HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Peel Street, Houghton Regis, Bedfordshire, LU5 5EY

Town Mayor: **Cllr D Jones** Tel: 01582 708540
Town Clerk: **Clare Evans** e-mail: info@houghtonregis-tc.gov.uk

6th October 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 12th October 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.

THIS MEETING MAY BE RECORDED[1]

Clare Evans
Town Clerk

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

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This meeting may be filmed by the Council for subsequent broadcast online and can be viewed at https://houghtonregis-tc.gov.uk/council/committees

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.

in respect of the business on the agenda.

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

3. SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

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 - 13

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 15th June 2026.

Recommendation: To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 15th June 2026.

5. COMMITTEE MINUTES

Pages 14 - 66

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

Corporate Services Committee	1st June 2026 **Minute number 13566** – For information this was approved at Town Council on 15th June 2026. **Minute number 13570** – Code of Conduct Complaint Handling To recommend to Town Council the adoption of the Town Councils Code of Conduct Complaint Handling policy. **Minute number 13571** – Communication Strategy To recommend to Town Council the adoption of the Town Councils newly developed Communication Strategy. **Minute number 13572** – Whistleblowing Policy To recommend to Town Council the adoption of the Town Councils Whistleblowing Policy
Community Services Committee	27th April 2026
Environment & Leisure Committee	21st April 2026
Planning Committee	2nd June and 22nd June, 13th July, 3rd August and 24th August, 14th September 2026 (add signed copies to agenda folder)
Staffing Committee	2nd February 2026

	Minute number 13519 - Staffing Forecast Review – Update for 2026-2027 To recommend to Town Council the formal recognition that the responsibilities of RFO be transferred to Head of Corporate Services as at 1st April 2026.
Town Partnership Committee	28th April 2026

Recommendation: **To receive the Minutes detailed above and to approve the recommendations and to adopt the policies contained therein:**

Minute number 13566 – Investment Working Group

- **To adopt the Town Councils Treasury Management Strategy**

Minute number 13570 – Code of Conduct Complaint Handling

- **To adopt the Town Councils Code of Conduct Complaint Handling policy.**

Minute number 13571 – Communication Strategy

- **To adopt the Town Councils newly developed Communication Strategy.**

Minute number 13572 – Whistleblowing Policy

- **To adopt the Town Councils Whistleblowing Policy**

Minute number 13519 - Staffing Forecast Review – Update for 2026-2027

- **To formally recognise that the responsibilities of RFO be transferred to Head of Corporate Services as at 1st April 2026**

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. PROJECT H

Pages 67 - 98

Council agreed at its meeting on 14th April 2026 to go out to tender for the detailed design and fit out, including electrical & mechanical and audio & visual, for Project H.

This report provides detailed information to enable the council to award the contract for the fit out and to determine how the works will be funded.

Recommendation: **1. To note the Project Summary Report;**

2. **To authorise the Mayor and the Town Clerk to sign the lease for Unit 1 All Saints View;**
3. **To receive the tender analysis report;**
4. **Subject to lease being signed, to appoint contractor A as the contractor for the fit out of Unit 1, All Saints View, as a Community Hub, up to a contract value of £669,153 (including a 10% contingency)**
5. **For Houghton Regis Town Council at its meeting on 21st October 2026 to seek the approval of the Secretary of State, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to apply for a PWLB annuity loan of £500,000 over the borrowing term of 7.5 not over 8 years for the fit-out of Unit 1, All Saints View, as a Community Hub. The annual loan repayments will come to around £79,398.**
   It is not intended to increase the council tax precept for the purpose of the loan repayments.
6. **To note that funding currently coded to 199-4991 will be re-purposed to a new code to facilitate the loan repayments.**
7. **To note that any contract variations during the construction phase will be determined as follows:**
   - **Variations to works within or less than the budget to be agreed by Town Clerk and the Head of Environmental & Community Services**

Variations in excess of budget to be agreed by Town Council

9. LOCAL COUNCIL AWARD SCHEME – GOLD APPLICATION

Pages 99 - 145

The Corporate Plan includes an objective under Pillar 4, Management & Operations, to apply for the NALC Local Council Award scheme. The scheme offers 3 levels of accreditation: Bronze, Silver and Gold.

Details about the scheme can be found here: Local Council Award Scheme

As part of the process Council is required to confirm by Resolution that all the required documents, information and conditions are in place for the award.

Recommendation:

1. **To confirm that all the required documents, information and conditions are in place for the Bronze award, and that these are published on the council's website, where applicable;**
2. **To confirm that all the required documents, information and conditions are in place for the Silver award, and that these are published on the council's website, where applicable**
3. **To confirm that all the required documents, information and conditions are in place for the Gold award, and that these are published on the council's website, where applicable**

10. 2023–2027 TERM REVIEW AND 2027 ELECTION PROMOTION

Pages 146 - 162

2023–2027 Term Review
As the 2023-2027 term of office draws to a close reflecting back on member experiences provides a useful learning opportunity for the council. It is hoped to use feedback to support or amend council administrative processes to improve councillor experiences.

2027 Election Promotion

The Electoral Administration Act 2006[2] places duties on Electoral Registration Officers and Returning Officers to encourage participation in the electoral process.

Whilst this statutory duty does not fall directly upon the Town Council, Houghton Regis Town Council can support democratic engagement by raising awareness of the 2027 elections and encouraging residents to participate in the local democratic process.

Recommendation:
1. **To support the review of the 2023-2027 term of office**
2. **To support the election promotion process for May 2027.**

11. INTERNAL CONTROL POLICY

Pages 163 - 167

Council are required, by Regulation 6.1 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, to review each financial year the effectiveness of its system of financial control.

The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the Council's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically. Therefore, members will find attached the Town Councils Internal Controls Policy, for review and approving.

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

Members are advised the legislative framework remains unchanged in respect of internal control requirements.

Recommendation: **To confirm the effectiveness of the council's internal control system in accordance with the council's Internal Control Policy**

12. PLANNING COMMITTEE VACANCY

As members are aware there is a vacancy on Planning Committee. Members are requested to consider an alternative appointment to this Committee.

Recommendation: **To appoint a member to the HRTC Planning Committee.**

[2] https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/22/section/69

13. AUDITED ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN 2025/26

Pages 168 - 178

To advised members of the outcomes of the external audit 2025/26.

Recommendation:

1. **To approve and accept the Audited Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2025/26;**
2. **To note the matters raised in the Completion Letter dated 18th September 2026.**

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HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 15th June 2026 at 7.00pm.

Present:	Councillors:	D Jones	Town Mayor
		E Billington	
		E Cooper	
		Y Farrell	
		W Henderson	
		M Herber	
		T McMahon	
		A Slough	
		C Slough	
	Officers:	Clare Evans	Town Clerk
		Debbie Marsh	Head of Corporate Services
		Amanda Samuels	Administration Officer
	Public:	0	
Apologies	Councillor:	J Carroll	
		E Costello	
		C Rollins	
		D Taylor	

13583 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllrs J Carroll, E Costello, C Rollins and D Taylor.

13584 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

13585 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

None.

13586 MINUTES

To approve, as amended, the Minutes of the meeting held on 20th May 2026.

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

13587 COMMITTEE AND SUB-COMMITTEE MINUTES

Members received the minutes of the following committees and were requested to consider any recommendations and to adopt any policies contained therein.

DRAFT

Corporate Services Committee	2nd 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	11th May 2026
Staffing Committee	None to present
Town Partnership Committee	None to present

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

New Cemetery Sub-Committee None to present.

Resolved: To receive the Minutes detailed above and to approve the 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**

13588 TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Town Mayor informed members that he had attended the following:

- Two Town Council events at Houghton Hall Park
- Five external events: Dunstable Sea Scouts Awards; the Aylesbury Mayoral inauguration; Mayor of Harpenden's Civic Service; Dunstable District Scout Council AGM; and the High Sheriff of Bedfordshire's garden party
- Mayoral fund-raising events were being developed and would be announced as soon as possible

The Deputy Mayor informed Members that they had attended a vintage event in Newport Pagnell.

13589 REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS & ON TRAINING SESSIONS ATTENDED

Councillors provided verbal reports from meetings they had attended of outside organisations or from training courses they had attended on behalf of the Council.

DRAFT

Councillor Farrell reported on the Memorial Hall

- the afternoon tea held in the hall had been a great success and another one had been requested
- there was a race night scheduled for July
- the Memorial Hall had been entered into Houghton Regis in Bloom
- the hall floor and stage were due to be revarnished
- the 70th anniversary of the hall was coming up and suggestions for celebratory events were invited.

Councillor Jones provided the following updates:

BATPC

- attended the Finance and General Purposed Committee on 11th May and the County Committee on 27th May. CBC Cllr Russell Goodchild had given a presentation at the County Committee on plans for a parish charter designed to 'encourage co-operative relations between the parties'.
- suffered a small financial loss in 2025/26.
- the impact of Martyn's Law on town and parish councils had been discussed in relation to venues and public events
- NALC was carrying out Project Keystone to consider ways in which the services provided to members could be improved

Hospice at Home Volunteers

- there had been a trustees and volunteers training day in April. Requests had been received for more training on dealing with dementia
- at the committee meeting held in May the possibility of expanding the charity's client area was discussed
- the 40th Anniversary Dinner had been a great success
- the AGM was scheduled for 7th July in the Memorial Hall

Chews Foundation

- the charity, which provided student school uniform grants, had received 152 applications and £11,175 had been awarded.
- Income from lettings would be down due to a tenant serving a notice to leave Chews House. Rooms would be remarketed soon.
- Operational costs of running Chews House and The Little Theatre might not be covered due to the impact reduced letting income. Funds available would require close monitoring.

13590 INDEPENDENCE OF THE TOWN COUNCIL APPOINTED INTERNAL AUDITOR

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.

Cllr Henderson joined the meeting.

DRAFT

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

13591 CONFIRMATION OF APPOINTMENT OF INTERNAL AUDITOR FOR 2026/27

Members were 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 were requested to confirm the appointment of the Internal Auditor for the financial year 2026/2027.

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

13592 INTERNAL AUDIT, PLANNING AND REVIEW POLICY

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

The policy set out the framework for the Council's internal audit arrangements, including planning, reporting procedures and the annual review of effectiveness. It ensured compliance with legislative requirements under the Accounts and Audit Regulations and supported the Council in maintaining a robust system of internal control, risk management and good governance.

Resolved: 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.

13593 YEAR END ACCOUNTS

Members received a report providing a brief outline of the year end accounting process. Members were invited to raise any queries relating to the process.

13594 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN 2025/2026: ANNUAL INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT 2025/2026

In accordance with Financial Regulation 3.5, Members were 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 was provided.

DRAFT

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

13595 DATES FOR THE EXERCISE OF PUBLIC RIGHTS FOR 2025/2026

Members were 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 had statutory rights in respect of a council's annual accounting statements and external audit under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014. These rights were summarised as follows:
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 were advised of the following

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

Resolved: 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**

13596 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN 2025/2026 SECTION 1 - ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

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 was provided for consideration, approval and signature.

Slight reconfiguration of accounts for the previous year regarding loan repayments.

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

DRAFT

13597 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN 2025/2026 SECTION 2 – ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS

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 was provided for consideration, approval and signature subject to external audit.

Members were requested to note that the column headed Year Ending 31st March 2025 had been headed 'Restated' to correct the reporting of loan repayments in 2024/25.

Resolved: 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

13598 REVIEW OF EARMARKED RESERVE MOVEMENTS 2026/27

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

13599 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

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 had 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 had been provided to the Council's Internal Auditor, who had raised no comments.

Owing to an administrative error, the second recommendation on the report had been omitted. Members agreed to take both recommendations forward.

Proposed by: Cllr McMahon Seconded by: Cllr Billington

Members voted unanimously in favour of the recommendations

Members were advised that the minimum investment rating, as included in the strategy, would need to be reflected in the Risk Management Strategy &Schedule.

Resolved: 1. To adopt the Town Council's Treasury Management Strategy.
2. To support the continuation of the Investment Working Group for a period beyond the original 12 month period.

DRAFT

13600 RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY AND SCHEDULE

In accordance with Financial Regulation 2.2, the council was 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.

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

13601 PROJECT H VENUE NAME

As requested by Council, a consultation exercise had 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.

Resolved: 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.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 7.34pm

Dated this 12th day of October 2026

Chairman

DRAFT

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Corporate Services Committee

Minutes of the Meeting held on
1st June 2026 at 7.00pm

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

ABSENCE OF THE CHAIR

Following apologies from the Chair (Cllr Taylor) and as the committee had not yet considered and appointed a Vice-Chair, the Head of Corporate Services invited members to elect a Chair for this particular meeting. On being put to the vote, Cllr Jones was duly voted Chair. No other nominations were received.

13555 APOLOGIES & SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Councillors J Carroll, W Henderson (Councillor C Slough substituted) and D Taylor.

13556 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

13557 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

None.

13558 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

Members were invited to elect a Vice-Chair for the Corporate Services Committee for 2026-2027

Nominee:	W Henderson	Proposed by:	C Slough
		Seconded by:	E Billington

There were no other nominations.

On being put to the vote, Cllr Henderson became the Vice-Chair of Corporate Services for the municipal year of 2026/2027.

13559 MINUTES

To approve the Minutes of the meetings held on 2nd March 2026.

Resolved: To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 2nd March 2026 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

13560 COMMITTEE FUNCTIONS & TERMS OF REFERENCE

In accordance with Standing Order 4.j.iv Council is 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.

Members were provided with the extract from the approved Committee Functions & Terms of Reference which related to this committee.

13561 COMMITTEE WORKPLAN

Members were provided with a workplan for the municipal year 2026/27.

The workplan provided a structured approach to the committee's business throughout 2026/27, ensuring all statutory requirements and governance obligations were met in a timely manner.

Resolved: To review and approve the Corporate Services Committee Workplan, which outlines anticipated specific reports for the municipal year 2026/27.

13562 INCOME AND EXPENDITURE REPORT

For information, Members were provided with the income and expenditure report for the Corporate Services committee up to the end of the 2025/2026 financial year.

In addition, Members were also provided with the income and expenditure report, for Corporate Services Committee to date (20th May 2026).

2025/26: Members queried why figures were under Committed Expenditure as this should not occur on completed accounts. The Head of Corporate Services explained that this occurred where a purchase order had been raised but the invoice had not yet been received. The relevant amounts would still appear under 2025/26 figures.

2026 to date: Members suggested that the report did not contain all the figures up to 20th May. The Head of Corporate Services confirmed that this was due to the timing of the agenda going out. It was intended that the first meeting of this committee would be pushed back for the next council year in order to complete the report in good time.

Members noted that the interest on the DMADF was not stated in the report.

The item 'Transfers to Earmarked Reserves' was questioned as this was not technically earmarked reserves, but for spending against Project H. The Head of Corporate Services responded that the advice from the accountant had been to keep the money separate. Members agreed that the money should be kept separate but that previous discussions had emphasised the need to specify how the funds would be allocated. Members were advised of a discussion that took place during the budget setting meeting held on the 19th January 2026 (minute number 13501).

13563 BANK AND CASH RECONCILIATION STATEMENTS

Members were requested to receive the monthly bank and cash reconciliation statements for February, March and April 2026.

Resolved:
1. **To approve the monthly bank and cash reconciliation statements for February, March and April 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.**

13564 LIST OF PAYMENTS

For information, Members were provided with a list of payments for the period February, March and April 2026. (inclusive).

13565 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 were 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.

13566 INVESTMENT WORKING GROUP

Members were provided with minutes from the Investment Working Group meeting held on the 18th May 2026.

At this meeting, members of the Investment Working Group completed its review of the Town Councils Treasury Management Strategy. Following this review, the Working Group recommended the Strategy be adopted and referred to Town Council in June for formal ratification.

Members supported the strategy and acknowledged the work involved.

Resolved:
1) **To note the minutes of the Investment Working Group meeting held on the 18th May 2026.**
2) **To recommend to Town Council the adoption of the Town Councils Treasury Management Strategy at the Town Council meeting to be held on the 15th June 2026.**

13567 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 4 for financial year 2025/2026. Members noted that the amount eligible to be reclaimed by the council was less than the previous year.

13568 RENEWAL OF DIRECT DEBIT, STANDING ORDER, BACS AND CHAPS PAYMENTS

Members were advised, under Financial Regulations 7.9 & 7.10, the approval of the use of Direct Debit, Standing Order, BACS or CHAPS shall be renewed by resolution of the council every year.

Members were provided with a list of Direct Debits and Standing Orders.

Resolved:
1. **To approve the use of BACS method of payment.**
2. **To approve the use of Direct Debit, Standing Order and CHAPS method of payment.**

13569 PUBLIC WORKS LOAN BOARD ANNUAL REPORT

In accordance with the committees Terms of Reference and Financial Regulation 12, For information Members are provided with an annual report of the council's loans.

Members were provided with a report for information.

13570 CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINT HANDLING

The Town Councils Code of Conduct Complaint Handling Policy was being reviewed as part of the Council's routine policy review programme. The review did not reflect any changes to legislation and therefore the policy remained fit for purpose. Members were advised, however, that an amendment had been made to the policy to highlight that the Town Councils Code of Conduct had been updated and re-adopted due to changes based on the Local Government Association Model Councillor Code of Conduct 2020.

Members were provided with a document highlighting the amendments.

Resolved: **To recommend to Town Council the adoption of the Town Councils Code of Conduct Complaint Handling policy.**

13571 COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

At the Community Services Committee meeting held on the 27th April 2026, Members were provided with a newly created Communications Strategy, which incorporated a draft Annual Marketing Plan (January – December). The Strategy set out how key messages would be communicated and identified tools to support officers and Members in delivering effective communications.

Members of the Community Services committee approved the Strategy and resolved to recommend its adoption to the Corporate Services committee and subsequent ratification by Town Council.

Members were provided with a copy of the newly created Communications Strategy.

Members were reminded that, at its meeting on 2 March 2026, the Corporate Services Committee reviewed the Council's existing Communications Strategy and recommended it for approval, while noting that a newly developed Communications Strategy, taking into consideration the target audience, would supersede it.

Resolved: To recommend to Town Council the adoption of the Town Councils newly developed Communication Strategy.

13572 WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

Members were provided with a track change document due to changes to the Equality Act 2010 which included a duty on employers to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment of their employees.

Resolved: To recommend to Town Council the adoption of the Town Councils Whistleblowing Policy

13573 MOBILE PHONE CONTRACT

The Town Council's current mobile phone contract has expired apart from two SIMs which are in contract until 31st July 2027.

The Head of Corporate Services informed Members that following some investigation into potential cost savings, three companies had been approached regarding phone contracts. Members were provided with a report and details of costs.

Members noted that the recommendation appeared in the report but was not on the agenda and agreed to propose the amendment "To enter into a 24-month contract with Company A" rather than defer it.

Proposed by: Cllr Slough Seconded by: Cllr Herber

Members voted unanimously in favour of the amendment.

Resolved: To enter into a 24-month contract with Company 'A'

WGH

13574 STAFFING FORECAST 2027-2032

Members were provided with a report on the proposed five-year Corporate Services staffing plan. Members agreed that this appeared to address Houghton Regis Town Council's need in the next five years.

Resolved:
1. **To support the projected staff changes within the Corporate Services team for the years 2027-2028, and to recommend to the Staffing Committee these changes be included as part of the 2027-2028 budget setting process;**
2. **To receive the staffing forecast for 2028-2032**

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 7.50pm

Dated this 7th day of September 2026

Chairman



HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Community Services Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on
27th April 2026 at 7.00 pm

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

13519 APOLOGIES & SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Cllr C Slough.

13520 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

13521 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

None.

13522 MINUTES

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 23rd February 2026.

Resolved: To confirm the minutes of the Community Services Committee meeting held on 23rd February 2026 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

13523 TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING WORKING GROUPS AND CONSIDER ANY RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED THEREIN

Community Engagement Sub-Committee	20th January 2026
Community Safety Sub-	17th December 2025, 21st January & 18th March 2026.

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

13524 COMMITTEE WORKPLAN

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

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

The Head of Environmental and Community Services confirmed that a new workplan would be presented at the next meeting.

13525 INCOME AND EXPENDITURE REPORT

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

The Head of Environmental and Community Services stated that 90% of the annual budget had been spent and that just under 10% would be carried into General Reserves.

13526 COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

Members were provided with the newly created Communications Strategy, which incorporated a draft Annual Marketing Plan (January – December). The document outlined how key messages were delivered, the internal processes, and the tools provided to support staff.

The Head of Environmental and Community Services informed Members that the reference to Communications Officer should read Communications Administrator and would be amended accordingly.

Members felt the document delivered a clear message and expressed thanks for the work undertaken. The Head of Environmental and Community Services confirmed that they would pass the message on to those involved.

Members were happy to approve the strategy with the agreed amendment.

Resolved: To approve the draft Communications Strategy and recommend its adoption via the Corporate Services Committee.

13527 THE REGIS GROUP UPDATE

Members were informed that HRTC had reached out to town and parish councils with the Regis appellation in order to establish the Regis Group. The inaugural meeting had been well received, and it was hoped that this would provide a forum to share good practice and promote civic identity.

In order to create momentum and increase visibility for the Regis Group, the councils would look to support each other via social media, town/parish magazines etc. It was hoped that mayors might attend civic events held by the group.

It was further proposed that HRTC secured or appointed a town crier who would attend civic and larger events. It was hoped this appointment would help strengthen the town's identity and might lead to future participation in the Bognor Regis Town Crier Competition.

The Head of Environmental and Community Services would consider how best to decide the appointment of Town Crier.

Resolved:

1. **To note the formation and purpose of the Regis Group.**
2. **To support officer engagement in the ongoing development of the group.**
3. **To endorse the agreed actions and proposed collaborative approach outlined in this report.**
4. **To support the proposal for Houghton Regis Town Council to explore securing or appointing a Town Crier, with a view to participating in the Bognor Regis Town Crier Competition as part of the Regis Group collaboration and civic promotion activities.**

13528 ANNUAL REVIEW OF COMMITTEE SERVICE CONTRACTS

This was to provide an annual review of key service contracts and partnership agreements, and to identify any required actions.

There were four contracts for consideration relating to:

- Town Centre Public Toilets
- Bulk Waste Collection
- Christmas Lights
- Operation Hana

Members had been provided with the relevant information and agreed to approve the recommendation.

Resolved:

1. **To note the annual review of key service contracts and partnership arrangements.**
2. **To note that the Town Centre Public Toilets contract is currently out of contract and endorses officers proceeding with an updated tender exercise.**
3. **To note the confirmed Bulk Waste Collection pricing and budget provision for 2026/27.**
4. **To note that the Christmas Lights contract is in place until 31 October 2029.**
5. **To note that funding for Operation Hanna 2026/27 is subject to consideration of a new Service Level Agreement by the Community Safety Sub-Committee.**

13529 FORMAT AND FUNCTION OF COMMITTEE SUB-COMMITTEES

Members were requested to discuss and decide on the future format and frequency of the Community Engagement Sub-Committee and the Community Safety Sub-Committee. Both sub-committees had discussed potential changes and their recommendations were presented to Members.

The Community Engagement Sub-Committee would continue to meet in the evenings and would be attended by both the Events Manager and the Youth and Community Manager.

The Community Safety Sub-Committee would meet as planned in May 2026 but would thereafter move to bi-monthly meetings for a maximum of six meetings a year.

For purposes of transparency, it had been decided that both committees should remain sub-committees to enable public participation. Members were also assured that officers would keep them informed of any important developments as they arose rather than being delayed until a future meeting.

It was hoped that the new schedules would enable officers to progress work more effectively between meetings.

Resolved:

1. **To approve that the Community Engagement Sub-Committee stays a sub-committee, and that it meets in the evenings, and is provided with the required officer support to ensure it achieves its purpose and meets a maximum of six times a year.**
2. **To approve that the Community Safety Sub-Committee stays a sub-committee, and that it meets in the daytime, and meets a maximum of six times a year.**

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 7.41 pm

Dated this 20th day of July 2026

Chairman



HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL
Environment & Leisure Committee
Minutes of the meeting held on
21st April 2026 at 7.00 pm

Present:	Councillors:	A Slough	Chairman
		P Burgess	
		T McMahon	
		C Rollins	
		C Slough	(Sub)
		D Taylor	
	Officers:	Ian Haynes	Head of Environmental & Community Services
		Amanda Samuels	Administration Officer
	Public:	1	
Apologies:	Councillors:	Y Farrell	
		W Henderson	

13508 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllr Y Farrell and Cllr W Henderson (Cllr C Slough substituted).

13509 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

A member of the public attended to enquire whether Houghton Regis Town Council (HRTC) had received any contact from Groundwork regarding the Himalayan Balsam in Houghton Brook.

It was stressed that the problem would not be resolved within a year and that there was a tight schedule for carrying out the necessary work. Permissions would be required from landowners before commencement, and conservation areas would be involved. Funds were available for the work once it could progress.

The Head of Environmental and Community Services confirmed no contact had been received from Groundwork, but HRTC was ready to grant permissions where possible. The Head of Environmental and Community Services confirmed they would contact the representative from Groundwork to ascertain details of the current situation.

13510 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

13511 MINUTES

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 12th January 2026.

AS

Resolved: **To confirm the minutes of the Environment & Leisure Committee meeting held on 12th January 2026 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.**

13512 COMMITTEE WORKPLAN

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

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

13513 HOUGHTON HALL PARK

The Head of Environmental and Community Services provided Members with a verbal update on Houghton Hall Park (HHP)

HHP continued to progress well. The Board had met to work through financial issues. The Board would also carry out detailed work with Central Bedfordshire Council on improving the Joint Venture Agreement.

HHP developments included:

- Installation of a tiny forest
- Earthwatch would carry out monitoring
- Friends of HHP, who assisted in the gardens, would be holding their AGM soon
- The box hedge was being removed
- The 83,000 bulbs that were planted were coming through
- Establishing how to improve HRTC's offer on Houghton Regis in Bloom – the Friends of HHP had expressed an interest in adopting the winter bedding display
- The borehole was up and running
- HHP had seen its first commercial hire for the Lime and Cedar rooms
- It was anticipated that HHP would be entered for the same awards as the previous year.

13514 INCOME AND EXPENDITURE REPORT

Members had been provided with a copy of the income and expenditure report.

The Head of Environmental and Community Services informed Members some end-of-year work remained to be carried out.

The main points of note were:

- Spend and variance figures were as expected, with the exception of utilities and some maintenance
- Thorn Park budget figures were not yet in, but would be less than the committee had approved

- HHP figures were as expected. There was a transfer from earmarked reserves to cover the cost of replacement blinds
- The cemetery income had increased; therefore, the deficit was not as large as anticipated

In response to a request from Members regarding the timeframe for reaching capacity in the vaults, the Head of Environmental and Community Services confirmed they would provide an estimated timeframe.

13515 TITHE FARM RECREATION GROUND SPORTS PROJECT UPDATE

Members were provided with a verbal update on the Tithe Farm Recreation Ground Sports Project.

The S278 requirements for the entrance had been completed.

The Scheduling Team required three months' notice for works that required roadworks and traffic management. It was hoped the work would take place over the school summer holidays.

13516 REVIEW OF OPEN SPACES AND SPORT AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

Members had been provided with a breakdown of existing open spaces with regard to use and function; accessibility and connectivity; quality; and condition.

As part of the review, Members were asked to consider the opportunities for additional sports and equipment provision. The recommendations were aspirational and did not reflect a commitment from Members at this stage.

Following a request from Members regarding benchmarking HRTC's provision of facilities, the Head of Environmental and Community Services confirmed that a benchmarking exercise could be carried out that covered:

- Town provision
- Town Council-delivered provision

Resolved:

1) **Approve the findings of the open spaces and outdoor sports review as set out in this report.**
2) **Endorse the progression of a prioritised action plan to improve the quality, accessibility and functionality of existing open spaces, timescale subject to available resources.**
3) **Agree that further feasibility work is undertaken with partners in respect of:**
   - **additional outdoor sports provision (tennis, outdoor gym, cricket and netball); and**
   - **the potential delivery of a second all-weather pitch at Thorn Park.**
4) **Request that officers explore external funding and partnership opportunities to support delivery, and report back with costed options.**

13517 ANNUAL REVIEW OF LAND AND ASSETS

Members were presented with the annual review of the Council's land and building assets, including condition, insurance and planned maintenance arrangements.

Resolved: **To endorse the continued management of the Council's land and building assets in accordance with good asset management practice, current insurance valuations and planned maintenance information.**

13518 PLAY AREA TENDER

Members were requested to approve that officers secured the S106 commuted sum of £97,000 from CB/21/03369/FULL - Hand Post Field north of Thorn Road, Houghton Regis, and invite tenders for the potential refurbishment of The Village Green play area with a project value of up to £250,000, potentially leaving £42,000 in the earmarked reserve.

