



Public Document Pack

Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council

There will be a meeting of the Full Council on Tuesday, 30th April, 2024 to be held at Newton Leys Pavilion commencing at 7.30 pm to transact the items of business set out in the agenda below.

Delia Shephard

Delia Shephard
Clerk to the Council
Monday, 22 April 2024

AGENDA

1. To note councillors' apologies for absence
2. To note councillors' declarations of interest in matters on the agenda
(Under the Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012, made under s30 (3) of the Localism Act, councillors are required to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests which they may have in any of the items under consideration at this meeting)
3. To approve draft minutes of meeting Tuesday, 26 March 2024 of Full Council (Pages 1 - 6)
4. Public Speaking
To receive representations from members of the public on items on the agenda and to hear questions from members of the public about council business which may not be listed on the agenda.

Members of the public who wish to present a spoken or written representation should contact the Clerk no later than 12 noon on the day before the day of the meeting in order to register to be heard or to obtain a link to join the meeting remotely.

The public speaking session will generally last no more than 15 minutes and individuals will be permitted to speak for a maximum of 3 minutes.

Requests to speak or ask questions will be dealt with in the order in which they have been received by the Clerk.

For more information or to register to speak please contact:
Delia Shephard
Town Clerk
01908 649469
clerk@bletchleyfennystratford-tc.gov.uk

Please be aware that meetings may be recorded and live streamed including the representations made by members of the public.
Meetings may be viewed on the town council's YouTube channel at
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCuEj3-xDT_faeAxDSZ8sySg
5. To note the draft minutes of recent meetings of committees of the council and to consider any recommendations contained therein
 - (i) Minutes of meeting Tuesday, 16 April 2024 of Community Committee (Pages 7 - 8)
 - (ii) Minutes of meeting Tuesday, 23 April 2024 of Finance and Governance Committee (Pages 9 - 12)

Members of the public and representatives of the media are welcome to attend but are warned that items marked with an asterisk () may involve discussion of confidential information and the council may resolve to exclude members of the public and press if this is deemed to be in the public interest*

6. Financial matters
- (i) To note the final internal audit report for the financial year 2023-2024 as recommended by the Finance and Governance Committee on 23 April 2024 (Pages 13 - 20)
 - (ii) Changes to the Financial Regulations as recommended by the Finance and Governance Committee (Pages 21 - 40)
 - (iii) To approve the Annual Governance and Accountability return as recommended by the Finance and Governance Committee on 23 April 2024 (Pages 41 - 46)
 - (iv) To approve the town council's continued use of MKCC's framework offered by the Laser Energy Buying Group for supply of gas and electricity
 MKCC's contracts for the supply of gas and electricity end on 30th September 2024. Arrangements are in place for a renewal of the contracts using a framework offered by the Laser Energy Buying Group. Laser's procurement model has performed better than the market averages over the period and the existing suppliers have been successful in the tendering process for the next four years. The purchasing strategy on this contract is called purchase in advance (PIA), this approach offers access to flexible purchasing whilst also ensuring price certainty for each 12-month period.

 As on previous occasions the town council, which currently uses the framework contracts, must make a clear and explicit decision to remain on the framework contract. The RFO will sign the appropriate documentation on behalf of the town council if consent is given.
- 7. To approve the draft annual report of the town council for the year 2023-2024 and to note arrangements for the annual meeting of electors on Tuesday 14 May 2024 (To Be Tabled)
 - 8. To consider a request for feedback from MKCC on street names for planned new development in Newton Leys (Pages 47 - 48)
 - 9. To note that MKCC is currently considering an application to list Bletchley Working Mens Club as an asset of community value under powers conferred in the Localism Act 2011 (Pages 49 - 78)
 - 10. To receive a progress update on the Sycamore Buildings project and to review a separate community consultation report to determine whether the council has sufficient support to proceed with its plans (Pages 79 - 90)
 - 11. *To approve heads of terms for a 5 year lease of Albert Street Public Conveniences (Pages 91 - 94)
 - 12. To note the outcome of the town council nomination process for the 2024-2028 council term and the subsequent casual vacancies listed below, co-options for which would begin from the next full town council meeting on 7 May 2024
 - i Eaton North Ward (single vacancy)
 - ii Eaton South Ward (two vacancies)
 - iii Fenny Stratford Ward (single vacancy)
 - iv Manor South Ward (single vacancy)
 - v Newton Leys (single vacancy)
 - vi Queensway and Denbigh North (single vacancy)
 - 13. To discuss potential changes to the council's committee structure and scheme of delegations prior to the annual meeting of the council on 7 May 2024
 - 14. To receive reports and information as follows
 - i Neighbourhood Plan
 - ii Bletchley Town Deal

- iii Bletchley Pathfinder
- iv MKCC Parishes Forum

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Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council

Minutes of a meeting of the Full Council of Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council held at Community Hall - Newton Leys Pavilion on Tuesday, 26th March, 2024 commencing at 7.30 pm

Present: Cllrs E Kelly-Wilson, R Graham, S Browne, K Ely, Fernandes, R Haine, E Hume, I Hussein, E O'Rourke, U Osumili, A Segebrecht, T Stephens and M Wymer

Absent: Cllr L Campbell

Apologies: Cllrs G Bedford, J Joshi, A Khanom and A Palmer

In attendance: Cllr A Khanom (virtual attendance)
Delia Shephard (Town Clerk) and John Fairclough (Deputy Clerk)

Min Ref

- FC23/24-117 **Councillors' apologies for absence**
It was RESOLVED that the apologies for absence and the absences without apologies listed above be noted. It was RESOLVED that Cllr Palmer's apologies for absence be approved. It was noted that Cllr Khanom was in attendance at the meeting via a virtual link but had sent apologies as she would be unable to vote.
- FC23/24-118 **Councillors' declarations of interest in matters on the agenda**
Cllr Fernandes declared an interest in agenda item 8 the grant application from MK Goan Community of which she was a member and advised that she would withdraw for this item of business.
- FC23/24-119 **Approval of draft minutes of meeting Tuesday, 30 January 2024 of Full Council**
It was RESOLVED that the draft minutes of the meeting be approved as a correct record of proceedings.
- FC23/24-120 **Variation of order of business on the agenda**
It was RESOLVED that agenda item 8 concerning a grant application from the MK Goan Community be considered next.
(Cllr Fernandes left the room and did not participate in the next item of business.)
- FC23/24-121 **Community grant application from MK Goan Community**
Members of MK Goan Community made representations and answered members' questions in support of their application for a community grant in the sum of £1,500 as a contribution towards an Easter Event.

