / unsuitable monitoring	Damage to reputation Financial costs Cessation / disruption of service Dissatisfied customers	2	3	6	Use of recognised & competent providers Annual review of contracts All contracts are signed	2	3	6	Town Clerk	Ongoing

Activity	Risk area	Risk event	Likelihood (x)	Impact (y)	Total (=)	Existing controls	Likelihood	Impact	Total	Actions (who)	Review date
						Financial statements provided					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional support inc legal, hr, occ health, payroll, accounts / year end 	Insufficient cover Incorrect advice	Damage to reputation Financial costs Dissatisfied customers / staff / contractors etc	2	3	6	Use of competent providers	2	3	6	Town Clerk	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IT & copier / equipment 	Security Failure Replacement Maintenance contracts fail	Damage to reputation Financial costs Cessation / disruption of service Dissatisfied customers	1	2	2	Routine maintenance provided Up to date equipment & security	1	2	2	Town Clerk	Ongoing
Activity	Risk area	Risk event	Likelihood (x)	Impact (y)	Total (=)	Existing controls	Likelihood	Impact	Total	Actions (who)	Review date

• Staff	Competence Resignation Unplanned extended leave Fraud Misconduct Policy compliance	Poor / disrupted service delivery Damage to reputation Financial costs Dissatisfied customers	2	2	4	Qualified staff Ongoing training provided Contracts of employment Policy guidance Staff aware of colleagues work and processes Cllr monitor Appraisals Insurance in place Succession planning included in appraisal process	2	2	4	Town Clerk	Ongoing Develop a succession plan for key members of staff – Dec 24
Activity	Risk area	Risk event	Likelihood (x)	Impact (y)	Total (=)	Existing controls	Likelihood	Impact	Total	Actions (who)	Review date

• Health & Safety	Non-compliance with legislation Accidents, injury & death	Damage to reputation Financial costs	2	2	4	H&S policy in place Trained staff inc NEBOSH Day to day H&S practices completed Insurance in place Use of first aiders at events H&S equipment provided Employee Assistance Programme provided	2	2	4	Town Clerk	Ongoing
-------------------	--	---	---	---	---	--	---	---	---	------------	---------

Activity	Risk area	Risk event	Likeli-	Impact	Total	Existing controls	Likeli- hood	Impact	Total	Actions (who)	Review date
----------	-----------	------------	---------	--------	-------	-------------------	-----------------	--------	-------	---------------	-------------

			hood (x)	(y)	(=)						
• Service continuity	Disruption to / cessation of services	Damage to reputation Financial costs	2	3	6	Premises security measures in place Data backed up off site Remote working available Staff and Cllr training to be provided	2	3	6	Town Clerk	Ongoing
• Senior Staff and Member leadership	Disruption to / cessation of services Failure to meet statutory requirements	Damage to reputation Financial costs	2	3	6	Senior leadership team with breadth of knowledge and expertise Availability of external support Regular leadership meetings held	2	2	4	Share external support options - Town Clerk	Ongoing

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

Environment & Leisure

Activity	Risk area	Risk event	Likelihood (=)	Impact (=)	Total	Existing controls	Likelihood	Impact	Total	Actions (who)	Review date
----------	-----------	------------	----------------	------------	-------	-------------------	------------	--------	-------	---------------	-------------

			hood (x)				hood				
Public open spaces / recreation grounds / pavilions / play areas / sport provision	Service delivery Health & safety Equipment suitability / safety Replacement Vandalism Lease expiring Land needed for other purposes Unauthorised access (trespass, travellers) Adequate maintenance	Poor / disrupted service delivery Damage to reputation Financial costs Dissatisfied customers Liability claims Non-compliance with relevant legislation	2	3	6	Competent staff Insurance in place Regular checks Up to date and maintained equipment Process and budget in place to manage illegal traveller encampments	2	3	6	Head of Environmental and Community Services	Ongoing
Acts of God	Harm to person Removal of service or facility	Poor / disrupted service delivery	1	3	3	Good management and maintenance	1	3	3	Clerk	Ongoing

