

# Sandy Town Council

**To: Cllrs P N Aldis, P Blaine, A Gibson, J Hewitt, A M Hill, W Jackson, T Knagg, R Lock, C Osborne, M Pettitt, M Scott, P Sharman, S Sutton and N Thompson**

**You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of Sandy Town Council to be held online on Monday 28 September 2020 at 7.30pm for the purpose of transacting the items of business below.**



Chris Robson  
Town Clerk  
10 Cambridge Road  
Sandy  
SG19 1JE  
01767 681491  
22<sup>nd</sup> September 2020

## **Notes:**

(1) Due to the current Covid-19 Coronavirus situation, the Town Council will meet virtually via Zoom (<https://zoom.us/>) as permitted in The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 ("the 2020 Regulations").

(2) Meeting ID: 827 3225 5806

Press and public are cordially invited to attend. Those wishing to join the meeting should contact the clerk on [clerk@sandytowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@sandytowncouncil.gov.uk) in advance for the meeting password.

(3) Members of the public wishing to address the Council during the public participation part of the formal meeting must make the Clerk aware of their intention before the meeting starts.

## **A G E N D A**

### **1 Apologies for Absence**

To receive any apologies for absence.

### **2 Declarations of interest and requests for dispensations**

*Under the Localism Act 2011 members of Council are not required to make oral declarations of interest at meetings but may not participate in discussion or voting on any items of business in which they have a Declarable Pecuniary Interest (DPI) and under Sandy Town Council's Standing Orders must leave the room for the duration of all discussion on such items. (All members' register of interests are available on the Sandy Town Council website or on application to the Clerk.)*

*This item is included on the agenda to enable members to declare new DPIs and also **those who wish to do so** may draw attention to their*

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*stated DPIs and also any non-declarable personal interests which they have declared under Sandy Town Council's adopted Code of Conduct and which may be relevant to items on the agenda.*

- i) Disclosable Pecuniary Interests*
- ii) Non Pecuniary Interests*
- iii) Dispensations*

## **3 Public Participation Session**

To receive questions and representations from members of the public. Members must raise their hand to indicate they wish to speak and the Chairman will advise them when it is time to do so.

## **4 Minutes of previous Town Council meetings**

To receive the Minutes of the meeting of Sandy Town Council held at 7.30pm on Monday 17 August 2020 and to approve them as a correct record of proceedings.

## **5 Minutes of committees and recommendations therein**

To receive and note the minutes of the meetings of the following committees and sub-committees and (if applicable) to approve recommendations therein which do not arise elsewhere.

- i) Community, Services and Environment Committee held on 24 August 2020

**RESOLVED to RECOMMEND** that the Council replace 12 concrete bins with 80L dual waste bins during the current financial year, with the Environmental Plan Group looking further into recycling waste and the long term replacement of the Council's remaining 21 bins.

**RESOLVED to RECOMMEND** that the Council appoint two representatives to attend future Greensand Country meetings and report back to Council.

- ii) Development Scrutiny Committee held on 24 August and 14 September 2020
- iii) Policy, Finance and Resources Committee held on 14 September 2020

**RESOLVED to RECOMMEND** that the Council applies a reduction in its charges for sports club rents to take into account time not played due to COVID19 for the financial year 2020/21.

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## **6 Reports from Central Bedfordshire Councillors**

To receive verbal reports from Central Bedfordshire Councillors.

## **7 Councillor Vacancy**

- i) To note that the Council has received confirmation it is able to now carry out a co-option process to fill the vacant Councillor position in Fallowfield Ward. Appendix I
- ii) To consider and adopt an amended Co-option Policy which takes account of virtual meetings. Appendix II

## **8 Neighbourhood planning**

To decide whether the Council wishes to start the process of developing a Neighbourhood Plan and agree to the establishment of a Steering Group. Volunteer Councillors will be required to establish and run the steering group.

## **9 Consultations**

- i) To receive and consider a briefing report and draft question responses to the 'Changes to the Current Planning System' Government Consultation Appendix III
- ii) To receive and consider a briefing report on the 'Planning for the Future' Government Consultation. Appendix IV

## **10 Correspondence**

- i) To receive and consider communication from Central Bedfordshire Council's Safer Communities Officer. Appendix V
- ii) To receive and consider correspondence received from Tilco, along with supporting information from the Clerk. Appendix VI
- iii) To receive and consider correspondence received from Central Bedfordshire Council's Marcel Coffait on supporting town centres and the wider economy. Appendix VII
- iv) To receive correspondence from the Open Beeston Gardens. Appendix VIII

## **11 Bedfordshire Association of Town and Parish Councils AGM**

To receive the Annual Report and Accounts from BATPC and confirm whether the Council wish to send up to three voting representatives to the Virtual AGM on 21<sup>st</sup> October at 7:30pm. Appendix IX

## **12 Reports from Councillors on Outside Bodies**

To receive a from Council representatives on outside bodies;  
*None received.*

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**13 News Release**

**14 Chairman's Items**

**15 Date of Next Full Council Meeting:** 9<sup>th</sup> November 2020

***Confidential Information***

*If the Council decides to exclude the public for any items on the agenda it will be necessary to pass the following resolution:*

**16 To move the following resolution;**

'That in the view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted it is advisable in the public interest that the press and public be temporarily excluded and they are instructed to withdraw'

**17 Leisure Services – Contractual**



Mr Chris Robson  
Clerk to Sandy Town Council  
10 Cambridge Road  
Sandy  
Beds  
SG19 1JE

**Fax no:**  
**Your ref:**  
**Our ref:**  
**Date:** 9 September 2020

Dear Mr Robson

**CASUAL VACANCY – SANDY (PART) FALLOWFIELD PARISH COUNCIL**

I refer to your notice of election dated 18 August 2020 and confirm that no request for an election has been received. Accordingly, you may now proceed to co-opt.

Using best practice we would advise that you always post a Notice of Co-option on the town/parish notice board or newsletter.

Please ensure that every Town and Parish Councillor submits a register of their interests within 28 days of entering office. The form used for registering Interests for Town or Parish Councillors is available for completion online. Please use this link to access the form:- [https://forms.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/officeforms/ROI\\_Application\\_Form.ofml](https://forms.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/officeforms/ROI_Application_Form.ofml)  
Guidance notes are included to help complete the form appropriately.

Yours sincerely

Brian Dunleavy  
**Democratic Services Manager**

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## **SANDY TOWN COUNCIL CO-OPTION POLICY**

### **Introduction**

Although the process for co-option is not prescribed in Law, County & District Councils and Local Council Associations provide best practice advice and guidelines. It is especially important that all applicants be treated alike so that the arrangements are seen as open, fair and transparent.

Whenever the need for co-option arises, Sandy Town Council will seek and encourage applications from anyone in the Town who is eligible to stand as a Town Councillor. Councillors or parishioners can legally approach individuals to suggest that they might wish to consider putting their names forward for co-option.

The Town Council will advertise the vacancies in the local area via the Town Council noticeboards, the Town Council website, **social media** and a media release.

The co-option procedure will be reviewed every four years.

The co-option process to be employed by Sandy Town Council is as follows:

### **Co-option Policy**

1. **On receipt, of written confirmation, from the Electoral Services Office at Central Bedfordshire Council, the casual vacancy can be filled by means of Co-option, the Town Clerk will;**
  - a. **Advertise the vacancy for 4 weeks on the Council noticeboards, Council Website, Council Facebook page and via a press release.**
  - b. **Inform the Council that the Co-option Policy has been instigated.**
2. The advertisement to co-opt will include:
  - a. the method by which applications can be made
  - b. the closing date for all applications
  - c. a contact point to obtain more information
  - d. show that further information is available electronically via the website, to include application forms, and information about the roles and responsibilities of the council.

3. Existing Members may point out the vacancies and the process to any qualifying candidate(s)
4. Any candidate(s) found to be offering inducements of any kind will be disqualified.
5. Eligibility of the candidate(s) will be confirmed by the Clerk.
6. All eligible candidates will be invited, by letter, to attend the next full Town Council meeting following the application deadline. If candidates are unable to attend, this meeting will not be rearranged. The co-option will still take place and voting on this vacancy will be subsequently based on this meeting and the candidate application form.
7. All Members will receive copies of candidate applications, along with the summons to attend the next full Town Council meeting following the application deadline. Candidate names will be displayed on the agenda of the meeting at which the co-option voting will occur. No other details apart from the candidates' names will be displayed. Candidate applications are strictly confidential.
8. An agenda item will be set aside for candidates to make a brief verbal presentation to members, outlining their relevant skills and experience. Each candidate will be allocated a maximum of three minutes. After presentations, members may ask candidates questions if considered necessary. These presentations and questions will be open to the public, **but other candidates will be asked to step outside the meeting until they are due to present. During the temporary holding of virtual meetings, which have occurred as a result of Covid19, applicants will be placed in the meeting's 'waiting room' until it is their turn to present.**
9. The Chair will then request those councillors present to nominate any or all of the candidates for co-option. As co-opting any person to the Town Council has to occur by resolution, candidates will require a proposer and seconder to progress to the voting stage.
10. The Chair will then place the names of nominated candidates in alphabetical order and proceed to vote.
11. **When conducting a co-option process in a physical meeting** the Town Council will appoint the co-opted member/s by voting according to Standing Orders. **During the temporary holding of virtual meetings, which have occurred as a result of Covid19, voting on candidates will be conducted by a show of hands.**

Applicants will be placed in the meeting 'waiting room' while voting is conducted.