The commuted sum could only be spent on The Village Green; however, this did not apply to the money in reserves. Members questioned how much it would cost to refurbish the Parkside Upper play area. The Head of Environmental and Community Services confirmed that they would carry out a costing exercise.

Members proposed amending recommendation 2 to include Parkside Upper.

Proposed by: Cllr A Slough Seconded by: Cllr C Slough

Members voted unanimously in favour of the amendment.

Members voted on the substantive:

Proposed by: Cllr McMahon Seconded by Cllr C Slough

Members voted unanimously in favour of the amended recommendation.

Resolved:

1) **Approve the application to secure the S106 commuted sum of £97,000 from CB/21/03369/FULL - Hand Post Field north of Thorn Road, Houghton Regis.**
2) **Approve an open tendering process for the refurbishment of The Village Green and Parkside Upper play areas from suitable and experienced suppliers.**
3) **To approve the use of an electronic tendering process in accordance with the provision within Appendix 1, point 2 of Financial Regulations.**
4) **To approve the Proper Officer and Town Mayor to open the tender submissions on behalf of HRTC, in accordance with Standing Order 18, d iv, and final designs to come back to the Environment & Leisure Committee.**

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 7.49 pm

Dated this 6th day of July 2026

Chairman



HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Planning Committee
Minutes of the meeting held on
2nd June 2026 at 7.00pm

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

13575 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Councillor Billington and Councillor Carroll.

13576 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

13577 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

13578 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

Members were invited to elect a Vice-Chair for Planning Committee for 2026/2027.

Nominee:	E Billington	Proposed by:	C Slough
		Seconded by:	E Cooper

There were no other nominations.

On being put to the vote, Councillor Billington became the Vice-Chair of Planning for the municipal year of 2026/2027.

13579 MINUTES

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

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

DJJ

13580 COMMITTEE FUNCTIONS & TERMS OF REFERENCE

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

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

For information, Members were provided with the extract from the approved Committee Functions & Terms of Reference which related to this committee.

13581 PLANNING MATTERS

(a) The following planning applications were considered:

CB/26/00961/FULL (click for more details)	Demolition of a store and the construction of a self-build two bedroom bungalow 6 Townsend Terrace, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5BB **Comments: Members felt that a precedent had been set as the proposed construction would be similar to that of neighbouring properties.** **Houghton Regis Town Council raised no objection to this application.**
CB/26/01014/FULL (click for more details)	Installation of substation and associated works including speed hump and pedestrian crossing Ground Floor of Multi Storey Car Park south of Thorn Road, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU6 1RT **Comments: Houghton Regis Town Council raised no objection to this application.**

Noted:

CB/26/01248/DOC (click for more details)	Discharge of Condition 4 against planning permission 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
CB/26/01220/LDCP (click for more details)	Lawful Development Certificate Proposed: Single storey outbuilding to rear of site 43 Pantheon Drive, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 6GW

CB/26/01401/DOC (click for more details)	Discharge of Condition 25, against planning permission ref. CB/12/03613/OUT (Outline planning permission with the details of access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale reserved for later determination. Development to comprise: up to 5,150 dwellings (Use Class C3); up to 202,500 sqm gross of additional development in Use Classes: A1, A2, A3 (retail), A4 (public house), A5 (take away); B1, B2, B8 (offices, industrial and storage and distribution); C1 (hotel), C2 (care home), D1 and D2 (community and leisure); car showroom; data centre; petrol filling station; car parking; primary substation; energy centre; and for the laying out of the buildings; routes and open spaces within the development; and all associated works and operations including but not limited to: demolition; earthworks; engineering operations. All development, works and operations to be in accordance with the Development Parameters Schedule and Plans.) Phase 4, Parcel 6, Houghton Regis North 1, Sundon Road, Houghton Regis
CB/26/01402/DOC (click for more details)	Discharge of Condition 19 (parcel 6 phase 4) against planning permission ref. CB/12/03613/OUT (Outline planning permission with the details of access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale reserved for later determination. Development to comprise: up to 5,150 dwellings (Use Class C3); up to 202,500 sqm gross of additional development in Use Classes: A1, A2, A3 (retail), A4 (public house), A5 (take away); B1, B2, B8 (offices, industrial and storage and distribution); C1 (hotel), C2 (care home), D1 and D2 (community and leisure); car showroom; data centre; petrol filling station; car parking; primary substation; energy centre; and for the laying out of the buildings; routes and open spaces within the development; and all associated works and operations including but not limited to: demolition; earthworks; engineering operations. All development, works and operations to be in accordance with the Development Parameters Schedule and Plans.) Phase 4, Parcel 6, Houghton Regis North 1, Sundon Road, Houghton Regis
CB/26/01394/NMA (click for more details)	Non-material amendment to planning permission CB/23/03448/FULL (Revised scheme: Demolition of existing outbuildings whilst retaining the existing dwelling. Erection of 26 dwellings with access road and sewers.) Amendment sought to amend the first floor front elevation and floor plan of plots 9 and 10 and the ground floor rear elevation and floor plan of plot 11 Red Cow Farm House, Bedford Road, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 6JP

DJJ

CB/26/01541/NMA (click for more details)	Non-material amendment to planning permission CB/23/03448/FULL (Revised scheme: Demolition of existing outbuildings whilst retaining the existing dwelling. Erection of 26 dwellings with access road and sewers.) Amendment sought: To regularise the retaining wall plan Red Cow Farm House, Bedford Road, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 6JP
CB/26/01337/DOC (click for more details)	Discharge of Condition 19 against planning permission CB/24/00059/FULL (Proposed demolition of existing buildings and redevelopment to provide new employment floorspace for a flexible range of uses (within Classes E(g)(iii), B2 and/or B8) with ancillary offices, together with the rationalisation of accesses and provision of yard area, parking, landscaping, and all other associated works) Unit 1, Humphrys Road, Dunstable, LU5 4TP

Permissions / Approvals / Consents
None received.

Refusals:
None received.

Withdrawals.
None received.

13582 PLANNING APPLICATIONS – DELEGATED AUTHORITY

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

CB/26/00933/FULL (click for more details)	Erection of an outbuilding, retrospective 19 Long Mead, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5JS
CB/26/01531/FULL (click for more details)	Loft conversion with rear dormer, hip to gable roof including 4 rooflights 116 Douglas Crescent, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5AT
CB/26/00629/FULL (click for more details)	Installation of an external cold storage unit and front canopy, retrospective Unit F, Townsend Farm Road, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5BA
CB/26/01171/FULL (click for more details)	Erection of a detached garage (retrospective) Midway Cottage, Bedford Road, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 6JP

CB/26/01395/FULL (click for more details)	First floor front extension with dormer. Demolition of rear conservatory and erection of single storey rear extension 54 Milton Way, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5UE

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 7.15pm

Dated this 22nd day of June 2026

Q. J. Jones.

Chairman

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Planning Committee
Minutes of the meeting held on
22nd June 2026 at 7.00pm

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

13602 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Councillor Carroll and Councillor Herber.

13603 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

13604 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

13605 MINUTES

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on the 2nd June 2026, and to receive the draft minutes from the Neighbourhood Plan Implementation Sub-Committee meeting held on 26th May 2026.

Members were requested to note item 2 of the resolve of the Neighbourhood Plan Implementation Sub-Committee (Minute NPISC23) which stated that explicit reference to the Neighbourhood Plan should be made when considering planning responses.

Resolved: To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on the 2nd June 2026, and to receive the draft minutes from the Neighbourhood Plan Implementation Sub-Committee meeting held on 26th May 2026.

13606 PLANNING MATTERS

(a) The following planning applications were considered:

CB/26/01526/FULL (click for more details)	Outbuilding conversion to annexe with two rooflights. 4A Bedford Road, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5DJ

Comments: Members noted that, while the archaeological report indicated that there was 'unlikely to be a major impact upon surviving archaeological items', the location of the site meant that the discovery of heritage assets could not be dismissed.
Members raised concerns regarding the purpose of the annex and whether it would raise any issues in regard to planning regulations.

Houghton Regis Town Council raised no objection to this application.

Noted:

CB/26/01619/NMA (click for more details)	Non-material amendment to planning permission 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) Amendment sought to conditions 13 and 14 from pre-commencement conditions to pre-occupation conditions. Highways improvements are not required until occupation, when infrastructure and use will be intensified. Hand Post Field north of Thorn Road Houghton Regis
CB/26/01620/NMA (click for more details)	Non-Material amendment to planning permission 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) Amendment sought to condition 34 approved drawings to show the inclusion of a Sub-Station Hand Post Field north of Thorn Road Houghton Regis
CB/26/01747/NMA (click for more details)	Non-material amendment to planning permission 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) Amendment sought: Proposed non-material amendment for the layout of the consented sprinkler tanks and pumphouse. Baytree Park, Grendall Lane, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 6GJ

QJJ.

CB/26/01694/DOC (click for more details)	Discharge of Condition(s) 8,20,25,26,29,32,33 and 35 against planning permission ref. CB/12/03613/OUT (Outline planning permission with the details of access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale reserved for later determination. Development to comprise: up to 5,150 dwellings (Use Class C3); up to 202,500 sqm gross of additional development in Use Classes: A1, A2, A3 (retail), A4 (public house), A5 (take away); B1, B2, B8 (offices, industrial and storage and distribution); C1 (hotel), C2 (care home), D1 and D2 (community and leisure); car showroom; data centre; petrol filling station; car parking; primary substation; energy centre; and for the laying out of the buildings; routes and open spaces within the development; and all associated works and operations including but not limited to: demolition; earthworks; engineering operations. All development, works and operations to be in accordance with the Development Parameters Schedule and Plans) Houghton Regis North Site 1, Land on the northern edge of Houghton Regis Phase 1, Parcel 6
CB/26/01626/DOC (click for more details)	Discharge of Condition 19 against planning permission ref. CB/12/03613/OUT (Outline planning permission with the details of access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale reserved for later determination. Development to comprise: up to 5,150 dwellings (Use Class C3); up to 202,500 sqm gross of additional development in Use Classes: A1, A2, A3 (retail), A4 (public house), A5 (take away); B1, B2, B8 (offices, industrial and storage and distribution); C1 (hotel), C2 (care home), D1 and D2 (community and leisure); car showroom; data centre; petrol filling station; car parking; primary substation; energy centre; and for the laying out of the buildings; routes and open spaces within the development; and all associated works and operations including but not limited to: demolition; earthworks; engineering operations. All development, works and operations to be in accordance with the Development Parameters Schedule and Plans.) Phase 3B Parcels 1 and 2, Houghton Regis North Site 1, Houghton Regis, Bedfordshire

DJJ.

CB/26/01772/DOC (click for more details)	Discharge of Conditions 2 to 6, 15, 17 to 21, 23 and 24 against planning permission ref. CB/25/03400/RM (Reserved Matters: following Outline application CB/12/03613/OUT (Outline planning permission with the details of access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale reserved for later determination. Development to comprise: up to 5,150 dwellings (Use Class C3); up to 202,500 sqm gross of additional development in Use Classes: A1, A2, A3 (retail), A4 (public house), A5 (take away); B1, B2, B8 (offices, industrial and storage and distribution); C1 (hotel), C2 (care home), D1 and D2 (community and leisure); car showroom; data centre; petrol filling station; car parking; primary substation; energy centre; and for the laying out of the buildings; routes and open spaces within the development; and all associated works and operations including but not limited to: demolition; earthworks; engineering operations. All development, works and operations to be in accordance with the Development Parameters Schedule and Plans.). Approval of Access, Appearance, Landscaping, Layout and Scale for 259 dwellings and associated works.) Phase 4, Parcels 4 and 5 - Houghton Regis North Site 1, Land on the northern edge of Houghton Regis
CB/26/01699/NMA (click for more details)	Non-material amendment to planning permission CB/25/03104/FULL (Erection of a two storey rear extension, first and second floor side extension, hip to gable, rear dormer rooflights to the front, two rear juliet balcony's. A front porch, and associated external alterations) Amendments sought: Substitution of bifold doors with standard fenestration (French doors and window) and the installation of a flush skylight 44 Leafields, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5LX

Permissions / Approvals / Consents
None received.

Refusals:
None received.

Withdrawals:
None received.

13607 PLANNING APPLICATIONS – DELEGATED AUTHORITY

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

CB/26/01272/FULL (click for more details)	Rear ground infill extension to the undercroft Whistlebrook Stud, Sewell Lane, Sewell, Dunstable, LU6 1RP

CB/26/01558/FULL (click for more details)	Erection of a two storey side extension, roof lights, removal of shed 161 Conway Close, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5SD
CB/26/01382/FULL (click for more details)	Single storey rear extension and garage conversion 122 Leafields, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5LX
CB/26/01689/FULL (click for more details)	Replacement 2.5m high boundary fence 5 Buttermilk Close, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 6UN

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 7.12pm

Dated this 13th day of July 2026

D. J. Jones.

Chairman

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Planning Committee
Minutes of the meeting held on
13th July 2026 at 7.00pm

Present:	Councillors:	D Jones	Chairman
		E Billington	
		E Cooper	
		M Herber	
		C Slough	
	Officers:	Clare Evans	Town Clerk
		Amanda Samuels	Administration Officer
	Public:	4	
Apologies:	Councillors:	J Carroll	

13622 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Councillor Carroll.

13623 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

13624 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

13625 MINUTES

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on the 22nd June 2026.

Resolved: To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 22nd June 2026 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

13626 PLANNING MATTERS

(a) The following planning applications were considered:

CB/26/01691/RM (click for more details)	Reserved Matters: following Outline Application CB/12/03613/OUT (for the erection of 52 dwellings with associated car parking, landscaping, drainage and open space). Approval of access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale Parcel 6 Houghton Regis North Site 1, Land on the northern edge of Houghton Regis

Comments: Members noted that affordable housing provision fell short of both the CBC standard and the 10% provision advised in the application.
Members supported the Ecological Officer's response which raised concerns regarding the reduction in width of the green corridor and highlighted the requirement for an Ecological Enhancement Strategy.
Members supported the Designing Out Crime Officer's response requesting clarification on car parking and 'ambiguous space'.

Houghton Regis Town Council raised no objection to this application.

CB/26/01262/FULL (click for more details)

Erection of a single storey side extension. Demolition of garages
East Ocean Fish & Chip Bar, 4 Bedford Road, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5DJ

Comments: Members stated that this application failed to address the issues raised in the previous application. As such the Town Council's previous objections remained, namely:

- **Insufficient parking provision which failed to meet required standards; and potential safety issues arising from inadequate provision**
- **The proposed development fell within an historic site and the Archaeologist's report highlighted that this would have 'a negative and irreversible impact' on any archaeological remains**
- **A noise assessment was required to ensure machinery fell within the accepted levels and would not impact nearby residents**

CB/26/00469/FULL (click for more details)

Erection of a self-build end-terrace dwelling
Land adjacent to 6 Buddleia View, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5TQ

Comments: Members raised a number of issues of concern including:

- **The dropped kerb did not extend across all parking bays**
- **An area at the front was being utilised as a parking space but was not a designated bay; this resulted in residents reversing into the main road and into a bus stop zone**
- **A lamp post situated in the middle of the parking area restricted vehicle movement**
- **The addition of an additional property would exacerbate existing fly tipping issues.**
- **The proposed location of parking spaces would create a noise nuisance for nearby properties and would cause**

significant disruption, potential road hazards and increase parking problems

- **Surface water drainage was already insufficient at the site**

Members felt the application showed little regard for the natural environment, nearby dwellings and traffic impact. Members also questioned the purpose of the dwelling, given its dimensions.

Members requested that this item was called in to the Development Management Committee. Cllr McMahon confirmed they would carry this out.

Houghton Regis Town Council raised a strong objection to this application on the following grounds:

- **Overdevelopment of the site would negatively impact the surrounding area and would be contrary to good design principles**
- **Failure to meet the minimal thresholds outlined by the Nationally Described Space Standards, as highlighted by the Housing Strategy and Implementation Officer**
- **Failure to comply with the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act: the development did not qualify as a self or custom build and was therefore not exempt from the requirement of a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) report**
- **The loss of 25m^2 grassland was significant and triggered the need for a BNG report**
- **The site fell within the Chiltern Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation and a Habitats Regulations Assessment was therefore required**

CB/26/01837/ADV (click for more details)	Advertisement: Two fascia vinyl signage and one illuminated projecting sign All Saints View, High Street, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5LQ

Members were advised that this application was for noting as the application was on behalf of Houghton Regis Town Council.

CB/26/01533/FULL (click for more details)	Conversion and extension of the existing store, into a bar area for the clubroom. Construction of a detached timber pergola Pavillion, Moore Crescent Sports Ground, Moore Crescent, Houghton Regis

Members were advised that this application was for noting as the application was on behalf of Houghton Regis Town Council.

Noted:

CB/26/01765/GPDE (click for more details)	Prior Notification of Householder Extension: Single storey rear extension, 4.0m beyond the rear wall of the original dwelling, maximum height of 3.7m & 2.9m to the eaves 98 Tithe Farm Road, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5JB
CB/26/01948/DOC (click for more details)	Discharge of Condition 20, against planning permission ref. CB/12/03613/OUT Houghton Regis North Site 1, Sundon Road, Houghton Regis
CB/26/02017/GPDE (click for more details)	Prior Notification of Householder Extension: Single storey rear extension, 6m beyond the rear wall of the original dwelling, maximum height of 3m & 3m to the eaves. 81 Leaf Road, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5JG
CB/26/01960/DOC (click for more details)	Discharge of Condition 16, against planning permission ref CB/25/03234/RM Parcel 7 and 8 in area 4 at Linmere, Houghton Regis North, Dunstable
CB/26/01961/DOC (click for more details)	Discharge of Condition 4, against planning permission ref. CB/25/03234/RM Parcel 7 & 8 of area 4 Linmere, Houghton Regis North, Dunstable
CB/26/01749/LDCP (click for more details)	Lawful Development Certificate Proposed: Internal alterations to an existing building Amazon, Unit 2, Baytree Park, Grendall Lane, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 6GJ
CB/26/01923/SDOC (click for more details)	Discharge of Section 106 Agreement attached to planning permission CB/25/02485/RM - Discharge of Fourth schedule, Paragraph 1.2 of the S106 Agreement dated 2nd June 2014. Submission of a sub area affordable housing delivery plan. Parcels 1 & 2 of phase 3B, Linmere, Houghton Regis North 1

Permissions / Approvals / Consents
None received.

Refusals:

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

Withdrawals:
None received.

13627 PLANNING APPLICATIONS – DELEGATED AUTHORITY

The following planning applications had been received for consultation and fell within delegated authority.

CB/26/01474/FULL (click for more details)	Erection of garden outbuilding with roof light (retrospective) 1 Bankside Close, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 6JF
CB/26/01958/FULL (click for more details)	Erection of a single storey rear/side extension 139 Leafields, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5LU
CB/26/01793/FULL (click for more details)	Single storey cladded link between two existing units (B2 / B8 / E(g)) Unit 2 and Unit 44, Humphrys Road, Dunstable, LU5 4TP
CB/26/01807/FULL (click for more details)	Demolition of existing conservatory, erection of single storey rear extension, conversion of garage into habitable accommodation, and associated internal and external alterations, rooflights 21 Conway Close, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5SB

Members had requested that retrospective application CB/26/01474/FULL was discussed since appearance and scale appeared to be significant issues.

CB/26/01474/FULL (click for more details)	Erection of garden outbuilding with roof light (retrospective) 1 Bankside Close, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 6JF

Comments: Members of the public had raised the following issues:

- **The size and height of the construction were problematic**
- **The outbuilding was not in keeping with the area.**
- **The structure fell within the 1 metre boundary limit on one side and exceeded the fence height by approximately 1 metre**
- **The outbuilding took up the width of the garden and appeared to exceed the 50% ground cover limit**
- **Additional ground space was covered by another building in the garden**
- **The outbuilding had been described as being of timber and glass construction but was formed of a steel skeleton and metal cladding**
- **The householder had claimed that construction had taken two weeks when it had, in fact, been carried out between August and October**
- **There was concern for the intended use**
- **The outbuilding had been installed without the relevant planning permission**

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

- **Size, scale and appearance were inappropriate**
- **The construction materials listed as timber and glass were inconsistent with the metal-clad construction in evidence to neighbouring properties**
- **There was concern regarding the intended use and suggested a need for further investigation**

13628 INCOME AND EXPENDITURE REPORT

Members were requested to note the Income and Expenditure Report for the Planning Committee.

Members were advised that the Neighbourhood Plan Implementation Sub-Committee would require additional expenditure in November to support the work of Sally Chapman, the Town Council's Planning Consultant.

Funding for this expenditure would be met through a virement from budget code 401/4059 to 401/4062.

13629 PLANNING APPEAL – Dismissal CB/26/00217/FULL (click for more details)

Members were advised that planning application CB/26/00217/FULL had been dismissed.
Two storey side/rear extension, 9 Watervale, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 6FY

The householder had appealed but the refusal stood.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 7.51pm

Dated this 3rd day of August 2026

D.J. Jones.

Chairman

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Planning Committee
Minutes of the meeting held on
Monday 3rd August 2026 at 7.00pm

Present:	Councillors:	D Jones	Chairman
		E Billington	
		E Cooper	
		S King	
		C Slough	
	Officers:	Louise Senior	Head of Democratic Services
		Amanda Samuels	Administration Officer
	Public:	12 (3 virtual)	
Apologies:	Councillors:	J Carroll	

13659 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Councillor Carroll.

13660 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Members of the public attending the meeting agreed to their questions being addressed under the relevant agenda item.

13661 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

13662 MINUTES

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on the 13th July 2026.

Resolved: **To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 13th July 2026 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.**

13663 PLANNING MATTERS

Members were advised that there were no planning matters for consideration.

Noted:

CB/26/01886/LDCP (click for more details)	Lawful Development Certificate Proposed: A mobile home, with roof light, for ancillary use to the main dwelling house 7 Douglas Crescent, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5AS

CB/26/02060/DOC (click for more details)	Discharge of Condition 21 against planning permission ref. CB/25/03234/RM Land to the North and East of Houghton Regis, Sundon Road, Houghton Regis
CB/26/02178/GPDE (click for more details)	Prior Notification of Householder Extension. Single storey rear extension, 3.5m beyond the rear wall of the original dwelling, maximum height of 3.5m and 2.6m to the eaves 11 Woodlands Avenue, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5LJ
CB/26/02274/NMA (click for more details)	Non-material amendment to planning permission CB/23/03551/RM Amendment sought: Revised boundary treatments. Bury Spinney, Thorn Road, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 6JQ
CB/26/02159/DOC (click for more details)	Discharge of Conditions 20 against planning permission ref. CB/25/03234/RM Parcels 7 & 8 in Area 4 at Linmere, Houghton Regis North, Dunstable
CB/26/02156/DOC (click for more details)	Discharge of Conditions 14 against planning permission ref. CB/25/03234/RM Parcel 7 & 8 Linmere, Houghton Regis North, Sundon Road, Houghton Regis

Permissions / Approvals / Consents
None received.

Refusals:
None received.

Withdrawals:
None received.

13664 PLANNING APPLICATIONS – DELEGATED AUTHORITY

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

13665 CB/26/00932/FULL - LAND ADJ VANE COTTAGE, PARK ROAD NORTH, HOUGHTON REGIS

Members were advised that notification had been received from Central Bedfordshire Council regarding CB/26/00932/FULL.

Central Bedfordshire Council had received the amendments below in respect of the application of the above property.

Amendments to dwelling types (now detached), landscaping and parking areas following consultee responses from Tree Officer, Ecologist and Landscape Officer. Application was

now supported by a Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Statement as requested by the Sustainable Drainage Officer.

An extension to the deadline of 30th July had been granted to allow submission of the Planning Committee's comments.

Members remained unaware of the results of the enforcement order regarding the unauthorised felling of trees, or whether the case continued to be pursued. HRTC had requested further information at their meeting on 11th May 2026 (Minute 13534) but had not received a response. It was thought that this information should be made available prior to a decision being made.

Members had received correspondence from members of the public: one had withdrawn their previous comments and now supported the application; the other, from residents of a neighbouring property, was in support of the revised application. The communication in support of the application was read out to Members. Members were minded, however, to repeat their strong objection made on 11th May and highlighted the illegal tree felling.

While the issue of inadequate internal spaces had been addressed, Members noted the plans showed an increase from 3-bedroom to 4-bedroom properties; therefore, extra parking spaces would be required.

While Members remained strongly opposed to the plan, preference for design option 3 was expressed in the event of approval from CBC.

Members enquired whether it was possible to make a Freedom of Information Request regarding the progression of prosecution, the Head of Democratic Services confirmed they would seek further information on this matter.

Members agreed to re-submit their earlier objections as below:

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 the proposed properties.*

Members highlighted that the original application stated two x three-bedroom properties, the revised application now stated two x four-bedroom properties, as such would require an additional parking space.

Resolved: **To note the amendments and consider any comments for submission to Central Bedfordshire Council.**

13666 CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE LOCAL PLAN REVIEW - SUBMITTED SITES CONSULTATION

Members were advised that Central Bedfordshire Council was consulting on sites submitted through its previous Call for Sites exercise as part of the preparation of the emerging Local Plan.

Members were invited to consider the submitted sites and whether the Town Council wished to submit comments in response to the consultation.

Members had been provided with a report which provided further information, and a location map showed the submitted sites.

The Chair suggested that comments from members of the public were taken at this time. Compatibility of the proposals with the policies of the Neighbourhood Plan would be examined and these factors would be incorporated into HRTC's response.

A member of the public responded to the submitted sites with reference to the Neighbourhood Plan, outlining the detrimental impact to each of the following:

Section: Site 135341 French's Avenue to Maidenbower
Full Representation: This site is adjacent Maidenbower Ancient Monument and its development will negatively affect the cultural value of this hill-top site. Buildings will obstruct the wide views to the east, north, west and south-west which are special features of the character of the town as stated in the Neighbourhood Plan. (7.10 and 7.11, and 12.19, 13.4, 13.5, 13.6 and 13.7 as shown on the Policies map Annexe 1.) Protected Natural Features are in Policy BNF1. Development will also endanger the wildlife at Maidenbower which traverse the site to access Sewell Quarry and Nature Reserve, and Suncote Pits for foraging

Section: Site 136530 Sewell Lane land in Barley Brow CWS
Full Representation: Sewell is a Conservation area, and this site is wooded and part of the Barley Brow CWS. It rises steeply and also has an historic roadway running through it, paved in parts, used to bypass the chalk cutting in wet weather, and as such is unsuitable for building on as well as being an important part of the whole area for wildlife. Sewell Lane is narrow, single lane, the single entrance/exit awkward with poor visibility, and not capable of being widened, therefore the road cannot cope with more traffic from more dwellings.

Section: Site 136564 Adjacent Chalkpit CWS and SSSI
Full Representation: My objection is because this site is adjacent to, and could be within the boundaries of, Houghton Regis Chalkpit County Wildlife Site and SSSI. The site is steeply sloping, occupied by residential properties, surrounded by good wildlife habitat, and accessed only by a steep narrow lane from the A5 at Chalk Hill. It is totally unsuitable for large trucks to manoeuvre, and join the traffic on the A5. The whole area is criss-

crossed by the tracks of wildlife foraging and denning, and the trees are a haven for birds, being contiguous with the Sewage Farm which also supports wildlife.

Section: Site 136597 Land North of Sewell to A505
Full Representation: This site is on the north-facing escarpment which is drained by many chalk streams running into Ouzel Brook. Risk of flooding is therefore high (Flood Zone 2). Access would be very difficult as the level of the roads around is higher than the land, and Sewell Lane not suitable for access, being single lane. Putting employment next to a Conservation Area is incongruous and would be damaging to the value of the Hamlet of Sewell, due to noise, traffic, and disruption of agricultural views north.

Section: Site 136641 Dog Kennel Down eastern arm
Full Representation: This site has twice been refused planning permission for employment use for a variety of strong reasons. It is a County Wildlife Site, part of Dog Kennel Down and supports wildlife when allowed to develop naturally. To quote from the Neighbourhood Plan Green Spaces Designation: "The site, including its eastern section, is important for chalk meadow flowers, pyramidal orchids in particular. The site contributes considerably to the biodiversity of South Bedfordshire." This site should be managed for nature and recreation, a break from the rest of the industrial sites around it where people can connect with nature.