Following discussions it was RESOLVED that a sum of £1,000 be awarded towards the project.

(Cllr Fernandes returned to the meeting room having taken no part in the discussion or voting.)
- FC23/24-122 **Public Speaking**
There were no further representations from members of the public.



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- FC23/24-123 **Draft minutes of recent meetings of committees of the council and recommendations contained therein**
- FC23/24-123.i **Minutes of meeting Tuesday, 13 February 2024 of Community Committee**
It was RESOLVED that the draft minutes be noted.
- FC23/24-123.ii **Minutes of meeting Tuesday, 20 February 2024 of Employment Policy Committee**
It was RESOLVED that the draft minutes be noted.
- FC23/24-123.iii **Minutes of meeting Tuesday, 27 February 2024 of Finance and Governance Committee**
It was RESOLVED that the draft minutes be noted and the following recommendations were considered.
- i Minute reference FC23/24-105 Review of effectiveness of internal audit and controls 2023-2024.
- It was RESOLVED that the council's review of the effectiveness of the internal audit and controls 2024 be approved as recommended by the committee.
- ii Minute reference FC23/24-106 Review of financial risk assessment 2023-2024
- It was RESOLVED that the council's financial risk assessment for the year 2023-24 be approved as recommended by the committee.
- FC23/24-123.iv **Minutes of meeting Tuesday, 19 March 2024 of Environment and Planning Committee**
It was RESOLVED that the draft minutes of the meeting be noted and the following recommendation was considered.
- i Minute ref EPC23-24-7ii Opportunity to bid for landscaping services work within the Parish of Stoke Hammond.
- Following considered debate it was RESOLVED that the committee's recommendation to quote for grass cutting services to be delivered by the town council's landscaping team be approved.
- Cllr Segebrecht noted that he had been present and the meeting and the clerk advised that the draft would be amended before the next committee meeting.
- FC23/24-124 **To review and comment on planning applications due to be considered by Milton Keynes Council**
- FC23/24-124.i **24/00351/HOU 3 Taylor Close Eaton Leys Milton Keynes MK17 9GN**
It was RESOLVED that no comments be made on the proposed development.
- FC23/24-124.ii **24/00584/HOU - 55 Simpson Road, MK1 1BE**
It was RESOLVED that no comments be made on the proposed development.
- FC23/24-125 **Response to Regulation 14 consultation on Stoke Hammond Neighbourhood Plan in the town council's capacity as a statutory consultee**
Members discussed the Stoke Hammond Parish Council pre-submission draft plan which had been put out for public consultation.



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Members noted that the plan specified that most future development in Stoke Hammond parish would take place to the west of Newton Leys and there would be no road access for residents from Newton Leys. Discussion centred around the problems with developments on the border of different local authorities and the impact which development could have on sites within neighbouring local planning authorities. Several members opined that the plan did not place sufficient emphasis on improved connectivity and better transport links. There was further discussion about the importance of good design and the use of design codes whilst Cllr Hussein supported the policies on green space.

It was RESOLVED that the clerk be asked to prepare a response on behalf of the council based on the discussions at the meeting.

FC23/24-126 **Financial Reports**

FC23/24-126.i **Summary financial report showing income and expenditure against budget to date**

It was RESOLVED that the report be noted.

FC23/24-126.ii **Report showing projected year end results 2023-2024**

Members discussed the forecast outturn for the end of year which predicted an underspend of up to £100,000. The main reasons for the underspend were that increased in interest rates meant additional bank interest of £47,000 had been generated which had not been predicted at budget setting. Due to uncertainty with the lease of Albert Street public toilets expenditure on a refurbishment had been delayed but the £7,000 allocated for this in the budget would likely be spent during 2024-2025 as the need for the work remained. Finally expenditure on youth services and citizens advice services had been limited by lack of availability of suitable provision.

The clerk noted that any surplus in any revenue budget would be paid back into the general reserve once the year end procedures had been completed and the council would then be able to determine future allocation of this sum.

FC23/24-126.iii **List of payments made or due to be made by the council before the next meeting of the Finance & Governance Committee**

It was RESOLVED that the list of payments circulated with the agenda be ratified for payment.

FC23/24-127 **Sycamore Buildings Project**

FC23/24-127.i **Outcome of the town council's recent consultation on the Sycamore Buildings Project and next steps**

The clerk reported that the community consultation on the future redevelopment of Sycamore buildings had just closed on 24 March 2024. In summary 79.35% of respondents stated they were in favour of the town council's proposals and 20.65% of respondents stated they were opposed to them. On the matter of borrowing up to £750,000 from the public works loan board 74.19% supported the proposal to borrow whereas 25.81% opposed the potential borrowing.

The clerk noted that at the next council meeting a full survey report showing detail of reach and comments from respondents would be available. At this meeting the town council would be able to review the full report and consider passing a formal resolution to borrow.



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It was RESOLVED that the summary report be noted and the matter be considered at the next meeting on 30 April 2024.

- FC23/24-127.ii **Approval of spending on a specialist groundwork investigative report**
Following work undertaken by the town council's structural engineers the need for a specialist groundwork investigative report had been identified and the clerk had been unable to secure three quotes for this specialist work. The quotation included obtaining core samples to see whether the mezzanine floor in the barn was supporting the structure of that building.

Following discussion it was RESOLVED to approve the quotation provided by Paddock GeoEngineering Ltd and commission geotechnical works in the sum of £2,625 as expressed in the quotation.

- FC23/24-128 **Review of progress against the town council's delivery plan for 2023-4**
Members had been provided with an updated copy of the town council's delivery plan for 2023-2024 showing work accomplished for the year and providing information about projects not yet completed and those which it was proposed to carry forward into the delivery plan for the next financial year.

It was RESOLVED that the plan be noted.

