Houghton Regis
Partnership Committee

Town Mayor: Cllr D Jones
Town Clerk: Clare Evans

Tel: 01582 708540

16th November 2026

To: Town Mayor and all Members of the Partnership Committee

Town Councillors: **D Jones (Chair), J Carroll, C Slough, D Taylor**

CBC Councillors **C Alderman (Vice Chair), S Goodchild, P Hamill, T McMahon**

CBC Officers **S Hughes, Community Engagement Manager**

Copies, for information, to:

- Cllr Baker, Executive Member for Finance and Highways, CBC
- Cllr R Goodchild, Deputy Executive Member for Town & Parish Councils and Town Centres, CBC
- all Houghton Regis Town Councillors

NOTICE OF MEETING

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the **Partnership Committee** to be held on **Monday 23rd November 2026** commencing at **7.00pm hours** at The Council Offices, Peel Street.

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 *

Clare Evans
Town Clerk

** 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.

AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS (to 7.05pm)

2. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC (3 minutes per person; maximum 15 minutes) **(to 7.25pm)**

To receive questions and statements from members of the public in respect of any item of business included in the agenda, as provided for in Standing Order No.s 1(f) and 1(h).

3. SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS (to 7.30pm)

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 (to 7.35pm)

Pages 5 - 10

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 28th July 2026.

Recommendation: To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 28th July 2026.

5. DRAFT HIGHWAYS CAPITAL PROGRAMME (to 8.05pm)

Patrick Clarke, CBC Service Director for Highways, will be attending the meeting for Members to receive and comment on the draft Highways Capital Programme for Houghton Regis.

6. DRAFT CBC / TOWN AND PARISH COUNCIL CHARTER (to 8.25pm)

Pages 11 - 21

Cllr Russ Goodchild, Deputy Executive Member for Town and Parish Councils, will attend the meeting to take feedback on the draft town and parish council charter.

7. HRTC UPDATE REPORT (to 8.40pm)

Pages 22 -28

Members will find attached the HRTC update report including an update on Project H / HR Hive.

This report is provided for information purposes.

8. CBC CONSULTATIONS (to 8.50pm)

Current Consultations:

Members are advised that CBC currently have the following consultations open:

- Public Health Funeral Policy 2026 (Closes 21st January 2027)
- School Admission arrangements for 2028 to 2029 (Closes 30th November 2026)

Details can be found by following this link: Consultations

Forward Plan of Key Decisions:

Details can be found by following this link: Forward Plan of Key Decisions - November 2026.pdf
Members are requested to review the document and to make suggestions to the committee of any key decisions of relevance to Houghton Regis which they would like to see come forward as agenda items. Members are requested to bear in mind the scheduling of these decisions alongside the planned Partnership Committee dates.

This report is provided for information purposes.

9. SCHEDULE OF COMMITTEE REPORTS (to 8.55pm)

Pages 29 - 30

Members are reminded of the agreed Partnership Committee Schedule of Committee Reports for 2026/27.

Members are requested to note that reports may be provided by CBC, HRTC or a 3rd party organisation as applicable. Where reports are provided by 3rd party organisations, members of the committee are advised that they are provided for information purposes only as the Committee has no remit to scrutinise the work of 3rd party organisations.

10. ITEMS REQUESTING ATTENTION BY CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL (to 9pm)

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

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

As such, Members are requested to identify and confirm if there are any requested items for CBC's attention.

11. PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE CO-OPTION (to 8.55pm)

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

Co-option

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

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MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF HOUGHTON REGIS PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, PEEL STREET ON 28th July 2027

Present:	Town Cllrs:	D Jones, J Carroll, E Cooper (Substitute)
	CBC Cllrs	C Alderman, S Goodchild, P Hamill
	CBC Officers:	S Hughes, Community Engagement Manager M Ahmed, Community Engagement Officer
	HRTC Officers:	C Evans, Town Clerk A Samuels, Administration Officer
	Co-opted members:	J Anderson, L Ellaway, D Gibbons, T Haines

Also in attendance: R Goodliffe, Director of Welfare Services, NOAH Enterprise

Apologies: Cllrs: T McMahon, C Slough, D Taylor

Members of the public: 3 (2 virtual)

1140 ELECTION OF CHAIR

Members were invited to elect a Chairman for Houghton Regis Partnership Committee for 2026/27.

In accordance with the Terms of Reference this could be a member from either authority.

Nominee: Cllr Jones

Proposed by: Cllr Cooper
Seconded by: Cllr Goodchild

There were no other nominations.

On being put to the vote, Cllr Jones became Chair of the Houghton Regis Partnership Committee for the municipal year of 2026/2027.