12. Only Town Councillors present at the meeting may vote upon a person to fill the vacancy. Councillors will have one vote per vacancy to be filled.
13. If a Candidate is a relative of a Councillor, that Councillor should declare a prejudicial interest and withdraw from the meeting.
14. A successful candidate must have received an absolute majority vote by those Councillors present.
15. It follows that if there are more than two candidates for one vacancy and not one of them at the first count receives a majority over the aggregate votes given to the rest, steps must be taken to strike off the candidate with the least number of votes and the remainder must then be put to the vote again.
16. This process must, if necessary, be repeated until an absolute majority is obtained.
17. The Chair has the casting vote.
18. If there is more than one vacancy and the number of candidates equals the number of vacancies, all the vacancies may be filled by a single composite resolution, but if the number of candidates exceeds the number of vacancies each vacancy must be filled by a separate vote or series of votes.
19. The Council is not obliged to fill all vacancies, but must take steps to advertise for further co-options or hold an election to fill vacancies.
20. Successfully co-opted candidates become Councillors in their own right, with immediate effect, and are no different to any other member once their Declaration of Acceptance of Office Form has been signed.
21. **At a physical meeting** the co-opted members will be asked to sign a Declaration of Acceptance of Office to agree to be bound by the Local Government Code of Conduct. This will then be signed and dated by the Clerk and they may then take their seat at Council and will be appointed to a committee and as a representative to local organisations. **If Co-option is conducted at a virtual meeting of the Council, the co-opted Member will be invited to stay in the meeting, but may not take their seat with the Council until the**



Declaration of Acceptance is signed and dated by both the co-opted Member and the Clerk.

22. Any application can be considered in the candidate(s) absence, but if successful, members would need to agree for him/her to sign the Declaration of Office either before or at the next meeting.
23. As soon as practicable following their co-option, members will be invited to attend an Induction and Training session with the Town Clerk.

***This Policy will be reviewed in six months from the date of its adoption, or at a time when Government COVID19 guidelines change to allow the holding of physical Council meetings.***

Adopted: November 2016



**SANDY TOWN COUNCIL****DATE: 28 September 2020****AUTHOR: Town Clerk****SUBJECT: Changes to the Current Planning System Consultation****1. Summary**

- 1.1 The government is consulting on three documents;
- Changes to the Current Planning System
  - Planning for the Future
  - Transparency and competition: a call for evidence on data on land control
- 1.2 At the last DS Committee meeting it was agreed the Clerk would compile a response to the 'Changes to the Current Planning System' consultation, which has a deadline of 1<sup>st</sup> October 2020. Councillors were invited to send their comments and feedback on the consultation to the Clerk. One Member sent comments and Cllrs Hewitt and Gibson met (virtually) with the Clerk to prepare answers to the consultation for Members' consideration.
- 1.3 To date only the 'Changes to the Current Planning System Consultation has been looked at. The Clerk feels that the 'Planning for the Future' consultation will be more critical and lengthy and would request that some additional Members provide support on reviewing and preparing an answer on that consultation.

**2. Background to 'Changes to the Current Planning System' Consultation**

- 2.1 'Changes to the Current Planning System' sets out proposed short-term changes which are intended to improve the efficiency of the current planning system. These appear to be short term reforms the Government is proposing to make to improve the efficiency of the system in certain areas and support economic recovery. The paper was published at the same times as 'Planning for the Future', which is a white paper and puts forward more significant changes.
- 2.2 The main proposals in the 'Changes to the Current Planning System' are:
- Changes to the standard method for assessing local housing need.
  - Securing First Homes, sold at a discount to market price for first time buyers, including key workers, through developer contributions until the transition to a new system.
  - Temporarily lifting the small sites threshold below which developers do not need to contribute to affordable housing, to up to 40 or 50 units to support SME builders following the impact of Covid-19 on the economy.

- Extending the current Permission in Principle (PiP) to major development so landowners and developers now have a fast route to secure the principle of development for housing on sites without having to submit detailed plans first.
- 2.3 These offer the most immediate short-term impact on planning, compared with the medium-long term impact which would emerge from the 'Planning for the Future' White Paper.
- 3. Standard method for assessing local housing need**
- 3.1 The current method uses a baseline of household projections which are then adjusted for affordability and capped to limit the increase for a specific area. In some cases, these projections have been criticised as resulting in artificially low projections, where overcrowding and concealed households suppress the numbers.
- 3.2 The newly proposed method is to take into account a percentage of existing housing stock levels, including homes that are already in an area. This will make allowances for diverse housing needs in all parts of the country. The stated aim of this new method is to allow the Government to hit its target of delivering 300,000 new homes a year, with a more appropriate distribution of homes.
- 3.3 This appears to be viewed as a temporary measure in advance of the more wide ranging and binding reforms proposed in the White Paper. It will have an immediate impact as the revised method will increase the national housing need. There are also detailed transitional measures proposed given the impact this will have on those in the middle of preparing plans (such as CBC).
- 4. Delivering First Homes**
- 4.1 It is proposed that a minimum of 25% of all affordable housing units secured through developer contributions should be First Homes which is a new form of Affordable Housing to support first time buyers. At first this will be secured through S106 planning obligations, however via the White Paper these will be potentially abolished and so these would subsequently be secured through the newly proposed Infrastructure Levy.
- 4.2 The proposed minimum discount for First Homes should be 30% from market price which will be set by an independent registered valuer. This could be increased to 40% or 50% based on Local Plan evidence.
- 4.3 Proposals on options for introducing new tenure in existing policies. One option includes First Homes replacing other affordable home ownership products. This appears to have a knock-on effect on social rental which may be resisted by

certain authorities who prioritise that particular form of affordable housing reflected in their own local needs and objectives.

- 4.4 First Homes is that they do not currently fall within the categories of social housing in the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010, so as to qualify for the exemption from the levy. The Government is proposing to amend the Regulations, but until that occurs the levy would be applied to First Homes.
- 4.5 There are transitional arrangements again with emerging Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans that are submitted for Examination within 6 months of this new policy being enacted not needing to be changed to reflect the First Homes policy requirements.

## **5. The Small Sites Threshold**

- 5.1 Short term steps designed to provide assistance to SMEs during the current coronavirus pandemic. The Government has already introduced legislation to give local authorities more flexibility by allowing them to defer and stagger Community Infrastructure Levy payments.
- 5.2 Support for SMEs to be extended by increasing the size of schemes where affordable housing is to be sought. This will be introduced for an initial period of 18 months with the small sites threshold proposed to be to 40 or 50 new homes through changes to national planning policy. If this does proceed following the consultation period, a decision will be made via the introduction of a Written Ministerial Statement in the Autumn.
- 5.3 Opposition expected from Local Authorities who rely on schemes on this scale to meet their affordable housing needs. Such resistance was previously seen when the small site threshold was changed before.

## **6. Extension of the current Permission in Principle regime**

- 6.1 Removal of restrictions in the current Permission in Principle (PiP) regulations on major development. Will allow a PiP application to be submitted for a wider range of sites and in turn increase the speed at which housing development can occur. As some restrictions will remain (such as those relating to Archaeology and Habitats) PiP will not be suitable for sites capable of delivering over 150 dwellings or more than 5 hectares. On commercial development, the consultation proposes to remove the 1,000 sq m floorspace limit.
- 6.2 The paper identifies that the Government is soon to publish a national Brownfield Land Register map which will automatically record those sites suitable for housing.
- 6.3 This is very much a precursor to the much wider reforms in the White Paper.

10 AUGUST 2020

## PC10-20 | CHANGES TO THE CURRENT PLANNING SYSTEM

### Summary

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has issued a new consultation on changes to the planning system. This consultation seeks views on a range of proposed changes to the current planning system including: changes to the standard method for assessing local housing need, securing of First Homes through developer contributions, temporarily lifting the small sites threshold and extending the current Permission in Principle to major development. The main consultation document can be found [here](#).

### Consultation questions

NALC will be responding to the consultation questions as follows:

- 1. Do you agree that planning practice guidance should be amended to specify that the appropriate baseline for the standard method is whichever is the higher of the level of 0.5% of housing stock in each local authority area OR the latest household projections averaged over a 10-year period?**

It is acknowledged that the Council may not have the expertise to respond in full. However, based on the principle that a formula is needed the proposed method is reasonable. This is answered in the context that this is a temporary proposal. As a long-term strategy this may result in development in areas where there is little demand and does not give flexibility for local concerns and need. There will undoubtedly be a large impact on housing target numbers for Local Plans and neighbourhood Plans.