Representatives from the Friends of Windsor Drive voiced concern that Windsor Drive (WD), while not one of the submitted sites, had been the subject of some discussion within CBC. It was felt that there was a need for transparency regarding the future objectives for Windsor Drive.

It was reported that the CBC website was confusing and did not provide an obvious means of response. It was further observed that under FAQs it was stated that comments were not required at this stage; however, this guidance related to an earlier phase of the process. There was also concern that sites had been categorised by CBC wards, rather than parishes, which had resulted in a 255-hectare area in the parish of Chalgrave to be listed under Heath and Reach.

The Chair acknowledged that there were inconsistencies and omissions in the consultation process. It was further noted that a communication from a CBC Executive councillor indicated that sites not included on the Call for Sites could nonetheless be introduced for consideration because they were within the settlement envelope.

The Friends of Windsor Drive put the following questions to the Planning Committee:

1. Do the FoWDCOS [Friends of Windsor Drive Community Open Space] still have the support of HRTC in keeping WD as an Open Space for the Community. Will you stand with us and work with us against any attempt to develop this land?
2. CBC have renewed their interest in developing WD, not necessarily through the call for sites process at this stage, meaning, for example, they could move to sell

WD. Should that happen, the Asset of Community Value status would mean a community bid could take place. Would HRTC be interested in supporting such a bid?

3. We first became aware of CBCs renewed interest in WD on the 11 June, were HRTC approached by CBC about their renewed interest before that date. If so what was your response?

4. At this stage there is no mention of WD on the call for sites survey, it may be added during the next stage. Are you aware of any plans CBC may have to progress their renewed interest in WD?
5. The residents are confused by the current surveys, finding them difficult to navigate. Have HRTC considered a social media post clarify what residents are being asked to comment on pertaining to HR.

Members of the public believed the proposals would overwhelm Sewell, which had a cluster of listed buildings and was a local beauty spot for nearby communities to visit.

Members of the public highlighted that Houghton Regis had already accommodated a substantial percentage of housing within the region and further development was being proposed. Members agreed with these concerns and emphasised that further development would result in the loss of yet more green space in Houghton Regis and increase pressure on infrastructure that was already considered inadequate.

The Chair reviewed the following submitted sites:

Section: Site 135302 Windy Willows – had previous approval for housing

Section: Site 135341 Top of French's Avenue – Green Belt land and potential impact on Maidenbower site

Section: Site 136350 Bretheren Church Site – this had been included in the 2021 Local Plan for 25 units but had been reviewed and rejected on this occasion

Section: Site 136530 Sewell Land – Green Belt land. Appeared to have been filtered out

Section: Site 136564 Grendall Lane - this was formerly the proposed cemetery site and local dwellings would be impacted. Appeared to have been filtered out

Section: Site 136596 Part of Linmere – a residential area but was now suggested for employment use. An old plan had proposed a local centre and school at this site.

Section: Site136597 Corner of Leighton Buzzard bypass and the A5 - proposed for employment use. Green Belt land containing springs and a tributary to the river Ouzel. Would also be detrimental to the views from the conservation area

Section: Site 136641 Land between Foster Avenue and the Arenson Centre – a designated Green Open Space under the Neighbourhood Plan. Planning permission previously refused twice

In regard of the final site, 136641, which had been cleared, the Head of Democratic Services confirmed that the Head of Environmental and Community Services was conducting further investigation.

Cllr Billington had composed a Freedom of Information Request which was read out to the Committee. Members agreed that this should be submitted and members of the public requested that clarity on Windsor Drive was also sought.

The Chair confirmed comments would be gathered in order to provide a response to each site under consideration. The Council would not comment on sites which did not currently form part of the process; however, the Council remained aware of additional locations not under consideration at this stage - including the site listed as Heath and Reach - which would require further investigation.

Resolved:

1. **To note the current Submitted Sites Consultation being undertaken by Central Bedfordshire Council.**
2. **To submit comments on all of the submitted sites, except 135302.**
3. **To comment also on the site listed under Heath and Reach where a proportion of the land is situated in the parish of Houghton Regis.**
4. **To draw attention to the objectives and policies of the Houghton Regis Neighbourhood Plan as they relate to the submitted sites.**
5. **To submit the Freedom of Information Request relating to Windsor Drive and to request clarity on CBC's intentions for that site.**

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.31

Dated this ~~24th~~ 5th day of ~~August~~ October 2026

D.J. Jones.

Chairman

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Planning Committee
Minutes of the meeting held on
Monday 24th August 2026 at 7.00pm

Present:	Councillors:	D Jones	Chairman
		E Cooper	
		S King	
		C Slough	
	Officers:	Louise Senior	Head of Democratic Services
		Amanda Samuels	Administration Officer
	Public:	3	
Apologies:	Councillors:	E Billington	
		J Carroll	

13667 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Councillor Billington and Councillor Carroll.

13668 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

13669 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

13670 MINUTES

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on the 3rd August 2026.

The Chair highlighted that discussions regarding the site north of the bypass had been omitted and no reference was made of the decision (Minute 13666). Members agreed to defer approval and signing of the minutes until the meeting on 14 September, to allow the omission to be corrected.

13671 PLANNING MATTERS

(a) The following planning applications were considered:

CB/26/01169/FULL (click for more details)	Detached garage with hardstanding, new fence, gate and new dropped kerb Land adjacent to 1 Fenwick Road and electricity sub-station, Houghton Regis

Comments: Members felt details regarding this application were unclear: the applicant resided outside of Houghton Regis, which raised questions regarding how the garage was intended to be used. Members expressed concern that the proposed development was on a site originally intended as public amenity land and had been sold without the prospect of development.

Houghton Regis Town Council raised an objection to this application on the grounds of the proposed development was on land designated as public amenity space.

CB/26/02097/FULL (click for more details)	Change of use from Class B1 (Office) to Class F1 a place of worship Park House, Parkside Drive, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5QN

Comments: Members expressed concern that both parking and noise levels were potential issues for local residents.

Houghton Regis Town Council raised no objection to this application.

Noted:

CB/26/02364/NMA (click for more details)	Non-material amendment to planning permission CB/23/03448/FULL. Amendment sought Amend the requirement of plots 7 and 8 from M4(3) adaptable dwellings to M4(2) dwelling. Land Around Jersey Close, Jersey Close, Houghton Regis
CB/26/02327/NMA (click for more details)	Non-Material Amendment to planning permission CB/21/03369/FULL. Amendment sought for alteration of conditions 13 and 14 from pre-commencement conditions to pre-occupation conditions Hand Post field, north of Thorn Road, Houghton Regis
CB/26/02299/DOC (click for more details)	Discharge of Conditions 5, 18 and 19 against Planning Permission ref. CB/18/04471/FULL Land At Oakwell Park, Thorn Road, Houghton Regis
CB/26/02428/NMA (click for more details)	Non material amendment to planning permission CB/24/01505/RM. Amendment sought (amend plot 160 from fully buff brick to half buff brick and half cladding) Parcel 5, Houghton Regis North 1, Sundon Road, Houghton Regis, LU5 5GX

Permissions / Approvals / Consents
None received.

Refusals:
None received.

Withdrawals:
None received.

13672 PLANNING APPLICATIONS – DELEGATED AUTHORITY

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

CB/26/00958/FULL (click for more details)	Single storey rear extension 1 Hillside, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5HR
CB/26/01997/FULL (click for more details)	Demolition of an existing conservatory to the rear and the erection of a rear single storey extension with rooflights 70 East Hill Road, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5EH

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 7.29pm

Dated this 14th day of September 2026

D. J. Jones.

Chairman

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Planning Committee
Minutes of the meeting held on
Monday 14th September 2026 at 7.00pm

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

13692 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Councillor Billington and Councillor Carroll.

13693 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

13694 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

13695 MINUTES

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on the 3rd August 2026 and 24th August 2026.

Members enquired whether any further information was available regarding the pursuit of the enforcement order relating to the unauthorised felling of trees (Minute 13665). The Head of Democratic Services confirmed that this item would appear on the next agenda.

Further amendments to the Minutes of 3rd August were requested. Members agreed to defer signing the Minutes until the next meeting on 5th October 2026.

Resolved: **To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 24th August 2026 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.**

13696 PLANNING MATTERS

(a) The following planning applications were considered:

CB/26/02394/FULL (click for more details)	Single storey front, side and rear extensions with rooflights, first floor roof space conversion, enlarge existing dormer with installation of a front brick wall, metal railings and access gate 47 Sundon Road, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5LL

Comments: Members observed that the scale of expansion was extensive and questioned whether it constituted overdevelopment, noting that it would not be in keeping with neighbouring properties. A new pedestrian access point would require permission for installation and access via public amenity land. It was further observed that the proposed six-foot fence to the front of the site would detrimentally affect the street scene.

Houghton Regis Town Council raised an objection to this application due to the scale of the proposed fence and its impact on the street scene.

CB/26/02481/FULL (click for more details)

Erection of a two storey rear extension and installation of front gates.
9 Watervale, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 6FY

Comments: Members noted that the property occupied a large corner site with a view intended for the benefit of the wider community. Members highlighted the following issues:

- **The complicated nature of the design**
- **Whether the installation of gates was absolutely necessary**
- **The need to avoid compromising public amenity land**
- **The importance of ensuring that the street scene was not detrimentally impacted**

Houghton Regis Town Council raised no objection to this application.

(b) Noted:

CB/26/02561/PADM (click for more details)

Prior Notification of Proposed Demolition. Demolition of single storey day centre
12 Parkside Drive, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5QN

CB/26/02457/DOC (click for more details)

Discharge of Condition 4 against planning permission ref CB/25/03805/REG3
12 Hillside, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5HR

CB/26/02305/LDCP (click for more details)

Lawful Development Proposed, single storey rear extension
32 Churchfield Road, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, LU5 5HL

CB/26/02654/DOC (click for more details)

Discharge of Condition 8 against planning permission ref. CB/12/03613/OUT
Phase 4, Parcels 4 & 5 Houghton Regis North Site 1, Land on the northern edge of Houghton Regis

Permissions / Approvals / Consents
None received.

Refusals:
None received.

Withdrawals:
None received.

13697 PLANNING APPLICATIONS – DELEGATED AUTHORITY

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

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 7.31pm

Dated this 5th day of October 2026

D. J. Jones.

Chairman

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Staffing Committee
Minutes of the meeting held on
2nd February 2026 at 7pm

Present:	Councillors:	D Jones	Chairman
		E Cooper	
		M Herber	
		T McMahon	
		A Slough	
		D Taylor	
	Officers:	Louise Senior	Head of Democratic Services
		Amanda Samuels	Administration Officer
		C Evans	Town Clerk.
	Public:	0	
Apologies:	Councillor:	W Henderson	

13512 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Cllr Costello (Cllr Cooper substituted) and Cllr Henderson.

13513 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

13514 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

None.

13515 MINUTES

The Committee received the minutes of the Staffing Committee meeting held on 24th November 2025for consideration.

Resolved: **That the minutes of the Staffing Committee meeting held on 24th November 2025 be approved as a correct record and signed accordingly.**

13516 TOWN CLERK'S ANNUAL LEAVE, OVERTIME WORKING AND SICKNESS

Annual leave

From October 2025 – December 2025 the Town Clerk has taken 6 days annual leave and 3 days flexi Leave.

WCH

The following leave is requested:

- 19th – 24th February 2026

Overtime

During the period October 2025 – December 2025 the Town Clerk has attended 4 meetings or events outside of the normal working day within the period compared with 4 in the previous quarter.

Sickness

From October 2025 – December 2025 the Clerk has not taken any sick leave.

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

13517 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Members voted on the exclusion of the press and public:

Proposed by: Cllr Slough Seconded by: Cllr Herber

Votes for: 6

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

13518 STAFF SICKNESS

Members received a rolling twelve-month record of sickness absence for all members of staff.

This report was provided for information only.

13519 STAFFING FORECAST REVIEW – UPDATE FOR 2026-2027

Members received a review of the staffing forecast for 2026 – 2027.

Discussions were held around the report with clarification sought regarding RFO responsibilities and how this would impact the current Job Description holding this role. It was felt that re-evaluation would be required.

Resolved:

1. **To recommend to Town Council the formal recognition that the responsibilities of RFO be transferred to Head of Corporate Services as at 1st April 2026.**
2. **To note the updated job descriptions for Head of Corporate Services and Head of Environmental & Community Services**

WGM

3. **To support the revised senior management salary scales following job evaluation outcomes as detailed in section 3**
4. **To support the consideration of additional support solutions within Corporate Services, including outsourced Health and Safety provision, with a further report to be presented to the Corporate Services Committee on 2nd March 2026.**

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 7.46 pm

Dated this 21st day of July 2026

Chairman



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF HOUGHTON REGIS PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, PEEL STREET ON 28th April 2026

Present:	Town Cllrs:	E Cooper, D Jones, M Herber
	CBC Cllrs	Y Farrell, S Goodchild, P Hamill, T McMahon
	CBC Officers:	Mrs Hughes, Community Engagement Manager
		Howard Hughes, Active Lifestyles Manager
	HRTC Officers:	C Evans, Town Clerk
		A Samuels, Administration Officer
	Co-opted members:	D Gibbons, T Haines (virtual), R Turner

Also in attendance: Cllr R Goodchild and Cllr J Carroll

Apologies: Cllr D Taylor

Absent: Cllr C Slough

Members of the public: 1 (virtual)

1129 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Cllr Alderman (Cllr Farrell substituted), Cllr Taylor (Cllr Cooper substituted) and C Regan.

1130 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

1131 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

None.

1132 MINUTES

To approve the Minutes of the meetings held on 27th January 2026.

Resolved: To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 27th January 2026 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

1133 BEAT THE STREET

By invitation, Howard Hughes, Active Lifestyles Manager at Central Bedfordshire Council, provided an update on the Beat the Street initiative.

The initiative would run in Houghton Regis between 10 June – 8 July and aimed to encourage residents to engage in active travel and explore their environment. It was hoped this would be an opportunity to change behaviours and increase social engagement.

Participants would use cards or apps to tap onto beat boxes placed around the town and earn points on a leaderboard. Those using the app would be able to access a 'hidden gem' which provided additional information on being tapped. Prizes would be awarded at the end of the period.

Primary school pupils would be provided with two cards (one for adult use), and a map free of charge. There would be additional card distribution sites around the town, including the library and the leisure centre and Esquires at Thorn.

This initiative was an opportunity to collect data to measure a number of areas including activity, travel, and barriers and motivations. A survey would also take place after the event.

The marketing and promotion were being completed and the final arrangements were being made for the event. The Beat the Street website for Houghton Regis was due to launch on 13th May.

In answer to questions from the Committee, it was confirmed that:

- Grant funding from Sport England was decided on a number of factors based on activity, inequality and health indicators. Houghton Regis was chosen as it was a good fit: it had seen the provision of a new leisure centre; activities introduced at Houghton Hall Park; and substantial local growth.
- A report would be produced after the event had taken place that provided anonymised data on areas such as demographic, age and gender. Changes pre and post play would be tracked, and the data would help inform future initiatives.
- Participation in the initiative was not obligatory. It was confirmed that GDPR regulations would be followed; however further information would be gathered on how the data would be handled, stored and used, and whether the cards would be specific to individuals.
- Permissions were being sought for those roads not yet adopted.
- There would be boxes on school routes and would form a key part of the exercise.
- It would be possible to insert links into the 'hidden gem' feature on the app. It would be checked if messages could be received in an alternative format for those using cards.

Members advised that Carnival and the Arts & Culture event would be held very soon after Beat the Street and might provide a good opportunity to celebrate the initiative.

1134 CRISIS AND RESILIENCE FUND

A verbal update was provided by the CBC Community Engagement Manager on the Crisis and Resilience Fund.

Members were reminded that this fund would be replacing the Household Support Fund.

It was brought to Members' attention that the crisis element of the fund was up and running; this provided financial assistance to those experiencing financial shock. The resilience aspect was currently being mapped and a further report on the C &RF would be presented at the next Executive meeting.

Members raised concerns regarding those residents who faced digital exclusion and the Community Engagement Manager responded that this had been taken into consideration. Citizens Advice had contributed to the production of a form and would be able to assist. A phone number was also provided as an alternative option.

1135 HRTC UPDATE REPORT

Members were provided with a copy of the HRTC update report. The Town Clerk invited questions.

The value of Operation Hana was questioned, and Members expressed disappointment that priority for policing was being given to other areas. There was also disappointment at the disbandment of the Police and Crime Panel at CBC as it was felt that Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee would be unable to dedicate the necessary time to policing matters.

1136 COMMUNITY BUILDINGS IN HOUGHTON REGIS

The Committee's workplan referenced the following community buildings:

Project H / Unit 1 All Saints View (HRTC)
Lease negotiations remained underway.
HRTC was working with a wider project team to develop a tender pack for the fitting out of the property. It was anticipated that the tender period would run during May.

HRN 2 Community Building - a verbal update was provided by the CBC Community Engagement Manager on the planned community centre in Bidwell.

The Community Engagement Manager confirmed that they had been working collaboratively with the charity to bring the project forward; work continued on the lease and the transfer of the land. The planning process was underway and a result was anticipated in the near future.

Members questioned if there were any barriers slowing delivery. The Community Engagement Manager stated that funding was always a challenge, but a lot of progress had been seen in recent months.

Cllr R Goodchild expressed enthusiasm for Project H and congratulated the team on its work.

1137 CBC CONSULTATION ON PROPOSED CHANGES TO FEES AND CHARGES

Central Bedfordshire Council had launched a six-week consultation on proposed changes to some of its fees and charges.

The Community Engagement Manager confirmed that this item was included on the agenda to make Members aware of the live consultation.

1138 PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE WORKPLAN

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

A co-optee requested that CBC provided a report on the future of the Red House. The Chair confirmed that this could be considered for 2026/27.

Members expressed concern regarding health and wellbeing in Houghton Regis and the insufficient level of primary care. Members also voiced frustration at the disjointed nature of services. It was thought that the Integrated Care Board (ICB), doctors and members of the Patient Participation Group should be brought together to discuss their needs and expectations. It was questioned whether it would be possible to access data in order to establish the areas of greatest need. It was agreed that this item should be taken forward as part of the workplan in 2026/27.

1139 PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE CO-OPTION

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

Co-option

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

Co-optees were reminded that they would need to reapply for the new council year.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.38pm

Dated this 28th day of July 2026

D. J. Jones.

Chairman

TOWN COUNCIL **Agenda Item 14**

Date:	**12th October 2026**
Title:	**PROJECT H: TENDER REVIEW, AWARD OF CONTRACT AND FUNDING**
Purpose of the Report:	**To provide and consider:** **1. Project Summary Report to Council** **2. Update on lease** **3. Tender review and analysis** **4. To consider the award of contract** **5. To consider funding options**
Contact Officer:	**Clare Evans, Town Clerk**

1. RECOMMENDATION

1. **To note the Project Summary Report;**
2. **To authorise the Mayor and the Town Clerk to sign the lease for Unit 1 All Saints View;**
3. **To receive the tender analysis report;**
4. **Subject to lease being signed, to appoint contractor A as the contractor for the fit out of Unit 1, All Saints View, as a Community Hub, up to a contract value of £669,153 (including a 10% contingency)**
5. **For Houghton Regis Town Council at its meeting on 21st October 2026 to seek the approval of the Secretary of State, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to apply for a PWLB annuity loan of £500,000 over the borrowing term of 7.5 not over 8 years for the fit-out of Unit 1, All Saints View, as a Community Hub. The annual loan repayments will come to around £79,398.**
   It is not intended to increase the council tax precept for the purpose of the loan repayments.
6. **To note that funding currently coded to 199-4991 will be re-purposed to a new code to facilitate the loan repayments.**
7. **To note that any contract variations during the construction phase will be determined as follows:**
   - **Variations to works within or less than the budget to be agreed by Town Clerk and the Head of Environmental & Community Services**
   - **Variations in excess of budget to be agreed by Town Council**

2. BACKGROUND

Council agreed at its meeting on 14th April 2026 to go out to tender for the detailed design and fit out, including electrical & mechanical and audio & visual, for Project H.

This report provides detailed information to enable the council to award the contract for the fit out and to determine how the works will be funded.

3. PROJECT SUMMARY REPORT

The attached report in Appendix A provides a summary of the project. This will be used to provide overarching information to the community on the project and also in support of the loan application. The report provided summarises the project including:

- Background to the project
- Need for the project
- Aims and objectives
- Aspirations for the project going forwards

4. UPDATE ON LEASE

At the time of preparing this report each councils solicitors were liaising over the provision of documentation relating to collateral warranties. A verbal update will be provided at the meeting by the Head of Environmental & Community Services.

Members are requested to confirm the signing arrangements for the lease of Unit 1 All Saints View. It is suggested that this be Mayor and the Town Clerk.

5. TENDER REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

As Members are aware, the tender process was undertaken during the summer. In accordance with the Council's decision, this was conducted as a restricted tender, with invitations issued to five contractors.

During the tender process a number of queries were responded to and visits to the unit were arranged.

The tenders were submitted electronically. A total of 3 tenders were received. The tenders were due to opened by the Deputy Mayor (in the absence of the Mayor) and the Town Clerk. However at the last minute the Deputy Mayor was unable to attend. Accordingly the tenders were opened by the Town Clerk and the Head of Environmental and Community Services.

The submissions were then referred to Common Works for analysis.

Members will find attached the analysis (redacted) by Common Works, Appendix B.

The following points are highlighted:

- Company A submitted a tender return and have subsequently worked with the project team to adjust some elements; accordingly the Council is in receipt of 2 prices from Company A. However, the council require some additional works to be included in the revised tender price. Combining elements from both tenders from Company A, gives a tender price of £608,321, excluding a contingency figure. This is suggested to be set at 10%, £60,832. Equating to a total tender price of £669,153
- Company B submitted a return priced at £563,461, however a number of elements were excluded from this price and a couple of elements had been altered from the specification. Upon follow up, Company B advised that they were very happy to work with the Council to respecify the brief and price to a set budget. Although the specification was not fully priced by Company B, it is estimated that if they had priced to meet the specification their tender price would have been comparable to Company A.
- Company C was discarded due to significant gaps in their tender return
- Company D declined to tender
- Company E declined to tender

6. TO CONSIDER THE AWARD OF CONTRACT

Company A and Company B have offered to work with the Council to identify further financial efficiencies. Should financial efficiencies be identified, the loan draw down will be reduced accordingly.

In accordance with the tender analysis report from Commons Works, Members are requested to appoint Company A at a contract price of £669,153(including a 10% contingency) for the Fit out of Unit 1, All Saints View, as a Community Hub.

7. FUNDING OPTIONS

Appendix C demonstrates how members could use up to £122,422 to contribute to the capital costs of Project H. Appendix C provides detail on:

- General Reserves at 31st March 2026
- EMR's at 31st March 2026
- Capital Budget in 2026/27
- Revenue Budget in 2026/27
- Grants & s106 Funding

From Appendix C members can see that the council is in the fortunate position of having a choice of how to fund this project. However, each option has its opportunities and constraints.

Given the tender submission cost of £669,153, it is suggested that the council look to secure a PWLB of £500,000 and fund the balance through the use of General Reserves and EMR's. The following is suggested:

Project capital cost	£669,153
Less Grants and s106 funding	-£50,122
Less PWLB of	-£500,000
Less General Reserve	-£50,000
Less EMR 355	-£51,530
Less EMR 330	-£17,501
Balance to find	**£0**

8. BORROWING

Members are requested to note that the repayment value should not exceed £80,000 in order for the council to be able to confirm latter section of Recommendation 5; namely,

It is not intended to increase the council tax precept for the purpose of the loan repayments.

In considering a loan the council need to determine the loan method and the loan period.

There are 2 methods of loan:

1. annuity (equal repayments over the period of the loan)
2. EIP (equal instalments of principal and reducing instalments of interest).

Historically the council has opted for annuity for the consistency of repayment costs. Attached provides detail of loan costs for a loan value of £500,000, Appendix D.

In considering the period of the loan it is officers' recommendation that the repayment costs match the capital budget of £80,000 per annum. This would equate to either:

1. Annuity loan over 7.5 / 8 years at £39,698.99 payable twice yearly, giving a total cost of £635,183.
2. EIP loan over 9.5/10 years at £39,975 payable twice in year one and reducing by £1,498 per annum in subsequent years, giving a total cost of £657,237.

Either option provides the following benefits:

- No increase in precept to service the loan
- The loan will be repaid in a timely way which supports anticipated refurbishment programme

Given that the total repayable is around £22,000 less with an annuity loan, option 1 is the officer recommendation.

However a suggestion was made at the Community Venue Task & Finish Group that the annual repayment costs be limited to £50,000 / £60,000 per annum to provide the council with some flexibility to put funds into other capital projects such as play area and pavilion refurbishments.

The budget for 2026/27 currently provides £15,000 as a capital fund for play areas and £50,000 as a capital fund for pavilions.

The following table summarises loan options and loan periods (extract from Appendix D) to provide detail to members on this alternative suggestion:

Amount of Advance: 500,000.00

Period	Annuity			EIP			
(years)	Rate %	½ Yearly Cost (£)	Total Cost (£)	Rate %	Initial ½ Yearly Costs (£)	Reduces by each ½ year (£)	Total Cost (£)
Over 7½ not over 8	5.93	39,698.99	635,183.84	5.91	46,025.00	923.44	625,587.50
Over 9½ not over 10	6.02	33,638.93	672,778.60	5.99	39,975.00	748.75	657,237.50
Over 11½ not over 12	6.11	29,698.90	712,773.60	6.06	35,983.33	631.25	689,375.00
Over 15½ not over 16	6.29	25,009.66	800,309.12	6.21	31,150.00	485.16	756,162.50
Over 29½ not over 30	6.75	19,542.10	1,172,526.00	6.64	24,933.33	276.67	1,006,300.00

Restricting repayments to £50,000 per annum would equate to:

1. annuity loan over a period of 15.5/16 years and a total repayment cost of £800,309
2. EIP loan over a period of 29.5/30 years and a total repayment cost of £1,006,300, annual payments reduce by and reducing by £552 per annum in subsequent years

Restricting repayments to £60,000 per annum would equate to:

3. annuity loan over a period of 11.5/12 years and a total repayment cost of £712,773
4. EIP loan over a period of 17/17.5 years and a total repayment cost of £782,150, annual payments reduce by £894 per annum in subsequent years

These options provide the following benefits:

- No increase in precept to service the loan
- Releases capital funding into the budget to provide for alternative capital projects.

However, the following is advised:

- A longer loan period increases the total repayable;
- An extended loan period will impact the council's ability to support the anticipated refurbishment programme without having an impact on the precept.

As part of the consideration of how to fund this project the following matters are highlighted:

- The lease is for a 25-year period, with an option to renew in year 23.
- Advice has been sought on the expected lifespan of fixtures and fittings. The lifespan is specific to each type of product and largely varies from 7 years to 30 years. In today's prices, the following replacement costs are anticipated:

Lifespan	**Replacement cost (2026 prices, £)**
7 yrs	1,125

10 years	90,528
15	50,118
20	39,788
25	18,865
27.5	8,075
30	27,180
30-50	24,881
60	2,081

It is the officer's recommendation that the Council apply for a PWLB annuity loan of £500,000 over the borrowing term of 7.5 not over 8 years for this project. Under this arrangement the annual loan repayments will come to around £79,398 and as such the council will not have to increase the council tax precept for the purpose of the loan repayments.

9. CONTRACT VARIATIONS

As has been advised the Contractors A and B have expressed an opinion that some value engineering may be possible, although the quality of the fit out is to be retained. The following is suggested to accommodate any contract variations:

- Variations to works within or less than the budget to be agreed by Town Clerk and the head of Environmental & Community Services
- Variations in excess of budget to be agreed by Town Council

10. HRTC CORPORATE PLAN

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

1.1 Improve integration between existing and new communities.

1.2 Support the sense of arrival and identity.

1.3 Create a stronger, more robust and engaging town centre offer.

1.5 Improve the visual appearance of the town centre.

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

2.3 Establish a town centre hub for the delivery of centrally based services, such as HRTC's offices, a youth centre and a tourist information/ heritage centre.

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

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

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

4.5 Enhance the role of the council.

11. IMPLICATIONS

Corporate Implications

- Staff implications for Project H to be considered

Legal Implications

- Power to borrow: Local Government Act 2003, schedule 1, paragraph 2
- Power to enter into a contract: Local Government Act 1972, s.111
- Power to provide public buildings: Local Government Act 1972, s.133
- Lease negotiations are ongoing
- Legal advice has been received on VAT

Crime and Disorder Implications

- reduces, prevents or does not negatively impact crime or anti-social behaviour
- supports partnership working (e.g., Police, CBC, local community safety partners)

Financial Implications

- Financial Regulations – the tender process has been carried out in line with the Minute 13499
- Budget availability – see report for specifics
- Tenders sourced

Risk Implications

- Service delivery
- Capacity
- H&S
- 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.