- FC23/24-129 **Review of a draft template for the town council's strategic plan for 2024-2028**
The clerk tabled a draft outline for a new strategic plan for Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town council for the new term from May 2024 to 2028. Explanatory notes were also provided. It was noted that whilst the new plan could not be agreed until after the May elections work had begun on both the delivery plan for 2024 to 2025 and the new strategic plan. Members were asked to provide feedback to the clerk on the proposed outline and were advised that this matter would be revisited at the next meeting of full council on 30 April 2024.

- FC23/24-130 **Report on progress with the Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Neighbourhood Plan**
The Chair of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering group gave an oral report on progress with the Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Neighbourhood Plan (NP) in support of a written document which had previously been circulated to councillors and members of the public involved in preparation of the plan.

In summary, following the outcome of public consultations in January 2024 the steering group had concluded that the timetable for production of the plan should be delayed. There were several reasons for this. The group recognised the complexity of the policy context and residents' lack of clarity about potential developments within the town and felt further public consultation was needed. It had also recognised the need to synchronise the NP development with progress on the New City Plan which the LPA was bringing forward and to link with public consultations on Town Deal projects which were to take place after the May elections. It was planned to continue with public consultation on potential policies with the NP as well as waiting for additional evidence from the Housing Needs Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment which were currently being prepared. A site visit from representative of AECOM was to be arranged during April to progress work on development of design codes. It was now hoped that a pre-submission plan would be ready for public consultation in the autumn of 2024.

It was RESOLVED that the progress report be noted.



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The meeting closed at 9.04 pm

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Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council

Minutes of a meeting of the Community Committee of Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council held at Community Hall - Newton Leys Pavilion on Tuesday, 16th April, 2024 commencing at 7.30 pm

Present: Cllrs T Stephens, M Wymer, S Browne, R Graham and Fernandes

Absent: Cllrs L Campbell and A Khanom

Apologies: Cllrs E Kelly-Wilson and A Palmer

In attendance: John Fairclough (Support Services Manager) (Clerk)

In Attendance virtually: Davina Pancholi (Community Events and Support Services Officer)

Min Ref

- CC24/25-1 **To note councillors' apologies for absence**
It was RESOLVED to note the apologies as listed above
- CC24/25-2 **To note councillors' declarations of interest in matters on the agenda**
Cllr Stephens drew attention to item 6.ii and explained he potentially had an interest in the East West Rail Project as was an employee of Network Rail and agreed to not participate in the discussion.
- CC24/25-3 **To approve the draft minutes of the previous meetings of the committee**
It was RESOLVED that the draft minutes of the last meeting be approved as a correct record of proceedings
- CC24/25-4 **Public Speaking Time**
- CC24/25-5 **Community Grant Applications**
- CC24/25-5i **To consider a grant application from the Fenny Poppers Festival in the sum of £7,000**
It was RESOLVED to award an amended sum of £6000 to the Fenny Poppers Festival.
- CC24/25-5ii **To consider a grant application from the Inland Waterways Association in the sum of £494.00**
It was RESOLVED to award the full sum of £494 to the Inland Waterways Association to help host the canalside festival.
- CC24/25-6 **To consider any planning applications due for determination by Milton Keynes Council**
- CC24/25-6i **24/00592/FUL 108 Queensway Bletchley Milton Keynes MK2 2RU**
It was RESOLVED that no comment be made on the proposed application.
- CC24/25-6ii **24/00677/CONINF Woburn Sands Associated With The Route Corridor of The East West Rail Project**



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It was RESOLVED that no comment be made on the proposed application.

CC24/25-6iii **23/01135/FUL - Travis Perkins 64-66 And 70 Simpson Road Bletchley Milton Keynes MK1 1BA**

It was RESOLVED that no comment be made on the proposed application.

CC24/25-7 **To review a proposal to establish a Repair Cafe in Bletchley and Fenny Stratford**
It was RESOLVED to provide support to the repair café by publicising the project and help to attract volunteers but the town council would not be in a position to provide a member of staff to act as the coordinator and run these sessions.

CC24/25-8 **To receive a report on the community Iftar and Easter event**
The officer responsible for community events and support services provided an update regarding the community events that have taken place. The community Iftar was considered a success with excellent feedback and learnings to take on board if the event was to be repeated.

The Easter event on Queensway was also well attended by the community with good feedback from local residents.

CC24/25-9 **To receive a report on the recent winter warm spaces programme**
The warm space programme report was noted and a special thanks was made to Cllr Wymer for the time and effort given to ensure the success of the events planned.

CC24/25-10 **To consider extending the services provided by MK Money Lifeline**
It was RESOLVED to extend the MK Money Lifeline services for a further three months and then reviewed thereafter.

CC24/25-11 **To note a report showing income and expenditure against budget which falls within the remit of the committee**
It was RESOLVED to note the report showing income and expenditure against budget.

The meeting closed 8.22pm



Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council

Minutes of a meeting of the Finance and Governance Committee of Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council held at Community Hall - Newton Leys Pavilion on Tuesday, 23rd April, 2024 commencing at 7.30 pm

Present: Cllrs S Browne, R Graham, R Haine, E Kelly-Wilson and O Fernandes

Absent: Cllr J Joshi

Apologies: Cllrs K Ely, E O'Rourke and U Osumili

In attendance: Alison Brown (Finance Manager acting as clerk to the committee) and Delia Shephard (Town Clerk)

Min Ref

- FC24/25-1 **To note apologies for absence**
It was RESOLVED to note the apologies listed above and to approve the apologies for absence from Cllr Palmer.
- FC24/25-2 **To note councillors' declarations of interest in matters on the agenda**
There were no declarations of interest.
- FC24/25-3 **To approve the draft minutes of the previous meeting of the committee**
It as RESOLVED that the draft minutes of the previous meeting on 27 February 2024 be approved as a correct record.
- FC24/25-4 **Public Speaking Time**
There were no representations from members of the public.
- FC24/25-5 **To review and comment on any planning applications due for review by Milton Keynes City Council**
- FC24/25-5i **24/00604/HOU 60 Baccara Grove Bletchley Milton Keynes MK2 3AT**
It was RESOLVED to make no comments on the planning application.
- FC24/25-5ii **24/00693/HOU 42 Saffron Street Bletchley Milton Keynes MK2 3AH**
It was RESOLVED to make no comments on the planning application.
- FC24/25-5iii **24/00738/HOU 18 Manor Road Bletchley Milton Keynes MK2 2HW**
It was RESOLVED to make no comments on the planning application.
- FC24/25-5iv **24/00384/FUL 53 Osborne Street Bletchley Milton Keynes MK2 2LR**
The Town Council RESOLVED to object to the planning application on the basis that that it results in the loss of a parking space in an area where there is high demand for on-street parking.
- FC24/25-6 **To review and note a financial management information report showing income and expenditure against budget for the year to 31 March 2024**
The RFO stated that the income and expenditure to 31 March 2024 resulted in an underspend of £85,733. The main reasons for the underspend were that:
- i additional revenue from bank interest had been received; during the original budget preparation, it was not anticipated that interest rates would increase to



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- the current level
- ii the budgets on youth work activities had been underspent as the council was not able to procure the required service provision.

