

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL
Corporate Services Committee
Minutes of the meeting held on
9th June 2025 7.00pm.

Present:	Councillors:	D Jones	Chairman
		E Billington	
		J Carroll	
		E Cooper	(Substitute)
		M Herber	
		C Slough	(Substitute)
	Officers:	Debbie Marsh	Head of Corporate Services
		Amanda Samuels	Administration Officer
	Public:	1	
Apologies:	Councillors:	E Costello	
		W Henderson	
		C Rollins	

13225 APOLOGIES & SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Cllr Costello (Cllr Cooper substituted), Cllr Henderson (Cllr C Slough substituted) and Cllr Rollins.

13226 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

13227 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

None.

13228 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

Members were invited to elect a Vice-Chair for the Corporate Services Committee for 2025-2026

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 2025/2026.

13229 MINUTES

To approve the Minutes of the meetings held on 3rd March 2025.

Resolved: To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 3rd March 2025 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

13230 TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING MEETINGS AND CONSIDER ANY RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED THEREIN

Personnel Sub-Committee: 3rd February 2025.

Town Council had agreed to the establishment of a Staffing Committee that would exercise overall consideration of all staffing matters including the functions of the Personnel Sub-Committee.

Due to the above, Members were requested to receive the minutes of the final meeting of the Personnel Sub-Committee as a governance and administrative record.

Resolved: To receive the Minutes of the Personnel Sub-Committee meeting of the 3rd February 2025.

13231 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 are 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.

13232 COMMITTEE WORKPLAN

Members had received a workplan for the municipal year 2025/26.

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

It was highlighted that meeting minutes would be in draft when budgets came to be considered. This concern was noted and the Head of Corporate Services responded that councillors would be requested to accept the recommendations from the draft minutes.

Members were happy to approve the workplan with the minor amendment of 2nd March 2025 being replaced with 2nd March 2026.

Resolved: To review and approve the Corporate Services Committee Workplan for 2025/26, which outlines anticipated specific reports for the municipal year.

13233 INCOME AND EXPENDITURE REPORT

Members had been provided with the income and expenditure report for the Corporate Services Committee up to the end of the 2024/2025 financial year.

Members had also received the income and expenditure report, for Corporate Services Committee to date (28th May 2025).

Following scrutiny of the Personnel/Staff Costs for this committee, an error had been identified. In order to rectify this error, Members were requested to vire £30k to cover the shortfall in the Community Services Personnel/Staff Costs budget for financial year 2025-2026. A staff member's salary had been included in the Corporate Services budget rather than Community Services.

It was noted that the cost of investments realised had not been included in the schedule and would need to be taken into consideration.

The following points were raised:

2024 / 2025

- *190-4015 Gas: Why did HRTC appear to be £400 in credit for the year.*
The Head of Corporate Services confirmed that they would investigate this further.
- *190-4026 Computer Costs: The figure was 148% of budget – why was there such an overspend?*
The Head of Corporate Services would investigate and email Members to clarify the reason for this figure.

2025 / 2026

- *190-4015: Gas: The budget had been reduced from the previous year and there was a Charge of £536 which was 73% of the budget. Would the funds be sufficient?*
The Head of Corporate Services would check this figure and ensure it related to the Town Council offices only.
- The percentage spend on expenses suggested Houghton Regis Town Council had spent 100.4% of the rates; however, this represented the full charge at year end with only half having been paid thus far.
- Insurance was paid at start of the council year. The Head of Corporate Services advised Members this was likely to go slightly over as Bidwell West had not been included in the figure.

Members queried whether the recommended virement of £30 would cover all costs. The Head of Corporate Services confirmed that the sum would be sufficient to cover the salary as it did not include any National Insurance or Pension payments. There was some question as to whether the budget would be exceeded if the inflation increases were similar to the previous year.

Resolved: To approve the virement of £30k from budget code 192/4001 (Corporate Services Personnel/Staff Costs to 392/4001 (Community Services Personnel/Staff Costs)

13234 BANK AND CASH RECONCILIATION STATEMENTS

Members were requested to receive the monthly bank and cash reconciliation statements for February, March and April 2025.

Members highlighted a small discrepancy in the March statement and the Head of Corporate Services confirmed they would discuss this with the Finance Officer. Members were happy to approve the reconciliation statements with this amendment.

Resolved:

- 1. To approve the monthly bank and cash reconciliation statements for February, March and April 2025;**
- 2. For these along with the original bank statements to be signed by the Chair of Corporate Services Committee and the Council's RFO.**

13235 LIST OF PAYMENTS

Members were provided with a list of payments for the period February, March and April 2025 (inclusive).

13236 INVESTMENT REPORT

This report was provided in accordance with the approved Committee Functions, Financial Regulation 12 and Banking Arrangements, Investment Strategy & Investment Arrangements.

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

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

- 1) To recommend to Town Council the adoption of the Town Councils Banking Arrangements, Investment Strategy & Investment Arrangements Policy;**
- 2) To approve the investment of the Bidwell West s106 commuted sum and Houghton Quarry maintenance funds in the CCLA Deposit Fund.**

13237 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 quarters 1, 2, 3 and 4 for financial year 2024/2025.

13238 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 had received 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.**

13239 PUBLIC WORKS LOAN BOARD ANNUAL REPORT

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

13240 LATE PAYMENTS AND BAD DEBTS POLICY

Members of this Committee were required to annually review the Town Councils Late Payments and Bad Debts Policy and make a recommendation to Town Council for its approval.

Member were provided with a track change document to reflect the changes and additions to this policy.

It was noted that Beds FA now dealt with all football bookings.

13241 COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

The Town Councils Complaints Procedure was last reviewed in September 2020. Apart from a minor amendment, this policy remained fit for purpose.

Members were provided with a copy of the Complaints Procedure.

Resolved: **To recommend to Town Council, the adoption of the Town Councils Complaints Procedure**

13242 SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Members were provided with a copy of the Town Council Draft Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy. Members had been advised that this was a wholly rewritten Policy.

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

The Head of Corporate Services informed Members that this was still very much a draft policy but it had been presented to the Committee for discussion.

The Safeguarding leads were the Head of Environment and Community Services and the Community Services Manager. Members questioned how training would be delivered, especially with regard to volunteers and councillors. It was also queried how the monitoring process would be accomplished? It was confirmed that the Safeguarding leads would provide further information once the policy had been adopted by TC

The Head of Corporate Services requested Members' approval to present this policy to the Town Council at the next meeting on 16th June 2025. Members agreed that this should be expedited at the earliest opportunity.

Resolved: To recommend to Town Council the adoption of the Town Councils Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy.

13243 COUNCIL OFFICES

Members were provided with a report detailing options of works to the Town Council offices, as follows.

- Comprehensive remodelling
- Slight remodelling
- Relocation to Bedford Square Community Centre
- Remain the same

Following some discussion, Members were in agreement that Option 2 was considered the most viable.

Resolved: To approve the internal remodelling suggestions within Option 2 (excluding the Chamber) up to a budget of £20,000 to be taken from EMR 355, Office Provision.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.13pm

Dated this 1st day of September 2025

Chairman

DRAFT