Climate Change Implications

- Where possible materials / product origin / recyclable / longevity of products has been incorporated into the design

Press Contact

The Project Summary will be shared in the Council website.

12. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

The report demonstrates that Project H has reached a key decision point. The tender process has identified a preferred contractor capable of delivering the fit-out of Unit 1, All Saints View as a Community Hub, while retaining scope to explore further value engineering without compromising the quality of the scheme.

Subject to completion of the lease, the proposed contract award will allow the project to progress and will support the Council's Corporate Plan objectives to strengthen the town centre, improve access to services and enhance the Council's role as a local service provider.

The Council has sufficient options available to fund the project through a combination of borrowing and existing resources. Having considered the different borrowing methods and repayment periods, the officer recommendation is to use an annuity loan over a shorter term, as this provides predictable repayments, reduces the overall borrowing cost and enables the loan to be serviced without increasing the council tax precept. This approach also seeks to balance delivery of the Community Hub with the need to plan for the future replacement of fixtures and fittings and other capital priorities.

If the recommendations are agreed, the Mayor and Town Clerk will proceed with the signing of the lease, officers will finalise the contract sum and appoint the preferred contractor, and the Council will seek the necessary borrowing approval. Officers will then work with the contractor and project team to confirm the programme, identify any appropriate cost efficiencies and manage delivery within the approved budget, with any variations above that budget referred back to the Town Council for approval.

13. APPENDICES

Appendix A:	Project Summary Report
Appendix B:	Tender Analysis from Common Works – redacted
Appendix C:	Project H Financial Overview and Funding Options
Appendix D:	PWLB Fixed Rate loans estimated repayment costs £500,000
Appendix E:	PWLB Fixed Rate loans estimated repayment costs £620,000

PROJECT SUMMARY

Project Vision

To create a welcoming, inclusive and sustainable town centre community venue that strengthens community life, improves access to services, supports young people, enhances civic engagement and contributes to a vibrant and thriving Houghton Regis town centre.

1. Introduction

Houghton Regis Town Council is seeking to establish a new community venue within Unit 1, All Saints View, at the heart of the town centre. The project forms a key part of the Council's long-term vision to strengthen the town centre, improve access to community services, provide enhanced opportunities for young people, and create a welcoming civic space that serves the whole community. The proposal supports the Council's Corporate Plan and Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan and represents a significant investment in the future of Houghton Regis.

The project is intended to create a modern, flexible and highly visible community hub which will become a focal point for residents, community groups, public sector partners and local organisations. The venue will provide space for community activities, youth services, public engagement, partner service delivery and civic functions, including a council chamber.

2. Background to the Project

The origins of the project can be traced to the Town Council's Corporate Plan commitment to establish a centrally located community hub within the town centre and improve access to services for residents. The Council has long recognised the importance of creating a stronger town centre offer and improving the sense of place within Houghton Regis.

Historically, the Council had considered Bedford Square Community Centre as a possible location for this objective. However, as this option was no longer considered achievable, the Council to explored alternative opportunities. Unit 1

at All Saints View has emerged as the preferred location because it provides a modern, accessible and highly visible premises within the town centre.

The project also arises at a time when the Town Council is in a stronger financial position due to increased investment income generated from Section 106 funds. The Council has considered how best to utilise this additional income to deliver meaningful and long-lasting benefits to residents and believes that investment in a landmark community facility represents a transformational opportunity

Alongside this, Central Bedfordshire Council continues to face significant financial challenges, creating opportunities for more localised service delivery and stronger partnership working. The proposed venue aligns with both authorities' ambitions to deliver improved services and greater community benefits at a local level.

The Council formally considered the project in September 2025 and subsequently established arrangements to develop the concept, secure a lease for the premises and progress the design and fit-out of the venue.

3. Need for the Project

Houghton Regis has experienced significant growth in recent years and is continuing to expand. This growth has increased demand for accessible community spaces, support services, youth provision and opportunities for community engagement. The town requires facilities capable of serving an increasingly diverse population while helping to bring together established and newer communities.

The Council's Corporate Plan identifies several priorities that this project will help address, including:

- Creating a stronger and more engaging town centre.
- Improving access to services and support.
- Providing opportunities for young people.
- Supporting community cohesion and civic pride.
- Enhancing the role and visibility of the Town Council.

At present, there is no single, centrally located community venue capable of acting as a focal point for residents, community groups and public services. The

proposed facility would help address this gap by bringing services and activities together in a highly accessible location. The Council has also identified opportunities for organisations such as health providers, Citizens Advice, Bedfordshire Police, community groups and voluntary organisations to utilise the space and improve the accessibility of services for local people.

The project also responds to community feedback supporting the development of community hubs, enhanced community facilities and more activities for residents of all ages.

4. Aims and Objectives

The overarching aim is to create a vibrant, sustainable and inclusive community venue that becomes a focal point for civic, social and community life within Houghton Regis.

The key objectives are to:

Strengthen the Town Centre
Provide a high-quality destination within the town centre that encourages activity, footfall and greater use of town centre services. The venue will contribute to a stronger sense of identity and place while supporting wider regeneration aspirations.

Improve Access to Services
Create a flexible hub capable of hosting a range of organisations and service providers, making it easier for residents to access advice, support, health services and community initiatives within a single location.

Enhance Youth and Community Provision
Provide dedicated space to support expanded youth services, community activities, events, meetings and local initiatives, helping improve opportunities and outcomes for residents.

Strengthen Civic Presence
Provide an accessible council chamber and civic venue that improves the visibility, openness and accessibility of the Town Council while supporting democratic engagement and community participation.

Deliver Long-Term Community Value

Use the Council's financial resources proactively to create an asset that delivers lasting social, economic and community benefits for current and future generations.

5. Aspirations for the Future

The Council's vision extends far beyond the creation of a single building. The proposed venue is intended to become the central hub within a wider network of community facilities across Houghton Regis, supporting residents throughout the town and encouraging stronger partnership working.

The Council aspires for the venue to become:

- A recognised focal point for community activity and civic life.
- A welcoming home for local organisations and service providers.
- A centre for youth engagement, learning and support.
- A place where residents can access advice, information and community services.
- A catalyst for increased town centre vitality and economic activity.
- A visible demonstration of the Council's commitment to investing in its community and improving quality of life for residents.

Looking forward, the project has the potential to support future phases of investment in community facilities and assets, helping to deliver the wider ambitions contained within the Council's Corporate Plan and Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan. It represents an opportunity not only to create a building, but to establish a long-term community legacy that supports Houghton Regis for many years to come.

COMMON WORKS FOR HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

PROJECT NO. 1140HRH

REPORT REV. 03

OCTOBER 2026

TENDER ANALYSIS

STAGE REPORT

SCORING BASED ON WHAT WE RECEIVED

SCORING

The total score circled in red shows the only contractor who passed (Contractor A)

SCORING											
CONTRACTORS	1.1 Contract Sum	1.2 O&P	2.1 Approach & Quality	2.2 Quality of completion of pricing list	2.3 Previous project experience	2.4 Programme & risk management	2.5 Budget management	2.6 Management and communication	2.7 Confirmation of appropriate insurances	2.8 Confirmation of appropriate trade body memberships etc.	TOTAL
A	64	4.9	8	5	3.5	4	3	pass	TBC	TBC	92.4
comments											
WEIGHTING	65%	5%	10%	5%	5%	5%	5%	pass/fail	pass/fail	pass/fail	
TOTAL											
B	59	4.8	4	2.5	3	0	0	fail	TBC	TBC	73.3
comments											FAIL
WEIGHTING	65%	5%	10%	5%	5%	5%	5%	pass/fail	pass/fail	pass/fail	
TOTAL											
C	61	4.6	3	1	1.5	1.5	0	fail	TBC	TBC	72.6
comments											FAIL
WEIGHTING	65%	5%	10%	5%	5%	5%	5%	pass/fail	pass/fail	pass/fail	
TOTAL											
D	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	fail	fail	fail	
comments											FAIL
WEIGHTING	65%	5%	10%	5%	5%	5%	5%	pass/fail	pass/fail	pass/fail	
TOTAL											
E	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	fail	fail	fail	
comments											FAIL
WEIGHTING	65%	5%	10%	5%	5%	5%	5%	pass/fail	pass/fail	pass/fail	
TOTAL											

BREAKDOWN OF NUMBERS

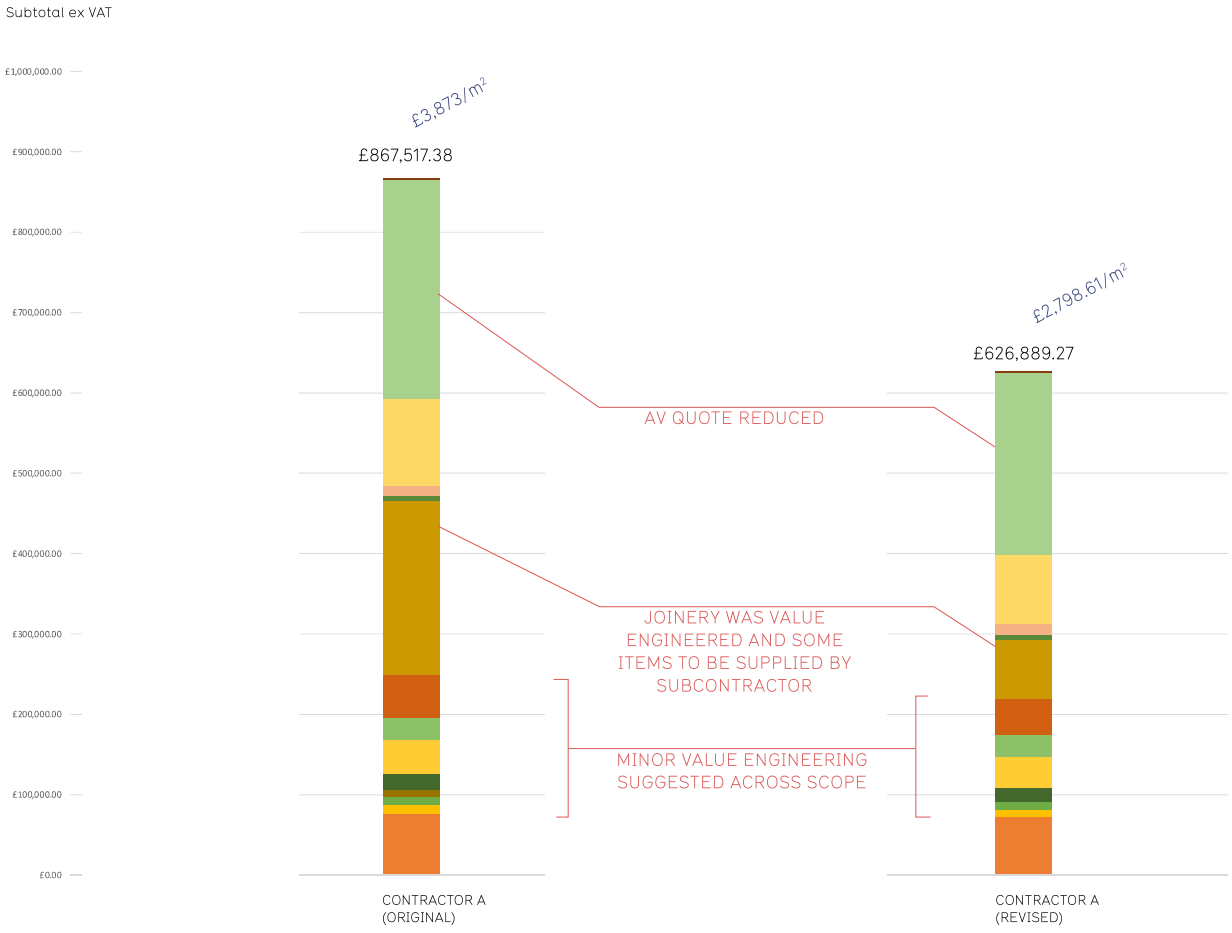
OVERVIEW


Subtotal ex VAT
£1,000,000.00
£900,000.00
£800,000.00
£700,000.00
£600,000.00
£500,000.00
£400,000.00
£300,000.00
£200,000.00
£100,000.00
£0.00
£3,873/m²
£867,517.38
£2,798.61/m²
£626,889.27
£2,515.45/m²
£563,461.30
£2,936/m²
£657,690.83
CONTRACTORS FAILED DUE TO MISSING INFORMATION. THEY HAD FAIR OPPORTUNITY TO PROVIDE IT BUT, TO DATE, HAVE NOT.
EXTERNAL LANDSCAPING
ELECTRICAL SYSTEMS - CDP
MECHANICAL SYSTEMS - CDP
ABOVE GROUND DRAINAGE AND PLUMBING - CDP
SANITARYWARE / BRASSWARE /EQUIPMENT
EQUIPMENT, JOINERY AND METALWORK
INTERNAL FINISHES
INTERNAL DOORS & WINDOWS
LININGS / SHEATHINGS / DRY PARTITIONING / INSULATION
BELOW GROUND DRAINAGE / GROUNDWORKS / SITE PREPARATION
PRELIMINARIES
CONTRACTOR A (ORIGINAL)
CONTRACTOR A (REVISED)
CONTRACTOR B
CONTRACTOR C
CONTRACTOR D & E NO SUBMISSION

OVERVIEW


Subtotal ex VAT
£1,000,000.00
£900,000.00
£800,000.00
£700,000.00
£600,000.00
£500,000.00
£400,000.00
£300,000.00
£200,000.00
£100,000.00
£0.00
£3,873/m²
£867,517.38
ELECTRICAL WORKS £273K
MECHANICAL £107K
EQUIP. & JOINERY £217K
£2,798.61/m²
£626,889.27
ELECTRICAL WORKS £226K
MECHANICAL £86K
EQUIP. & JOINERY £74K
CONTRACTORS FAILED DUE TO MISSING INFORMATION. THEY HAD FAIR OPPORTUNITY TO PROVIDE IT BUT, TO DATE, HAVE NOT.
£2,515.45/m²
£563,461.30
ELECTRICAL WORKS £166K
MECHANICAL £62K
EQUIP. & JOINERY £83K
£2,936/m²
£657,690.83
EQUIP. & JOINERY £86K
PAINTING EXISTING WALLS £40K
MEETING ROOM WALLS £92K
TIMBER FRAMING £36K
THIS QUOTE HELPED US UNDERSTAND THE COST OF JOINERY ITEMS ALONE
£64,557.00
EXTERNAL LANDSCAPING
ELECTRICAL SYSTEMS - CDP
MECHANICAL SYSTEMS - CDP
ABOVE GROUND DRAINAGE AND PLUMBING - CDP
SANITARYWARE / BRASSWARE /EQUIPMENT
EQUIPMENT, JOINERY AND METALWORK
INTERNAL FINISHES
INTERNAL DOORS & WINDOWS
LININGS / SHEATHINGS / DRY PARTITIONING / INSULATION
BELOW GROUND DRAINAGE / GROUNDWORKS / SITE PREPARATION
PRELIMINARIES
CONTRACTOR A (ORIGINAL)
CONTRACTOR A (REVISED)
CONTRACTOR B
CONTRACTOR C
CONTRACTOR D & E NO SUBMISSION
JOINERY SUB-CONTRACTOR

COMPARISON OF CONTRACTOR A SUBMISSIONS



RECOMMENDATION

RECOMMENDED ROUTE

CONTRACTOR A



+

JOINERY SUB-CONTRACTOR



with clarifications made and some of the specification refined (e.g. AV)

RECOMMENDED ROUTE

CONTRACTOR A



JOINERY SUB-CONTRACTOR



+

with clarifications made and some of the specification refined (e.g. AV)

+ additional value engineering


COMMON
WORKS

Appendix C

Project H Financial Overview and Funding Options

Reserves at 31st March 2026

			Opening Balance 01.04.26 £
Town Council	310	General Reserves - Predicted	587,897
Corp Serv	355	New Office Provision	104,921
Comm Serv	330	Community Development	17,501

Scope within General Reserves

The most recent calculation of General Reserves as presented to the Investment Working Group on 6th August 2026 advised the following:

> *General Reserves*
> *The generally accepted recommendation with regard to the appropriate minimum level of a smaller authority's general reserve is that this should be maintained at between three and twelve months of net revenue expenditure (NRE).*
> *In practice, any authority with income and expenditure in excess of £200,000 should plan towards 3 months equivalent general reserve.*
> *As of 31st March 2026, the Town Council held total unrestricted reserves of £587,897, comprising a year-end surplus of £189,781 and a general reserve balance of £398,116.*
> *To assess the adequacy of reserves, the Council's Net Revenue Expenditure (NRE) for 2026/27 was calculated by taking the total projected expenditure of £2,183,204 and excluding expenditure within the capital cost centres (199, 299 and 399) of £234,349. This gives an annual NRE of £1,948,855.*
> *Dividing the annual NRE by 12 gives a monthly net revenue expenditure of approximately £162,405.*
> *The Council's total reserves of £587,897 therefore equates to approximately three and a half months' worth of net revenue expenditure.*

To meet 3 months net revenue expenditure, HRTC General Reserve balance should be in the region of £487,215. Accordingly, there is scope to utilise up to £100,682 of General Reserves.

Comment: It is felt that it would not be prudent halfway through the financial year to look to utilise all the capacity within General Reserves. Should members be minded to use General Reserves, it is suggested that the use be restricted to approximately **£50,000**.

Scope within Ear Marked Reserves

It is suggested that EMRs 355 and 330 could be used to support this project. Accordingly, there is scope to utilise up to £122,422 of EMRs.

Comment: in the short term at least the offices in Peel Street will be retained. In addition, there is also the future question of the Park View Room and the Red House. As such it is suggested that EMR 355 be retained in part. Community Services Committee has no identified project for EMR 330. Should members be minded to use either or both EMRs, it is suggested that this be limited to £54,921 from EMR 350 and £17,501 from EMR 330, total **£72,422**.

Capital Budget in 2026/27

Transfer to EMR (Project H) (199-4991) £80,000.

Comment: this will be used to fund capital costs incurred in 2026/27. Expenses incurred to date include:

Planning & Building Regulations fees	£1,167	
Tender analysis	£2,450	
Vat Advice	£900	
Total		*£4,517*

Committed expenditure includes:

Contract management fee (agreed at 7.5% of contract value with a minimum cost of £18,000), based on the tender submission this fee is estimated to be	£49,500	
Legal fees associated with Lease estimated	£4,000	
PWLB Fee	£175	
Total anticipated additional expenses until completion:		*£53,675*
Total		***£58,192***

It is suggested that the £21,808 balance be set aside for ancillary costs including fixtures and fittings.

Revenue Budget in 2026/27
Revenue: Project H (103 various) £62,375

Comment: these provisions were made to cover the running costs of Project H. However due to the delays in the project it is unlikely that they will be used in their entirety for their intended purpose. These funds could be reallocated to meet contingency costs should they be required. Should the funds not be required, they would contribute to General Reserves at year end.

Grants & s106 Funding

As previously advised to the Community Venue Task & Finish Group:

- An application for s106 funding has been approved which secures a contribution of £30,122.60. This has been partially claimed and HRTC are awaiting receipt of funds. The balance of funds will be claimed once expenditure has been incurred.
- The application made to the National Lottery Community Fund (10/12/2025), has been successful and the award of £20,000 has been received.

These income streams have not been budgeted for and as such can be used to offset costs.

Summary

Project capital cost	£669,153
Less Grants and s106 funding	-£50,122
Net capital cost	£619,031
Less PWLB of	-£500,000
Balance to find	**£119,031**

The following options are available to members:

	Project Contribution
General Reserve	Up to £50,000
EMR 355	Up to £54,921
EMR 330	Up to £17,501
Revenue: Project H (Cost centre 103 various)	Up to £62,375
Total	**Up to £184,797**

An alternative would be to increase the loan amount to £620,000. Appendix E shows the repayments figures for this loan value.

Suggestion:

To fund the balance of £119,031 the following is suggested:

	Project Contribution
General Reserve	Up to £50,000
EMR 355	Up to £54,921
EMR 330	Up to £17,501
Total	**Up to £122,422**

It is not suggested that there is a need to increase the value of the loan as of the Balance to Find (£119,031) £60,832 comprises the project contingency and it is anticipated that a value engineering process will secure further savings, possibly up to £60,000. However should the contingency be required and value engineering not deliver the anticipated savings the council is able to afford these costs through the use of General Reserves and EMR 355 and 330.

Data Date: 25-Sep-2026

United Kingdom Debt Management Office

PWLB FIXED RATE LOANS
ESTIMATED REPAYMENT COSTS

Amount of Advance: 500,000.00

Period	Annuity			EIP			
(years)	Rate %	½ Yearly Cost (£)	Total Cost (£)	Rate %	Initial ½ Yearly Costs (£)	Reduces by each ½ year (£)	Total Cost (£)
1 year	-	0.00	0.00	-	0.00	0.00	0.00
Over 1 not over 1½	-	0.00	0.00	-	0.00	0.00	0.00
Over 1½ not over 2	5.53	133,758.44	535,033.76	5.53	138,825.00	3,456.25	534,562.50
Over 2 not over 2½	5.59	108,539.05	542,695.25	5.59	113,975.00	2,795.00	541,925.00
Over 2½ not over 3	5.63	91,733.60	550,401.60	5.63	97,408.33	2,345.83	549,262.50
Over 3 not over 3½	5.68	79,769.94	558,389.58	5.67	85,603.57	2,025.00	556,700.00
Over 3½ not over 4	5.71	70,793.17	566,345.36	5.71	76,775.00	1,784.38	564,237.50
Over 4 not over 4½	5.75	63,843.15	574,588.35	5.74	69,905.56	1,594.44	571,750.00
Over 4½ not over 5	5.78	58,286.68	582,866.80	5.77	64,425.00	1,442.50	579,337.50
Over 5 not over 5½	5.81	53,754.77	591,302.47	5.80	59,954.55	1,318.18	587,000.00
Over 5½ not over 6	5.84	49,991.46	599,897.52	5.82	56,216.67	1,212.50	594,575.00
Over 6 not over 6½	5.86	46,804.55	608,459.15	5.85	53,086.54	1,125.00	602,375.00
Over 6½ not over 7	5.89	44,097.39	617,363.46	5.87	50,389.29	1,048.21	610,062.50
Over 7 not over 7½	5.91	41,747.08	626,206.20	5.89	48,058.33	981.67	617,800.00
Over 7½ not over 8	5.93	39,698.99	635,183.84	5.91	46,025.00	923.44	625,587.50
Over 8 not over 8½	5.96	37,915.13	644,557.21	5.93	44,236.76	872.06	633,425.00
Over 8½ not over 9	5.98	36,323.62	653,825.16	5.95	42,652.78	826.39	641,312.50
Over 9 not over 9½	6.00	34,906.94	663,231.86	5.97	41,240.79	785.53	649,250.00
Over 9½ not over 10	6.02	33,638.93	672,778.60	5.99	39,975.00	748.75	657,237.50
Over 10 not over 10½	6.04	32,498.42	682,466.82	6.01	38,834.52	715.48	665,275.00
Over 10½ not over 11	6.06	31,468.06	692,297.32	6.03	37,802.27	685.23	673,362.50
Over 11 not over 11½	6.09	30,549.40	702,636.20	6.05	36,864.13	657.61	681,500.00
Over 11½ not over 12	6.11	29,698.90	712,773.60	6.06	35,983.33	631.25	689,375.00
Over 12 not over 12½	6.13	28,922.30	723,057.50	6.08	35,200.00	608.00	697,600.00
Over 12½ not over 13	6.15	28,211.10	733,488.60	6.10	34,480.77	586.54	705,875.00
Over 13 not over 13½	6.18	27,574.36	744,507.72	6.12	33,818.52	566.67	714,200.00
Over 13½ not over 14	6.20	26,973.44	755,256.32	6.14	33,207.14	548.21	722,575.00
Over 14 not over 14½	6.22	26,419.17	766,155.93	6.16	32,641.38	531.03	731,000.00
Over 14½ not over 15	6.25	25,923.53	777,705.90	6.18	32,116.67	515.00	739,475.00
Over 15 not over 15½	6.27	25,449.37	788,930.47	6.20	31,629.03	500.00	748,000.00
Over 15½ not over 16	6.29	25,009.66	800,309.12	6.21	31,150.00	485.16	756,162.50
Over 16 not over 16½	6.32	24,618.27	812,402.91	6.23	30,726.52	471.97	764,775.00
Over 16½ not over 17	6.34	24,238.64	824,113.76	6.25	30,330.88	459.56	773,437.50
Over 17 not over 17½	6.36	23,885.19	835,981.65	6.27	29,960.71	447.86	782,150.00
Over 17½ not over 18	6.39	23,573.10	848,631.60	6.29	29,613.89	436.81	790,912.50
Over 18 not over 18½	6.41	23,265.90	860,838.30	6.31	29,288.51	426.35	799,725.00
Over 18½ not over 19	6.43	22,979.07	873,204.66	6.32	28,957.89	415.79	808,100.00

Period	Annuity			EIP			
(years)	Rate %	½ Yearly Cost (£)	Total Cost (£)	Rate %	Initial ½ Yearly Costs (£)	Reduces by each ½ year (£)	Total Cost (£)
Over 19 not over 19½	6.45	22,711.08	885,732.12	6.34	28,670.51	406.41	817,000.00
Over 19½ not over 20	6.47	22,460.52	898,420.80	6.36	28,400.00	397.50	825,950.00
Over 20 not over 20½	6.49	22,226.14	911,271.74	6.38	28,145.12	389.02	834,950.00
Over 20½ not over 21	6.51	22,006.80	924,285.60	6.39	27,879.76	380.36	843,462.50
Over 21 not over 21½	6.53	21,801.46	937,462.78	6.41	27,652.91	372.67	852,550.00
Over 21½ not over 22	6.55	21,609.19	950,804.36	6.43	27,438.64	365.34	861,687.50
Over 22 not over 22½	6.57	21,429.12	964,310.40	6.44	27,211.11	357.78	870,300.00
Over 22½ not over 23	6.59	21,260.48	977,982.08	6.46	27,019.57	351.09	879,525.00
Over 23 not over 23½	6.60	21,083.91	990,943.77	6.47	26,813.30	344.15	888,200.00
Over 23½ not over 24	6.62	20,935.89	1,004,922.72	6.49	26,641.67	338.02	897,512.50
Over 24 not over 24½	6.63	20,778.47	1,018,145.03	6.50	26,454.08	331.63	906,250.00
Over 24½ not over 25	6.65	20,648.66	1,032,433.00	6.52	26,300.00	326.00	915,650.00
Over 25 not over 25½	6.66	20,508.14	1,045,915.14	6.53	26,128.92	320.10	924,450.00
Over 25½ not over 26	6.67	20,375.30	1,059,515.60	6.54	25,965.38	314.42	933,275.00
Over 26 not over 26½	6.69	20,268.97	1,074,255.41	6.56	25,833.96	309.43	942,800.00
Over 26½ not over 27	6.70	20,150.28	1,088,115.12	6.57	25,684.26	304.17	951,687.50
Over 27 not over 27½	6.71	20,038.05	1,102,092.75	6.58	25,540.91	299.09	960,600.00
Over 27½ not over 28	6.72	19,931.91	1,116,186.96	6.59	25,403.57	294.20	969,537.50
Over 28 not over 28½	6.73	19,831.54	1,130,397.78	6.60	25,271.93	289.47	978,500.00
Over 28½ not over 29	6.74	19,736.63	1,144,724.54	6.61	25,145.69	284.91	987,487.50
Over 29 not over 29½	6.75	19,646.90	1,159,167.10	6.63	25,049.58	280.93	997,250.00
Over 29½ not over 30	6.75	19,542.10	1,172,526.00	6.64	24,933.33	276.67	1,006,300.00
Over 30 not over 30½	6.76	19,461.87	1,187,174.07	6.65	24,821.72	272.54	1,015,375.00
Over 30½ not over 31	6.77	19,386.06	1,201,935.72	6.65	24,689.52	268.15	1,023,687.50
Over 31 not over 31½	6.77	19,294.20	1,215,534.60	6.66	24,586.51	264.29	1,032,800.00
Over 31½ not over 32	6.78	19,226.54	1,230,498.56	6.67	24,487.50	260.55	1,041,937.50
Over 32 not over 32½	6.78	19,142.24	1,244,245.60	6.68	24,392.31	256.92	1,051,100.00
Over 32½ not over 33	6.79	19,081.94	1,259,408.04	6.69	24,300.76	253.41	1,060,287.50
Over 33 not over 33½	6.79	19,004.49	1,273,300.83	6.70	24,212.69	250.00	1,069,500.00
Over 33½ not over 34	6.80	18,950.89	1,288,660.52	6.70	24,102.94	246.32	1,077,875.00
Over 34 not over 34½	6.80	18,879.65	1,302,695.85	6.71	24,021.38	243.12	1,087,125.00
Over 34½ not over 35	6.80	18,811.26	1,316,788.20	6.72	23,942.86	240.00	1,096,400.00
Over 35 not over 35½	6.81	18,766.55	1,332,425.05	6.72	23,842.25	236.62	1,104,800.00
Over 35½ not over 36	6.81	18,703.55	1,346,655.60	6.73	23,769.44	233.68	1,114,112.50
Over 36 not over 36½	6.81	18,643.02	1,360,940.46	6.74	23,699.32	230.82	1,123,450.00
Over 36½ not over 37	6.81	18,584.86	1,375,279.64	6.74	23,606.76	227.70	1,131,875.00
Over 37 not over 37½	6.82	18,550.23	1,391,267.25	6.75	23,541.67	225.00	1,141,250.00
Over 37½ not over 38	6.82	18,496.57	1,405,739.32	6.75	23,453.95	222.04	1,149,687.50
Over 38 not over 38½	6.82	18,444.96	1,420,261.92	6.76	23,393.51	219.48	1,159,100.00
Over 38½ not over 39	6.82	18,395.33	1,434,835.74	6.76	23,310.26	216.67	1,167,550.00
Over 39 not over 39½	6.82	18,347.59	1,449,459.61	6.77	23,254.11	214.24	1,177,000.00
Over 39½ not over 40	6.82	18,301.66	1,464,132.80	6.77	23,175.00	211.56	1,185,462.50
Over 40 not over 40½	6.82	18,257.47	1,478,855.07	6.77	23,097.84	208.95	1,193,925.00
Over 40½ not over 41	6.82	18,214.93	1,493,624.26	6.78	23,047.56	206.71	1,203,425.00
Over 41 not over 41½	6.82	18,173.98	1,508,440.34	6.78	22,974.10	204.22	1,211,900.00