- 2. In the stock element of the baseline, do you agree that 0.5% of existing stock for the standard method is appropriate? If not, please explain why**

It is acknowledged that the Council may not have the expertise to respond in full. Approach may be appropriate for some areas, but not all. Once again local context and needs will not be taken into account. Current housing demand and waiting lists with local authorities should be considered in the baseline to ensure that enough new homes are built to reduce/eliminate the waiting list and meet the expected growth. Affordable housing must be included and should also take into consideration the mix of housing available and types of accommodation that will be needed from first homes to final homes.

**3. Do you agree that using the workplace-based median house price to median earnings ratio from the most recent year for which data is available to adjust the standard method's baseline is appropriate? If not, please explain why.**

Yes. The Council does not have the expertise to answer this question in full.

**4. Do you agree that incorporating an adjustment for the change of affordability over 10 years is a positive way to look at whether affordability has improved? If not, please explain why.**

Yes. However, the issue is more complicated. Affordability is impacted by many factors, including wages, local supply and demand as well as reducing the cost to build. A preferred measure may whether local homelessness has been reduced, housing association waiting lists have been reduced and home ownership has increased.

**5. Do you agree that affordability is given an appropriate weighting within the standard method? If not, please explain why.**

No. Affordability at a local level may be different than "commutable" affordability. The approach does not take into account salary levels of residents commuting outside of areas and may make housing less affordable for local people in suburban areas, creating unexpected demand that will push up market prices. We would query how people migrating from higher to lower cost areas will be factored into these calculations. Local people may still be priced out of the market.

A permanent move from higher priced areas may also create a price fall and therefore affordability, for instance within inner cities, or result in housing built in the wrong location for where people want to live.

**Do you agree that authorities should be planning having regard to their revised standard method need figure, from the publication date of the revised guidance, with the exception of:**

**6. Authorities which are already at the second stage of the strategic plan consultation process (Regulation 19), which should be given 6 months to submit their plan to the Planning Inspectorate for examination?**

The Council does not have the expertise to answer this. However, we could comment that any speed up of the process should not be at the cost of consultation and response to consultation within the Plans.

**7. Authorities close to publishing their second stage consultation (Regulation 19), which should be given 3 months from the publication date of the revised guidance to publish their Regulation 19 plan, and a further 6 months to submit their plan to the Planning Inspectorate?**

The Council does not have the expertise to answer this. However, we could comment that any speed up of the process should not be at the cost of consultation and response to consultation within the Plans.

**If not, please explain why. Are there particular circumstances which need to be catered for?**

**8. The Government is proposing policy compliant planning applications will deliver a minimum of 25% of onsite affordable housing as First Homes, and a minimum of 25% of offsite contributions towards First Homes where appropriate. Which do you think is the most appropriate option for the remaining 75% of affordable housing secured through developer contributions? Please provide reasons and / or evidence for your views (if possible):**

- i) Prioritising the replacement of affordable home ownership tenures, and delivering rental tenures in the ratio set out in the local plan policy.**
- ii) Negotiation between a local authority and developer.**
- iii) Other (please specify)**

There should not be a minimum for affordable first homes and the focus should be on developing a mix of homes that meet local requirements for both house ownership and rental. Decisions should be made at a local level determined by requirements, not on a national formula. There will need to be an understanding of local demographics and needs as every LPA will be different. This would need to involve a mix of i & ii.

**With regards to current exemptions from delivery of affordable home ownership products:**

**9. Should the existing exemptions from the requirement for affordable home ownership products (e.g. for build to rent) also apply to this First Homes requirement?**

No. We do not consider there should be any distinction between affordable housing and housing as first homes. Units that can be sold as first homes or contributed towards affordable home ownership should be provided by the developer.

**10. Are any existing exemptions not required? If not, please set out which exemptions and why.**

The council does not have the expertise to answer this question.

**11. Are any other exemptions needed? If so, please provide reasons and /or evidence for your views.**

The council does not have the expertise to answer this question.

**12. Do you agree with the proposed approach to transitional arrangements set out above?**

No. It would be preferable to have a cutoff date when all plans need to be revised, such as 1 year from the change of planning law.

**13. Do you agree with the proposed approach to different levels of discount?**

**The Council does not have the required level of expertise to full answer this question.**

The council does not have the expertise to answer this question.

**14. Do you agree with the approach of allowing a small proportion of market housing on First Homes exception sites, in order to ensure site viability?**

The small proportion needs to be well defined at the outset of a development and not be able to be renegotiated by the developer after permission is granted.

**15. Do you agree with the removal of the site size threshold set out in the National Planning Policy Framework?**

No. This would mean that an exception site could be disproportionate to the local environment. Current restrictions as set out should stay in place.

**16. Do you agree that the First Homes exception sites policy should not apply in designated rural areas?**

Yes.

**17. Do you agree with the proposed approach to raise the small sites threshold for a time-limited period?**

No. This will lead to an increase in the number of small sites being created from larger plots and will result in a series of phased developments with will avoid paying any contribution to the existing community via developer contributions. This would also open up incentive for larger developers to create small SME subsidiaries to exploit this opportunity.

**18. What is the appropriate level of small sites threshold? i) Up to 40 homes ii) Up to 50 homes iii) Other (please specify)**

The Council does not support the policy to change from the current 10 home, 0.5 hectares approach.

**19. Do you agree with the proposed approach to the site size threshold?**

No.

**20. Do you agree with linking the time-limited period to economic recovery and raising the threshold for an initial period of 18 months?**

No. As stated the Council does not support a change to the current policy.

**21. Do you agree with the proposed approach to minimising threshold effects?**

No. The proposal offers no explanation on mitigation to be taken and this will add further complexity to planning applications as the evidence that a larger site is being brought forward will be able to be refuted and lead to challenges to the local authority and more appeals.

**22. Do you agree with the Government's proposed approach to setting thresholds in rural areas?**

Yes.



**23. Are there any other ways in which the Government can support SME builders to deliver new homes during the economic recovery period?**

There are already measures and support in place to help SME's, including deferred tax, business lands and home builders fund. There should be sufficient demand for housing for the sector to recover without the need to reduce contributions for affordable housing and community projects, which are essential for the long-term sustainability of communities.

**24. Do you agree that the new Permission in Principle should remove the restriction on major development?**

Yes. Reducing time waste will be beneficial and consideration of more PiP applications would create certainty before money spent on outline or detailed planning. Town and Parish Council's should be a statutory consultee on PiP's. However, it is unclear what happens if PiP is refused and whether a developer can challenge the decision or come forward with detailed plans for the same site. If so, there could be increased time and costs. There needs to be a framework for what is the maximum number of homes would be.

**25. Should the new Permission in Principle for major development set any limit on the amount of commercial development (providing housing still occupies the majority of the floorspace of the overall scheme)? Please provide any comments in support of your views.**

Yes. Commercial development must be in keeping with the overall scheme to support the local community, such as local services, retail and community space. However, this is unlikely to be included without some insistence from the Local Planning Authorities.

**26. Do you agree with our proposal that information requirements for Permission in Principle by application for major development should broadly remain unchanged? If you disagree, what changes would you suggest and why?**

For major development, a longer time period should be considered to ensure there is sufficient times for consultation take place. The 14 days notification isn't long enough for the local community to have their say regarding development on land that has not previously been designated for housing. This notification period should be extended to a minimum of 30 days.

**27. Should there be an additional height parameter for Permission in Principle? Please provide comments in support of your views.**

Yes. Details on height and access should be included in the PiP application, with other technical details coming forward after this at the Technical application stage.

**28. Do you agree that publicity arrangements for Permission in Principle by application should be extended for large developments? If so, should local planning authorities be:**

- i) required to publish a notice in a local newspaper?
- ii) subject to a general requirement to publicise the application or
- iii) both?
- iv) Disagree

Yes. As much publicity as possible should be used to inform residents about major applications. It should be ensured that both local newspapers and a general requirement to publicise though local notices and social media are used to reach as many people as possible.

**29. Do you agree with our proposal for a banded fee structure based on a flat fee per hectare, with a maximum fee cap?**

Yes. The proposed way of calculating fees seems fair.

**30. What level of flat fee do you consider appropriate, and why?**

The Council does not have the sufficient expertise to suggest a specific level of flat fee. However, the fee should cover the costs of the application review process and public consultation. Any time needed by planning inspectors for site visits and all ancillary costs must also be factored in. Most importantly there should be no cost to the Local Planning Authority or the local taxpayers.

**31. Do you agree that any brownfield site that is granted Permission in Principle through the application process should be included in Part 2 of the Brownfield Land Register? If you disagree, please state why.**

Yes.