1141 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

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

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1142 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR

Members were invited to elect a Vice Chairman for Houghton Regis Partnership Committee for the municipal year of 2026/2027.
In accordance with the Terms of Reference this should be a member from the other authority to the Chair.

Nominee: Cllr Alderman

Proposed by: Cllr Goodchild
Seconded by: Cllr Cooper

There were no other nominations.

On being put to the vote, Cllr Alderman became Vice-Chair of the Houghton Regis Partnership Committee for the municipal year of 2026/2027.

1143 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

1144 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

None.

1145 MINUTES

To approve the Minutes of the meetings held on 28th April 2026

Resolved: To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 28th April 2026 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

1146 PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE CO-OPTION

The Terms of Reference required the list of Co-opted Members to be reviewed annually by the Joint Committee.

Members unanimously approved the applications for co-option from:

- David Gibbons - a co-opted member during 2024/2025
- Jo Anderson – a co-opted member during 2024/2025
- Roger Turner – a co-opted member during 2024/2025,
- Tim Haines - a co-opted member during 2024/2025,
- Laura Ellaway as a representative from Parkside Action Group – new application for co-option for 2026/27

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.

Resolved: To approve the following as co-opted members of the Houghton Regis Partnership Committee for 2026/27:

- **David Gibbons**
- **Jo Anderson**

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- **Roger Turner**
- **Tim Haines**
- **Laura Ellaway**

1147 COMMITTEE FUNCTIONS & TERMS OF REFERENCE

Members were provided with a copy of the Terms of Reference which related to this committee.

1148 CONFIRMATION OF THE SECRETARIAT

In accordance with the Terms of Reference, the Committee confirmed the secretariat for the Partnership Committee for 2026/27 as Houghton Regis Town Council.

1149 DRAFT SCHEDULE OF COMMITTEE REPORTS

Members were invited to consider the Partnership Committee Draft Schedule of Committee Reports for 2026/27.

Members were requested to note that reports might be provided by CBC, HRTC or a 3rd party organisation as applicable. Where reports were provided by 3rd party organisations, members of the committee were advised that they were provided for information purposes only as the Committee had no remit to scrutinise the work of 3rd party organisations.

Members expressed a wish for the following items, which did not appear on the schedule, to be discussed:

<u>New Cemetery</u>
Members felt that an update was required, even if this was to confirm that no further progress had been made regarding possible sites.
The Town Clerk suggested that this item could be included on the Town Council Update Report.

<u>Primary Care</u>
Cllr Goodchild requested that primary care provision was discussed in order that residents remained informed of local developments.
The Town Clerk informed the committee that issues for discussion would ideally focus on the issues that Partnership could influence. Primary care did not fall under the responsibility of either authority and was not within the public domain. It was agreed that the Town Clerk and the Community Engagement Manager would liaise on the best means of addressing this issue.

<u>Community Spaces and 'Call for Sites'</u>
Members noted that Parkside and other community spaces had been omitted. CBC was responsible for the 'Call for Sites' process which would be key in establishing community developments; therefore, Members were keen for this matter to be discussed. The Chair informed Members that HRTC's response to CBC's 'Call for Sites' would be discussed at the following week's Planning Committee meeting.

Cllr Alderman offered to share further information on the 'Call for Sites' outside of the meeting.

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The item 'Homelessness in Houghton Regis' was brought forward

1150 HOMELESSNESS IN HOUGHTON REGIS

Jo Anderson and Rob Goodliffe from the NOAH Enterprise charity gave a presentation on the services it provided for homeless people in Luton and Central Bedfordshire.

NOAH ran a welfare centre that provided support throughout the year for homeless individuals and ran an outreach team working on behalf of CBC. Case studies were presented to Members to demonstrate the type of work carried out by the charity.

There were three outreach workers who checked in on individuals who were known to be sleeping rough and who worked towards establishing a relationship and building trust. The charity assisted with finding accommodation as well as providing other means of support, e.g. sleeping bags, mobile phones, food parcels clothing, health support and shower facilities.

A significant sector of the community was homeless for a variety of reasons and included those who were in employment. Regular barriers to finding accommodation included the reluctance to move away from known communities, pet ownership and the cost of living. In addition, there were not enough services available to those with complex needs, while access to affordable travel also prevented access to services.

NOAH's primary requirements were: accessible, safe and neutral spaces to meet; volunteers to help run the hubs; and reporting incidents of homelessness to NOAH. Potential sites for local hubs had been offered and would be investigated further.