Period	Annuity			EIP			
(years)	Rate %	½ Yearly Cost (£)	Total Cost (£)	Rate %	Initial ½ Yearly Costs (£)	Reduces by each ½ year (£)	Total Cost (£)
Over 41½ not over 42	6.82	18,134.56	1,523,303.04	6.78	22,902.38	201.79	1,220,375.00
Over 42 not over 42½	6.81	18,074.64	1,536,344.40	6.79	22,857.35	199.71	1,229,925.00
Over 42½ not over 43	6.81	18,038.02	1,551,269.72	6.79	22,788.95	197.38	1,238,412.50
Over 43 not over 43½	6.81	18,002.74	1,566,238.38	6.79	22,722.13	195.11	1,246,900.00
Over 43½ not over 44	6.81	17,968.76	1,581,250.88	6.80	22,681.82	193.18	1,256,500.00
Over 44 not over 44½	6.81	17,936.02	1,596,305.78	6.80	22,617.98	191.01	1,265,000.00
Over 44½ not over 45	6.80	17,882.21	1,609,398.90	6.80	22,555.56	188.89	1,273,500.00
Over 45 not over 45½	6.80	17,851.75	1,624,509.25	6.80	22,494.51	186.81	1,282,000.00
Over 45½ not over 46	6.80	17,822.39	1,639,659.88	6.80	22,434.78	184.78	1,290,500.00
Over 46 not over 46½	6.79	17,771.66	1,652,764.38	6.81	22,401.34	183.06	1,300,175.00
Over 46½ not over 47	6.79	17,744.31	1,667,965.14	6.81	22,344.15	181.12	1,308,687.50
Over 47 not over 47½	6.79	17,717.95	1,683,205.25	6.81	22,288.16	179.21	1,317,200.00
Over 47½ not over 48	6.78	17,669.94	1,696,314.24	6.81	22,233.33	177.34	1,325,712.50
Over 48 not over 48½	6.78	17,645.36	1,711,599.92	6.81	22,179.64	175.52	1,334,225.00
Over 48½ not over 49	6.77	17,598.98	1,724,700.04	6.81	22,127.04	173.72	1,342,737.50
Over 49 not over 49½	6.77	17,576.07	1,740,030.93	6.81	22,075.51	171.97	1,351,250.00
Over 49½ not over 50	6.76	17,531.19	1,753,119.00	6.82	22,050.00	170.50	1,361,025.00

Note: 1. If a borrower wishes to make a premature repayment of a loan, either in whole or in part, it should contact the Board giving full details beforehand. The Board will usually agree to accept this request but it should be noted that a premium will be payable when the interest rate on the loan to be repaid is higher than the current rate applying to the premature repayment of a loan repayable by the same method and over the same period as that remaining on the loan which it is proposed to repay. When the interest rate on the loan to be repaid is lower than the current rate applying to the premature repayment, a discount will be allowed.

Data Date: 02-Oct-2026

United Kingdom Debt Management Office

PWLB FIXED RATE LOANS
ESTIMATED REPAYMENT COSTS

Amount of Advance: 620,000.00

Period	Annuity			EIP			
(years)	Rate %	½ Yearly Cost (£)	Total Cost (£)	Rate %	Initial ½ Yearly Costs (£)	Reduces by each ½ year (£)	Total Cost (£)
1 year	-	0.00	0.00	-	0.00	0.00	0.00
Over 1 not over 1½	-	0.00	0.00	-	0.00	0.00	0.00
Over 1½ not over 2	5.44	165,681.40	662,725.60	5.43	171,833.00	4,208.25	662,082.50
Over 2 not over 2½	5.49	134,395.69	671,978.45	5.49	141,019.00	3,403.80	671,057.00
Over 2½ not over 3	5.53	113,560.60	681,363.60	5.53	120,476.33	2,857.17	680,000.50
Over 3 not over 3½	5.58	98,727.83	691,094.81	5.57	105,838.43	2,466.71	689,068.00
Over 3½ not over 4	5.61	87,597.90	700,783.20	5.60	94,860.00	2,170.00	698,120.00
Over 4 not over 4½	5.65	78,980.50	710,824.50	5.64	86,372.89	1,942.67	707,420.00
Over 4½ not over 5	5.68	72,090.67	720,906.70	5.67	79,577.00	1,757.70	716,673.50
Over 5 not over 5½	5.71	66,470.98	731,180.78	5.70	74,033.64	1,606.36	726,020.00
Over 5½ not over 6	5.74	61,804.12	741,649.44	5.73	69,429.67	1,480.25	735,459.50
Over 6 not over 6½	5.77	57,870.39	752,315.07	5.76	65,548.31	1,373.54	744,992.00
Over 6½ not over 7	5.80	54,512.87	763,180.18	5.78	62,203.71	1,279.86	754,385.00
Over 7 not over 7½	5.83	51,616.50	774,247.50	5.81	59,344.33	1,200.73	764,088.00
Over 7½ not over 8	5.86	49,094.97	785,519.52	5.83	56,823.00	1,129.56	773,620.50
Over 8 not over 8½	5.88	46,863.36	796,677.12	5.85	54,605.59	1,066.76	783,215.00
Over 8½ not over 9	5.91	44,908.06	808,345.08	5.88	52,672.44	1,012.67	793,166.00
Over 9 not over 9½	5.93	43,150.61	819,861.59	5.90	50,921.58	962.63	802,900.00
Over 9½ not over 10	5.96	41,596.72	831,934.40	5.92	49,352.00	917.60	812,696.00
Over 10 not over 10½	5.99	40,201.13	844,223.73	5.95	47,968.81	878.33	822,895.00
Over 10½ not over 11	6.01	38,922.87	856,303.14	5.97	46,688.82	841.23	832,830.50
Over 11 not over 11½	6.04	37,783.07	869,010.61	5.99	45,525.52	807.35	842,828.00
Over 11½ not over 12	6.06	36,727.81	881,467.44	6.01	44,464.33	776.29	852,887.50
Over 12 not over 12½	6.09	35,784.05	894,601.25	6.03	43,493.00	747.72	863,009.00
Over 12½ not over 13	6.12	34,921.65	907,962.90	6.06	42,632.15	722.54	873,611.00
Over 13 not over 13½	6.14	34,111.50	921,010.50	6.08	41,810.96	698.07	883,872.00
Over 13½ not over 14	6.17	33,386.12	934,811.36	6.10	41,052.86	675.36	894,195.00
Over 14 not over 14½	6.20	32,718.85	948,846.65	6.12	40,351.31	654.21	904,580.00
Over 14½ not over 15	6.22	32,083.37	962,501.10	6.14	39,700.67	634.47	915,027.00
Over 15 not over 15½	6.25	31,515.72	976,987.32	6.16	39,096.00	616.00	925,536.00
Over 15½ not over 16	6.28	30,991.08	991,714.56	6.19	38,564.00	599.66	936,618.50
Over 16 not over 16½	6.30	30,484.57	1,005,990.81	6.21	38,038.88	583.36	947,267.00
Over 16½ not over 17	6.33	30,034.72	1,021,180.48	6.23	37,548.29	568.03	957,977.50
Over 17 not over 17½	6.35	29,596.30	1,035,870.50	6.25	37,089.29	553.57	968,750.00
Over 17½ not over 18	6.37	29,187.67	1,050,756.12	6.27	36,659.22	539.92	979,584.50
Over 18 not over 18½	6.40	28,828.08	1,066,638.96	6.29	36,255.76	527.00	990,481.00
Over 18½ not over 19	6.42	28,472.27	1,081,946.26	6.31	35,876.79	514.76	1,001,439.50

Period	Annuity			EIP			
	Rate	½ Yearly	Total	Rate	Initial ½ Yearly	Reduces by	Total
(years)	%	Cost (£)	Cost (£)	%	Costs (£)	each ½ year (£)	Cost (£)
Over 19 not over 19½	6.44	28,139.81	1,097,452.59	6.33	35,520.44	503.15	1,012,460.00
Over 19½ not over 20	6.47	27,851.05	1,114,042.00	6.34	35,154.00	491.35	1,022,907.00
Over 20 not over 20½	6.49	27,560.42	1,129,977.22	6.36	34,837.95	480.88	1,034,036.00
Over 20½ not over 21	6.51	27,288.43	1,146,114.06	6.38	34,539.90	470.90	1,045,227.00
Over 21 not over 21½	6.53	27,033.82	1,162,454.26	6.40	34,258.60	461.40	1,056,480.00
Over 21½ not over 22	6.55	26,795.40	1,178,997.60	6.42	33,992.91	452.32	1,067,795.00
Over 22 not over 22½	6.57	26,572.11	1,195,744.95	6.43	33,710.78	442.96	1,078,459.00
Over 22½ not over 23	6.59	26,362.99	1,212,697.54	6.45	33,473.26	434.67	1,089,882.50
Over 23 not over 23½	6.60	26,144.05	1,228,770.35	6.47	33,248.49	426.74	1,101,368.00
Over 23½ not over 24	6.62	25,960.51	1,246,104.48	6.48	33,004.67	418.50	1,112,156.00
Over 24 not over 24½	6.64	25,788.67	1,263,644.83	6.50	32,803.06	411.22	1,123,750.00
Over 24½ not over 25	6.65	25,604.34	1,280,217.00	6.51	32,581.00	403.62	1,134,615.50
Over 25 not over 25½	6.66	25,430.10	1,296,935.10	6.53	32,399.86	396.92	1,146,318.00
Over 25½ not over 26	6.68	25,289.15	1,315,035.80	6.54	32,197.08	389.88	1,157,261.00
Over 26 not over 26½	6.69	25,133.52	1,332,076.56	6.55	32,003.11	383.11	1,168,235.00
Over 26½ not over 27	6.70	24,986.35	1,349,262.90	6.57	31,848.48	377.17	1,180,092.50
Over 27 not over 27½	6.72	24,871.35	1,367,924.25	6.58	31,670.73	370.87	1,191,144.00
Over 27½ not over 28	6.73	24,739.87	1,385,432.72	6.59	31,500.43	364.80	1,202,226.50
Over 28 not over 28½	6.74	24,615.53	1,403,085.21	6.60	31,337.19	358.95	1,213,340.00
Over 28½ not over 29	6.75	24,497.97	1,420,882.26	6.62	31,211.66	353.83	1,225,399.00
Over 29 not over 29½	6.76	24,386.84	1,438,823.56	6.63	31,061.47	348.36	1,236,590.00
Over 29½ not over 30	6.76	24,257.00	1,455,420.00	6.64	30,917.33	343.07	1,247,812.00
Over 30 not over 30½	6.77	24,157.62	1,473,614.82	6.65	30,778.93	337.95	1,259,065.00
Over 30½ not over 31	6.78	24,063.75	1,491,952.50	6.66	30,646.00	333.00	1,270,349.00
Over 31 not over 31½	6.79	23,975.10	1,510,431.30	6.67	30,518.27	328.21	1,281,664.00
Over 31½ not over 32	6.79	23,866.16	1,527,434.24	6.68	30,395.50	323.56	1,293,010.00
Over 32 not over 32½	6.80	23,787.12	1,546,162.80	6.69	30,277.46	319.06	1,304,387.00
Over 32½ not over 33	6.80	23,687.09	1,563,347.94	6.69	30,132.94	314.23	1,314,756.50
Over 33 not over 33½	6.81	23,616.75	1,582,322.25	6.70	30,023.73	310.00	1,326,180.00
Over 33½ not over 34	6.81	23,524.80	1,599,686.40	6.71	29,918.65	305.90	1,337,634.50
Over 34 not over 34½	6.82	23,462.37	1,618,903.53	6.72	29,817.51	301.91	1,349,120.00
Over 34½ not over 35	6.82	23,377.76	1,636,443.20	6.73	29,720.14	298.04	1,360,636.50
Over 35 not over 35½	6.83	23,322.54	1,655,900.34	6.73	29,595.39	293.85	1,371,068.00
Over 35½ not over 36	6.83	23,244.61	1,673,611.92	6.74	29,505.11	290.19	1,382,631.00
Over 36 not over 36½	6.83	23,169.75	1,691,391.75	6.75	29,418.15	286.64	1,394,225.00
Over 36½ not over 37	6.83	23,097.82	1,709,238.68	6.75	29,303.38	282.77	1,404,687.50
Over 37 not over 37½	6.84	23,055.09	1,729,131.75	6.76	29,222.67	279.41	1,416,328.00
Over 37½ not over 38	6.84	22,988.72	1,747,142.72	6.76	29,113.89	275.74	1,426,806.00
Over 38 not over 38½	6.84	22,924.91	1,765,218.07	6.77	29,038.95	272.56	1,438,493.00
Over 38½ not over 39	6.84	22,863.55	1,783,356.90	6.77	28,935.72	269.06	1,448,986.50
Over 39 not over 39½	6.84	22,804.53	1,801,557.87	6.78	28,866.10	266.05	1,460,720.00
Over 39½ not over 40	6.84	22,747.75	1,819,820.00	6.78	28,768.00	262.73	1,471,229.00
Over 40 not over 40½	6.84	22,693.11	1,838,141.91	6.79	28,703.32	259.86	1,483,009.00
Over 40½ not over 41	6.84	22,640.53	1,856,523.46	6.79	28,609.98	256.70	1,493,533.50
Over 41 not over 41½	6.84	22,589.92	1,874,963.36	6.79	28,518.88	253.60	1,504,058.00

Period	Annuity			EIP			
(years)	Rate %	½ Yearly Cost (£)	Total Cost (£)	Rate %	Initial ½ Yearly Costs (£)	Reduces by each ½ year (£)	Total Cost (£)
Over 41½ not over 42	6.84	22,541.20	1,893,460.80	6.80	28,460.95	250.95	1,515,900.00
Over 42 not over 42½	6.84	22,494.29	1,912,014.65	6.80	28,374.12	248.00	1,526,440.00
Over 42½ not over 43	6.84	22,449.11	1,930,623.46	6.81	28,320.30	245.48	1,538,328.50
Over 43 not over 43½	6.84	22,405.61	1,949,288.07	6.81	28,237.44	242.66	1,548,884.00
Over 43½ not over 44	6.83	22,336.21	1,965,586.48	6.81	28,156.45	239.90	1,559,439.50
Over 44 not over 44½	6.83	22,295.76	1,984,322.64	6.81	28,077.29	237.20	1,569,995.00
Over 44½ not over 45	6.83	22,256.79	2,003,111.10	6.82	28,030.89	234.91	1,581,961.00
Over 45 not over 45½	6.83	22,219.23	2,021,949.93	6.82	27,955.19	232.33	1,592,532.00
Over 45½ not over 46	6.82	22,155.27	2,038,284.84	6.82	27,881.13	229.80	1,603,103.00
Over 46 not over 46½	6.82	22,120.31	2,057,188.83	6.82	27,808.67	227.33	1,613,674.00
Over 46½ not over 47	6.82	22,086.61	2,076,141.34	6.83	27,768.74	225.24	1,625,717.50
Over 47 not over 47½	6.81	22,026.15	2,092,484.25	6.83	27,699.32	222.87	1,636,304.00
Over 47½ not over 48	6.81	21,994.75	2,111,496.00	6.83	27,631.33	220.55	1,646,890.50
Over 48 not over 48½	6.81	21,964.48	2,130,554.56	6.83	27,564.75	218.28	1,657,477.00
Over 48½ not over 49	6.80	21,907.13	2,146,898.74	6.83	27,499.53	216.05	1,668,063.50
Over 49 not over 49½	6.80	21,878.90	2,166,011.10	6.83	27,435.63	213.87	1,678,650.00
Over 49½ not over 50	6.79	21,823.41	2,182,341.00	6.84	27,404.00	212.04	1,690,802.00

Note: 1. If a borrower wishes to make a premature repayment of a loan, either in whole or in part, it should contact the Board giving full details beforehand. The Board will usually agree to accept this request but it should be noted that a premium will be payable when the interest rate on the loan to be repaid is higher than the current rate applying to the premature repayment of a loan repayable by the same method and over the same period as that remaining on the loan which it is proposed to repay. When the interest rate on the loan to be repaid is lower than the current rate applying to the premature repayment, a discount will be allowed.

TOWN COUNCIL **Agenda Item 9**

Date:	**12th October 2026**
Title:	**LOCAL COUNCIL AWARD SCHEME: GOLD APPLICATION**
Purpose of the Report:	**To present to members the draft Local Council Award Scheme application form for approval.**
Contact Officer:	**Clare Evans, Town Clerk**

1. RECOMMENDATION

In accordance with the Local Council Award Scheme criteria:

1. **To confirm that all the required documents, information and conditions are in place for the Bronze award, and that these are published on the council's website, where applicable;**
2. **To confirm that all the required documents, information and conditions are in place for the Silver award, and that these are published on the council's website, where applicable**
3. **To confirm that all the required documents, information and conditions are in place for the Gold award, and that these are published on the council's website, where applicable**

2. BACKGROUND

The Corporate Plan includes an objective under Pillar 4, Management & Operations, to apply for the NALC Local Council Award scheme. The scheme offers 3 levels of accreditation: Bronze, Silver and Gold.

Details about the scheme can be found here: Local Council Award Scheme

As part of the process Council is required to confirm by Resolution that all the required documents, information and conditions are in place for the award.

3. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Having reviewed the requirements for each level of accreditation, the council is considered able to apply for a Gold Award.

Members will find attached the following:

- NALC Guide to the Local Council Award Scheme
- Guide Completed Application Form and supporting evidence

The following determination timeline is provided:

Deadline for applications — 4 January 2027
Deadline for NALC to provide triage feedback to parish or town councils — 22 January 2027
Deadline for parish or town councils to respond to triage feedback — 5 February 2027
Deadline for applications to be sent to panel — 12 February 2027
Deadline for panel results — 9 April 2027

4. HRTC CORPORATE PLAN

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

4.5 Enhance the role of the council.

6. IMPLICATIONS

Corporate Implications

- The purpose of this award scheme is:
  …to celebrate the achievements of the finest parish and town councils while offering a structured framework to empower all councils to enhance and realise their full potential. This scheme allows councils to demonstrate adherence to sector standards, be evaluated by their peers, and establish conditions conducive to ongoing improvement.

Legal Implications

- There are no legal implications arising from the recommendations

Crime and Disorder Implications

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

Financial Implications

- There are 2 parts to the accreditation fee - £50 registration fee, payable upon registration (completed) and £200 accreditation fee payable once the award is determined (anticipated to by April / May ’27). This will be funded through budget code 190-4059.

Risk Implications

- The scheme requires council to confirm that all the required documents, information and conditions are in place for each level of award. Members were sent a draft by email on 16th September to provide extra time for review. Comments received in response have been incorporated.

Equalities Implications

- 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

7. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

The council has worked hard to ensure it has good governance in place; it works collaboratively with its community and delivers projects and initiatives which support and enhance local services and facilities. This award scheme looks to recognise this work.

8. APPENDICES

- **Appendix A:** LC Guide to the Local Council Award Scheme
- **Appendix B:** Completed Application Form
  (supporting evidence available to members on request)

LOCAL COUNCIL AWARD SCHEME

nalc

A guide to the Local Council Award Scheme

Published by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC)

The Bloomsbury Building
10 Bloomsbury Way
Holborn
London
WC1A 2SL

020 7637 1865
nalc@nalc.gov.uk
www.nalc.gov.uk

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THE LOCAL COUNCIL AWARD SCHEME EXISTS TO CELEBRATE THE SUCCESSES OF THE VERY BEST LOCAL COUNCILS, AND TO PROVIDE A FRAMEWORK TO SUPPORT ALL LOCAL COUNCILS TO MEET THEIR FULL POTENTIAL

All local councils want to serve their local communities and make a real difference to the lives of the people that live there. This scheme offers councils the opportunity to show that they meet the standards set by the sector, assessed by their peers, and to put in place the conditions for continued improvement.

The Local Council Award Scheme has been designed to both provide the tools and encouragement to those councils at the beginning of their improvement journeys, as well as promoting and recognising councils that are at the cutting edge of the sector. It is only through the sector working together to share best practice, drive up standards and supporting those who are committed to improving their offer to their communities that individual councils and the sector as a whole will reach its full potential.

The scheme was created in 2014 and is managed on behalf of local councils by the Improvement and Development Board (IDB). Councils can apply for an award at one of three levels:

- The Bronze Award demonstrates that a council meets the requirements for operating lawfully and according to standard practice.
- The Silver Award demonstrates that a council achieves good practice in governance, community engagement and council improvement.
- The Gold Award demonstrates that a council is at the forefront of best practice and achieves excellence in governance, community leadership and council development.

The scheme sets out criteria to meet at each level covering selected aspects of the council's work. Councils can seek to progress through the tiers over time thereby raising standards. Councils of any size can aspire to an award appropriate for their budget and level of activity.

To support transparency, every award level has a requirement for certain information to be published online (plus some information that does not need to be published). In all instances the council confirms that the required documents, information and conditions are in place (whether published or not) by resolution in public at a full council meeting. For Gold, councils also provide statements for submission to the panel demonstrating excellence in their activities. The panel may ask for additional information to check the accuracy of claims.

CONTENTS

5 BRONZE AWARD CRITERIA

11 SILVER AWARD CRITERIA

16 GOLD AWARD CRITERIA

This section sets out in brief what is required for each award and then explains in more detail the evidence that the accreditation panel is looking for. Councils should find this additional guidance helpful in identifying what is required.

8 BRONZE AWARD ACCREDITATION PROCESS

13 SILVER AWARD ACCREDITATION PROCESS

18 GOLD AWARD ACCREDITATION PROCESS

The Local Council Award Scheme is a form of peer review. Councils are reviewed by experienced peers through the work of an accreditation panel.

This section outlines guidance for the process for accreditation. These are not strict rules, and can be tailored to local need in consultation with NALC.

23 FEES

There are two fees:

- A registration fee paid to NALC
- An accreditation fee paid to the organisation responsible for administering the local or national accreditation process.

25 EVALUATION AND IMPROVEMENT

The aim of the evaluation and improvement process is to allow the sector to feel ownership of the Local Council Award Scheme, and to see the scheme changing to meet the feedback and needs expressed by the sector. This section outlines the evaluation and improvement process that will allow the scheme to be dynamic and respond over time to changes in the sector, national policy and other relevant issues.

BRONZE AWARD

TO ACHIEVE A BRONZE AWARD A COUNCIL DEMONSTRATES THAT IT HAS THE DOCUMENTATION AND INFORMATION IN PLACE FOR OPERATING LAWFULLY AND ACCORDING TO STANDARD PRACTICE. THE COUNCIL ALSO HAS POLICIES FOR TRAINING COUNCILLORS AND OFFICERS AND IS BUILDING A FOUNDATION FOR IMPROVEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT.

Before applying for the Bronze award the council confirms by resolution that all the required documents, information and conditions are in place for the Bronze award, and that these are published on the council's website, where applicable

To achieve the Bronze award the council must publish on its website:

Governance	**Community**	**Development**
Criteria demonstrating good governance in managing the business and finances of a council	*Criteria representing a council's role in the community and how it engages with the community*	*Criteria representing council improvement through the management and development of staff and councillors*
Its standing orders	Council contact details	
Its financial regulations	Councillor information, including registers of interests, in line with the Transparency Code	
Its Code of Conduct	Its action plan for the current year	
Its accessibility statement	Evidence of consulting the community	
Its publication scheme	Publicity advertising council activities	
Its complaints procedure	Evidence of participating in town and country planning	
Its privacy notice	Evidence of publicising elections and vacancies on the council	
Its last annual return		
Transparent information about council payments		
A calendar of all meetings including the annual meeting of electors		

Minutes for at least one year of full council meetings and all committee and sub-committee meetings		
Current agendas		
The budget and precept information for the current or next financial year		
It's biodiversity policy		

The following documents and information must be in place and evidence provided to the assessment panel:

Governance	**Community**	**Development**
Criteria demonstrating good governance in managing the business and finances of a council	Criteria representing a council's role in the community and how it engages with the community	Criteria representing council improvement through the management and development of staff and councillors
A risk management policy	Evidence of considering the impact of their functions and decisions on crime and disorder in their local area	Disciplinary and grievance procedures
A register of assets		A policy for training and development of staff and councillors
Up-to-date insurance policies that mitigate risks to public money		A record of all training undertaken by staff and councillors in the last year
		The clerk who has achieved 12 Continuing Professional Development (CPD) points in the last year
		Signed up to the Civility & Respect Pledge, including adopting a Dignity at Work policy

The council notifies the accreditation panel co-ordinator when the resolution has been agreed and provides a completed application form, including webpage addresses to where the information can be found online.

BRONZE AWARD - WHAT IS THE ACCREDITATION PANEL LOOKING FOR?

The panel seeks assurance that the council acts lawfully and according to standard practice. Unless it is a matter of law, the panel is not making a judgement on the quality of the evidence at this level; it simply confirms that the documentation and information is in place, up-to-date and complies with the guidance below. All policies should comply with current legislation and guidance and note the date of the next review.