**32. What guidance would help support applicants and local planning authorities to make decisions about Permission in Principle? Where possible, please set out any areas of guidance you consider are currently lacking and would assist stakeholders.**

The Council does not have the sufficient expertise to answer this question. Clear design guidelines should be available for designated areas and information on aspects such as land contamination.

One concern is the lack of data required for site access/infrastructure needed to approve, not convinced this can be ignored for Permission in Principle. For a brown field site this should be an easier decision as there is already infrastructure in place. If we think about our own experience regarding change of use, then parking is always an issue when converting to residential.

**33. What costs and benefits do you envisage the proposed scheme would cause? Where you have identified drawbacks, how might these be overcome?**

The scheme would benefit both developers and PA's in reducing costs of preparing and reviewing detailed documents for sites where planning is not desired. However, there is a

concern that an appeal process for PiP decisions could result in increased time and costs.  
Clear guidelines, Local Plans and rules need to be in place for this scheme to be effective.

**34. To what extent do you consider landowners and developers are likely to use the proposed measure? Please provide evidence where possible.**

As yet STC has not had any PIP applications. However, we would expect that if the site size for which PIP's can be submitted is increased more applications for smaller developments may come forward, this may include on land that has already been refused for larger sites. This may be likely to come in phases of 40 – 50 homes that would over time become larger 300 – 500 developments without the benefit of developer contributions for infrastructure. There is a risk this will create smaller, fractured and stranded communities rather than a joined up urban plan.

**35. In light of the proposals set out in this consultation, are there any direct or indirect impacts in terms of eliminating unlawful discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations on people who share characteristics protected under the Public Sector Equality Duty?**

No

**SANDY TOWN COUNCIL**

**DATE:** 28 September 2020

**AUTHOR:** Town Clerk

**SUBJECT:** Planning for the Future Consultation

**1. Summary**

- 1.1 The government is consulting on three documents;
- Changes to the Current Planning System
  - Planning for the Future
  - Transparency and competition: a call for evidence on data on land control
- 1.2 The Clerk and Cllrs Gibson and Hewitt worked on producing a response to the questions on the Current 'Planning System Consultation'. It is proposed that a similar approach is taken to the 'Planning for the Future' consultation and that at least four Councillors work on a 'task and finish' basis to formulate a response prior to the 28<sup>th</sup> October 2020. The scope of the white paper and the medium-long term proposals within it require some greater review than the short-term proposals of the 'Current Planning System' consultation.

**2. Background to 'Planning for the Future Consultation'**

- 2.1 This is a government White Paper which proposes significant changes to the following:
- Local Plans and Land Allocations;
  - Standardised Housing Need;
  - Role of Design;
  - Section 106 & Community Infrastructure Levy; and
  - Running the System.
- 2.2 These are set within what are described in the Paper as three Pillars:
- Planning for Development;
  - Planning for Beautiful and Sustainable Places; and
  - Planning for Infrastructure and Connectivity.

**3. Local Plans and Land Allocations**

- 3.1 Proposals to change Local Plans, as there is a view that the current system is not working, based on the rate of plans being adopted and how quickly they can

become out-of-date. The proposal is for slimmed down Local Plans which are to be adopted within 30 months through a series of measures.

- 3.2 Development Management policies will in general be removed at a local level and moved to national level, with area specific design coding and rules based Local Plans to fill in at the local tier. It is commented that this may remove repetition which currently exists in Plans.
- 3.3 The proposal to reform Local Plans appears to be based on a tripartite division of land into Growth, Renewal and Protection zones. Outline planning permission for forms and types of development specified in the Local Plan will be granted automatically in Growth Areas. Renewal areas will include areas such as Town Centres. Protection zones will be those areas such as AONBs and Green Belts where development will be restricted, and the Local Plan will need to explain what is allowed.
- 3.4 Areas suitable for development in growth areas given approval for the principle of development by the adoption of the Local Plan. A detailed permission could then be secured at a later date, but the principle would have been established. Local Plans will allow for more sites to be permitted in the Local Plan, rather than left to the detailed approval stage.
- 3.5 Introduction of a single statutory sustainability test, unsure what this test would be.
- 3.6 Proposed removal of the soundness test and duty to cooperate (with neighbouring authorities). Suggested that Local Plans have struggled with this and this has led to delays. Suggested that this may allow for a speedier process for Local Plans, but further consideration is being given on to how to plan for strategic cross boundary issues.
- 3.7 Proposals may shift pressure in the planning system from application stage to Local Plan preparation stage. This may have an impact on the desire to have Local Plans adopted within a 30-month timescale. Although the principle of development will have already been approved detailed approval will still be required through application to the LPA.

#### **4. Standardised Changes to Housing Numbers**

- 4.1 Appears to be a return to setting housing numbers by central government. It is suggested this may result in a national plan for housing which leads to a requirement for housing delivery for areas. May see a reduction in evidence base for housing need. Some authorities have expressed concern that the number of houses needed to be delivered in areas will increase substantially and will have a negative impact on existing Local and Neighbourhood Plans.

4.2 Unsure on how flexibility required to deal with local circumstances will be delivered, for example where an LPA has large areas of Green Belt or Conservation Areas. The proposal does not seem to answer how those considerations and limitations will be taken into new housing number calculations.

## **5. Design**

5.1 National Design Guide and the Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission Report previously published may provide basis for role of design in proposal.

5.2 'Provably locally-popular' design codes suggested. Will require some engagement from local community and Councils. Could Neighbourhood Plans be used as the vehicle with which to take local design codes forward?

5.3 Introduction of "net gain" rather than just 'no net harm'. May provide more scope for 'negotiation' on what developments are providing local communities.

## **6. Section 106 & Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)**

6.1 Abolition of Section 106 agreements and replacement with a nationally set infrastructure levy which would be calculated as a fixed proportion of the final development value (or an assessment of sales value if development is not sold). This levy would be paid at the point of occupation rather than the current system of commencement but based on a rate at the time that planning permission is granted. It would apply to all use classes and to permitted development rights. Members may have concerns about the time at which the fund becomes available and the provision of infrastructure and service before development is completed, as opposed to one it is occupied.

6.2 Fixing of a levy could significantly affect the amount of levy in low value areas. The proposal for it to reflect 'average' build costs may be difficult on a national level.

6.3 Levy would include affordable housing. On site provision or on-site or off-site land would act as an offset against the levy. The inclusion of affordable housing may reduce some of the challenges LPAs have in agreeing Section 106.

6.4 Query over other items that a Section 106 can cover such as securing scheme specific infrastructure and improvements, sustainable travel methods, outdoor sports, providing retail units at affordable rent. At present a Section 106 is not just a levy and there is a lot more detail with an agreement. To switch to a levy may need to be covered by planning conditions.

**7. Running the System**

- 7.1 Focus on streamlining the process for securing planning permission via the Local Plan reforms and a more streamlined and digitally enabled process. This includes;
- using the 8 and 13 week deadlines as firm deadlines
  - using new software to digitise the process
  - seeking to introduce a more standardised approach to reduce error and cost.
  - Potential automatic refund of application fees that have not been determined within time limit
- 7.2 Changes may rely on resourcing and funding, more support will be needed for Local Authorities and other stakeholders in the system. It is proposed that costs of a new system should be funded by landowner and developers, rather than tax-payers.

## Community Safety Session, 12th October, 3pm

Elaine Mountfort <Elaine.Mountfort@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk>

Tue 22/09/2020 11:04

 1 attachments (515 KB)

How to Join a Central Bedfordshire Meeting using Microsoft Teams (002).docx;

Good Morning

I am contacting you today because I am planning to hold a free online update and information session which I hope might interest you or your colleagues. It is aimed at groups in our area who have an interest in community safety and I hope to be able to offer them regularly if they are of interest, so I would be grateful if you would share this message.

It is easy to take part from your own sofa. Contact [elaine.mountfort@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:elaine.mountfort@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk) to express interest and I will send you an online invite with a link to a 'Teams' meeting. Just click on the link at the time of the meeting and you will be sent to an online waiting room until the meeting starts. No one need worry about having no camera or wi-fi dropping out or any of the concerns we have when going online, it will be quite informal and friendly. This will be new to all of us and I will be just glad to 'virtually' meet you all. Instructions are available, but you can also ask me if anyone has any queries.

The first session will be held on 12<sup>th</sup> October to coincide with Hate Crime Week, so following a quick crime update we will welcome our speaker to give us a short overview of Hate Crime and the things the community can be aware of to help address it. We hope these sessions will be an opportunity for groups to network and engage with professionals and each other to discuss best practice and feel a little less isolated now that in person meetings are not possible. The session will last approximately an hour.

If you would like a Community Safety session tailored to your group – possibly in place of a local meeting – I would love to hear from you and prepare a session where you can discuss your local business and have a short talk on a topic that interests your group.