It was RESOLVED that the report be noted.

FC24/25-7

To review and note cash and investment reconciliations to 31 March 2024

The RFO stated that bank statements were now being authorised by a member of the committee on a monthly basis.

It was RESOLVED that the cash and investment reconciliations be noted.

FC24/25-8

To review and note the council's balance sheet as at 31 March 2024

It was RESOLVED that the balance sheet as at 31 March 2024 be noted.

It was RESOLVED that the list of individual transactions over £500 for the period be noted.

FC24/25-9

To ratify a list of payments made or due to be made to 30 April 2024

It was RESOLVED that the list of payments made or due to be made, which had been published with the agenda, be ratified.

FC24/25-10

To review the financial regulations and scheme of delegation

The RFO stated that minor amendments to the Financial Regulations 2024 were proposed because of increases in the procurement thresholds, as determined by the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. A draft document showing the proposed changes had been circulated before the meeting. (A review of the scheme of delegation was withdrawn from consideration at this meeting and would be reviewed at full council on 30 April 2024.)

It was RESOLVED to recommend to full council that the draft Financial Regulations 2024 be formally approved on 30 April 2024.

FC24/25-11

To approve the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2023/24

The Finance Manager introduced the council's completed Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for the financial year 2023-2024 which included page 3 completed by the town council's internal auditor. Discussion followed on page 4 Section 1 the Annual Governance Statement which all members of the council would need to approve.

It was RESOLVED to recommend to full council that the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2023/24 be formally approved at Full Council on 30 April 2024.

FC24/25-12

To review the final internal audit report for 2023/24

The final written internal audit report for the year 2023-2024 had been circulated to members of the committee in advance and no matters were brought to the attention of the council in the audit report.



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It was RESOLVED to recommend to full council that the final Internal Audit Report be formally approved on 30 April 2024 alongside the AGAR.

FC24/25-13

Future of Albert Street Public Conveniences

The clerk gave an oral report reminding members that the council had previously considered a range of options for the future of the public toilets. The building was currently occupied under a tenancy at will from MKCC. The site was one which might be considered for further development as the Town Deal and other developments progressed in the next few years.

A public consultation in 2021 yielded a high response rate and an overwhelming desire from the community to keep the toilets open and free at the time of use. At that time the TC agreed to keep the toilets open until the end of the council's term and to consider ways to improve the facilities. Research had since made it clear that a "light" refurbishment would not easily achieve a significant improvement to the facilities. Therefore a larger refresh has been researched and indicative quotes had been obtained. A project cost of £30K upwards was anticipated which would necessitate a formal tendering arrangement. (A draft tender specification for the project had been included with the meeting pack.)

Following negotiations with MKCC for a short-term lease, heads of terms had been provided to the clerk and these were discussed by the committee at some length.

It was RESOLVED to ask the clerk to approach MKCC to request the following amendments:

- i that the schedule of repayment of investment monies should be on a straight-line basis ie Year 3-60%, Year 4-40% and Year 5-20%
- ii that regular trading hours should also include Sundays.

Members reviewed the draft specification of the refurbishment of Albert Street Toilets and requested that a refurbishment of the disabled toilet should be included in the document.

Members agreed that the likelihood of the lease ending within two years was small and that the toilets should be refurbished until new facilities including a changing places toilet could be provided within the town centre.

It was RESOLVED to recommend to full council that half of the underspend for the financial year 2023-2024 be set aside to go towards this project when the year end adjustment to reserves were approved.

The meeting closed at 8.02 pm

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Bletchley & Fenny Stratford Town Council

Internal Audit Report 2023-24: Final

Adrian Shepherd-Roberts

*For and on behalf of
Auditing Solutions Ltd*

Background

All town and parish councils are required by statute to make arrangements for an independent internal audit examination of their accounting records and system of internal control and for the conclusions to be reported each year in the Annual Return. Auditing Solutions Ltd has provided this service to Bletchley & Fenny Stratford Town Council since 2013.

This report sets out the work undertaken in relation to the 2023-24 financial year which were completed by the 11th October 2023 and 17th April 2024. We have again undertaken our final review for the year remotely: we wish to thank the Clerk and the Finance Officer in assisting the process, providing all necessary documentation in electronic format to facilitate completion of our reviews for the year. We have examined various aspects of the Council management and administration and a sample of payments ensuring governance and financial controls remain effective.

Internal Audit Approach

In undertaking our reviews for the financial year, we have had regard to the materiality of transactions and their susceptibility to potential mis-recording or misrepresentation in the year-end Statement of Accounts/Annual Return. We have employed a combination of selective sampling techniques (where appropriate) and 100% detailed checks in a number of key areas in order to gain sufficient assurance that the Council's financial and regulatory systems and controls are appropriate and fit for the purposes intended.

Our programme of cover has been designed to afford appropriate assurance that the Council's financial systems are robust and operate in a manner to ensure effective probity of transactions and to afford a reasonable probability of identifying any material errors or possible abuse of the Council's own and the national statutory regulatory framework. The programme is also designed to facilitate our completion of the 'Annual Internal Audit Report' in the Council's Annual Return, which requires independent assurance over a number of internal control objectives.

Overall Conclusion

No significant issues have been identified during the course of the reviews and we are able to conclude that, in the areas examined, effective systems of financial control continue to operate and help to ensure that transactions and have been reflected accurately in the year-end Annual Governance and Accountability Return for 2023-24.