The representatives from NOAH confirmed they would provide contact details following the meeting so that they could be contacted about any incidents of rough sleeping.

1151 CBC UPDATE REPORT

For information, the Community Engagement Manager provide Members with the CBC update report.

Beat the Streets, which had been discussed at the previous meeting of the Town Partnership, had been a resounding success. It was hoped an extended update would be provided by the Active Lifestyles Manager at a future meeting. Key points to note were:

- 2,829 participating by day 3 of the final week, which exceeded the target
- 902 children and over 1000 adults recorded
- 39,000 swipes
- 9,600 miles covered by participants

It was hoped this initiative would provide a potential referral route on to other activity schemes.

Members were reminded that the Crisis and Resilience Fund was available to those requiring a crisis payment and that there was a facility on the CBC website where people could apply. Residents could also phone the Contact Centre. The plan for the resilience side was taking shape and would focus on the provision of support facilities.

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Members of the committee raised the following issues:

Policing

- Contact with the police and police presence appeared to have dropped significantly. Members believed Houghton Regis received an inadequate level of policing.

Health

- There appeared to be very little progress regarding the health hub in Houghton Regis and needed to be pursued. Healthcare was a priority issue as levels were inadequate and CBC had acknowledged that there was a lack of capacity to carry out health checks etc. Houghton Regis was growing but the infrastructure was not in place.

Education

- Members agreed that insufficient school places were available in Houghton Regis. The co-optee from Bidwell West thanked councillors for their help in achieving the agreed delivery of a school in 2029. It was noted, however, that an update on delivery had not been received since June. It was felt that more communication from CBC would be helpful on this issue, and on plans for the coming years.
- Facilities had been promised at the leisure centre for Send and ECHP cases but had not yet materialised. No further details had been provided on how those who had previously attended the Townsend Centre would be accommodated. This provided a further example of inadequate infrastructure.

Members enquired if future reports could contain data on the following items:

- Safer Communities: what number of open cases in the report had been carried over from the previous period and how many were closed in the previous period?
- Figures on the frequency of grass cutting, weeding, general maintenance of hedges etc carried out by CBC in Bidwell West.

1152 PROJECT H / HR HIVE

A verbal update was provided by the Town Clerk highlighting the following:

- Following consultation, it had been decided that the new space would be called HR Hive.
- The lease was close to a final agreement.
- Following the tender process, the submissions were reviewed by the project team. Subsequently, it had been decided that further liaison was required to ensure the best outcome and optimise value for money.
- It was hoped that a contractor would be recommended to Town Council in mid-September.

1153 SUGGESTED CHANGE OF DATE

The Committee had received a request from CBC Highways to attend a meeting later in the year to discuss the Highways Capital Plan.

To accommodate the availability of the Highways Team it had been suggested that the agreed meeting date of 27th October be put back to 1st December. It had been established earlier in the meeting that an Executive meeting had also been scheduled

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for 1st December; it was therefore suggested that the presentation should instead be held on Monday 23rd November. Members agreed to the amended date.

Resolved: To rearrange the scheduled meeting date of 27th October to 23rd November 2026.

1154 ITEMS REQUESTING ATTENTION BY CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

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

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

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

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.45pm

Dated this 23rd day of November 2026

Chairman

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APPENDIX A

Central Bedfordshire Town and Parish Charter

Working Together for Stronger Communities

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Central Bedfordshire Town and Parish Charter

Working Together for Stronger Communities

Foreword

This Charter represents a shared commitment between Central Bedfordshire Council and the Town and Parish Councils of Central Bedfordshire.

Together, we form two interconnected tiers of local government, each with distinct responsibilities, democratic mandates and strengths. Through partnership, mutual respect and effective communication, we can improve outcomes for residents, strengthen local democracy and support thriving communities.

This Charter establishes a framework for how Central Bedfordshire Council and Town and Parish Councils will work together to:

- strengthen community leadership
- support local decision making
- improve communication and engagement
- encourage innovation and local solutions
- deliver high-quality services
- empower communities to shape their future

The Charter is intended to be both a statement of shared principles and a practical framework for collaboration.

1. Context

Central Bedfordshire is home to vibrant market towns, thriving villages and growing communities, supported by outstanding natural landscapes, important transport connections and a strong economy. The area continues to experience significant growth and change, creating both opportunities and challenges for local communities.