I hope to meet of many of you as I can and share what the Safer Communities and Partnership Team can offer to support your group.

Kind Regards

**Elaine Mountfort**

Safer Communities Officer

Safer Communities & Partnership Team

Community Safety, Parking and Programmes

Central Bedfordshire Council Priory House, Monks Walk, Chicksands, Shefford, Bedfordshire, SG17 5TQ



**SANDY TOWN COUNCIL**

**DATE:** 28 September 2020

**AUTHOR:** Town Clerk

**SUBJECT:** Tilco/Taylor Wimpey Land Ownership

**1. Summary**

1.1 The purpose of this note is to provide Members with some background information to support the communication received from Mr Orford of Tilco.

**2. Background Information**

2.1 In 2014 Tilco approached the Council on behalf of Taylor Wimpey with a request that the Council take on ownership of the land shown in the attachment included with Mr Orford's letter. The Deputy Clerk who was in position at the time completed a comprehensive review and report of the land in question.

2.2 The Council had previously resolved to confirm its intention to adopt the public open space in return for a commuted sum of £28,849.21. This figure was based on a sum by Taylor Wimpey which had originally been sent to the Council in 2007.

2.3 In 2016 the Council had numerous correspondence with Tilco in which it was stated by Tilco that there was no Section 106 agreement in place from the time of the development and as such Taylor Wimpey did not have to pay a commuted sum.

2.4 The Council responded to Tilco stating that it would not take on ownership of the land without a commuted sum to support the maintenance and resource implications that would be placed on the Council. No commuted sum was offered, and the matter progressed no further.

**3. Initial response**

3.1 The Clerk has sent an initial response to Tilco asking whether any funds would be offered to the Council in support of taking on ownership and maintenance of the land in question. The Clerk also asked what action was going to be undertaken by Taylor Wimpey to ensure outstanding maintenance works required, including to fencing and trees, is completed if the Town Council were to take on ownership of the land. No response had been received at the date of issuing this report.

Sandy Town Council  
10 Cambridge Road  
Sandy  
Beds  
SG19 1JE

Dear Sirs

**Re: Transfer of open spaces at Meadowcroft, Sandy**

You will recall from previous correspondences that we are appointed by our clients Taylor Wimpey to deal with their 'left over' land assets.

By way of a reminder, when I met with the Town Council in 2015, we all agreed that there is no S.106 Agreement and therefore no obligation to pay a commuted sum.

Nonetheless my client remains willing, as they always have been, to transfer the open spaces shown edged red in the attached plan into the ownership of the Town Council.

I am able to instruct TW's solicitors to prepare and issue that transfer forthwith. Accordingly, please could you provide me with the town council's solicitor details.

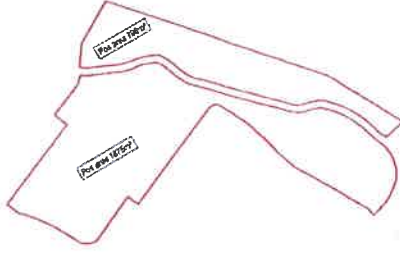
Yours faithfully,



Robert Orford  
On behalf of Taylor Wimpey North Thames  
07841619373



**NOTES:**

Total extent of public open space areas = 5510m<sup>2</sup>



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NOTES

Rev.	Description	By	Date
	 <b>Barter Hill Partnership Limited</b> Wynters Farm Barn Magdalen Layer Ongar Essex CM5 0EW t: 01279 430888 f: 01279 429607 e: mail@barterhill.co.uk		
	 Consulting Structural & Civil Engineers 15 Meridian Way Meridian Business Park Norwich NR7 0TA t: 01603 300360 f: 01603 438854 e: mail@barterhill.co.uk		

Client  
**Taylor Wimpey**

Project  
**Meadow Croft, Sandy**

Drawing Title  
**Public Open Space  
Transfer Plan**

Designed by  
JR

Drawn by  
NV

Checked by

Scale @ A3  
1:1250

Date  
July 2007

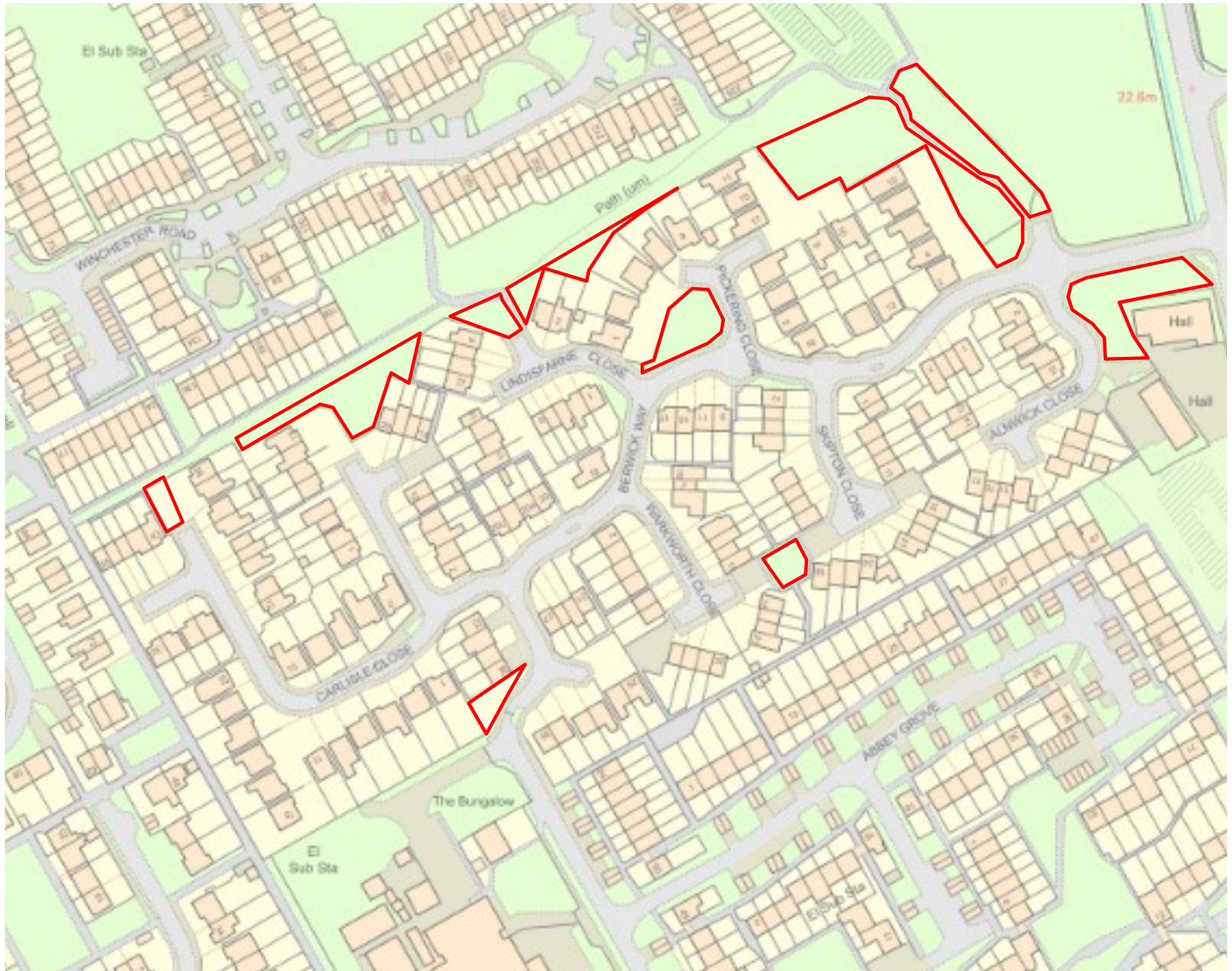
Revision  
Job Ref  
2856

Drawing No.  
**11122\_101**

Status  
**AS BUILT**

Cad file  
P:\2856\Civil\

Contact Office  
Magdalen Layer



Sent to: Clerk & Chairman to the town Councils of:

Ampthill, Biggleswade, Dunstable,  
Flitwick, Houghton Regis, Leighton Linlade,  
Potton, Sandy, Shefford

**Date:** 15/09/20

**Dear Clerk to the Council,**

### **Supporting Town Centres and the wider Economy**

I am writing to you with regard to the Council's ongoing response to Covid-19 and its economic impact on our local residents, business community and town centres.

As lockdown has eased and our economy has gradually reopened, it is apparent that this crisis has precipitated significant changes to how our resident's shop and access services and, as a consequence how our towns function.

The enforced closure of physical shops has accelerated the long-term trend towards online retail, which for many is now the new norm or first port of call, when it comes to retail shopping. Our town centres have been, and will most likely continue to be, profoundly impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, a period of time that has exacerbated trends that were already emerging.