We ask that members consider the content of this report and acknowledge that the report has been reviewed by Council.

We have completed and signed the 'Annual Internal Audit Report' in the year's Annual Governance and Accountability Return, having concluded that, in all significant respects, the control objectives set out in that report were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of the Council.

Detailed Report

Review of Accounting Arrangements & Bank Reconciliations

Our objective here is to ensure that the accounting records are being maintained accurately and currently and that no anomalous entries appear in cashbooks or financial ledgers. To that end, we have: -

- Checked and agreed the opening Trial Balance for 2023-24 to the closing Financial Statements for 2022-23 to ensure that all the detailed balances have been accurately rolled forward;
- Ensured that the coding structure is appropriate for purpose and provides appropriate detail to assist in the preparation of the Council's year-end Annual Return;
- Checked and agreed transactions in the Council's Unity Bank Current and Deposit account cashbooks to the relevant bank statements for April and September 2023 and March 2024;
- Checked and agreed all transactions, comprising inter account transfers and other sundry receipts and payments on the Unity Trust bank account cashbooks against the relevant bank statements for the year; and
- Checked detail on the bank reconciliations and nominal ledgers for the Current & Deposit accounts as at April and September 2023 and March 2024 to ensure that no long-standing uncleared cheques or other anomalous entries exist.

Conclusions

We are pleased to report that no significant issues have been identified in this area.

Review of Corporate Governance

Our objective here is to ensure that the Council has robust corporate governance documentation and processes in place; that Council and Committee (where appropriate) meetings are conducted in accordance with the adopted Standing Orders and that, as far as we are able to ascertain, no actions of a potentially unlawful nature have been or are being considered for implementation. We have: -

- Noted that the Standing Orders and Finance Regulations were reviewed and re-adopted by the Council in May 2023; and
- Examined the Council's minutes for the current year to determine whether or not any issues exist that may have an adverse effect, through litigation or other causes, on the Council's future financial stability.

Conclusions

We are pleased to report that no significant issues have been identified in this area

Review of Expenditure

Our aim here is to ensure that: -

- Council resources are released in accordance with the Council's approved procedures and budgets;
- Payments are supported by appropriate documentation, either in the form of an original trade invoice or other appropriate form of document confirming the payment as due and/or an acknowledgement of receipt, where no other form of invoice is available;
- All discounts due on goods and services supplied are identified and appropriate action taken to secure the discount;
- The correct expense codes have been applied to invoices when processed;
- All payments have been reported to Council; and
- VAT has been appropriately identified and continues to be reclaimed quarterly.

We have selected a sample of payments for examination to ensure compliance with the above criteria from the Current Account cashbook transactions, excluding salary related payments, irrespective of value processed in the year to March 2024.

We are pleased to note that members are provided routinely with and approve a schedule of payments, including detail of petrol card purchases and Direct Debits, together with monthly bank reconciliation detail, also that the Council's signatories sign the schedule of payments as confirmation that they have reviewed and agreed the content to the supporting invoices.

Finally, in this area, we have examined the content of the VAT reclaims submitted to HMRC for the year to March 2024, agreeing the returns to the underlying control account detail and the sample invoices that we have reviewed.

Conclusions

We are pleased to record that no significant issues have been identified in this area of review.

Assessment and Management of Risk

Our aim here is to ensure that the Council has put in place appropriate arrangements to identify all potential areas of risk of both a financial and health and safety nature, whilst also ensuring that appropriate arrangements exist to monitor and manage those risks identified in order to minimise the opportunity for their coming to fruition.

- We note that the Financial Risk Assessment programme was reviewed and adopted by the Council for 2023-2024;
- We also note that the Council has contracted with Ellis Whittam as a provider for both Health & Safety and Human Resources support.; and

- We have examined the current year's insurance with the Zurich noting that Employer's and Public Liability cover are each in place at £10 million, with Fidelity Guarantee cover at £2 million.

Conclusions

No issues have arisen in this area warranting formal comment or recommendation currently with appropriate insurance cover in place.

Precept Determination and Budget Control

We aim in this area of our work to ensure that the Council has appropriate procedures in place to determine its future financial requirements leading to the adoption of an approved budget and formal determination of the amount to be precepted on Milton Keynes Council, that effective arrangements are in place to monitor budgetary performance throughout the financial year and that the Council has identified and retains appropriate reserve funds to meet future spending plans.

We note that the Council, at its 30th January 2024 meeting, approved a precept of £1,234,426-74.

We are also pleased to note that members continue to receive regular budget monitoring reports with over/under-spends and the level of earmarked reserves the subject of regular review.

Conclusions

No issues have been identified in this area warranting formal comment or recommendation.

Review of Income

In considering the Council's income streams, we aim to ensure that robust systems are in place to ensure the identification of all income due to the Council from its various sources, to ensure that the income is invoiced in a timely manner and that effective procedures are in place to pursue recovery of any outstanding monies due to the Council. We have;

- At the interim review, we reviewed the cash book and nominal ledgers entries in respect of the market;
- Reviewed the collection of rentals, the management controls and the subsequent banking of fees;
- We have also completed a sample review of the invoicing of the market stall holders, the Fenny Stratford Community Centre and the Newton Leys Pavilion together with the sales receipts ledger; and
- Also noted that members had previously reviewed the fees and the method of calculation for the Halls and market for 2023-24.

Conclusions

There are no issues arising from our examination of the operational controls and reviews undertaken in this area.

Petty Cash Account

We note that the Council continues to operate a limited petty cash account in the administration office and at Spotlight.

We note that a payment card is now being used and we have completed a sample check of the cash book entries. We have also checked a sample of the petrol card payment through the cashbook.

We have not physically checked the cash but have reviewed the holding from the information that we have been provided and we consider that it continues to operate effectively. As we are working remotely, we suggest that where possible an independent check is undertaken to confirm that the cash has been checked and the account balances. This should be minuted accordingly.

Conclusions

No matters arise in this area warranting formal comment or recommendation.