Criteria	Guidance
Its standing orders Its financial regulations Its Code of Conduct Its accessibility statement Its publication scheme Its complaints procedure Its privacy notice	Standing orders, financial regulations, the Code of Conduct, publication scheme, accessibility statement, privacy statement and complaints procedure are public documents tailored to the specific council. Standing orders or financial regulations explain procedures for contracts and internal controls. For councils with an annual turnover of less than £25,000 they also demonstrate compliance with the Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities.
Its last annual return	The panel checks that the council has published its most recent Accounting Statements and Annual Governance Statement. Where the council is eligible for external audit the panel checks that the council has a limited assurance (unqualified) opinion from the external auditor; the opinion may contain recommendations for consideration as long as a qualified opinion is not given. The panel checks the arrangements for internal audit and internal controls.
Transparent information about council payments	Information on all payments must be transparent and in accordance with financial regulations and statutory proper practices. The panel will seek evidence that the council publishes information on payments in line with the appropriate transparency code. For smaller councils publishing payments over £100 annually and larger councils publishing payments over £500 quarterly. For more information see the Good Councillors Guide to Finance and Transparency.
A calendar of all meetings including the annual meeting of electors	The calendar includes the Annual Meeting of the Council and the Annual Parish/Town Meeting and both meetings must be held during the correct statutory period. The calendar also shows that the council has at least four full council meetings a year.
Minutes for at least one year of full council meetings and all committee and sub-committee meetings Current agendas	Minutes and agendas are published for all council meetings for at least the last year, including committees and the Annual Meeting of the Council. The panel checks that minutes (including associated papers) and agendas demonstrate the lawful convening of meetings and decision-making and that all meetings allow the public to make representations to the council. Draft minutes (marked Draft) of all council and committee meetings should be posted up as soon as

	possible after the meeting and within at least four weeks. The minutes will show that the council monitors its performance against the budget at least every three months.
The budget and precept information for the current or next financial year	The council can post up the current or next year's budget (or both). The council publishes detailed budget documents that include information on income and expenditure (or receipts and payments). Documents show how the precept was calculated and that the council understand the impact of precept changes on taxpayers.
Council contact details	The council's website should include the name of the clerk and contact details (address, phone, email) for the council as a corporate body.
Councillor information, including registers of interests, in line with the Transparency Code	It should also publish the names of councillors and councillors' responsibilities in compliance with the Local Government Transparency Code. The council does not need to publish the councillors' registers of interests on their own website provided that there is a working link to the complete register of all councillors' interests on the principal authority's website.
Its action plan for the current year	The council must publish an action plan; as a minimum this is a one-page document listing the council's objectives for the current year. It is not a parish plan which is a plan for the future of the community; the council can extract objectives for action from the parish plan depending on its areas of responsibility.
Evidence of consulting the community Publicity advertising council activities	The panel seeks at least one piece of evidence from council publicity that it consults and actively serves its community. Publicity might include an annual report, web material or news bulletins. The information gives a flavour of any council activity such as lobbying principal authorities, giving grants to community groups, the provision of a service or helping with community events. For guidance, councils can refer to The Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity. Similarly any form of consultation is suitable, including surveys, online polls, focus groups or public meetings
Evidence of participating in town and country planning	Council documents demonstrate that the council participates in the planning system by, for example, commenting on planning applications or working on a neighbourhood plan. Decisions on planning matters must be made in properly convened meetings and, if required, by delegation to a committee. Some decisions may be delegated to an officer.
Evidence of publicising elections and vacancies on the council	The panel will seek evidence that when there are scheduled elections or council vacancies, the council informs the public. This includes displaying notices in conspicuous places within the parish and should also involve additional methods such as announcements on

	the council's website or in local newspapers.
It's biodiversity policy	The biodiversity policy will show the council's commitment to protecting and enhancing biodiversity in the parish. Including specific objectives, such as promoting habitat creation, supporting pollinators, or enhancing green spaces. Practical actions the council might take could include reviewing planning applications for biodiversity impacts, managing council-owned land for wildlife, or working with local conservation groups.
A risk management policy	The risk management policy shows the council has considered all relevant risks to the council, including but not limited to health and safety.
A register of assets	The register of assets can be based on a model but tailored to the specific council. They are not published.
Up-to-date insurance policies that mitigate risks to public money	The panel may wish to check that insurance policies have been reviewed and are up-to-date and that the council recognises insurance as a way of mitigating risks to public money. The panel does not seek to judge the appropriateness of the insurance policies themselves.
Evidence of considering the impact of their functions and decisions on crime and disorder in their local area	Evidence might include a published policy, or minutes of meetings, or other materials that describe council activities that relate to crime and disorder
Disciplinary and grievance procedures	Disciplinary and grievance procedures can be based on a model but tailored to the specific council. There is not a requirement to publish.
A policy for training and development of staff and councillors A record of all training undertaken by staff and councillors in the last year A clerk who has achieved 12 Continuing Professional Development (CPD) points in the last year	A training and development policy for staff and councillors can be a short statement of intent while a training record gives dates, titles and providers of development activities undertaken by named individuals in the last year, including, for example, events, online courses, learning on the job and qualifications. Councillors undertake a range of development activities such as attending conferences, undertaking training, or reading about developments in the sector. The CPD points are for the clerk in employment with the council at the time of application. The clerk's training record includes evidence of CPD such as training, conference attendance, mentoring and studying for qualifications. CPD points are allocated according to a system published by the IDB.
Signed up to the Civility & Respect Pledge, including adopting a Dignity at Work policy	The panel will ask to see the certificate that the council has signed up to the Civility and Respect pledge. A Dignity at Work Policy should ensure a respectful and supportive workplace by outlining expectations for behaviour, defining and prohibiting bullying, harassment, and discrimination, and providing procedures for raising and addressing concerns.

SILVER AWARD

TO ACHIEVE THE SILVER AWARD A COUNCIL DEMONSTRATES THAT IT MEETS ALL REQUIREMENTS OF THE BRONZE AWARD AND HAS ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION AND INFORMATION IN PLACE FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE, EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND COUNCIL IMPROVEMENT.

Before applying for the Silver award the council confirms by resolution that all the required documents, information and conditions are in place for the Silver award, and that these are published on the council's website, where applicable

To achieve the Silver award the council must publish on its website:

Governance	**Community**	**Development**
Criteria demonstrating good governance in managing the business and finances of a council	*Criteria representing a council's role in the community and how it engages with the community*	*Criteria representing council improvement through the management and development of staff and councillors*
A Health and Safety policy	A community engagement policy involving two-way communication between council and community	
Its policy on equality	Councillor profiles	
A co-option policy	A grant awarding policy	
	Evidence showing how electors contribute to the Annual Parish or Town Meeting	
	An action plan and related budget responding to community engagement and setting out a timetable for action and review	
	Evidence of community engagement, council activities and the promotion of democratic processes in an annual report that is actively shared with the community, online material and regular news bulletins	
	Evidence of helping the community plan for its future	
	Evidence of encouraging public engagement in local democracy	

The following documents and information must be in place and evidence provided to the assessment panel:

Governance	**Community**	**Development**
Criteria demonstrating good governance in managing the business and finances of a council	Criteria representing a council's role in the community and how it engages with the community	Criteria representing council improvement through the management and development of staff and councillors
A scheme of delegation (where relevant)	At least two-thirds of its councillors who stood for election, or significant evidence of the council advertising vacancies	A qualified clerk
	Evidence of a customer service in how the council handles correspondence with the public	A formal appraisal process for all staff

The council notifies the accreditation panel co-ordinator when the resolution has been agreed and provides a completed application form, including webpage addresses to where the information can be found online.

SILVER AWARD - WHAT IS THE ACCREDITATION PANEL LOOKING FOR?

The accreditation panel first checks that the criteria for the Bronze Award are in place if the award was granted more than one year ago. The exception to this is if the council received the Bronze award less than a year ago. Then the panel does not check the Bronze criteria again, but the council still confirms in a public meeting that it meets these criteria.

It then considers the additional criteria for the Silver Award.

The panel assesses the quality of documents and information seeking reassurance that the council is acting lawfully and according to good (rather than best) practice. The panel confirms that the documentation and information is in place and up-to-date and complies with the guidance below. The council is encouraged (but not obliged) to use a gov.uk domain for its website and email addresses for staff and councillors. All policies should comply with current legislation and guidance and note the date of the next review.

Criteria	**Guidance**
A Health and Safety policy Its policy on equality	The panel seeks evidence that the council has in place light touch policies for managing Health and Safety, including its duty of care to staff and promoting equality in compliance with legislation. For example, evidence might include employment documents or statements on agendas.
A co-option policy	The panel will seek evidence that the co-option policy includes a well-defined process for co-option, that the process is transparent, and where the council openly advertises seats available for co-option.
A community engagement policy involving two-way communication between council and community	A community engagement policy demonstrates the council's commitment to hearing what people in the community think and communicating its own actions and decisions.
Councillor profiles	Councillor profiles normally contain a photo and reference to the ward represented (if relevant) but personal contact details are not required.
A grant awarding policy	The council gives grants to community organisations and publishes a grant awarding policy.
Evidence showing how electors contribute to the Annual Parish or Town Meeting	Evidence that electors can contribute to the Annual Parish or Town Meeting can come in any form; for example, it could be an invitation to attend and participate in discussions or a record of how community groups spoke about their use of grant funding over the last year.
An action plan and related budget responding to community engagement and setting out a timetable for action and review	The action plan (or similar forward plan) summarises findings from community engagement and sets out aims and objectives that respond to community views. The action plan includes a timetable for actions to be completed with dates for reviewing the plan. The council's budget shows how the action plan is put into practice and manages risks to public money.
Evidence of community engagement, council activities and the promotion of democratic	The council is expected to produce an annual report, online material and regular news bulletins throughout the year. The annual report and news bulletins must be

processes in an annual report that is actively share with the community, online material and regular news bulletins	online even if they were also distributed in hard copy such as in printed newsletters or village magazines. If the council uses social media such as Facebook or Twitter, this will be evident from the council's website. The accreditation panel will read the materials looking for evidence of community engagement, council activities and promoting democratic processes. The panel expects to see that the council consults the community in at least three different ways (such as surveys, focus groups, online or street polls and community workshops) and engages with other organisations, including community groups and the principal authority(ies). It will look for at least three positive actions for the community in the last year. The annual report should be actively communicated and shared with the community. It might be produced digitally and/or in hard copy. It is accepted that it cannot always be distributed to all households, but digital versions could be distributed by email and social media. Hard copies could be left at prime locations in a community, including a library, doctors' surgeries, schools, pubs, shops or residential homes.
Evidence of helping the community plan for its future	The panel seeks evidence from council documents and online information that it supports the community in planning for its future. The panel seeks evidence that the council has considered environmental matters as part of how it plans for the future of the community. This may be through the planning system such as considering environmental impact in neighbourhood plans, or through engagement with the community. The council might also undertake activities to engage with the community on the environment outside of the planning system, this might include tree planting, litter picking, reducing carbon and addressing climate change.
Evidence of encouraging public engagement in local democracy	The panel will seek evidence of encouraging the public in engagement in local democracy. This might include campaigns to encourage people to vote or stand for election. It might include providing information on the council website on how the council makes decisions and how the public can observe or take part in council meetings.
A scheme of delegation (where relevant)	The panel may wish to check that a council properly operates the delegation of decision-making to committees, sub-committees and officers (where relevant). Arrangements for delegation may be set out in standing orders or in a separate scheme of delegation.
At least two-thirds of its councillors who stood for election, or significant evidence of the council advertising	At the time of making the resolution, at least two-thirds of the seats on the council must be filled by councillors who stood for election at either the last ordinary elections or a by-election. This shows that the council

vacancies	represents the community through democratic processes. Councillors who stood for election, even if elected unopposed, do count, while councillors who were co-opted or appointed cannot count. If two thirds is not a whole number, then it must be rounded up to the next whole number using the table below. The panel will seek evidence that when there are scheduled elections or council vacancies, the council puts significant effort towards informing the public and encouraging participation. The panel will be looking for the council to demonstrate it has done more than the statutory requirements of posting notices, for example posters in noticeboards, posts on social media, articles in newsletters, local newspapers etc.

Total Council Seats	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Two Thirds	4	4	5	6	6	7	8	8	9	10	10	11	12	12	13	14

Evidence of a customer service in how the council handles correspondence with the public	The panel seeks evidence of how the council handles correspondence with the public and takes a customer service approach. Evidence shows how the council plans for and manages correspondence with the public, this might include examples of the council has addressed complaints, queries and other communications in the past year. It might also include any policies or training for staff that illustrates the councils commitment to customer service.
A qualified clerk	This criteria relates to the clerk employed by the council at the time of application. A qualified clerk is defined in Parish Councils (General Power of Competence) (Prescribed Conditions) Order 2012. The clerk (and deputy clerk) should be properly remunerated with a contract in accordance with terms and conditions set out in the national agreement or in a local government scheme.
A formal appraisal process for all staff	The panel may ask to see the document setting out the formal appraisal process that must be in place for all staff. It checks that the council has a training budget and may ask to see a general training policy for staff and councillors with a detailed record of all training undertaken by staff and councillors in the last year. The panel seeks assurance that a training culture is embedded in the council.

GOLD AWARD

TO ACHIEVE A GOLD AWARD A COUNCIL DEMONSTRATES THAT IT MEETS ALL REQUIREMENTS OF THE BRONZE AND SILVER AWARDS, AND IS AT THE FOREFRONT OF BEST PRACTICE BY ACHIEVING AN EXCELLENT STANDARD IN COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE, COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT.

Before applying for the Gold award the council confirms by resolution that all the required documents, information and conditions are in place for the Gold award, and that these are published on the council's website, where applicable

To achieve the Gold award the council must publish on its website:

Governance	**Community**	**Development**
Criteria demonstrating good governance in managing the business and finances of a council	*Criteria representing a council's role in the community and how it engages with the community*	*Criteria representing council improvement through the management and development of staff and councillors*
A business plan covering a financial forecast for at least three years linked to revenue and capital plans for the council and its community	An annual report, online material, news bulletins and other council communications with evidence of: • Engaging with diverse groups in the community using a variety of methods • Community engagement influencing council activity and priorities • A wide range of council activities, including innovative projects, that produce positive outcomes for the community • Co-operating constructively with other organisations • Active promotion of elections, including that at least two-thirds of its councillors stood for election	

The following criteria require statements (of no more than one page) that should be presented to the accreditation panel showing how the council:

Governance	**Community**	**Development**
Criteria demonstrating good governance in managing the business and finances of a council	*Criteria representing a council's role in the community and how it engages with the community*	*Criteria representing council improvement through the management and development of staff and councillors*
Ensures that the council delivers value for money	Provides leadership in planning for the future of the community	Manages the performance of staff and the council as a corporate body to achieve its business plan
	Engages with the community on issues related to the environment and climate change	Supports a culture of civility and respect in the council

The council notifies the accreditation panel co-ordinator when the resolution has been agreed and provides a completed application form, including webpage addresses to where the information can be found online.

GOLD AWARD - WHAT IS THE ACCREDITATION PANEL LOOKING FOR?

The accreditation panel first checks that criteria for the Bronze and Silver Awards are in place if an award was assessed more than one year ago. It then considers the additional criteria for Gold. The exception to this is if the council received a Bronze or Silver award less than a year ago. Then the panel does not check the criteria for that award again, but the council still confirms in a public meeting that it meets these criteria.

The panel assesses the quality of documents and information in some depth. It seeks reassurance that the council is acting lawfully and aspires to excellence. In identifying excellence, the panel confirms that the council operates within the law as explained in standard works of reference, demonstrates transparent, efficient and effective decision-making and governance and exercises sound financial management.

The panel also seeks evidence of councillors and officers working together as a corporate body to achieve the criteria at Gold level. The panel will be interested to note whether the council already has a reputation for being at the forefront of best practice. The panel also seeks reassurance that the council is not experiencing destructive internal conflict or that nothing has occurred to bring the council into disrepute.

Complying with the guidance below, the panel confirms that up-to-date documentation and information for Gold is in place. The panel may ask for further information or talk to councillors and staff. Councils seeking the Gold Award should be aware that the panel is a peer group applying their own standards of excellence to the criteria explained below.

Criteria	**Guidance**
A business plan covering a financial forecast for at least three years linked to revenue and capital plans for the council and its community	The council works to a forward plan (or business plan) created for at least three years even if this takes the council beyond the next election. This plan explicitly responds to community engagement. It sets out the council's aims and objectives for both the council and the community and shows how they will be achieved including financial forecasts for both revenue and capital for the duration of the plan.
An annual report, online material, news bulletins and other council communications with evidence of: • Engaging with diverse groups in the community using a variety of methods • Community engagement influencing council activity and priorities • A wide range of council activities, including innovative projects, that produce positive outcomes for the community • Co-operating constructively with other organisations • Active promotion of elections, including that at least two-thirds of its councillors	The annual report, web material and news bulletins publicise the work and achievements of the council and contain substantial evidence that the council takes the lead in actively representing and serving all parts of its local community. The council therefore addresses the diversity of its community, including, for example, different age groups, service users, physical locations, housing types, language, employment status and skills. These sources of information also show that the council seeks out and responds to views and ideas expressed by its community. The council uses a variety of ways (at least four)

stood for election	of consulting and involving local people to understand their views. There should be evidence that the council identifies local needs and views through community engagement that are then addressed in constructive council action. These sources also show that the council promotes local democracy. The panel seeks evidence that community engagement is at the heart of determining council priorities. Evidence shows this engagement leads to actions and projects within the council that deliver positive outcomes for the community. The council is innovative; this is the case if the council undertakes actions that are still relatively new or unusual for that council. There is evidence that the council embraces new ideas and trying new projects. The panel also checks that the council is co-operating with other organisations, including community groups, its principal authority(ies) and other agencies to provide an effective service to the community. Co-operation includes but is not limited to partnerships. At the time of making the resolution, at least two-thirds of the seats on the council must be filled by councillors who stood for election at either the last ordinary elections or a by-election. This shows that the council represents the community through democratic processes. Councillors who stood for election, even if elected unopposed, do count, while councillors who were co-opted or appointed cannot count. If two thirds is not a whole number, then it must be rounded up to the next whole number using the table provided below

Total Council Seats	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Two Thirds	4	4	5	6	6	7	8	8	9	10	10	11	12	12	13	14

Ensures that the council delivers value for money	The statement on ensuring value for money explains how the council reviews the quality and costs of its activities to confirm that the costs are appropriate. This could include, for example, the cost of the clerk's role in serving

	the council, the purchase of computer equipment or a grass cutting contract. It may also include reference to criteria from the other award levels as a number of these criteria do provide evidence that the council offers value for money. The statement will describe to the panel how the council understands and upholds its responsibilities over use of public money and showing due care and appropriate processes have been followed. The panel will look for evidence of sound financial management and transparency, including that the council has had two consecutive years of unqualified audits and it would be desirable if the council published its internal audit report on its website alongside the AGAR each year.
Provides leadership in planning for the future of the community	The statement on leadership in planning for the future shows how the council engages with a range of activities that influence the planning system and facilitate community-led planning. Activities may include, for example, identifying and representing community views on planning applications and local plans, working on parish or town plans, or holding community-led planning activities such as Planning for Real® or community conferences. The statement should include the council's approach to neighbourhood planning.
Engages with the community on issues related to the environment and climate change	The panel seeks evidence in this statement that the council has considered climate change and other environmental issues and has engaged with the community on these issues. The council will have considered how it can support or facilitate the community to take actions that could have a positive environmental impact for the local area, or more widely.
Manages the performance of staff and the council as a corporate body to achieve its business plan	The statement on performance management explains the processes by which the performance of the council as a corporate body is constantly improved and shows how the performance, skills and knowledge of each individual in the council is managed to help the council achieve its objectives on behalf of the community. The statement also includes confirming that each member of staff has their own professional development plan and that the majority of councillors

	participate in a member development programme that is specific to their roles and the needs of the council. It is important to show evidence that the council is a good employer.
Supports a culture of civility and respect in the council	The statement will provide the panel with a variety of ways in which the council actively supports a culture of civility and respect. This might include information from council meetings where commitment has been made to civil and respectful debate. It might include council policies, training for staff and councillors related to code of conduct, NOLAN principles and other relevant topics. The council might include information of where conflict in the council has been successfully managed and resolved. The statement might include supporting comments from staff, councillors, other partners

THE OUTCOME

When the panel is satisfied that it has seen sufficient information, the findings are presented in a report agreed by the panel. The panel makes one of three recommendations to the council:

- The Award is achieved.
- The Award is achieved but the council is advised to make some small changes.
- The Award is not achieved until specified improvements have been made.

If a council has applied for a higher award but has not achieved all the criteria, the panel can award a lower award if appropriate.

The aim of the scheme is to be supportive and help councils achieve the status they have applied for and so it is expected that achieving a lower (or no) award would be an exceptional circumstance. The panel will let the council know as soon as possible if it appears that they have omitted necessary evidence or it appears likely that they will not achieved the award, and the council will be given some time to respond to that feedback.

Once an award has been achieved NALC will issue a certificate and provide resources to help the council celebrate & promote its achievements. County Associations that carry out their own local panel assessments will present the certificate to the council themselves.

A list of currently awarded councils is published on the NALC website and is updated on a quarterly basis

Councils and accreditation panels may be contacted by NALC for feedback on the process and the benefits of receiving the awards.

A council may appeal to the IDB (with an additional fee of £100) if it feels that the panel's decision is unjustified. The IDB will appoint two representatives to review the appeal and the IDB's decision is final.

UPGRADING ACCREDITATION, RE-ACCREDITATION AND REMOVAL OF ACCREDITATION

Accreditation lasts for four years.

Applying for a higher award:

- If a council wishes to apply for a higher award, it makes a fresh registration and application.
- A council can make a fresh application for a higher award at any time. If this is within one year of the previously successful accreditation, the panel does not need to revisit evidence that was previously approved.

Re-accreditation:

- The council may seek re-accreditation at the same level after four years. If it does not achieve a new accreditation or re-accreditation before the four-year end-date, it loses its award.

Removal of accreditation:

- The council is expected to maintain its reputation by meeting the criteria throughout the four years.
- Although some circumstances may change, the council will not lose its award unless a significant event such as an audit, employment tribunal, court case or police investigation demonstrates the council's poor performance. In this case, a panel co-ordinator asks the IDB to appoint two representatives to review the situation. The IDB assesses the severity of the case before deciding whether to impose a sanction which may include the removal of all awards or returning the council to a lower award.
- The council can appeal to the IDB if the decision to remove an award is taken in which case two different IDB representatives review the case and their decision is final.

FEES

There are two fees:

- A registration fee paid to the National Association of Local Councils
- An accreditation fee paid to the organisation responsible for administering the local or regional accreditation process. This will either be NALC or the local county association.

The registration fee paid to NALC is £50 paid by all councils regardless of size and is payable upon registration.

The accreditation fee is payable once the council has received their result and varies according to:

- The award applied for
- The income of the council
- The council's accreditation history.

The accreditation fee covers the cost of the accreditation panel decision making process only. County Associations may charge additional costs for advice, training or support of applications.

	ANNUAL INCOME UNDER £25,000	ANNUAL INCOME OVER £25,000
Bronze	£50	£80
Silver	£80	£100
Gold	£100	£200

All figures quoted are excluding VAT.

The figures quoted are the discounted rates for members of NALC.

Both the registration fee and accreditation fees listed above are for local councils in membership of NALC and their local county association.

Non-member councils must pay a higher fee that is double the figure quoted above.

The fee is reduced by 20% if the council achieved accreditation at a lower level within the previous 12 months as the checking process covering criteria for the previous award requires less work.

EVALUATION AND IMPROVEMENT

The aim of the evaluation and improvement process is to allow councils to feel ownership of the scheme, and to see the scheme changing to meet the feedback and needs expressed by the sector. It should also allow the scheme to be dynamic and able to respond over time to changes in the sector, national policy and other relevant issues.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

Twice a year, representatives of the IDB will check at random a small sample of awards by carrying out spot checks of documents and information posted on a council's website.

The findings will not affect a council's award but will be used to improve the training for accreditation panels and to inform regular reviews of the scheme.

EVALUATION

At the end of each accreditation process the council and the panel will be sent a short evaluation questionnaire. This will aim to gather feedback on the process, the criteria, the resources provided by NALC and how they could be improved.

IMPROVEMENT

The feedback collected will be used to inform improvements to the scheme. The whole scheme, including the content and accreditation process, will be reviewed regularly.

The IDB will oversee all changes to the scheme.

Local Council Award Scheme Application Form

COUNCIL NAME	Houghton Regis Town Council
DATE OF APPLICATION	TBC
AWARD LEVEL	TBC

Please read through the scheme guide before completing this form as it includes essential information in support of the evidence required. If you are unsure of the criteria requirements or need further information, then please check with your local county association or contact NALC at LocalCouncilAwardScheme@nalc.gov.uk

Completed sections required for each award level:

- If you are applying for Bronze level complete the Bronze criteria section
- If you are applying for Silver complete the Bronze and Silver criteria sections
- If you are applying for Gold complete the Bronze, Silver and Gold criteria sections

The exception to the above is if you have achieved an award within the last 12 months, then the section for that level award (and the preceding one) need not be completed.

All relevant sections of the form must be completed with evidence provided for the level that you are applying for. Otherwise, this could result in a delay to your application.

Application Tips

- Check all relevant documents are attached with your submission and hyperlinks provided are working correctly.
- Hyperlinks to the council's website must be to the exact evidence required. If this is not possible then include details of how the evidence can be found (i.e. menu, sub-menu etc).
- All published policies and documents must be tailored/personalised to the council.
- Check policies and procedures are not overdue for review. It is best practice to include a review date on all relevant documents and for Silver/Gold award levels the next review date must be included.
- If you are providing minutes as evidence, it is important you include the specific minute reference.
- For the Silver and Gold award levels, a more in-depth assessment will be undertaken of the evidence provided for the preceding award levels. For Gold in particular, the assessment panel will be looking for evidence of best practise throughout the application.
- A column has been provided on this form for any supporting comments you may have.

LOCAL COUNCIL AWARD SCHEME BRONZE

BRONZE RESOLUTION

Please provide hyperlink to minutes: https://houghtonregis-tc.gov.uk/council/committees

The Council must confirm by resolution that all documentation and information is in place for the Bronze award (See Guide for wording)

Please provide a direct hyperlink for evidence that is published on the council's website. For all other evidence please specify attachment provided.

Criteria	Hyperlink or Attachment	Supporting Comments (if any)
1. Standing Orders	Standing Orders Town Council AGM 20th May 2026	The Council's Standing Orders were approved at the Town Council meeting held on 20th May 2026, Minute number: 13549
2. Financial Regulations	Financial Regulations Town Council AGM 20th May 2026	The Council's Financial Regulations were approved at the Town Council meeting held on 20th May 2026, Minute number: 13550
3. Code of Conduct and a link to councillors' registers of interests	Code of Conduct HRTC Town Council 3rd October 2022 Register of interests	The Council's Code of Conduct was approved at the Town Council meeting held on 3rd October 2022, Minute number 12186 The Register of Members' Interests for Houghton Regis Town Councillors is maintained and published by Central Bedfordshire Council. The Central Bedfordshire Council website provides this information in a publicly accessible CSV format, and Houghton Regis Town Council's website includes a direct link to the relevant Central Bedfordshire Council page to ensure residents can easily access the latest published Register of Interests.
4. Accessibility statement	Accessibility Statement	The Council publishes an Accessibility Statement, highlighting how the website complies with accessibility requirements and how users can report accessibility issues.

5. Publication scheme	Publication Scheme	The Council publishes an approved Publication Scheme on its website, highlighting information that is made available to the public. This is in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000.
6. Complaints procedure	Complaints Procedure Town Council 13th December 2025	The Council's Complaints Procedure was re-approved at the Town Council meeting held on 13th December 2025, Minute number: 13363
7. Privacy notice	Data Protection Policy Town Council 17th June 2024	The Council's Data Protection Policy was re-approved at the Town Council meeting held on 17th June 2024, Minute number: 12876
8. Last annual return	Houghton Regis Town Council Finance webpage Notice of Electors Rights Annual Governance & Accountability Return 2025/26 Form 3 Audited Supporting Statements Internal Audit 2025/26 Notice of Conclusion of Audit AGAR Completion Letter Town Council 15th June 2026	The Council publishes its most recent Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), together with supporting documents, on its website. These documents were presented to the Town Council at its meeting held on 15th June 2026, Minute number: 13595
9. Transparent information about council payments	Corporate Service Committee	Each Corporate Services Committee agenda includes an Income and Expenditure Report, Bank, Cash and Investment Reconciliation, and Cashbook, providing Members with regular financial monitoring information.
10. Calendar of all meetings including the next annual meeting of electors	Calendar of meetings	The Calendar of Meetings includes the date of the next Annual Meeting of Electors, scheduled for 17th May 2027.