It is therefore important that we plan for this new reality and look for ways to adapt and improve our town centres, so that they can continue to be at the heart of our local communities.

As part of helping to develop our new approach I am inviting your Town Council to work with Central Bedfordshire Council to build on recent work focused on understanding our town centres and the scope to address a range of issues, some of which I have touched on above. Initially I am proposing we focus on the following areas:

- 1) Building on work from earlier this year, when we invited you to share your ideas concerning potential submissions to Government programmes such as the Future High Street programme, we would like to work with you to review what came out of this in light of Covid-19 and the future challenges and opportunities our town centres face. I have asked the Place Delivery team to contact you in order to give you the opportunity to put forward your suggestions and ideas as to what type of activities and projects you would like to see delivered in your area. This can include locally focused schemes or Central Bedfordshire wide initiatives that you feel would help to support our town centre network as a whole.

- 2) In 2019 the Council commissioned People & Places to conduct a round of town centre benchmarking. This gave us vital data on vacancy rates, footfall as well as important qualitative feedback from businesses, visitors, and regular users of our town centres. In order to attempt to better understand the impacts and implications of the Covid-19 pandemic we will also be looking to repeat this exercise. As before we will be looking to ensure that the outputs of this are as beneficial to you as possible, so will be seeking to work with you to determine any additional scope or questions. We envisage this work commencing in November with footfall and vacant unit counts and concluding in March next year, with business confidence and shopper surveys being undertaken. The additional time for the latter surveys to be carried out, will ensure that any emerging changes to shopping patterns due to the impact of Covid 19 are more fully apparent.
- 3) As a Council we are also rapidly progressing work to develop our Economic Strategy. To support this, we need to understand what is important to residents, businesses and key stakeholders – such as yourselves. With that in mind a brief online survey will be available on the Central Bedfordshire Council website at:

[https://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/info/58/business/819/economic\\_strategy\\_survey](https://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/info/58/business/819/economic_strategy_survey)

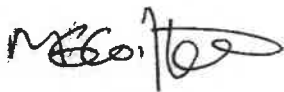
I would be grateful if you were able to take the time to respond; we will also be promoting this to residents and businesses. The survey closes on 30<sup>th</sup> September.

The results of this survey, in addition to your input concerning town centre specific activities as described above, will be collated and incorporated into the Emerging Economic Strategy currently being developed, as well as potential future bids for funding to Central Government.

If you have any questions on any aspects of this work please contact Stephen Mooring, Head of Place Delivery, [Stephen.Mooring@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:Stephen.Mooring@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

We look forward to continuing to work with you.

Yours sincerely



**Marcel Coiffait**

Director for Place & Communities

**Direct telephone** 0300 300 5637

**Email** [marcel.coiffait@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:marcel.coiffait@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

Are you responding as: (please select one)

- Resident
- Town or Parish Council
- Local Business
- Voluntary or Community organisation
- Other

Our [Vision for 2050](#) has highlighted a number of areas that are important for businesses and the economy. Which do you think is the most important?

- Culture of innovation** - we want to harness the benefits of economic recovery and growth and be increasingly productive. We will continue to nurture our local industries and leading sectors.
- Diverse and flourishing local businesses** - we will continue to be a great place for business - especially SMEs (small or medium-sized enterprise) which bring investment, employment opportunities and vibrancy to our towns and villages
- Digital working for us** - we want to ensure all generations feel ready for a new digital age. Technology and data will only be used where it improves our lives
- Skilled for the future** - we want an education system that is truly inclusive, closes the skills gap, helps our young people into great jobs and supports our older generations in lifelong learning

## Areas of focus

Please indicate which **two** areas you think are the most important within the vision ambition of a 'culture of innovation':

- Maximise assets - such as Cranfield University and Millbrook
- Ensure strong links to London, Oxford and Cambridge
- Improve links between Technology and Research & Development sectors and higher education providers
- Continue to develop strong links between businesses and the voluntary sector
- Continue to develop strong links between businesses and schools
- Ensure opportunities are available for those in the most deprived areas of Central Bedfordshire
- Provide more job opportunities locally

Please indicate which **two** areas you think are the most important within the vision ambition of a 'diverse and flourishing local businesses':

- Create flexible and modern workspaces to allow people work freely and flexibly
- Consider how we can reduce the need to travel to work
- Understand the conditions that make Central Bedfordshire an attractive place to invest
- Identify opportunities for shared services and networks
- Ensure local businesses remain active and viable
- The need to provide fast broadband to enable flexible/ remote working

Please indicate which **two** areas you think are most important within the vision ambition of 'digital working for us':

- Digital technology can help to reduce social isolation
- Opportunities to integrate digital initiatives into new developments
- Promote digital skills as life long learning
- Create flexible and modern workspaces to allow people to work freely and flexibly

Please indicate which **two** areas you think are the most important within the vision ambition for 'skilled for the future':

- Assist employers to have more direct involvement in supporting routes to employment - i.e. promoting apprenticeships and vocational learning
- Identify skills gaps that may exist in the future and target programmes and education early
- Ensure access to funding to support jobs growth



The Vision also highlights a number of other areas that would help us to have a sustainable economy. How far do you agree or disagree that the following are important in developing our economic strategy? (please select one per row)

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
<b>Inclusive for all</b> - work with existing buildings and networks to develop opportunities for all, provide the right infrastructure to support all residents	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Thriving market towns and villages</b> - develop leisure and cultural experiences and provide mixed-use high streets	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Climate responsive and resilient</b> - developing the outside economy and green infrastructure	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>A great place to play</b> - build on cultural and leisure assets, making leisure opportunities available to all, provide training that supports employment in local tourist attractions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Local resource, local produce</b> - link with local innovators to make gains in biodiversity, use technology to harvest more local produce	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Healthy and well</b> - enhancing leisure facilities and open spaces, and local community-led food production	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Easy to get around</b> - implementation of electric vehicle charging network, development of cycle networks, opportunities to develop cleaner and greener modes of travel	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Beneficial growth</b> - develop the right mobility, green and social infrastructure to support growth	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Residents skills

How would you describe your current employment status? (please select one)

- Employee in a full time job - work more than 30 hours a week
- Employee in a part time job - work less than 30 hours a week
- Self employed full or part time
- On a government supported training programme - modern apprenticeship/training for work
- Full time education at school, college or university
- Unemployed and available for work
- Permanently sick/disabled
- Wholly retired from work
- Looking after the home
- Doing something else

Has your household income been affected as a result of Covid-19? (please select one)

- Yes - negatively affected
- Yes - positively affected
- No change

What impact has Covid-19 had on your employment status? (please select all that apply)

- I was/am furloughed
- I had to reduce my working hours
- I recently retired
- I lost my job
- None of the above

Do you feel you have the necessary skills to find alternative employment if you needed to? (please select one)

- Yes  
 No

What skills do you think will be most valuable in any new employment? (please select a maximum of 3)

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Information and technology         | <input type="checkbox"/> Analytical skills |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Numeracy                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Team working      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Language                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Adaptability      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communication (verbal and written) | <input type="checkbox"/> Social skills     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Digital (documents/spreadsheets)   | <input type="checkbox"/> Confidence        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Critical thinking                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Time keeping      |

Thinking further forward, what sort of skills for employment do you think will be most important in the future?

How likely or unlikely would you be to retrain if you required new skills? (please select one)

- Very likely     Likely     Unsure     Unlikely     Definitely not

Which of the below are you aware of being available to Central Bedfordshire residents? (please select all that apply)

- National Careers Service: Email: [ncs@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:ncs@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)
- Adult Learning and Employment Support [website](#)
- [Find Your Future website](#)
- None of the above

Do you feel that age presents any specific barriers to your future employment? (please select one)

- Yes
- No

How often do you think you will work from home in the future, when compared with the previous year? (please select one)

- Much more
- More
- About the same
- Less
- Much less
- Not applicable

## The economy

Has Covid-19 made you more likely or less likely to support local businesses in the future? (please select one)

- More likely  
 Stayed the same  
 Less likely
- How often do you think you will visit your local town's high street compared to before Covid-19? (please select one)
- Much more  More  About the same  Less  Much less

How do you feel about the prospects of the economy at a national and local level? (please select one per row)

- |          |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |
|----------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| National | Very positive         | Somewhat positive     | Unsure                | Somewhat concerned    | Very concerned        |
| Local    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Do you have any other comments to make generally about the potential impact the economy might make either on your own employment, or the local/national economy?