Central Bedfordshire Council was formed in 2009. We have 63 Ward Councillors across 31 wards, with 79 Town and Parish Councils/ Meetings. We currently have 4 local Joint Committees across the area; Biggleswade, Dunstable, Houghton Regis and Leighton- Linslade. The Bedfordshire Association of Town and Parish Councils is an unaffiliated membership organisation which advises, supports and provides training and representation for Parish & Town Councils and Meetings in Bedfordshire (Central Bedfordshire and Bedford unitary authority areas)

The English Devolution and Community Empowerment Act is now in place, this draft Charter prepares Central Bedfordshire Council and it's Town and Parish Councils to embrace the significant commitment to "rewire" the relationship between town and parish councils and Central Bedfordshire Council, with stronger expectations around engagement, consultation and ensuring

the town and parish council community voice is heard. When more details and statutory guidance is published it is expected that this Charter will provide a platform for the way of working together.

Town and Parish Councils play a vital role as the closest tier of government to residents. Through their local knowledge, community leadership and direct engagement with residents, they contribute significantly to the social, environmental and economic wellbeing of Central Bedfordshire.

This document is a working document, whereby Central Bedfordshire Council commits to reviewing and developing the document with Town and Parish Council representatives so that it remains relevant and fit for purpose.

This Charter supports the ambitions contained within Central Bedfordshire Council's Strategic Plan and reflects our shared commitment to:

- Community engagement and empowerment
- Sustainable growth
- Environmental stewardship and climate resilience
- Healthy and resilient communities
- Economic prosperity
- Strong local democracy

2. Aims and purpose of the Charter

The charter aims to bring together Central Bedfordshire Council and town and parish councils to:

- Build and maintain a relationship that is effective, efficient, and collaborative based upon mutual respect
- Create a positive impact by working to our strengths for the benefit of our local communities

The purpose of this Charter is to:

- Define the relationship between Central Bedfordshire Council and Town and Parish Councils
- Establish shared principles and expectations
- Promote effective communication and engagement
- Encourage partnership working
- Create opportunities for greater local involvement in service delivery
- Support community-led initiatives and local innovation
- Provide a framework for reviewing and developing future collaborations

This Charter recognises that Central Bedfordshire Council and Town and Parish Councils are independent democratic bodies with different legal responsibilities but shared interests in serving local communities.

3. Shared Principles

Central Bedfordshire Council and Town and Parish Councils will work together based upon the following principles to achieve strong partnership working.

- **Respect -** Recognising and valuing each other's democratic authority, responsibilities and expertise and treating each other with mutual respect
- **Openness -** Sharing information wherever possible and engaging honestly and transparently in a timely manner.
- **Early Engagement -** Seeking opportunities to involve local councils at the earliest practicable stage in policy development, service reviews and significant projects.
- **Community Leadership -** Supporting communities to influence decisions affecting their places and future.
- **Equality and Inclusion -** Ensuring all communities have opportunities to participate and influence decision-making.
- **Sustainability -** Supporting environmental improvement, climate resilience and responsible stewardship of local assets.
- **Value for Money -** Working collaboratively to maximise public value and make efficient use of resources.
- **Meeting local needs –** Working to our strengths to meet the needs of our residents

4. Working Together

Central Bedfordshire Council and Town and Parish Councils recognise that successful local government depends upon strong collaborative relationships. Central Bedfordshire Council acknowledges that Town and Parish Councils are often best placed to understand local needs and aspirations.

Town and Parish Councils will

- acknowledge Central Bedfordshire Councils' strategic responsibilities for services including assets, planning and infrastructure across the Central Bedfordshire Council area

Together we will:

- Work constructively to resolve issues
- Strive to eliminate all forms of discrimination and promote equality of opportunity
- Share local knowledge and intelligence
- Listen to and give importance and recognition to issues and ideas raised at each level of local government
- Collaborate on projects of mutual interest
- Support community resilience and emergency planning
- Promote innovation and best practice
- Seek opportunities to secure external funding and investment

5. Communication

Effective communication underpins successful partnership working and needs to be a two-way channel which utilises a variety of appropriate methods.

Central Bedfordshire Council will:

- Maintain regular communication through Chief Executive meetings and the Town clerks, the Town and Parish Forum, Town Joint and Partnership Committees; the town and parish council bulletin; online 'topic' sessions, task groups and future Conferences and regular ad hoc emails on specific subjects e.g consultations.
- Provide information regarding major projects and service changes affecting local communities.
- Make best use of the information technology available to promote quick and efficient communication, recognising that many of those involved with Town and Parish Councils do so on a voluntary and or part- time basis and may require additional time to respond
- Share consultation opportunities.
- Respond to enquiries within published service standards.
- Ensure Town and Parish Councils have appropriate access to officers and elected members where relevant whilst recognising a digital first/ online approach to access services and raise queries is efficient.