Salaries and Wages

In examining the Council's payroll function, we aim to confirm that extant legislation is being appropriately observed as regards adherence to the Employee Rights Act 1998 and the requirements of HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) legislation as regards the deduction and payment over of income tax and NI contributions, together with meeting the requirements of the local government pension scheme, as further revised from 1st April 2021 in relation to employee percentage bandings; we have

- Ensured that the Council reviews and approves pay scales for staff as appropriate;
- Agreed the gross salary payment to each individual on the payroll as compiled by Payroll Options for September 2023 by reference to the Council's approved pay scales. Also verifying that the net payments corresponded to the salary return settlement statement for the month; and
- Checked to ensure that the correct Tax codes, National Insurance tables and LGPS salary banding pension rates have been accurately applied and that the deductions arising therefrom have been paid over to the respective agencies in a timely manner.

Conclusions

No significant matters arise warranting formal comment or recommendation.

Fixed Asset Registers

The Governance and Accountability Manual requires all councils to maintain a record of all assets owned. We have checked and agreed the principles used in the detail, as recorded in the Council's Asset Register, noting that it has been prepared using purchase cost values or where that value is unknown at the previous year's Return level or uplifted or decreased to reflect the acquisition or disposal of assets.

Conclusion

No issues require formal comment or recommendation.

Investments and Loans

The Council has no investments requiring separate disclosure, any "surplus" funds being held are deposit accounts with Unity Trust Bank: we have, as noted above, verified detail of transactions for the year to date from bank statements to the cash books. We have also reviewed the deposit held with the CCLA.

The Council has no loans in place, either repayable by or to it.

Conclusions

No matters arise in this area of our review for the year. We will undertake further work at our final review.

Annual Governance and Accountability Return

The Accounts and Audit Regulations required that all Councils prepare a detailed Statement of Accounts, together with supporting statements identifying other aspects of the Council's financial affairs.

We have examined the Council's procedures in relation to the preparation of the year-end detailed Annual Governance and Accountability Return data, also reviewing the arrangements for the identification of year-end debtors and creditors with no issues arising.

Conclusions

No issues have arisen in this review area and, on the basis of work undertaken during the year, we have duly signed off the Internal Audit Report of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, assigning positive assurances in each relevant area.

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BLETCHLEY & FENNY STRATFORD TOWN COUNCIL

FINANCIAL REGULATIONS 2024

Adopted

Review date: Annual Meeting of Council May 2025

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1. GENERAL

- 1.1. These financial regulations govern the conduct of financial management by the council and may only be amended or varied by resolution of the council. Financial regulations are one of the council's three governing policy documents providing procedural guidance for members and officers. Financial regulations must be observed in conjunction with the council's standing orders¹ and any individual financial regulations relating to contracts.
- 1.2. The council is responsible in law for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that the council has a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of the council's functions, including arrangements for the management of risk.
- 1.3. The council's accounting control systems must include measures:
 - for the timely production of accounts;
 - that provide for the safe and efficient safeguarding of public money;
 - to prevent and detect inaccuracy and fraud; and
 - identifying the duties of officers.
- 1.4. These financial regulations demonstrate how the council meets these responsibilities and requirements.
- 1.5. At least once a year, prior to approving the Annual Governance Statement, the council must review the effectiveness of its system of internal control which shall be in accordance with proper practices.
- 1.6. Deliberate or wilful breach of these Regulations by an employee may give rise to disciplinary proceedings.
- 1.7. Members of Council are expected to follow the instructions within these Regulations and not to entice employees to breach them. Failure to follow instructions within these Regulations brings the office of councillor into disrepute.
- 1.8. The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) holds a statutory office to be appointed by the council. The Finance Manager has been appointed as RFO for this council and these regulations will apply accordingly.
- 1.9. The RFO;
 - acts under the policy direction of the council;
 - administers the council's financial affairs in accordance with all Acts, Regulations and proper practices;

¹ Standing Orders for Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council 2024 are contained in a separate document available on our website

- determines on behalf of the council its accounting records and accounting control systems;
 - ensures the accounting control systems are observed;
 - maintains the accounting records of the council up to date in accordance with proper practices;
 - assists the council to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of its resources; and
 - produces financial management information as required by the council.
- 1.10. The accounting records determined by the RFO shall be sufficient to show and explain the council's transactions and to enable the RFO to ensure that any income and expenditure account and statement of balances, or record of receipts and payments and additional information, as the case may be, or management information prepared for the council from time to time comply with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 1.11. The accounting records determined by the RFO shall in particular contain:
- entries from day to day of all sums of money received and expended by the council and the matters to which the income and expenditure or receipts and payments account relate;
 - a record of the assets and liabilities of the council; and
 - wherever relevant, a record of the council's income and expenditure in relation to claims made, or to be made, for any contribution, grant or subsidy.
- 1.12. The accounting control systems determined by the RFO shall include:
- procedures to ensure that the financial transactions of the council are recorded as soon as reasonably practicable and as accurately and reasonably as possible;
 - procedures to enable the prevention and detection of inaccuracies and fraud and the ability to reconstruct any lost records;
 - identification of the duties of officers dealing with financial transactions and division of responsibilities of those officers in relation to significant transactions;
 - procedures to ensure that uncollectable amounts, including any bad debts are not submitted to the council for approval to be written off except with the approval of the RFO and that the approvals are shown in the accounting records; and
 - measures to ensure that risk is properly managed.
- 1.13. The council is not empowered by these Regulations or otherwise to delegate certain specified decisions. In particular any decision regarding:

- setting the final budget or the precept (council tax requirement);
- approving accounting statements;
- approving an annual governance statement;
- borrowing;
- writing off bad debts;
- declaring eligibility for the General Power of Competence; and
- addressing recommendations in any report from the internal or external auditors,

shall be a matter for the full council only.

1.14. In addition the council must:

- determine and keep under regular review the bank mandate for all council bank accounts;
- approve any grant or a single commitment in excess of £5,000; and
- in respect of the annual salary for any employee have regard to recommendations about annual salaries of employees made by the relevant committee in accordance with its terms of reference. In other words salaries of employees may be delegated to a nominated committee.

1.15. In these financial regulations, references to the Accounts and Audit Regulations or 'the regulations' shall mean the regulations issued under the provisions of section 27 of the Audit Commission Act 1998, or any superseding legislation, and then in force unless otherwise specified.