# **BEESTON OPEN GARDENS**



**19, The Green**

**Beeston**

**Sandy**

**Beds.**

**SG19 1PE**

**16<sup>TH</sup> September 2020**

**Sandy Town Council**

**Council Chambers**

**Cambridge Rd**

**Sandy**

**Dear Sirs**

**It is with regret that I have to inform you that the Committee of the Beeston Open Gardens have decided that the event will no longer take place. It seems unlikely in the foreseeable future that the pandemic will be over and as a result of this it would be impossible to expect people to open their premises to visitors.**

**We are therefore requesting of the Council that they take over the maintenance of the Picnic Table and Benches we purchased in memory of Mrs Poppy Cope and the Planters situated in various part of the village with effect from the Autumn of 2021. We have a reserve of funds to maintain them until that time and the current committee have agreed to each being responsible for these to be replanted in due season until that time.**

It is our intention to donate the monies held in the bank between Beeston Methodist Church and the St John's Hospice, Moggerhanger, as these amounts were raised from the last Open Gardens also our village Plant Stall and should therefore be used for charitable purposes.

We trust that you will give this your consideration and thank you in anticipation.

Yours faithfully



V A Haygarth



Chairman

# Bedfordshire Association of Town & Parish Councils

## Annual Report & Accounts 2019-20



**PRESIDENT**

**Mrs Helen Nellis, HM Lord Lieutenant of Bedfordshire**

**VICE PRESIDENT**

**Mrs E Brown**

**HONORARY TREASURER**

**Mr P Lawrence**

**AUDITOR**

**Mr A D Walden FCCA**

## COUNTY COMMITTEE

President}  
Vice President} Ex-officio  
Hon Treasurer}

### North Beds

Cllr June Barnes	Sharnbrook Parish Council (until May 2019)
Cllr Rosemary Drewery	Felmersham & Radwell Parish Council (until May 2019)
Cllr Andrew Gell	Riseley Parish Council (elected October 2019)
Cllr Alastair Grant	Brickhill Parish Council (co-opted October 2019)
Cllr Jo Ibbett	Staploe Parish Council (until May 2019)
Cllr Ann Lovesey MBE	Great Barford Parish Council (elected Oct 2019) (Chairman)
Cllr Elizabeth Luder	Bromham Parish Council (elected October 2019)
Cllr Andrew Senior	Pavenham Parish Council (co-opted October 2019)
Cllr Robert Wallace	Wootton Parish Council (elected October 2019)

### Central Bedfordshire (Parish)

Cllr Nigel Aldis	Blunham Parish Council (elected October 2019)
Cllr Les Bolland	Southill Parish Council (elected October 2019)
Cllr John Goodge	Haynes Parish Council (until May 2019)
Cllr John Harfield	Harlington Parish Council (elected October 2019)
Cllr Helen Papworth	Northill Parish Council (elected October 2019)
Cllr Philip Parry	Chalgrave Parish Council (elected October 2019)
Cllr Harvey Silver	Toddington Parish Council (elected October 2019)
Cllr Ian Smith	Blunham Parish Council (until October 2019)
Cllr John Westbury	Eggington Parish Council (elected October 2019)

### Central Bedfordshire (Town)

Cllr Peter Blaine	Sandy Town Council (elected October 2019)
Cllr James Carroll	Houghton Regis Town Council (until October 2019)
Cllr David Jones	Houghton Regis Town Council ((co-opted October 2019)
Cllr Paul Mackin	Shefford Town Council (elected October 2019)
Cllr Michael North	Biggleswade Town Council (co-opted November 2019)
Cllr Madeline Russell	Biggleswade Town Council (elected October 2019)
Cllr Russell Shaw	Flitwick Town Council (co-opted October 2019)
Cllr John Talbot	Stotfold Town Council (co-opted October 2019)

## REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

A1/A421/A428 East West Rail Stakeholder Group	Cllr Madeline Russell
Bedfordshire Councils Planning Consortium	Cllr John Harfield
Bedfordshire Rural Transport Partnership	Cllr Ann Lovesey MBE
EEAPTC	Chairman
London Luton Airport Consultative Committee	Cllr John Westbury
Marston Vale Community Rail Partnership	Cllr Paul Mackin
Marston Vale Trust	Cllr Bob Wallace
National Association of Local Councils	Cllr Elizabeth Luder

## **Foreword by the Association's Chairman**

As I write this foreword, life is so very different from this time last year. As we were getting to the end of our year in March, Covid-19 struck and we were in lockdown. Suddenly we were isolated from our surroundings as we knew them, and the world around us had become very quiet. Another year has passed by so quickly and the county office remains just as busy. Thank you Louise and Tracy for all your hard work in making the office run so smoothly.

Our vision as a County Association remains the same, and that is to provide an excellent county-wide service to improve the effectiveness of local councils within their communities, be they Town Councils, Parish Councils or Parish Meetings. At the moment we have 116 councils and 3 parish meetings in membership. We welcomed Cotton End Parish Council and Shortstown Parish Council into membership as they were newly created councils in April 2019, and said goodbye to Eastcotts Parish Council as it ceased to exist.

We all work together to raise the profile of Parish and Town councils, and your County Association works on your behalf to lobby within and beyond the county boundaries. The National Association, of which you are all members, has a large role to play in raising the profile of parish and town councils, and we thank your representative on NALC Assembly, Cllr Elizabeth Luder, for all she does on our behalf when she goes to the meetings.

Your County Committee has met regularly during the year to ensure that the aims of the Association are being met and that member councils are kept informed. At the elections for the County Committee in October 2019 all the seats for Central Bedfordshire Town Councils and Parish Councils were filled. There is one vacancy in the Bedford Borough area. If you feel you would like to join us on the County Committee, do contact Louise at the County Office in Biggleswade. Your application will then be considered by the County Committee at its next meeting.

The Finance and General Purposes Committee, chaired by Cllr Madeline Russell, meets between the main committee meetings and keeps a watching brief on the finances, ably looked after by our Treasurer, Peter Lawrence. Thank you, Peter.

The Local Council Award Scheme is still available for all sizes of council. Sadly there were no applications during the year 2019-20. The scheme has three levels . Foundation, Quality and Quality Gold. I am sure many of you have clerks with their CiLCA accreditation who would be most eligible Do support any of your clerks if they have not already qualified. A qualified clerk is worth their weight in gold. Do discuss your council's eligibility and we hope to see applications flooding in during the coming year.

As we approach our Annual General Meeting, which, this year due to Covid-19 will be a remote meeting via Zoom, a huge thank you to you all for what you and your clerks have been doing during this difficult time. Business does not just disappear.

Cllr Ann Lovesey MBE  
Chairman

### **The County Committee**

The Association's constitution calls for a County Committee of elected members to be responsible for the promotion of its objectives. Those objectives are:

- to protect and promote the interests, rights, functions and privileges of members.
- to assist members in the performance of their duties and to promote and develop the social, cultural and recreational life of parishes and villages.
- to promote a widespread and well informed interest in local government.
- to promote good local government.

Seven members from the Bedford Borough area and fourteen members from the Central Bedfordshire area are elected to hold office for four years. Elections for a new committee were held in October 2019.

The President, Vice President and Honorary Treasurer are ex-officio members of the County Committee and are elected each year at the Annual General Meeting.

The County Committee meets quarterly, currently in Biggleswade, and is responsible for managing the Association's business in accordance with its Strategic Plan 2015-20. In February 2020 the updated Strategic Plan was adopted as a rolling plan, to be kept under annual review. The County Committee's responsibilities include setting affiliation fees each year. The County Committee appoints representatives to represent members' interests on various outside bodies. The Finance & General Purposes Committee, whose members are drawn from the County Committee, meets quarterly in advance of County Committee meetings. F&GP business includes making recommendations as part of a careful budgeting process, and responding to consultation documents. The Management Committee, whose members are drawn from the F&GP Committee, has responsibility for staffing and premises matters.

### **BATPC Staff**

BATPC employs two members of staff, a County Officer, Louise Ashmore, and an Administrative Assistant, Tracy Moorhouse. Office contact hours are 09.00 - 13.00, Monday to Friday.

### **Membership**

In the year under review 116 councils and 3 parish meetings were in membership of the Association. This included the two new councils of Cotton End Parish Council and Shortstown Parish Council, both created on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019 following the abolition of Eastcotts Parish Council which had previously served the same area.

### **The National Association of Local Councils**

The National Association of Local Councils (NALC) works in partnership with County Associations to provide on-going support and guidance for member councils. Councils who join BATPC are automatically also members of NALC. BATPC collects the total affiliation fee, a proportion of which is paid on to NALC, based on the each council's electorate. In accordance with the agreed protocol, member councils seeking advice should contact BATPC in the first instance; BATPC will refer queries to NALC as necessary, including requests for legal advice. The largest councils may be nominated as Direct Access Councils.

NALC continues to have a significant role in raising the profile of parish and town councils and the work they do, and lobbying Government to ensure that legislation and regulations do not impact unfairly on the sector but rather enable it to deliver for local communities.

NALC provides the Secretariat to the All Party Parliamentary Local Democracy Group whose purpose is to promote the virtues of existing forms of first tier local authorities; to inform policy making and initiatives affecting first tier local authorities; and to stimulate debate on models of community governance.