Town and Parish Councils will:

- Promptly advise Central Bedfordshire Council of any changes to clerk and chair details to maintain up-to-date contact information
- Share relevant local intelligence and community concerns
- Engage constructively in partnership opportunities
- Communicate local priorities clearly and consistently
- Endeavour to attend and be represented at relevant Central Bedfordshire Council meetings and forums when invited
- Share relevant information with residents and their communities on behalf of Central Bedfordshire Council, where appropriate

6. Engagement and Consultation

Central Bedfordshire Council is committed to meaningful engagement with local councils through a variety of organised platforms such as the in-person Town and Parish Council Forum and online topic sessions.

Where appropriate Central Bedfordshire Council will:

- Consult Town and Parish Councils on major policies and strategies that are relevant to the sector
- Consult Town and Parish Councils in budget-related matters affecting communities

- Seek local views on infrastructure and development proposals e.g. to inform S106 agreements
- Provide early feedback on consultation outcomes

Town and Parish Councils will:

- seek to represent local communities fairly and respond within consultation timescales wherever possible
- recognise Central Bedfordshire Council's strategic role in tackling issues and challenges that look beyond Town and Parish boundaries

7. Community Leadership and Place Shaping

Town and Parish Councils have an important role in shaping the future of their communities.

This includes:

- Neighbourhood Planning
- Community resilience
- Health and wellbeing initiatives
- Community safety
- Climate action projects
- Local environmental improvements
- Active travel and accessibility initiatives
- Community events and activities

Central Bedfordshire Council will support Town / Parish councils in developing and delivering community-led priorities wherever possible through its policy, estate, funding and strategic role.

The English Devolution and Community Governance Act enables new opportunities for neighbourhood governance and decision making, relevant to the aims of the Charter.

8. Local Service Delivery Framework

A distinctive feature of the Central Bedfordshire Charter is the recognition that Town and Parish Councils may choose different levels of involvement in local service delivery according to their capacity, priorities and resources.

Level 1: Influence and Monitor

Town and Parish Councils may:

- Provide local feedback
- Report issues
- Participate in consultations
- Help shape future service delivery
- Support communication with residents

Examples include:

- Highways reporting
- Anti-social behaviour monitoring
- Active travel initiatives
- Feedback on contracts and service standards

Level 2: Joint Delivery and Service Enhancement

Town and Parish Councils may choose to contribute resources to enhance existing services.

Examples include:

- Road Safety schemes
- Additional grass cutting
- Wildflower projects
- Environmental improvements
- Winter maintenance support
- Open space enhancements

Level 3: Delegation of Services

By agreement, Town and Parish Councils may deliver services on behalf of Central Bedfordshire Council where appropriate.

Potential examples include:

- Grounds maintenance
- Rights of way maintenance
- Public realm services
- Open space management
- Community facility management

Delegation arrangements will be supported by clear agreements, performance standards and monitoring arrangements.

Level 4: Transfer of Services and Assets

Where appropriate, Town and Parish Councils may assume responsibility for services and associated assets. Central Bedfordshire Council will consider, in accordance with relevant legislation and the Council's own devolution/ community asset transfer arrangements, proposals for the transfer of locally based services and assets to the Parish Sector

Potential examples include:

- Parks & Play areas
- Community facilities
- Public conveniences
- Leisure and sports facilities
- Open spaces

Any transfer will be subject to business case assessment, due diligence, financial viability and long-term sustainability considerations.

9. Funding, Resources and Support

Central Bedfordshire Council will work with Town and Parish Councils to identify and support opportunities for:

- Grant funding
- External funding bids
- S106 opportunities
- Partnership funding
- Community investment initiatives

Central Bedfordshire Council will continue to provide advice and technical support where resources permit. Central Bedfordshire Council will, in accordance with relevant legislation, work with the Parish Sector to consider devolution opportunities to maintain their own local services and assets if they wish to do so, and where it is practicable for them. This will be managed through the Council's own devolution/ community asset transfer arrangements.

10. Training and Capacity Building

Central Bedfordshire Council recognises that effective local partnerships require investment in skills and knowledge.

Where appropriate and where resources allow, Central Bedfordshire Council will support Town and Parish Councils with:

- Induction & Training workshops
- Planning guidance
- Emergency planning support
- Data and evidence sharing
- Climate and sustainability advice
- Community engagement support
- Service delivery guidance

11. Charter: Partnership Working Group

The Central Bedfordshire Town and Parish Charter Working Group should:

- Include representatives from Central Bedfordshire Council and Town and Parish Councils
- Provide a forum for co-design and review
- Identify areas for continuous improvement
- Consider opportunities for service delivery and devolution
- Review feedback and emerging issues

This approach reflects the collaborative ethos of the Charter and ensures that Town and Parish Councils remain active partners in its evolution.