11. Minutes for at least one year of full council meetings and (if relevant) all committee/sub-committee meetings	Minutes for the full municipal year of 2025 – 2026 14th May 2025 Town Council (AGM) 20th May 2025 Neigh'hood Plan Implementation S-C 2nd June 2025 Planning 3rd June 2025 Staffing Committee 9th June 2025 Corporate Services 16th June 2025 Town Council 23rd June 2025 Planning 24th June 2025 Community Engagement Sub-Com 14th July 2025 Planning 21st July 2025 Community Services 28th July 2025 Environment & Leisure 29th July 2025 Town Partnership 4th August 2025 Planning 26th August 2025 Planning 1st September 2025 Corporate Services 15th September 2025 Planning 23rd September 2025 Community Engagement Sub-Com 29th September 2025 Town Council 6th October 2025 Planning 13th October 2025 Town Council 20th October 2025 Environment & Leisure 21st October 2025 Town Partnership 27th October 2025 Planning 3rd November 2025 Community Services 10th November 2025 Community Services (Grants) 17th November 2025 Planning 18th November 2025 Neigh'hood Plan Implementation S-C 24th November 2025 Staffing Committee 25th November 2025 Community Engagement Sub- Comm 26th November 2025 Town Partnership 1st December 2025 Corporate Services 8th December 2025 Planning 15th December 2025 Town Council 17th December 2025 Community Safety Sub-Com 5th January 2026 Planning 12th January 2026 Environment & Leisure 19th January 2026 Town Council 20th January 2026 Community Engagement Sub-Com 26th January 2026 Planning 27th January 2026 Town Partnership 2nd February 2026 Staffing Committee 16th February 2026 Planning 23rd February 2026 Community Services 2nd March 2026 Corporate Services 9th March 2026 Planning 16th March 2026 Town Council 24th March 2026 Community Engagement Sub-Com 30th March 2026 Planning 20th April 2026 Planning

	21st April 2026 Environment & Leisure 27th April 2026 Community Services 28th April 2026 Town Partnership 11th May 2026 Planning 20th May 2026 Community Safety Sub-Com 20th May 2026 Town Council (AGM)	
12. Current agendas	Committee page	The link directs users to the Council's Committees, Meetings and Minutes page. From this page, any Committee or Sub-Committee can be selected to access published agendas, minutes and, where available, recordings of meetings.
13. The Budget and Precept information for the current or next financial year	Town Council Agenda 19th Jan 2026 Minutes – Town Council 19th January 2026	The Council considers and approves its annual Budget and Precept at a meeting of the Town Council. The link provides evidence of the Council's approval of the Budget and Precept for the financial year 2026/27 at its meeting on 19th January 2026, Minute number 13502.
14. Biodiversity policy	Biodiversity policy Minutes - Town Council 16th March 2026	The Council approved and adopted the Biodiversity Policy at the Town Council meeting held on 16th March 2026, Minute number 13581
15. Council contact details and councillor information in line with the Transparency Code	Contact Us Town Councillors	Click on an individual councillor's profile from the webpage and select the **'Register of Interests'** button. This will redirect you to the Central Bedfordshire Council website, where you can view the councillor's contact details, profile information and Register of Interests. The Register is published in CSV format on the Central Bedfordshire Council website
16. Action plan for the current year	Corporate Plan CPC Action plan	The purpose of Houghton Regis Town Council's Corporate Plan 2024-2028 is to set out the council's vision, priorities, and actions for the next four years, helping guide decisions, spending, and service delivery for residents. The Corporate Plan is further supported by the **Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) Report and Action Plan**. The Council undertook a Corporate Peer

		Challenge to gain an independent assessment from experienced local government peers, reviewing its performance, governance and finances, while helping ensure it is well prepared for future growth and able to deliver its priorities for residents. The Corporate Plan and Corporate Peer Challenge Report provide the Council and residents with a clear vision for Houghton Regis, an independent assessment of the Council's effectiveness, and a framework for delivering improved services, stronger governance and positive outcomes for the growing community.
17. Evidence of consulting the community	Houghton Regis Town Council Annual Report 25-26.pdf Town Crier - Residents Newsletter Spring/Summer 2024_ Consultation feedback re: Corporate Plan *Pages 20 - 26* Consultation feedback re: Budget & Precept document *Pages 27 - 31*	Annual Report 2025/26 Resident newsletters In the Spring / Summer 2024 edition the Council consulted on its emerging Corporate Plan through its residents' newsletter. The attached summarises the consultation process and the feedback received. In addition, the Council has functionality on its website to set up public consultations. A link to the website and the consultation is then provided on social media channels. Recent consultations have included: • 2026/27 Budget / Precept Consultation - summary attached • Naming of new community centre • Community Safety • Community Events
18. Publicity advertising council activities	Website Facebook Instagram Town Crier LinkedIn Council Noticeboard Ad-hoc publications – Carnival Programme *Pages 32 - 43*	The council uses a variety of means to publicise its work and activities including website, social media, newsletters, noticeboards and ad hoc publications.

19. Evidence of participating in town and country planning	Planning Committee Neighbourhood Plan Webpage NHP Consultation feedback *Pages 44 - 45* Neighbourhood Plan Implementation Sub Committee Houghton Regis Town Council	The council actively participates in town and country planning through: 1. Planning Committee: meets every three weeks to consider planning applications, planning decisions, local plans and other planning matters. Consultation responses are based on material planning considerations, local knowledge, and community feedback. 2. Development and publication of a Houghton Regis Neighbourhood Plan (HRNHP) 3. Monitoring of the HRNHP through the Neighbourhood Plan Implementation Sub Committee The Council utilises a scheme of delegation for planning matters. Details are within the HRTC Committee Functions & Terms of Reference.
20. Evidence of publicising elections and vacancies on the council	Election Notices *Pages 46 - 49* Email re Election Publicity *Page 50 - 52* Invitation to Open Session *Page 53* Town Council Agenda – 12th October 2026 Draft Minutes – 12th October 2026 to be added following the meeting.	The Council actively publicises Town Council elections and vacancies through its website and other communication channels. Information published includes Notices of Vacancy, Notices of Election, Notices of Poll and Declarations of Result of Poll. The most recent Notices are attached for the By-Election on 6th May 2026. As evidence of publicity, attached is an email from the Clerk to officers asking them to share the Notice of Election. This publicity ensures residents are kept informed throughout the election process. For full elections, the Council provides information on the process on its website and provides links to this information on social media. The last full election was in May 2023. In addition, the Council hosted an Open Evening to enable residents to find out more about the work of the Council and its councillors. For the May 2027 election, the Council will consider a publicity programme at its meeting on 12th October 2026. The

		agenda is attached. Following the meeting, the draft minutes and relevant minute number will be added to the application.
21. Risk management policy	Risk Management Policy Town Council 16th June 2025	The Council's Risk Management Policy was approved at the Town Council meeting held on 16th June 2025, Minute number: 13257
22. Register of assets	Statement of accounts: list of assets pages 9 - 12 Asset Register *Page 54 - 57*	The AGAR Supporting Statements provide information to the electorate on Fixed Assets including additions and disposals. HRTC uses the Smartlog platform to maintain its Register of Assets. This provides a centralised electronic record of council assets, helping to ensure information is accurate, up to date and easily accessible for management and audit purposes.
23. Up-to-date insurance policies that mitigate risks to public money	Corporate Service Committee Agenda 7th September 2026 Minutes 7th September 2026 Policy Schedule 2026 – 2027, specifically relating to public money please see Part D & Part N *Page 58 - 75*	The Council maintains up-to-date and fit-for-purpose insurance cover. This is confirmed to Corporate Services Committee. Agenda and Minutes from meeting on 7th September 2026, Minute Number 13690 Included in this insurance is Fidelity Guarantee Insurance to protect public money against losses arising from fraud or dishonesty. The policy is reviewed and renewed annually to ensure appropriate cover is maintained.
24. Evidence of considering the impact of the council's functions and decisions on crime and disorder in local area	Model agenda report template, Crime & Disorder section highlighted in green *Page 76 - 80* Community Safety Sub-Committee meetings	Officers used a standardised agenda report template. This includes a section to ensure active consideration is given to the impact of the recommendation on crime, disorder or anti-social behaviour. It helps keep Section 17 of the Crime & Disorder Act 1998 duty in view while also supporting Corporate Plan priority 2.2 to work with partners to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour. The Council considers crime & ASB through regular Community Safety Sub-Committee meetings. These meetings are supported by the local police, principal authority crime prevention officers and other local stakeholders. The Sub-Committee identifies hotspots,

		with input from Bedfordshire Police and partners, and directs resources to appropriate locations. Resources include high visibility policing (under Operation Hana) and the locations of redeployable CCTV cameras. The Sub-Committee also considers additional community safety initiatives such as "Watch" schemes to address anti-social behaviour.
25. Disciplinary and Grievance procedures	Disciplinary Policy *Page 81 - 100* 395-minutes.pdf Grievance Policy *Page 101 - 105* 308-minutes.pdf	The Council's Disciplinary Policy was approved at the Town Council meeting held on 16th June 2025, Minute Number 13248. The Council's Grievance Policy was approved at the Town Council meeting held on 14th October 2024, Minute Number 13007.
26. A policy for training and development of staff and councillors	Training statement of intent *Page 106 - 107* Town Council 14th October 2024 Minute number: 13007	The Council's Training Statement of Intent was approved at the Town Council meeting held on 14th October 2024, Minute Number 13007.
27. A record of all training undertaken by staff and councillors in the last year	Staff Training Record *Page 108 - 136* Councillor Training record *Page 137 - 163*	Houghton Regis Town Council maintains individual training records for all staff and councillors. During the year, a wide range of mandatory and role-specific training, including GDPR, health and safety, cyber security, equality and diversity, first aid, fire safety and professional qualifications has been completed.
28. A current clerk who has achieved 12 CPD points in the last year	Clerks CPD Points 25/26 *Page 164 - 166*	Certificated evidence for the Clerk's CPD points 2025 – 2026
29. Signed up to the Civility & Respect Pledge and a Dignity at Work policy	Town Council meeting 19th December 2022 *Town Council meeting 19th June 2023* Bullying & Harassment Policy *Page 167 - 183* *Town Council meeting 16th June 2025*	The Council formally adopted the Civility & Respect Pledge on 19th December 2022 (Minute No. 12298). The pledge was confirmed to the new administration on 19th June 2023 (Minute No. 12503). The Council adopted Bullying & Harassment Policy on 16th June 2025 (Minute No. 13248).

LOCAL COUNCIL AWARD SCHEME SILVER

SILVER RESOLUTION **Please provide hyperlink to minutes: https://houghtonregis-tc.gov.uk/council/committees** The Council must confirm by resolution that all documentation and information is in place for the Silver award (See Guide for wording)
Please provide a direct hyperlink for evidence that is published on the council's website. For all other evidence please specify attachment provided.

Criteria	Hyperlink or Attachment	Supporting Comments (if any)
30. Health and Safety policy	Health and Safety at Work Policy Town Council 16th December 2024	The Council's Health and Safety at Work Policy was approved at the Town Council meeting held on 16th December 2024. Minute number: 13066
31. Policy on Equality	Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy Town Council 16th June 2025	The Council's Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy was approved at the Town Council meeting held on 16th June 2025. Minute number: 13248
32. Co-option policy	Co-option Policy & Procedure Town Council 17th June 2019	The Council approved and adopted the Co-option Policy & Procedure at the Town Council meeting held on 17th June 2019. Minute number: 9949
33. Community engagement policy involving two-way communication between council and community	Communication Policy & Communication Strategy Town Council 15th June 2026	The Council's Communication Policy & Communication Strategy was approved at the Town Council meeting held on 15th June 2026. Minute number: 13587
34. Councillor profiles	Councillors	Click on an individual councillor's profile from the webpage and select the **'Register of Interests'** button. This will redirect you to the Central Bedfordshire Council website, where you can view the councillor's contact details, profile information and Register of Interests.
35. Grant awarding	Community Grants Scheme	The Council operates a Community Grants

policy	Essential Facts Project Grants	Scheme to support local organisations and community projects that contribute to the wellbeing of Houghton Regis. The Grant Awarding Policy sets out the eligibility criteria, application process and assessment arrangements, ensuring grants are awarded in a fair, transparent and consistent manner.
36. Evidence showing how electors contribute to the Annual Parish or Town Meeting	Annual Town Assembly	The Council holds an Annual Town Assembly (previously Annual Town Meeting) each year, providing local electors with an opportunity to receive updates on the Council's activities, ask questions, raise matters of local interest and contribute to discussions on issues affecting the community. The agendas and minutes below demonstrate how electors are invited to and participate in the meeting.
37. Action plan and related Budget responding to community engagement and setting out a timetable for action and review	Corporate Plan: corporate-plan-2024-2028.pdf Annual Budget Cloud Suite 5-Year Financial Forecast *Pages Page 184 - 191*	The Council's Corporate Plan sets out its Vision, Mission and Strategic Priorities for the period 2024–2028. Delivery of the Plan is supported by the Council's annual budgets and a five-year financial forecast, ensuring that the Council's strategic objectives are underpinned by robust financial planning.
38. Evidence of community engagement, council activities and the promotion of democratic processes in an annual report, online material and regular news bulletins	Annual report Houghton Regis Town Council Annual Report 25-26.pdf Annual report publication evidence *Page 192 - 193* Online material Welcome Houghton Regis Town Council Regular news bulletin Town Crier - Residents Newsletter Website Facebook Instagram Town Crier LinkedIn	The annual report, web material, news bulletins and social media pages publicise the work and achievements of the council. They are also used to offer residents the opportunity to engage with the Council on matters that impact them. The council also has functionality on its website to provide consultation questionnaires to gauge views on any emerging issues or matters. The variety of communication methods is designed to ensure anyone and everyone has the opportunity to engage.

	Consultation feedback re Corporate Plan document *Pages 20 - 26* Consultation feedback re Budget & Precept doc ref 17b2 *Pages 27 - 31*	
39. Evidence of helping the community plan for its future	Houghton Regis Neighbourhood Plan Online: Neighbourhood Plan	The Council was pleased to work with local representatives on developing and bringing forward a **Neighbourhood Plan for Houghton Regis.** The link to the council's website provides a further link to the approved plan plus a record of its development and progress.
	Neighbourhood Plan Implementation Sub Committee Neighbourhood Plan Implementation Sub Committee	To continue with the neighbourhood planning journey the council has established a **Neighbourhood Plan Implementation Sub Committee**. This sub committee meets twice a year to monitor the progress and use of the NHP.
	Planning committee minutes – siting Neighbourhood plan: 14 July 2025	Minute number 13272 CB/25/01901/FULL
	15 September 2025	Minute number 13339 Linmere Phase 3B (Parcels 1 & 2)
	27 October 2025	Minute number 13396 CB/25/01901/FULL – NOTIFICATION OF AMENDMENTS
	09 March 2026	Minute number 13562 CB/26/00445/TDM
	03 August 2026	Minute number 13666
	Houghton Regis in Bloom	The Council commenced its Anglia in Bloom journey in 2025, continuing its participation in 2026. This encompassed a number of initiatives, many of which contributed to improved environmental sustainability including: • Installation of a water borehole • 4 beehives – supported by the HRTC Community Gardener and a suitably

	Green Flag Facebook snippet *Page 194* Open Spaces	experienced member of the volunteer group • Extensive bulb planting Undertaken by groups from local schools • Community garden Cared for by an extensive team of volunteers Volunteer | Houghton Hall Park (en-GB) • Compost facility to remove all green waste • Community orchard • Never ending dead hedge Created and extended through Corporate volunteering (Whitbread Plc and CBC Highways Maintenance Team) • Tiny forest Tiny Forest | Houghton Hall Park (en-GB) **Green Flag awards** Houghton Hall Park has secured and maintained a Green Flag award for 5 years. **Windsor Drive open space** The council works closely with the Friends of Windsor Drive group. In partnership the council has increased biodiversity by carefully managing the space and woodland including implementing a new mowing regime to reduce how often sections of the space are mown to encourage a greater range of wildlife and flora back into the area.
40. Evidence of encouraging public engagement in local democracy	About The Town Council Hybrid Meeting Guidance Committees *Page 195*	**General** The council's website provides information on how to engage in local democracy **Council meetings** All publicly accessible meetings include the option for remote attendance for members of the public to encourage participation. All full Council meetings, committees and sub-committees include as a standard agenda item a public participation section. **Meeting Publication / Promotion** Meeting agendas are published on the

	Page 196 - 197 *Page 198* Committees <

42. At least two-thirds of its councillors who stood for election, or significant evidence of the council advertising vacancies	Community Governance review Election results Houghton Regis TC (Part) Houghton Hall Town Council 2023 Houghton Regis (Part) Parkside Town Council 2023 Houghton Regis (Part) Tithe Farm Town Council 2023 Houghton Regis West election results 2023 Parkside Ward by-election 2026	Evidence from the Central Bedfordshire Council website clearly demonstrates that Houghton Regis Town Council meets the requirement for at least two-thirds of its councillors to have stood for election. CBC's published ward data shows that all three wards—Houghton Hall, Parkside, and Tithe Farm—regularly attract more candidates than available seats, confirming a strong electoral mandate across the council. For example, Houghton Hall Ward had 8 candidates standing for 5 seats, Parkside Ward had 11 candidates for 4 seats, and Tithe Farm Ward had 15 candidates for 5 seats, demonstrating consistently contested elections. Where a councillor resigns mid-term, the resulting vacancy is advertised. Over the last 20 years, there have been around 10 casual vacancies, around 80% have been filled through a by-election.
43. Evidence of customer service with examples of managing/handling correspondence with the public	*Page 204 - 236*	A selection of redacted emails are included. Further examples can be provided if needed.
44. A current qualified clerk	*Page 237 - 238*	
45. A formal appraisal process for all staff	*Page 239 - 251*	The Council has a formal appraisal process for all employees, supported by its Appraisal Policy and associated appraisal documentation. The policy sets out the arrangements for reviewing performance, objectives, development needs and ongoing support.

LOCAL COUNCIL AWARD SCHEME GOLD

GOLD RESOLUTION

Please provide hyperlink to minutes: https://houghtonregis-tc.gov.uk/council/committees

The Council must confirm by resolution that all documentation and information is in place for the Gold award (See Guide for wording)

Please provide a direct hyperlink for evidence that is published on the council's website. For all other evidence please specify attachment provided.

Criteria	Hyperlink or Attachment	Supporting Comments (if any)
46. A business plan covering a financial forecast for at least three years linked to revenue and capital plans for the council and its community	Corporate Plan Financial Forecast Agenda for Town Council meeting 17/03/25 Minutes for Town Council meeting 17/03/25	Hyperlink to the Corporate Plan and links to the agenda and minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 17th March 2025, which include the three-year financial forecast.
47. An annual report, online material, news bulletins and other council communications with evidence of:	Council Plans Residents Newsletter	Annual Report 2025/26 & Corporate Plan Biannual residents' newsletter
a) engaging with diverse groups in the community using a variety of methods	Website Facebook Instagram LinkedIn Town Crier residents' newsletter *Page 252 - 254*	The Town Council engages with its residents and stakeholders using a wide range of communication methods. Website and Social Media The Council uses its official website and a range of social media platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and LinkedIn, to share timely news, promote local services and facilities. Newsletters are distributed in strategic locations around Houghton Regis, ensuring that updates are accessible to those who prefer printed information or may have limited access to digital media.

		Noticeboards The Council provides regular updates through its network of 10 town noticeboards, displaying posters, meeting notices and community information.
b) community engagement influencing council activity and priorities	Spring/Summer Town Crier 2024 Consultation feedback re Corporate *Pages 20 - 26* Consultation feedback re Budget & Precept *Pages 27 - 31*	In the Spring / Summer 2024 edition of the Town Crier, the Council consulted on its emerging Corporate Plan through its residents' newsletter. The attached evidence summarises the consultation process and the feedback received. In addition, the Council has functionality on its website to set up public consultations. A link to the website and the consultation is then provided on social media channels. Recent consultations have included: • 2026/27 Budget / Precept Consultation - summary attached
c) A wide range of council activities, including innovative projects, that produce positive outcomes for the community	Project H 29/09/25 Agenda Minutes Minute 13347 UKSPF (CBC Link) Environment & Leisure Meeting: 29/07/24 Agenda 29/07/24 Minutes Minute number 12935 Anglia in Bloom RHS It's Your Neighbourhood Community Grants Scheme Community Services (Grants) Meetings held annually: 10/11/25 Agenda 10/11/25 Minutes Town ranger Town Council Meeting 14/12/20 Agenda Minutes Minute number 11453	The Council delivers a wide range of activities and innovative projects that create positive and lasting outcomes for the community. Through environmental initiatives, community grant funding, youth services, town centre improvements, and partnership-led projects, the Council demonstrates a strong commitment to enhancing local wellbeing, civic pride, and community engagement. Evidence of this work can be found within the following agendas and minutes, which highlight both strategic decision-making and the successful delivery of community-focused initiatives.

	Youth Services Community Events & Celebrations	
d) co-operating constructively with other organisations	Council Strategies NETWORK | FOWD Houghton Regis in Bloom Presentation *Pages 255 - 267* Household Support Fund Poster *Pages 268*	The Council engaged in 2024 in a Corporate Peer Challenge. The Peer report, associated Action Plan and Progress Review report demonstrate significant positive partnership working Specific recent examples of partnership working include: Friends of Windsor Drive Houghton Regis in Bloom Judges' presentation attached. Page 15 identifies the partner organisations involved and demonstrates the Council's collaborative approach to delivering Houghton Regis in Bloom. Central Bedfordshire Council – Household Support Fund Poster attached, demonstrating partnership working between Houghton Regis Town Council, Central Bedfordshire Council and two local community support groups: Houghton Regis Helpers and Jewels. The attached poster provides evidence of the initiative; however, the scale of the partnership working extended considerably beyond the publicity material – the principal authority contacted HRTC in December 2025 and asked if we could help distribute £30k to local residents by the end of March 2026 in amounts of £50 to each family. In partnership this challenge was exceeded – together we distributed £40k to some 800 households.
e) Active promotion of elections, including that at least two-thirds of its councillors stood for election	Invitation to Open Session *Page 269*	To encourage participation in local democracy, the Council promoted an Open Session for residents interested in becoming a councillor in the main election in 2023, providing information about the role and the election process. The Council actively publicises Town Council elections and vacancies through its website and other communication channels. Information published includes Notices of Election, election results and by-election notices, ensuring residents are kept informed

	Houghton Regis TC (Part) Houghton Hall Town Council 2023 Houghton Regis (Part) Parkside Town Council 2023 Houghton Regis (Part) Tithe Farm Town Council 2023 Houghton Regis West election results 2023 Parkside Ward by-election 2026	throughout the election process. These links evidence that the 2023 election was contested. All seats were filled by election.

The following criteria require statements only (of no more than 1 page). Statements must include a narrative and where applicable, contain document references or hyperlinks as evidence to support the narrative.

48. Ensures that the council delivers value for money		*Page 270*
49. Provides leadership in planning for the future of the community		*Page 271*
50. Engages with the community on issues related to the environment and climate change		*Page 272*
51. Manages the performance of staff and the council as a corporate body to achieve its business plan		*Page 273*
52. Supports a culture of civility and respect in the council		*Page 274*

Town Council **Agenda Item 10**

Date:	**12th October 2026**
Title:	**2023–2027 TERM REVIEW AND 2027 ELECTION PROMOTION**
Purpose of the Report:	**1. To propose undertaking a review of the 2023-2027 term of office** **2. To present a proposed election promotion process for the 2027 elections.**
Contact Officer:	**Louise Senior, Head of Democratic Services**

1. RECOMMENDATION

1. **To support the review of the 2023-2027 term of office**
2. **To support the election promotion process for May 2027.**

2. BACKGROUND

As the 2023-2027 term of office draws to a close reflecting back on member experiences provides a useful learning opportunity for the council. It is hoped to use feedback to support or amend council administrative processes to improve councillor experiences.

The Electoral Administration Act 2006[1] places duties on Electoral Registration Officers and Returning Officers to encourage participation in the electoral process.

Whilst this statutory duty does not fall directly upon the Town Council, Houghton Regis Town Council can support democratic engagement by raising awareness of the 2027 elections and encouraging residents to participate in the local democratic process.

3. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Review of the 2023-2027 Term of Office

It is proposed that the Council's established questionnaire be used to obtain feedback from current Town Councillors on their experience during the 2023-2027 term of office. The questionnaire would seek views on:

[1] https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/22/section/69

- Internal processes / administrative procedures
- Communications / information
- Council meetings
- Training and development
- Council structure
- Council projects / initiatives
- Council facilities
- Council services
- Civic function

An opportunity for one-to-one feedback would also be offered.

Appendix A contains a draft feedback form.

The Pre Election Process

The key dates, provided by the Electoral Commission (click here for link to site), are attached at Appendix B.

In summary, these include:

- Notice of Election — **no later than Wednesday 31st March 2027**
- Nominations — **up to 4pm Thursday 8th April**
- Withdrawal deadline — **4pm Thursday 8th April**
- Statement of Persons Nominated — **no later than 4pm Friday 9th April**
- Registration deadline — **Monday 19th April**
- Postal vote deadline — **5pm Tuesday 20th April**
- Proxy/Voter Authority Certificate deadline — **5pm Tuesday 27th April**
- Notice of Poll — **no later than Tuesday 27th April**
- Polling Day — **7am–10pm Thursday 6th May 2027**.

Encouraging Participation

Appendix C sets out a promotional process. This does not include the promotion of individual candidates or political parties. It is a promotional process to encourage participation in the election from standing as a candidate to voting on polling day.

Pre-Election Period

In undertaking the proposed election promotion process, the Council will need to have regard to the restrictions applying to local authority publicity during the pre-election period.

The pre-election period does not prevent the Council from continuing its normal business or providing factual information about the election. However, particular care must be taken to ensure that Council publicity and resources remain politically neutral and are not used in a way which could influence voters or promote an individual candidate or political party.

A summary of the relevant guidance, including what the Council can and should not do during the pre-election period, together with links to the current NALC, Government and Local Government Association guidance, is attached at Appendix D.

Awareness Meeting

The session will include a short presentation on what Town and Parish Councils are and what Town and Parish Councillors do. It is hoped that existing councillors will attend to informally chat about HRTC.

Workshop session

It is suggested that this session would follow on from the Awareness Meeting by providing interactive sessions considering in more detail local government structure and how HRTC operates within this, what activities and roles HRTC councillors may be involved in and what could be expected from the role. People attending the awareness meeting would specifically be invited to attend but the session would be open to anyone who was interested.

4. COUNCIL VISION

The proposed action supports the Objectives of Council's Vision;

4. A more active, engaged and inclusive community
5. A strong efficient and proactive Town Council.

5. IMPLICATIONS

Corporate Implications

- This process is an additional project to be delivered.

Legal Implications

- The statutory duty under the Electoral Administration Act 2006 to encourage electoral participation applies to Electoral Registration Officers and Returning Officers rather than directly to the Town Council.
- The Council must have regard to the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity and the requirements of the Local Government Act 1986 when undertaking publicity and communications activity.
- Particular care must be taken during the pre-election period to ensure that Council publicity remains objective, even-handed and politically neutral and is not used to promote or support individual candidates or political parties.

Financial Implications

- This project will involve 1-2 members of staff working 2 additional meetings outside of normal office hours.

Risk Implications

- This project helps to promote the council within the local community and provides for a review process which may provide suggestions for improvements.

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.

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

6. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

The Town Council is well placed to support and encourage democratic engagement within the local community. The proposed election promotion process provides a positive means of raising awareness of the role of the Town Council and encouraging residents to participate in the 2027 elections. All activity will be undertaken in accordance with the requirements relating to local authority publicity and the pre-election period.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Cllr Feedback Form
Appendix B: **Parish Election Key Dates as published by the Electoral Commission**
Appendix C: Promoting the Election Process
Appendix D: Guidance on the pre-election period

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Review of 2023-2027 Term of Office

	What has been good	What has been not so good	How could we do better
Internal processes / administrative procedures: Could they be improved? Are there time efficiencies you have spotted? Are there savings you think we could make? Think about things like the development of the Vision, the budget setting process, the annual return, policy setting and review etc			
Communications / information How do these work for you? Members mailing Emails Website Social media Open sessions Leaders briefings Member briefings			

Council meetings Frequency Time Length Understanding of reports, processes and decision making			
Training and development Were you offered training? Did you take advantage of training opportunities? Was the training: Sufficient? Timely? Accessible? Useful?			
Council structure Do we have the right committees / sub-committees etc Level of decision making – too detailed / too strategic / too variable Are there too many meetings / not enough meetings			

Council projects / initiatives What do you think of the range, scope and community benefit of the projects / initiatives? Are there too many / not enough? Do you feel able to initiate projects? Do you feel able to shape projects?			
Council facilities What do you think of the facilities? Are they fit for purpose? Are they good quality? Do we maintain them well? Are they accessible for residents?			
Council services Is there a good range and scope of services? Do all the services provide community benefit? Are there too many / not enough?			

Civic function How do you perceive the role of mayor / deputy mayor? Civic role / ceremonial role Is enough support provided? Does the mayor have a positive role/impact within the town?			
Other Has your experience as a councillor been what you had anticipated? Have you been able to achieve your objectives? Any other comments?			

The Electoral Commission

Timetable for local elections in England: 6 May 2027

This timetable covers the following polls taking place on 6 May 2027:

- local government principal area elections (i.e. district, borough, county, county borough and unitary authority elections)
- parish council elections
- local authority mayoral elections in England
- combined (county) authority mayoral elections in England

The days which are disregarded in calculating the timetable are Saturday, Sunday, bank holidays and any day appointed for public thanksgiving or mourning.

Please be aware that the timetable may change in the event of days being appointed for public thanksgiving or mourning.

This timetable has been developed based on the legislation as it currently stands and so it may be subject to change. We will update and re-publish the timetable as appropriate if further legislation is made.