In the year under review NALC and the Local Government Association (LGA) joined forces again, following the *One Community Guide* published in May 2018 to provide the *Reaching Out Guide* to helping principal and local councils tackle loneliness. The guide, an important starting point and a practical resource, was launched at NALC's Annual Conference in Milton Keynes in October 2019.

Officers from the 39 County Associations meet regularly as a County Officer Forum for briefings, discussions of topical issues and to share good practice. The BATPC County Officer attended meetings in London and Milton Keynes where topics covered included: the new audit arrangements, banking services and use of electronic banking; good practice in borrowing approval applications; neighbourhood plans; CiL; public interest reports; HR Services.

#### **Local Council Award Scheme**

The Local Council Award Scheme was developed 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. The award is at three levels, Foundation, Quality and Quality Gold. Disappointingly no applications were received in 2019-20.

#### **Training**

BATPC offers training for councillors, councils, clerks and other officers.

*New Councillor Induction Training* sessions were held in Toddington, Renhold, Old Warden and Milton Ernest Village Halls. Three levels of *Chairmanship* training were delivered in the Spring and Autumn and a *Financial Management for Councillors* session, all in our training room in Baystrait House. In March 2020 we ran a *Transparency and Audit* session with external trainer Steve Parkinson in Old Warden Village Hall.

Seven delegates attended the six x half-day *Local Council Clerk – Core Skills* training course in the Spring and a further three attended the Autumn course. The course covers the basics of local council administration and prepares Clerks and other council officers to submit a portfolio of evidence to gain the Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA). CiLCA is externally verified by Ascentis and is the nationally recognised qualification for parish clerks. A CiLCA qualified Clerk is one of the eligibility criteria for a council to use the general power of competence and also to gain Quality and Quality Gold status under the Local Council Award Scheme.

#### **Websites for Parish & Town Councils**

March 2020 saw the demise of *Project Involve* websites for parish councils. This provision first came about as a Government funded regional project between the six County Associations in the East of England. The aim was for every parish and town council in the region to have access to a parish-council tailored website, free of charge. The project relied on a principal authority hosting. Bedfordshire County Council first hosted and provided the training and support in Bedfordshire; Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire Councils subsequently agreed to continue the provision when Bedfordshire transferred to unitary

governance. Over the years a significant number of parishes took advantage of the provision. BATPC initially met several times with colleagues from Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire Councils to discuss a way forward, but it soon became apparent that there was no funding or desire to negotiate a new deal. Thanks to the diligent efforts of James Stirling, Clerk to Clophill and Stondon Parish Councils, an alternative group solution was investigated and negotiated, and to which many Bedfordshire councils have since signed up.

### **BATPC Member Councils 2019-20**

Amphill Town Council	Great Denham Parish Council	Roxton Parish Council
Arlesey Town Council	Harlington Parish Council	Sandy Town Council
Aspley Guise Parish Council	Harrold Parish Council	Sharnbrook Parish Council
Aspley Heath Parish Council	Haynes Parish Council	Shefford Town Council
Barton le Clay Parish Council	Heath & Reach Parish Council	Shillington Parish Council
Biddenham Parish Council	Henlow Parish Council	Shortstown Parish Council
Biggleswade Town Council	Hockliffe Parish Council	Silsoe Parish Council
Billington Parish Council	Houghton Conquest Parish Council	Slip end Parish Council
Bletsoe Parish Council	Houghton Regis Town Council	Southill Parish Council
Blunham Parish Council	Hulcote & Salford Parish Council	Stagsden Parish Council
Bolnhurst & Keysoe Parish Council	Husborne Crawley Parish Council	Stanbridge Parish Council
Brickhill Parish Council	Hyde Parish Council	Staploe & Duloe Parish Council
Brogborough Parish Council	Kempston Rural Parish Council	Steppingley Parish Council
Bromham Parish Council	Kensworth Parish Council	Stevington Parish Council
Caddington Parish Council	Knotting & Souldrop Parish Council	Stewartby Parish Council
Campton & Chicksands Parish Council	Langford Parish Council	Stondon Parish Council
Cardington Parish Council	Leighton Linlade Town Council	Stotfold Town Council
Carlton & Chellington Parish Council	Lidlington Parish Council	Streatley Parish Council
Chalgrave Parish Council	Little Staughton Parish Council	Studham Parish Council
Chalton Parish Council	Marston Moretaine Parish Council	Sundon Parish Council
Clapham Parish Council	Maulden Parish Council	Sutton Parish Council
Clifton Parish Council	Melchbourne & Yelden Parish Council	Tempsford Parish Council
Clophill Parish Council	Meppershall Parish Council	Thurleigh Parish Council
Colmworth Parish Council	Millbrook Parish Meeting	Tilsworth Parish Council
Cople Parish Council	Milton Byran Parish Meeting	Tingrith Parish Meeting
Cotton End Parish Council	Milton Ernest Parish Council	Toddington Parish Council
Cranfield Parish Council	Moggerhanger Parish Council	Totternhoe Parish Council
Dean & Shelton Parish Council	Northill Parish Council	Turvey Parish Council
Dunstable Town Council	Oakley Parish Council	Westoning Parish Council
Dunton Parish Council	Odell Parish Council	Whipsnade Parish Council
Eaton Bray Parish Council	Old Warden Parish Council	Wilden Parish Council
Eggington Parish Council	Pavenham Parish Council	Willington Parish Council
Eversholt Parish Council	Pertenhall & Swineshead PC	Wilstead Parish Council
Everton Parish Council	Podington Parish Council	Wixams Parish Council
Fairfield Parish Council	Potton Town Council	Woburn Parish Council
Felmersham & Radwell Parish Council	Pulloxhill Parish Council	Wootton Parish Council
Flitton & Greenfield Parish Council	Ravensden Parish Council	Wrestlingworth & Cockayne Hatley PC
Flitwick Town Council	Renhold Parish Council	Wyboston Parish Council
Gravenhurst Parish Council	Ridgmont Parish Council	Wymington Parish Council
Great Barford Parish Council	Riseley Parish Council	



**BEDFORDSHIRE ASSOCIATION OF TOWN AND PARISH COUNCILS**

**INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT for the YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2020**

<u>2018-19</u>	INCOME	£
52,917	Affiliation Fees	54,755
59	Sales of NALC publications	199
5,130	Training Course Fees	9,860
80	LCAS Fees	-
-	Grants	-
400	Miscellaneous Income	300
214	Bank Interest	394
<u>58,800</u>		<u>65,508</u>
	<b>EXPENDITURE</b>	
17,033	Affiliation Fees - NALC	18,037
26,718	Salaries	27,945
5,986	Premises costs	5,979
280	Insurance	291
175	Purchase of NALC publications	611
1,147	Copying, Stationery & Computer costs	980
1,351	Postage Telephone & Website	1,826
789	Meetings & Conferences	876
590	Delivery of Training	571
443	Travelling Expenses	435
255	Staff Training	110
250	Audit Fee	250
170	Miscellaneous Expenditure	36
<u>55,187</u>		<u>57,946</u>
<u>3,613</u>	Surplus/(Deficit) for Year	<u>7,561</u>
<u>58,800</u>		<u>65,508</u>

**BALANCE SHEET as at 31st MARCH 2020**

30,000	Investment Account - NatWest		40,000
41,437	Business Reserve Account - NatWest		39,317
100	Petty Cash		100
<u>71,537</u>			<u>79,417</u>
1,671	Plus: Payments in Advance	2,017	Note 1
97	Debtors	114	Note 2
(287)	Less: Creditors	(291)	Note 3
<u>(11,676)</u>	Receipts in Advance	<u>(12,354)</u>	Note 4
<u>61,342</u>	Net Assets		<u>68,903</u>
	<b>Funded by:</b>		
54,526	General Fund	Balance at 31 March 2019	58,139
<u>3,613</u>		Surplus (Deficit) for Year	<u>7,561</u>
58,139		Balance at 31 March 2020	65,700
	<b>Designated Funds:</b>		
	Computer Replacement Fund 31/03/19	3,203	
	Transfer from Income & Expenditure	-	
<u>3,203</u>	Balance at 31 March 2020		<u>3,203</u>
<u>61,342</u>			<u>68,903</u>

I have examined the above Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended 31st March 2020 and the Balance Sheet as at that date, and confirm them to be in accordance with the books and records of the Association and, in my opinion, correct.

A D Walden, FCCA

7th JULY 2020

Note 1:	Payments in Advance comprise	
	Rent	1,050
	Oakmont Estates	330
	Insurance	341
	BNP Paribas	185
	Village Hall Hire	111
		<u>2,017</u>
Note 2:	Debtors	
	CCS Falcon	114
		<u>114</u>
Note 3:	Creditors	
	NEST	10
	James Todd	31
	Audit fee	250
		<u>291</u>
Note 4:	Receipts in Advance	
	Affiliation fees	11,174
	Training course fees	1,180
		<u>12,354</u>