In these financial regulations the term 'proper practice' or 'proper practices' shall refer to guidance issued in *Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England A Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices to be applied to the preparation of statutory annual accounts and governance statements* issued by the Joint Practitioners Advisory Group (JPAG), available from the websites of NALC and the Society for Local Council Clerks (SLCC).

2. ACCOUNTING AND AUDIT (INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL)

- 2.1. All accounting procedures and financial records of the council shall be determined by the RFO in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations, appropriate guidance and proper practices.
- 2.2. On a regular basis, at least once in each quarter, and at each financial year end, a member other than the Chairman shall be appointed to verify bank reconciliations (for all accounts) produced by the RFO. The member shall sign the reconciliations and the original bank statements (or similar document) as evidence of verification. This activity shall on conclusion be reported, including any exceptions, to and noted by the Finance Committee.
- 2.3. The RFO shall complete the annual statement of accounts, annual report, and any related documents of the council contained in the Annual Return (as specified in proper practices) as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year and having certified the accounts shall submit them and report thereon to the council within the timescales set by the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 2.4. The council shall ensure that there is an adequate and effective system of internal audit of its accounting records, and of its system of internal control in accordance with proper practices. Any officer or member of the council shall make available such documents and records as appear to the council to be necessary for the purpose of the audit and shall, as directed by the council, supply the RFO, internal auditor, or external auditor with such information and explanation as the council considers necessary for that purpose.
- 2.5. The internal auditor shall be appointed by and shall carry out the work in relation to internal controls required by the council in accordance with proper practices.
- 2.6. The internal auditor shall:
 - be competent and independent of the financial operations of the council;
 - report to council in writing, or in person, on a regular basis with a minimum of one annual written report during each financial year;
 - to demonstrate competence, objectivity and independence, be free from any actual or perceived conflicts of interest, including those arising from family relationships; and
 - have no involvement in the financial decision making, management or control of the council.
- 2.7. Internal or external auditors may not under any circumstances:
 - perform any operational duties for the council;
 - initiate or approve accounting transactions; or

- direct the activities of any council employee, except to the extent those such employees have been appropriately assigned to assist the internal auditor.
- 2.8. For the avoidance of doubt, in relation to internal audit the terms 'independent' and 'independence' shall have the same meaning as is described in proper practices.
 - 2.9. The RFO shall make arrangements for the exercise of electors' rights in relation to the accounts including the opportunity to inspect the accounts, books, and vouchers and display or publish any notices and statements of account required by Audit Commission Act 1998, or any superseding legislation, and the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
 - 2.10. The RFO shall, without undue delay, bring to the attention of all councillors any correspondence or report from internal or external auditors unless this correspondence is purely an administrative matter (eg confirms receipt of information).

3. ANNUAL ESTIMATES (BUDGET) AND FORWARD PLANNING

- 3.1. Each committee (if any) shall review its three year forecast of revenue and capital receipts and payments. Having regard to the forecast, it shall thereafter formulate and submit proposals for the following financial year to the finance committee not later than the end of November each year including any proposals for revising the forecast.
- 3.2. The RFO must each year, by no later than January, prepare detailed estimates of all receipts and payments including the use of reserves and all sources of funding for the following financial year in the form of a budget to be considered by the relevant committees and the council.
- 3.3. The council shall consider annual budget proposals in relation to the council's three year forecast of revenue and capital receipts and payments including recommendations for the use of reserves and sources of funding and update the forecast accordingly.
- 3.4. The council shall fix the precept (council tax requirement), and relevant basic amount of council tax to be levied for the ensuing financial year not later than by the end of January each year. The RFO shall issue the precept to the billing authority and shall supply each member with a copy of the approved annual budget.
- 3.5. The approved annual budget shall form the basis of financial control for the ensuing year.

4. BUDGETARY CONTROL AND AUTHORITY TO SPEND

- 4.1. Expenditure on revenue items may be authorised up to the amounts included for that class of expenditure in the approved budget. This authority is to be determined by:
- the council for all items over £20,000;
 - a duly delegated committee of the council for items over £3,000; or
 - the Clerk, for any items below £3,000 for routine expenditure (and £5,000 for emergency expenditure see below).

Such authority is to be evidenced by a minute or by an authorisation slip duly signed by the Clerk, and where necessary also by the appropriate Chairman.

Contracts may not be disaggregated to avoid controls imposed by these regulations.

- 4.2. No expenditure may be authorised that will exceed the amount provided in the revenue budget for that class of expenditure other than by resolution of the council, or duly delegated committee. During the budget year and with the approval of council having considered fully the implications for public services, unspent and available amounts may be moved to other budget headings or to an earmarked reserve as appropriate ('virement'). The Clerk is authorised to vire monies within budgets to a maximum of £2,000.
- 4.3. Unspent provisions in the revenue or capital budgets for completed projects shall not be carried forward to a subsequent year.
- 4.4. The salary budgets are to be reviewed at least annually in December for the following financial year and such review shall be evidenced by a hard copy schedule signed by the Clerk and the Chairman of Council or relevant committee. The RFO will inform committees of any changes impacting on their budget requirement for the coming year in good time.
- 4.5. In cases of extreme risk to the delivery of council services, the clerk may authorise revenue expenditure on behalf of the council which in the clerk's judgement it is necessary to carry out. Such expenditure includes repair, replacement or other work, whether or not there is any budgetary provision for the expenditure, subject to a limit of £5,000. The Clerk shall report such action to the chairman as soon as possible and to the council as soon as practicable thereafter.
- 4.6. No expenditure shall be authorised in relation to any capital project and no contract entered into or tender accepted involving capital expenditure unless the council is satisfied that the necessary funds are available and the requisite borrowing approval has been obtained.
- 4.7. All capital works shall be administered in accordance with the council's standing orders and financial regulations relating to contracts.

- 4.8. The RFO shall regularly provide the council with a statement of receipts and payments to date under each head of the budgets, comparing actual expenditure to the appropriate date against that planned as shown in the budget. These statements are to be prepared at least at the end of each financial quarter and shall show explanations of material variances. For this purpose "material" shall be in excess of 15% of the budget.
- 4.9. Changes in earmarked reserves shall be approved by council as part of the budgetary control process.