Event	Election	Working days before poll (deadline if not midnight)	Date
Publication of notice of election	All	Not later than 25 days	Not later than Wednesday 31 March
Delivery of nomination papers	All, excluding combined authority mayoral	From the date stated on the notice of election up to 4pm on the nineteenth working day before the election	From the date stated on the notice of election up to 4pm on Thursday 8 April
Delivery of nomination papers	Combined authority mayoral	From the day after the publication of notice of election until 4pm on the nineteenth working day before the election (10am to 4pm)	Between 10am and 4pm on any working day after publication of the notice of election until 4pm on Thursday 8 April

Event	Election	Working days before poll (deadline if not midnight)	Date
Deadline for withdrawals of nomination	All	19 days (4pm)	4pm on Thursday 8 April
Deadline for the notification of appointment of election agent	All, excluding parish council	19 days (4pm)	4pm on Thursday 8 April
Making objections to nomination papers	Combined authority mayoral	19 days (10am to 5pm), subject to the following: Between 10am and 12noon objections can be made to all delivered nominations Between 12 noon and 5pm objections can only be made to nominations delivered after 4pm, 20 days before the poll	Between 10am and 12 noon on Thursday 8 April objections can be made to all delivered nominations Between 12 noon and 5pm on Thursday 8 April objections can only be made to nominations delivered after 4pm on Wednesday 7 April
Publication of first interim election notice of alteration	All	19 days	Thursday 8 April
Publication of statement of persons nominated	All	Not later than 18 days (4pm)	Not later than 4pm on Friday 9 April
Deadline for receiving applications for registration	All	12 days	Monday 19 April

Event	Election	Working days before poll (deadline if not midnight)	Date
Deadline for receiving new postal vote and postal proxy applications, and for changes to existing postal or proxy votes	All	11 days (5pm)	5pm on Tuesday 20 April
Deadline for receiving new applications to vote by proxy (not postal proxy or emergency proxies)	All	6 days (5pm)	5pm on Tuesday 27 April
Deadline for receiving applications for Voter Authority Certificates	All	6 days (5pm)	5pm on Tuesday 27 April
Publication of second interim election notice of alteration	All	Between 18 days and 6 days	Between Friday 9 April and Tuesday 27 April (inclusive)
Publication of notice of poll	All	Not later than 6 days	Not later than Tuesday 27 April
Publication of final election notice of alteration	All	5 days	Wednesday 28 April
Deadline for notification of appointment of polling and counting agents	All	5 days	Wednesday 28 April
Deadline for notification of appointment of sub agents	Combined authority mayoral	5 days	Wednesday 28 April

Event	Election	Working days before poll (deadline if not midnight)	Date
First date that electors can apply for a replacement for lost postal votes	All	4 days	Thursday 29 April
Polling day	All	**0 (7am to 10pm)**	**7am to 10pm on Thursday 6 May**
Last time that electors can apply for a replacement for spoilt or lost postal votes	All	0 (5pm)	5pm on Thursday 6 May
Deadline for emergency proxy applications	All	0 (5pm)	5pm on Thursday 6 May
Last time to alter the register due to clerical error or court appeal	All	0 (9pm)	9pm on Thursday 6 May
Delivery of return as to election expenses (parish council elections only)	Parish council	Not later than 28 calendar days* after the date of the election	Refer to the table below for further information on the date for return of parish council election expenses.
Delivery of return as to election expenses	All, excluding parish council	Not later than 35 calendar days* after the date the election result is declared	Refer to the table below for further information on the date for return of all other election expenses.
Sending postal vote identifier rejection notices	All	Within 3 calendar months beginning with the date of the poll	By Friday 6 August

*Although these deadlines are calculated on calendar days, the deadline cannot fall on a dies-non. The deadline will in that case be the next working day

Delivery of return as to election expenses for parish council (28 calendar days)

If the result is declared:	Deadline:
Thursday 6 May	Thursday 3 June
Friday 7 May	Friday 3 June
Any declaration made on 8 May or 9 May	Monday 7 June
Monday 10 May	Monday 7 June

Delivery of return as to election expenses for all other election types (35 calendar days)

If the result is declared:	Deadline for return:
Thursday 6 May	Thursday 10 June
Friday 7 May	Friday 11 June
Any declaration made on 8 May or 9 May	Monday 14 June
Monday 10 May	Monday 14 June

Appendix C

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Town Council Election – 6th May 2027

Promoting the Election Process

Time Line	Activity
January / February 2027	Launch of advertising material through: • Website • Notice Boards • Social Media • Local community / not for profit groups • Other
February 2027	Awareness meeting covering: • Booklet – All about Town Council / Getting involved • Cllr qualities • The Democracy Tree • Houghton Regis • The Town Council Vision / Annual Report
February / March 2027	Reviewing of the 2023 - 2027 Term of Office
March 2027	Workshop style event covering: • Meet Councillors / Meet and Greet • What do local councillors do? • Decision Making / What would I do?
March 2027	Pre-election period – commences on publication of the Notice of Election • HRTC publicity and communications to be undertaken in accordance with the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity and relevant pre-election guidance.
March / April 2027	Nomination period – from the date stated on the Notice of Election until 4pm on Thursday 8th April 2027.
April 2027	Candidates campaign (no HRTC staff involvement)
April 2027	HRTC publicity campaign to encourage electors to vote through: • Website • Notice Boards • Social Media • Other
19th April 2027	Registration deadline
20th April 2027	Postal vote deadline
27th April 2027	Proxy/Voter Authority Certificate deadline
6th May 2027	**POLLING DAY**

Appendix D

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Pre-Election Period Guidance

Purpose

The pre-election period is the period immediately before an election when particular restrictions and considerations apply to local authority publicity and the use of Council resources.

The pre-election period does not prevent the Council from continuing its normal business. However, particular care must be taken with publicity, communications, events and the use of Council resources to ensure that Council activity remains objective, even-handed and politically neutral.

For local government elections, the pre-election period commences with the publication of the Notice of Election and continues until polling day.

What the Council can do

During the pre-election period the Council can:

- continue normal Council business and decision-making;
- continue to hold Council and committee meetings;
- publish information which the Council is legally required to publish;
- provide factual information about the election and electoral process;
- provide information about registering to vote and how and when to vote;
- respond factually to specific requests for information;
- continue necessary and routine Council communications; and
- continue normal Council activities, provided appropriate consideration is given to whether the activity or associated publicity could influence the election.

What the Council should not do

During the pre-election period the Council should not:

- publish material which appears designed to affect public support for a political party;
- issue publicity which seeks to influence voters;
- use Council publicity or resources to promote or provide an advantage to an individual candidate, group of candidates or political party;
- arrange proactive publicity or media activity involving candidates where this could be regarded as election-related promotion;
- issue publicity photographs featuring candidates where this could provide electoral publicity;
- provide Council photographs, facilities or other Council resources for campaigning purposes;

- use Council staff or resources to support the campaigning activities of individual candidates or political parties; or
- launch publicity or consultations on politically controversial matters where these could reasonably be regarded as seeking to influence voters.

Particular care should be taken with

During the pre-election period particular consideration should be given to:

- the Council's website and social media accounts;
- press releases and other media activity;
- photographs involving councillors who are standing for election;
- Council events involving councillors or candidates;
- new publicity campaigns;
- consultations and the publication of consultation results; and
- information or material supplied to councillors which could subsequently be used for campaigning.

Councillors who are standing for election may continue to carry out their normal Council duties. However, Council resources must not be used for election campaigning.

The key consideration should be whether Council activity or publicity could reasonably be regarded as seeking to influence voters or providing an electoral advantage to a candidate or political party.

HRTC Election Promotion Activity

The Council's proposed election promotion activity will focus on providing factual information and encouraging participation in the democratic process. It will not promote individual candidates or political parties.

During the pre-election period, particular care will be taken to ensure that any HRTC publicity encouraging residents to vote remains factual, politically neutral and does not feature or promote individual candidates.

Guidance and Further Information

The following guidance should be read alongside the Council's election promotion process:

National Association of Local Councils (NALC)
Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity and publicity during the pre-election period (England) – updated 13 March 2026.

This provides specific guidance for local councils on publicity and activity during the pre-election period.

UK Government
Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity

This is the statutory Publicity Code and includes the requirement for particular care to be taken during periods of heightened sensitivity.

Local Government Association (LGA)
A short guide to publicity during the pre-election period

This provides practical guidance on what councils should and should not do during the pre-election period.

Further Advice

Where there is any uncertainty about proposed Council publicity or activity during the pre-election period, advice should be sought from the Returning Officer and/or Monitoring Officer.

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

Internal Control Policy

Date of Adoption:	14th October 2024
Date of Review:	13th October 2025; 12th October 2026

1. Scope of Responsibility

Houghton Regis Town Council is a Local Authority funded largely by public money. It is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded, properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively. In discharging this overall responsibility, the Council is also responsible for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of the Council's functions and which includes arrangements for the management of risk. The Council is required, by regulation 6.1 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, to review each financial year the effectiveness of its system of financial control.

2. The Purpose of the System of Internal Control

The system of internal control is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level rather than to eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives; it can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the Council's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

3. The Internal Control Environment

The Council

- The Council has adopted Financial Regulations which set parameters for the Council's financial operations.
- The Council has appointed a Chairman who is responsible for the smooth running of meetings and for ensuring that all Council decisions are lawful, and in accordance with its Standing Orders.
- The Council meets six times per year to monitor and review its obligations, aims and objectives, and receive reports from the Clerk, Responsible Financial Officer, committees and members of the Council.
- The Council has appointed Committees who monitor progress against objectives and budgets
- The Corporate Services committee monitors financial systems and procedures, budgetary control and regularly reviews financial matters.
- The Council met in January to approve the budget and precept for the coming year.

- The Council carries out regular reviews of its internal controls, systems and procedures.
- Payroll is processed by an external payroll provider using payroll software and checked by the Responsible Finance Officer.
- Banking services are provided by NatWest.
- The Council uses a computerised accounting system Rialtas to complete the management accounts and financial returns for the Council.

Clerk to the Council and Responsible Financial Officer

The Council has appointed a Clerk to the Council who acts as the Council's advisor and manager and a Responsible Financial Officer who is responsible for the administration of the Council's finances.

The Clerk is responsible for advising on the day-to-day compliance with laws and regulations that the Council is subject to and for managing risks. The Clerk also provides advice to help the Council ensure that its procedures, control systems and policies are adhered to.

Payments

All expenditure (the incurring of costs) must be authorised by the Council, or by a committee having delegated authority, or (in accordance with the Financial Regulations) by other delegated authority.

All payments from the Council's banks accounts are only to be made with dual authorisation.

All payments are reported to the Corporate Services Committee. The Responsible Financial Officer is responsible for checking the legality of each payment and that payments are within the powers of the Council.

Risk Assessments/Risk Management

The Council carries out regular risk assessments in respect of actions and regularly reviews its systems and controls. The insurance cover is regularly reviewed to ensure the correct level of cover has been provided.

Internal Auditor

The Council has appointed IAC Audit and Consultancy Ltd, as Independent Internal Auditor who reports to the Council on the adequacy of:

• records
• procedures
• systems of internal control
• regulations
• risk management
• governance processes

The effectiveness of internal audit is reviewed annually by the Council.

External Auditor

The Council's external auditors, as appointed by SAAA Ltd, submit an annual certificate of audit which is presented to the Council.

Professional Advice

Additionally, the Council seeks and receives appropriate property, legal, insurance, VAT, personnel/human resources and health & safety advice as appropriate to manage risk.

4. Review of Effectiveness

The Council has responsibility for conducting an annual review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control. The review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control is informed by:

- The full Council
- The work of officers reporting to the Council and its committees
- The Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer to the Council who are responsible for the development and maintenance of the internal control environment and managing risk.
- The Independent Internal Auditor who reviews the Council's system of internal control and reports to the Council.
- The Council's External Auditor who makes a final check using the Annual Return, a form completed and signed by the Responsible Financial Officer, the

Chairman, the Town Clerk and the Internal Auditor. An Audit Certificate is issued.

- The number of significant issues that are raised during the year

5. Significant Internal Control Issues

Whilst no significant internal control issues were identified during the year the Council strives at all times for the continuous improvement of the system it has adopted.

Approved by Council

Date: 12th October 2026

Minute Reference: To be referenced following adoption.

TOWN COUNCIL **Agenda Item 13**

Date:	**12th October 2026**
Title:	**AUDITED ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN 2025/26**
Purpose of the Report:	**To advised members of the outcomes of the external audit 2025/26.**
Contact Officer:	**Debbie Marsh, Head of Corporate Services & RFO**

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **To approve and accept the Audited Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2025/26;**
2. **To note the matters raised in the Completion Letter dated 18th September 2026.**

2. BACKGROUND

The Audited Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2025/26 was submitted for external audit on 25th June 2026.

The external audit has to be completed by 30th September 2026. The audited return was received on 18th September 2026.

3. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Members will find attached the following:

- Audited Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2025/26, Appendix A
- Completion Letter dated 18th September 2026, Appendix B

Members will note under Section 2 of the External Auditor's Report and Certificate 2025/26 (Appendix A) that following review of the Town Councils Annual Governance and Accountability Return, no matters have come to their attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met and therefore, as under Section 3 have certified they have completed their review and discharged their responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, for the year ended 31st March 2026.

The completion letter (Appendix B) raised no minor issues for improvement in 2026/27 however it did provide the following information:

1. ***Amendment to the Practitioners' Guide 2026/27 in respect of Section 2 Box 11 Trust Fund Transactions***
   As part of the Accounting Statements (Section 2), the authority is asked to confirm whether there are any trust fund transactions included in the figures. Box 11 has been amended to state the authority should answer based on whether trust fund transactions have been excluded from the AGAR. We wish to draw attention to a change within the 2026/27 Practitioner's Guide (point 2.32) which confirms the authority will need to respond 'Yes' where the figures include trust fund transactions. We would encourage all authorities to familiarise themselves with the 2026/27 Practitioner's Guide (available on the NALC website) ahead of completing their 2026/27 AGAR.

Members are advised this information will be considered when completing the 2026/27 AGAR.

2. ***Accessibility Regulations***
   We are aware that the Accounts and Audit Regulations requirement for a physical 'wet ink' signature on the original AGAR, does not allow parish council's to fully comply with the Accessibility Regulations. The National Audit Office are aware that the two pieces of legislation are not compatible, therefore smaller authorities are advised to make it clear on their website that the document is a scan and will not be fully compliant with the Accessibility Regulations.

This advice remains provided on the Council's website.

4. HRTC CORPORATE PLAN

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

4.5 Enhance the role of the council.

5. IMPLICATIONS

Corporate Implications

- There are no corporate implications arising from the recommendations.

Legal Implications

- There are no legal implications arising from the recommendations

Financial Implications

- There are no financial implications arising from the recommendations

Risk Implications

- There are no risk implications arising from the recommendations

Equalities Implications

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

This project / issue does not discriminate.

Climate Change Implications

- There are no climate change implications arising from the recommendations

Press Contact

- There are no press implications arising from the recommendations

6. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

Members are requested to receive the external auditor's completion letter and Audited Annual Governance and Accountability Return for 2025/26 and to note the auditor's guidance for next year's AGAR.

7. APPENDICES

- Appendix A, Audited Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2025/26
- Appendix B, Completion Letter dated 18th September 2026

Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2025/26 Form 3

To be completed by Local Councils, Internal Drainage Boards and other Smaller Authorities*:

- **where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure exceeded £25,000 but did not exceed £15 million; or**
- **where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure was £25,000 or less but that:**
  - **are unable to certify themselves as exempt (fee payable); or**
  - **have requested a limited assurance review (fee payable)**

Guidance notes on completing Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2025/26

1. Every smaller authority in England that either received gross income or incurred gross expenditure exceeding £25,000 **must** complete Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return at the end of each financial year in accordance with *Proper Practices.*

2. **The Annual Governance and Accountability Return is made up of three parts, pages 3 to 6:**
   - The **Annual Internal Audit Report must** be completed by the authority's internal auditor.
   - **Sections 1 and 2 must** be completed and approved by the authority.
   - **Section 3** is completed by the external auditor and will be returned to the authority.
3. The authority **must** approve Section 1, Annual Governance Statement, before approving Section 2, Accounting Statements, and both **must** be approved and published on the authority website/webpage **before 1 July 2026.**
4. An authority with either gross income or gross expenditure exceeding £25,000 or an authority with neither income nor expenditure exceeding £25,000, but which is unable to certify itself as exempt, or is requesting a limited assurance review, **must** return to the external auditor by email or post (not both) **no later than 30 June 2026** Reminder letters will incur a charge of £40 +VAT:
   - the Annual Governance and Accountability Return Sections 1 and 2, together with
   - a bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2026
   - an explanation of any significant year on year variances in the accounting statements
   - notification of the commencement date of the period for the exercise of public rights
   - Annual Internal Audit Report 2025/26

Unless requested, do not send any additional documents to your external auditor. Your external auditor will ask for any additional documents needed.

Once the external auditor has completed the limited assurance review and is able to give an opinion, the Annual Governance and Accountability Return **Section 1, Section 2 and Section 3 – External Auditor Report and Certificate** will be returned to the authority by email or post.

Publication Requirements

Under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, authorities **must** publish the following information on the authority website/webpage:

Before 1 July 2026 authorities **must** publish:

- Notice of the period for the exercise of public rights and a declaration that the accounting statements are as yet unaudited;
- **Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement 2025/26** approved and signed, page 4
- **Section 2 - Accounting Statements 2025/26** approved and signed, page 5

Not later than 30 September 2026 authorities **must** publish:

- Notice of conclusion of audit
- **Section 3 - External Auditor Report and Certificate**
- **Sections 1 and 2 of AGAR** including any amendments as a result of the limited assurance review. It is recommended as best practice, to avoid any potential confusion by local electors and interested parties, that you also publish the Annual Internal Audit Report, page 3.

The Annual Governance and Accountability Return constitutes the annual return referred to in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. Throughout, the words 'external auditor' have the same meaning as the words 'local auditor' in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

**for a complete list of bodies that may be smaller authorities refer to schedule 2 to the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.*

Guidance notes on completing Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2025/26

- The authority **must** comply with *Proper Practices* in completing Sections 1 and 2 of this AGAR. *Proper Practices* are found in the *Practitioners' Guide** which is updated from time to time and contains everything needed to prepare successfully for the financial year-end and the subsequent work by the external auditor.
- Make sure that the AGAR is complete (no highlighted boxes left empty) and is properly signed and dated. Any amendments **must** be approved by the authority and properly initialled.
- The authority **should** receive and note the Annual Internal Audit Report before approving the Annual Governance Statement and the accounts.
- Use the checklist provided below to review the AGAR for completeness before returning it to the external auditor by email or post (not both) no later than 30 June 2026
- The Annual Governance Statement (Section 1) **must** be approved before the Accounting Statements (Section 2) and evidenced by the agenda or minute references, even where approved on the same day.
- The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) **must** certify the accounts (Section 2) before they are presented to the authority for approval. The authority **must** in this order; consider, approve and sign the accounts.
- The RFO is required to commence the public rights period which **must** be a single period of 30 working days for inspection (this excludes weekends and public holidays) which **must** include the first 10 working days of July.
- **You must inform your external auditor about any change of Clerk, Responsible Financial Officer or Chair, and provide relevant authority owned generic email addresses and telephone numbers.**
- Make sure that the copy of the bank reconciliation to be sent to your external auditor with the AGAR covers all the bank accounts. If the authority holds any short-term investments, note their value on the bank reconciliation. The external auditor **must** be able to agree the bank reconciliation to Box 8 on the accounting statements **(Section 2, page 5)**. An explanation **must** be provided of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8. More help on bank reconciliation is available in the *Practitioners' Guide**.
- Explain fully significant variances in the accounting statements on **page 5**. Do not just send a copy of the detailed accounting records instead of this explanation. The external auditor wants to know that you understand the reasons for all variances. Include complete numerical and narrative analysis to support the full variance.
- Additional costs may be incurred if additional audit work is required.
- Make sure that the accounting statements add up and that the balance carried forward from the previous year (Box 7 of 2025) equals the balance brought forward in the current year (Box 1 of 2026).
- The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO), on behalf of the authority, **must** set the commencement date for the exercise of public rights which **must** be a single period of 30 working days for inspection (this excludes weekends and public holidays) which **must** include the first 10 working days of July.
- The authority **must** publish on the authority website/webpage the information required by Regulation 15 (2), Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, including the period for the exercise of public rights and the name and address of the external auditor **before 1 July 2026**

Completion checklist – 'No' answers mean you may not have met requirements		Yes	No
All sections	Have all highlighted boxes have been completed?	✔	
	Has all additional information requested, including **the dates set for the period for the exercise of public rights**, been provided for the external auditor?	✔	
Internal Audit Report	Have all highlighted boxes been completed by the internal auditor and explanations provided?	✔	
Section 1	For any statement to which the response is 'no', has an explanation been published?	✔	
Section 2	Has the Responsible Financial Officer signed the accounting statements before presentation to the authority for approval?	✔	
	Has the authority's approval of the accounting statements been confirmed by the signature of the Chair of the approval meeting?	✔	
	Has an explanation of significant variations been published where required?	✔	
	Has the bank reconciliation as at **31 March 2026** been reconciled to Box 8?	✔	
	Has an explanation of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8 been provided?	✔	
Sections 1 and 2	Trust funds – have all disclosures been made if the authority as a body corporate is a sole managing trustee? **NB:** do not send trust accounting statements unless requested.	✔	

Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices, can be downloaded from **www.nalc.gov.uk** or from **www.ada.org.uk**

Annual Internal Audit Report 2025/26

Houghton Regis Town Council

houghtonregis-tc.gov.uk

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. *(If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2024/25 AGAR tick "not covered")*			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 *(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).*	Yes		
N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2024/25 AGAR *(see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes).*	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

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).

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	No*	'Yes' means that this authority:
1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.	✓		*prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.*
2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.	✓		*made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.*
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.	✓		*has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.*
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.	✓		*during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.*
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.	✓		*considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.*
6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.	✓		*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.*
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.	✓		*responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.*
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.	✓		*disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.*
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 — *has met all of its responsibilities where, as a body corporate, it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts.*
			✓
10. We have put in place arrangements for the effective IT and data management in accordance with proper practices during the year under review.	✓		*has made suitable arrangements for its IT and data management and has complied with proper practices in doing so.*

***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:

DATE OF MEETING: 15/06/2026

and recorded as minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE: 135/26

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

Chair: SIGNATURE REQUIRED D.J. Jones

Clerk: SIGNATURE REQUIRED

WEBSITE/WEBPAGE ADDRESS: www.houghtonregis-tc.gov.uk

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2025/26 for

Houghton Regis Town Council

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2025 £	31 March 2026 £	*Please round all figures to nearest £1. Do not leave any boxes blank and report £0 or Nil balances. All figures **must** agree to underlying financial records.*
1. Balances brought forward	Restated 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 cash-book 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 D 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 13597

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

SIGNATURE REQUIRED D.J. Jones

Section 3 – External Auditor's Report and Certificate 2025/26

In respect of **Houghton Regis Town Council**

1 Respective responsibilities of the auditor and the authority

Our responsibility as auditors to complete a **limited assurance review** is set out by the National Audit Office (NAO). A limited assurance review is **not a full statutory audit,** it does not constitute an audit carried out in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland) and hence it **does not** provide the same level of assurance that such an audit would. The UK Government has determined that a lower level of assurance than that provided by a full statutory audit is appropriate for those local public bodies with the lowest levels of spending.

Under a limited assurance review, the auditor is responsible for reviewing Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with NAO Auditor Guidance Note 02 (AGN 02) as issued by the NAO on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General. AGN 02 is available from the NAO website – https://www.nao.org.uk/code-audit-practice/guidance-and-information-for-auditors/ .

This authority is responsible for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control. The authority prepares an Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with *Proper Practices* which:

- summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2026 and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors.

2 External auditor's limited assurance opinion 2025/26

On the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority:

Not applicable

3 External auditor certificate 2025/26

We certify that we have completed our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, and discharged our responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, for the year ended 31 March 2026

*We do not certify completion because:

Not applicable

External Auditor Name

Forvis Mazars LLP, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE1 1DF

External Auditor Signature Forvis Mazars LLP Date **17 September 2026**

Newcastle office
Sustainably routed via:
30 Old Bailey
London
EC4M 7AU

Tel: +44 (0)191 383 6300
forvismazars.com/uk

Ms D Marsh
Houghton Regis Town Council
Peel Street
Houghton Regis
Bedfordshire
LU5 5EY

Direct line: +44 (0)191 383 6348
Email: local.councils@mazars.co.uk

Date: 18 September 2026

Dear Ms Marsh

Completion of the limited assurance review for the year ended 31 March 2026

We have completed our review for the year ended 31 March 2026 and I have pleasure in enclosing the certified Annual Governance and Accountability Return. The External Auditor's Certificate and Report is given in Section 3.

If there are any significant matters arising from the review, they are summarised in the External Auditor's certificate in Section 3. If we have identified minor scope for improvement we have recorded this on page 2 of this letter. The Council should consider these matters and decide what action is required. In most cases this will be self-evident. In some instances we have referred to further guidance available, such as the Smaller Authorities Proper Practices Panel Practitioners' Guide (England) 2026/27. This can be obtained via your NALC or SLCC branch, or downloaded free of charge at the following website: **https://www.nalc.gov.uk/resource/practitioners-guide-2025.html**.

Please also note that a copy of the 2026/27 Practitioner's Guide has now been released and is available, alongside a summary of the summary of changes from the 2025 version, at the following website: **https://www.nalc.gov.uk/resource/practitioners-guide-2026-27.html**. We would encourage all authorities to become familiar with this document ahead of preparing their 2026/27 Annual Governance and Accountability Returns.

Action you are required to take:

The Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 set out what you must do at the conclusion of the review. In summary, you are required to:

Publish (which must include publication on the authority's website) a statement **on or before 30 September to confirm:**

- that the review has been concluded and that the statement of accounts has been published;
- of the rights of inspection conferred on local government electors by section 25 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014; and
- the address at which, and the hours during which, those rights may be exercised.

- Keep copies of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for purchase by any person on payment of a reasonable sum.
- Ensure that the Annual Governance and Accountability Return remains available for public access for a period of not less than five years beginning with the date on which the Annual Governance and Accountability Return was first published.

Forvis Mazars LLP
Forvis Mazars LLP is the UK firm of Forvis Mazars Global, a leading global professional services network. Forvis Mazars LLP is a limited liability partnership registered in England and Wales with registered number OC308299 and with its registered office at 30 Old Bailey, London, EC4M 7AU. Registered to carry on audit work in the UK by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales. Details about our audit registration can be viewed at www.auditregister.org.uk under reference number C001139861. VAT number: GB 839 8356 73

The Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 do not specify the period the Completion Notice needs to be on the council's website, but this period must be reasonable.

Minor scope for improvement in 2026/27

No minor issues identified.

Amendment to the Practitioners' Guide 2026/27 in respect of Section 2 Box 11 Trust Fund Transactions

As part of the Accounting Statements (Section 2), the authority is asked to confirm whether there are any trust fund transactions included in the figures. Box 11 has been amended to state the authority should answer based on whether trust fund transactions have been excluded from the AGAR.

We wish to draw attention to a change within the 2026/27 Practitioner's Guide (point 2.32) which confirms the authority will need to respond 'Yes' where the figures include trust fund transactions. We would encourage all authorities to familiarise themselves with the 2026/27 Practitioner's Guide (available on the NALC website) ahead of completing their 2026/27 AGAR.

Accessibility Regulations

We are aware that the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 requirement for a physical 'wet ink' signature on the original AGAR, does not allow parish council's to fully comply with the Accessibility Regulations. The National Audit Office are aware that the two pieces of legislation are not compatible, therefore smaller authorities are advised to make it clear on their website that the document is a scan and will not be fully compliant with the Accessibility Regulations.

Audit fee

Our fee note for the audit, which is in accordance with the audit fee scales set by SAAA, and available at **Audit Fees | Smaller Authorities' Audit Appointments (saaa.co.uk)** will follow.

If your invoice is not as expected, please check the audit fee scales via the link above as your fee band may have changed.

We would be grateful if you could arrange for this to be paid at the earliest opportunity.

Commitment to achieving net zero

We've made an important change to how we handle post - and sustainability is driving it.

In line with our net zero targets, we encourage digital communication wherever possible. However, should it be necessary for you to communicate with us by post, our correspondence address is **30 Old Bailey, London, EC4M 7AU**.

Yours sincerely



James Collins
Director
For and on behalf of Forvis Mazars LLP