12. Adoption and Review

The Charter is intended to be a living document. To ensure the charter is properly reviewed and integrated

The Charter Working Group will:

- Review the Charter (every two years)
- Recommend updates where required
- Share examples of best practice
- Consider partnership effectiveness
- Consider new opportunities arising from legislation, devolution or local priorities

Appendix 1 Charter – timeline

Milestone	Purpose	Meeting Date	Deadlines
Full Council	Adoption	28th January 2027	28th December
Executive	Sign off / Approval	2nd December	2nd November
CR OSC	Scrutinise and offer recommendations to Executive	3rd November	22nd October
T/PC briefing	Awareness /engagement / feedback	2nd November	n/a
BATPC	Engagement and feedback	17th November	n/a
Cabinet	Awareness / engagement / feedback	29th September	n/a
Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC)	Engagement and feedback	24th September	n/a
CMT	Challenge/ review draft Charter	16th September	10th September
Leader/Exec Member /Deputy Exec Member	Review draft Charter	4th September	
Chief Executive	Review draft Charter	24th August	
TPC Forum	Explore concept	15th July	

Central Bedfordshire

Central Bedfordshire in contact

Find us online: www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk
Write to: Central Bedfordshire Council, Priory House,
Monks Walk, Chicksands, Shefford, Bedfordshire SG17 5TQ

Houghton Regis
Partnership Committee

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

Tel: 01582 708540
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HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL UPDATE

Purpose of report: For information

Contents

1. Corporate Services 2
2. Environment & Leisure 3
3. Community Services 4
4. Planning 6

1. Corporate Services

HRTC Budget 2027/28

Houghton Regis Town Council's budget setting process has started, albeit with an officer's draft so far. Once completed and agreed by Council, Central Bedfordshire Council will be advised of the Town Council's precept requirement. This budget will not only reflect the Town Council's existing commitments but also the funding required to deliver the Corporate Plan.

S106 monies (developer contributions) - Following receipt of more than £3million in developer contributions for the long-term maintenance of the open space, sports field, pavilion and play areas within the Bidwell West development (Thorn Park), the Town Council has proactively sought investment opportunities that will maximise the benefit of these funds to help support the delivery of the commitments set out in its Corporate Plan.

Link to the Council's Corporate Plan

Local Council Award Scheme

Following approval of the application and supporting documents at the Town Council meeting on 12th October 2026, the Council submitted its application for the Gold level of the Local Council Award Scheme on 11th November 2026.

The application brings together evidence of the Council's governance, financial management, community engagement, staff and councillor development, and service delivery. It demonstrates the Council's achievements and its continued commitment to improving how it works for the benefit of residents.

An outcome is anticipated by April 2027, in line with NALC's published assessment timetable.

Election Promotion

Preparations are underway to promote the May 2027 Town Council elections, raise awareness of the role of town councillors, and encourage residents to consider standing for election.

As part of this work, informal visits to various locations around the town are being arranged for 26th November 2026, to encourage interested residents to attend an information session planned in the Council Chamber on 3rd December 2026 at 7pm. This session will provide an opportunity to find out more about the Town Council, what being a councillor involves and how to stand for election.

Further information will be shared through the Council's website, social media and other communication channels as election arrangements and key dates are confirmed.

External Audit

The Town Council received the outcome of its 2025/2026 External Audit on the 18th September 2026. The outcome was positive, with no matters of concern identified and no improvement actions required. This demonstrates the Town Council's strong governance, effective financial management, and continued commitment to transparency and accountability.

2. Environment & Leisure

Green Flag Awards

The Council retained all three of its Green Flag Awards in 2026, with The Village Green and Houghton Hall Park retaining their full Green Flag Award, and Windsor Drive Recreation Ground retaining its Green Flag Community Award.

Additional awards are being considered for submission in 2027, with the Friends of Houghton Hall Park being put forward for its own Community Award, and Thorn Park being submitted for a full Green Flag Award.

Anglia in Bloom

The Houghton Regis in Bloom team is thrilled to announce that we have had a brilliantly blooming time at the Anglia in Bloom Awards.

Large Town – Houghton Regis → Gold & County Winner
Historic Parks & Gardens – Houghton Hall Park → Gold & Category Winner
Cemeteries – Houghton Regis Cemetery → Gold and Category Winner
Public Park – Thorn Park → Gold

Special Award Nominations & Wins

This year, Houghton Regis also celebrated eight Special Award nominations – a huge honour, as these highlight only the very best projects in the entire Anglia region.