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

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

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

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

Activity	Risk area	Risk event	Likelihood (x)	Impact (y)	Total (=)	Existing controls	Likelihood	Impact	Total	Actions (who)	Review date
• Unregistered land	Evidence of right to manage Right of ownership challengeable False claim of ownership by a third party Insurance claims	Liability claims Non-compliance with relevant legislation Legal challenge: Ownership Injury Responsibilities	2	1	2	Solicitor advice sought. Land registered during legal transaction	2	1	2	Head of Environmental and Community Services	Ongoing
• Tithe Farm Sports Project	Financial affordability Contractor financial stability Future site management	Poor / disrupted delivery Damage to reputation Increase in financial costs	2	2	4	Tender process followed Grants secured Contingency included	2	2	4	Town Clerk	Ongoing until build complete and facility up and running

		Liability claims									
--	--	------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Community Services

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

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

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

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communications inc town crier, town guide, website, social media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cessation of services Disruption to services Quality of communications Suitability of contractors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor service delivery Damage to reputation Financial costs Dissatisfied customers Non-compliance with relevant legislation 	2	2	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compiled by all staff Delivered by various distributors Use of reputable print & design company 	2	2	4	Head of Environmental and Community Services	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Civic events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Absence of mayor Absence of support staff Health & safety issues Event not financially viable Not supported by attendees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Damage to reputation Poor quality event Personal injury Financial implications 	3	1	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of established events Use of regular providers & venues Availability of deputy mayor / cllrs Supported by staff 	3	1	3	Head of Democratic Services	Ongoing

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Corporate events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Absence of support staff Health & safety issues Not supported by attendees Weather Disaster / terrorism etc Poor attendance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Damage to reputation Poor quality event Personal injury Financial implications Reduce value for money / low community benefit 	3	1	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of established events Use of regular providers & venues Availability of deputy mayor / cllrs / other staff 	3	1	3	Town Clerk	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community grants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Failure to provide appropriate support to Community Groups Public perception Service delivery Poor uptake Excessive uptake 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Damage to reputation Lack of service delivery Insufficient funds 	2	1	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budget provision Cllr support Advertising availability Robust application process Budget advice provided 	2	1	2	Head of Environmental and Community Services	Ongoing

Activity	Risk area	Risk event	Likelihood (x)	Impact (y)	Total (=)	Existing controls	Likelihood	Impact	Total	Actions (who)	Review date
• Community safety	Community support Public perception Service delivery	Damage to reputation Lack of community support	2	2	4	Monthly contract review Use of Beds Police Budget provision Cllr support Regular Community Safety Sub-Committee meetings attended by the police	2	2	4	Head of Environmental and Community Services	Ongoing
Mayor and deputy mayor	Civic face of Council Resignation from position	Damage to reputation	2	1	2	Cllr and staff support Regular reviews	2	1	2	Town Clerk	Ongoing
Houghton Regis Hive	Financial affordability /	Increase in financial costs	2	2	4	Cllr and staff support	2	2	4	Town Clerk & Head of Environmental	Ongoing

	financial management	Insufficient funds				Use of reputable contractor				and Community Services	
	Community support / Public perception	Damage to reputation				Up to date equipment					
	Quality of communications	Lack of community support				Contractual agreement to be signed					
	Health & safety issues	Liability claims				Regular reports to T&FG					
	Service delivery	Dissatisfied customers				Monitoring of contracts					
	Disruption to services	Non-compliance with relevant legislation				Insurance in place					
	Suitability of contractors					Risk assessments undertaken and checked					
	Contractor financial stability										
	Future site management										

Planning

Activity	Risk area	Risk event	Likelihood (x)	Impact (=)	Total	Existing controls	Likelihood	Impact	Total	Actions (who)	Review date
----------	-----------	------------	----------------	------------	-------	-------------------	------------	--------	-------	---------------	-------------

• Consultation responses	In house expertise Professional advice	Damage to reputation Poor / ineffective response	2	2	4	Use of consultant to guide on more significant applications	2	2	4	Head of Democratic Services	Ongoing
--------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	-----------------------------	---------