Nominations:

Best Community Project – Houghton Regis Art Town
Best gardening for wildlife and biodiversity – The Never-Ending Dead Hedge
Best grow your own project – The Kitchen Garden
Best industrial/commercial area – Bedford Square Shopping Centre
Best Sheltered Housing/Care Home/Inclusive Garden – All Saints View Independent Living Scheme
Best Special Feature 100 years of Winnie the Pooh Books – A Blooming Tribute to Winnie-The-Pooh
Best sustainable Garden – The Tiny Forest
Best young people's project – The Chiltern School

Winners:
A Blooming Tribute to Winnie-The-Pooh
The Tiny Forest
The Kitchen Garden

We also received our RHS It's Your Neighbourhood certificates for:

Woodside Link Road Community Orchard – Level 2 Improving
Friends of Windsor Community Open Space – Level 4 Thriving
All Saints View Independent Living Scheme Gardening Club – Level 5 Outstanding
Houghton Regis Memorial Hall – Level 4 Thriving
Houghton Regis Bowls Club – Level 3 Developing

Elm Park Close – Level 1 Establishing
All Saints' Parish Church, Houghton Regis – Level 3 Developing
Houghton Hall Park Kitchen Garden – Level 5 Outstanding

Lake View Play Area

At the Environment and Leisure Committee meeting held on Monday 19th October, the committee agreed to accept the offer to transfer freehold ownership of Lake View Play Area to the Town Council, from Central Bedfordshire Council, and requested Town Council endorse the recommendation at its meeting being held on Monday 7th December. A commuted maintenance sum of £115,183.85 is expected to transfer with the asset, subject to any expenditure incurred prior to completion.

3. Community Services

HR Hive Update

At the Town Council meeting held on Monday 12th October, Council considered awarding a contract for the fit-out of Unit 1 All Saints View. Subject to the lease being signed, Council agreed to appoint Form Workplace Solutions Limited 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).

It is hoped that work will commence on site in early 2027. However, delays in signing the lease may have a knock-on effect on timelines.

Youth Services

The breakdown of youth engagement and detached youth work, including attendance figures, was as follows.

Delivery Data: Youth Council			
Month	Number of Sessions	Average Session attendance	Individual Young People
July	**7 (6 = volunteering)**	**8**	**10**
August	**4 = Volunteering**	**5**	**8**
September	**2**	**9**	**13**
Totals	**13**		

Delivery Data: Youth Cafe			
Month	Number of Sessions	Average Session attendance	Individual Young People
July	**2**	**11**	**16**
August	**0**	**0**	**0**
September	**3**	**7**	**8**
Totals	**5**		

Delivery Data: Houghton Hall Park			
Month	Number of Sessions	Average Session attendance	Individual Young People
July	**4**	**2 (Outreach)**	**14**

August	**4**	**0 (Outreach)**	**22**
September	**5**	**3 (Outreach)**	**18**
Totals	**13**		

Delivery Data: Tithe Farm			
Month	Number of Sessions	Average Session attendance	Individual Young People
July	**5**	**6**	**11**
August	**4**	**0 (Outreach)**	**24**
September	**4**	**4 (Outreach)**	**17**
Totals	**13**		

Enhanced Activities included:

- Skate Jam
- Youth Arena at Houghton Rocks
-

Engagement with schools

- Information leaflets were sent via email to both All Saints Academy and Houstone Secondary School.
- Youth Council members who attend those schools had also given information leaflets to the relevant staff members.
- All Saints Academy was keen for a student to undertake work experience at Houghton Regis Town Council Offices at the end of November.

Grants Update

At the Community Services Committee meeting on Monday 9th October, representatives from the Key Partner Grant recipients were invited to present their annual review/update.

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

The representative from Keech Hospice Care informed Members that the hospice had provided care and support to 4,218 people, including 94 adult patients, 6 child patients and 11 family members who were residents of Houghton Regis. In addition to end-of-life and palliative care, Keech also provided: inpatient and community-based care; outpatient services, including pre- and post-bereavement services; nurse-led clinics; play services; and complimentary therapy sessions. A case study was presented to illustrate the positive impact of the hospice services.

The representative from Dunstable & District Citizens Advice (CA) informed Members that the organisation had provided support to 759 clients from Houghton Regis, assisting with 1,952 issues across a range of areas. Over the past three years CA had delivered a social prescribing service, liaising with clients to identify underlying issues requiring assistance. The CA sought to resolve clients' issues through collaboration with Central Bedfordshire Council and other bodies and services who could support the needs of the client. It was reported that demand for the service had increased significantly in recent years.

The representative informed Members that Art Town, a community arts project specific to Houghton Regis, was established in 2014 and delivered a wide range of arts projects for children and young people aged 1 to 17 years. Earlier in the year, Art Town Extra had provided additional hours for young people in the 11+ age range in Houghton Regis. The organisation also held

Hullabaloo, the annual festival of children's theatre which was open to everyone. Full House Theatre had also worked in collaboration with Houghton Regis Town Council for local events

The following summarised the amount of the Key Partner Award:

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

No Project Grants were awarded.

Events Update

Houghton Regis Town Council delivers a variety of community events throughout the year, on Town Council land and also at Houghton Hall Park.

Heritage Day – 19th September 2026 - Was a successful event, with very positive feedback from attendees. The re-enactments were very popular, and there were some excellent displays from Houghton Regis Heritage Society and All Saints Church. Subject to budget confirmation, it is hoped to continue the event again next year.

Halloween – 30th October 2026 - The Halloween event exceeded expectations with the phenomenal attendance. The day included a Halloween Trail around the park, Facepainting / glitter tattoos, Potion making (with the Youth Council), Crafts, and Storytelling. From the trail maps, we know that 350 children took part in the trails, with the data showing that most families were from Houghton Regis.

Fireworks Display – 6th November 2026 - A big thank you to everyone who volunteered at the Fireworks Display, both town and CBC Cllrs, who helped out. The event was a big success, and no health and safety concerns were reported.

Some future events from 25th November 2026 until 12th January 2027 are as follows;

- 5th December 2026 – Christmas Market
- 5th December – Christmas Light Switch-On
- 12th December 2026 – Santa's Grotto

4. Planning

Planning

Between April to October 2026, the Planning Committee discussed 20 planning applications and noted a further 61, with 25 applications dealt with under delegated authority. These figures include applications which returned to the Committee following amendments.

Neighbourhood Plan

The Town Council's Planning Consultant continues to support the monitoring and implementation of the Houghton Regis Neighbourhood Plan. The latest monitoring report covers June to early October 2026 and looks at the Town Council's responses to planning applications and how the Plan has been considered by Central Bedfordshire Council.

The report identifies that, where applications had been determined and the Town Council had submitted comments, CBC's officer reports acknowledged the Neighbourhood Plan, although references to specific policies were limited. The report also identifies opportunities to make clearer reference to relevant Neighbourhood Plan policies in the Town Council's planning responses.

Building on the approach agreed in May 2026, the Planning Consultant will continue to support Members in identifying and referring to relevant policies where appropriate, with progress reviewed at the biannual meetings of the Neighbourhood Plan Implementation Sub-Committee.

The monitoring report also includes the aspirations within the Neighbourhood Plan, which will help inform future discussions on priorities and opportunities to work with partners.

For those wishing to review the complete Neighbourhood Plan document, please visit: Houghton Regis Neighbourhood Plan

Houghton Regis
Partnership Committee

Town Clerk: Clare Evans Email: info@houghtonregis-tc.gov.uk

HOUGHTON REGIS PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE
DRAFT SCHEDULE OF COMMITTEE REPORTS [1] 2026/27

Meeting Date	Regular Updates	Areas of Interest 2026/27	Reports to be received / completed
28th July 2026	Election of Chair Election of Vice Chair Partnership Committee Co-Option approval Confirmation Of The Secretariat Committee Functions & Terms Of Reference CBC Update report Work Plan Items Requesting Attention By CBC CBC Consultations	The following suggestions are put forward, the timings to be confirmed: • Waste & recycling • Planning • Schools & education • Health & social care • Children & young people • Benefits • Community safety • Housing • Jobs, skills & adult learning • Leisure, libraries & countryside • Business • Transport, roads & parking • Environmental Services	Homelessness in Houghton Regis / Project H / HR Hive Suggested change of date
23rd November 2026	CBC Consultations HRTC Update report Schedule of Committee Reports Items Requesting Attention By CBC		Draft Highways Capital Programme Draft CBC T&PC Charter Project H / HR Hive (inc in HRTC Update Report)

[1] Reports may be provided by CBC, HRTC or a 3rd party organisation as applicable.
Where reports are provided by 3rd party organisations, members of the committee are advised that they are provided for information purposes only as the Committee has no remit to scrutinise the work of 3rd party organisations.

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16th March 2027	CBC Update report Schedule of Committee Reports Proposed Dates For Meetings for following year Council Budgets Items Requesting Attention By CBC CBC Consultations		Project H / HR Hive