5. BANKING ARRANGEMENTS AND AUTHORISATION OF PAYMENTS

- 5.1. The council's banking arrangements, including the bank mandate, shall be made by the RFO and approved by the council; banking arrangements may not be delegated to a committee. They shall be regularly reviewed for safety and efficiency.
- 5.2. The RFO shall prepare a schedule of payments requiring authorisation, forming part of the Agenda for the Meeting and, together with the relevant invoices, present the schedule to the finance committee. The finance committee shall review the schedule for compliance and, having satisfied itself shall authorise payment by a resolution of the committee. The approved schedule shall be ruled off and initialled by the Chairman of the Meeting. A detailed list of all payments shall be disclosed within or as an attachment to the minutes of the meeting at which payment was authorised. Personal payments (including salaries, wages, expenses and any payment made in relation to the termination of a contract of employment) may be summarised to remove public access to any personal information.
- 5.3. All invoices for payment shall be examined, verified and certified by the RFO to confirm that the work, goods or services to which each invoice relates has been received, carried out, examined and represents expenditure previously approved by the council.
- 5.4. The RFO shall examine invoices for arithmetical accuracy and analyse them to the appropriate expenditure heading. The RFO shall take all steps to pay all invoices submitted, and which are in order, at the next available Finance Committee meeting.
- 5.5. The Clerk shall have delegated authority to authorise the payment of items only in the following circumstances:
 - a) If a payment is necessary to avoid a charge to interest under the Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1998, and the due date for payment is before the next scheduled Meeting of council, where the Clerk /RFO certifies that there is no dispute or other reason to delay payment, provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of the finance committee;

- b) An expenditure item authorised under 5.6 below (continuing contracts and obligations) provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of council [or finance committee]; or
 - c) fund transfers within the councils banking arrangements up to the sum of £50,000, provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of the finance committee.
- 5.6. For each financial year the Clerk and RFO shall draw up a list of due payments which arise on a regular basis as the result of a continuing contract, statutory duty, or obligation (such as but not exclusively) Salaries, PAYE and NI, Superannuation Fund and regular maintenance contracts and the like for which council ,or a duly authorised committee, may authorise payment for the year provided that the requirements of regulation 4.1 (Budgetary Controls) are adhered to, provided also that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of the Finance Committee.
- 5.7. A record of regular payments made under 5.6 above shall be drawn up and be signed by two members on each and every occasion when payment is authorised - thus controlling the risk of duplicated payments being authorised and / or made.
- 5.8. In respect of grants a duly authorised committee shall approve expenditure within any limits set by council and in accordance with any policy statement approved by council.
- 5.9. Members are subject to the Code of Conduct that has been adopted by the council and shall comply with the Code and Standing Orders when a decision to authorise or instruct payment is made in respect of a matter in which they have a disclosable pecuniary or other interest, unless a dispensation has been granted.
- 5.10. The council will aim to rotate the duties of members in these Regulations so that onerous duties are shared out as evenly as possible over time.
- 5.11. Any changes in the recorded details of suppliers, such as bank account records, shall be approved in writing by a Member.

6. INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE MAKING OF PAYMENTS

- 6.1. The council will make safe and efficient arrangements for the making of its payments.
- 6.2. Following authorisation under Financial Regulation 5 above, the council, a duly delegated committee or, if so delegated, the Clerk /RFO shall give instruction that a payment shall be made.
- 6.3. All payments shall be effected by internet bank transfer or other instructions to the council's bankers, or otherwise, in accordance with a resolution of council or a duly delegated committee. Evidence should be retained showing which members approved the payment. A member who is a bank signatory, having a connection by virtue of

family or business relationships with the beneficiary of a payment, should not, under normal circumstances, be a signatory to the payment in question.

- 6.4. Cheques or orders for payment drawn on the bank account in accordance with the schedule as presented to council or committee shall be signed by two member[s] of council in accordance with a resolution instructing that payment. A member who is a bank signatory, having a connection by virtue of family or business relationships with the beneficiary of a payment, should not, under normal circumstances, be a signatory to the payment in question.
- 6.5. To indicate agreement of the details shown on the cheque or order for payment with the counterfoil and the invoice or similar documentation, the signatories shall each also initial the cheque counterfoil if relevant.
- 6.6. If thought appropriate by the council, payment for utility supplies (energy, telephone and water) and any National Non-Domestic Rates may be made by variable direct debit provided that the instructions are signed by two members and any payments are reported to council as made. The approval of the use of a variable direct debit shall be renewed by resolution of the council at least every two years.
- 6.7. If thought appropriate by the council, payment for certain items may be made by BACS or CHAPS methods provided that the instructions are signed, or otherwise evidenced by two members are retained and any payments are reported to council as made. If thought appropriate by the council, payment for certain items may be made by BACS or CHAPS methods provided that the instructions for each payment are signed, or otherwise evidenced, by two authorised bank signatories, are retained and any payments are reported to council as made. The approval of the use of BACS or CHAPS shall be renewed by resolution of the council at least every two years.
- 6.8. No employee or councillor shall disclose any PIN or password, relevant to the working of the council or its bank accounts, to any person not authorised in writing by the council or a duly delegated committee.
- 6.9. Regular back-up copies of the records on any computer shall be made and shall be stored securely away from the computer in question, and preferably off site.
- 6.10. The council, and any members using computers for the council's financial business, shall ensure that anti-virus, anti-spyware and firewall software with automatic updates, together with a high level of security, is used.
- 6.11. Where internet banking arrangements are made with any bank, the Clerk shall be appointed as the Service Administrator. The bank mandate approved by the council shall identify a number of councillors who will be authorised to approve transactions on those accounts. The bank mandate will state clearly the amounts of payments that can be instructed by the use of the Service Administrator alone, or by the Service Administrator with a stated number of approvals.

- 6.12. Access to any internet banking accounts will be directly to the access page (which may be saved under “favourites”), and not through a search engine or e-mail link. Remembered or saved passwords facilities must not be used on any computer used for council banking work. Breach of this Regulation will be treated as a very serious matter under these regulations.
- 6.13. Changes to account details for suppliers, which are used for internet banking may only be changed on written hard copy notification by the supplier and supported by hard copy authority for change signed by the Clerk and a Member. A programme of regular checks of standing data with suppliers will be followed.
- 6.14. Any Debit Card issued for use will be specifically restricted to the Clerk [and will also be restricted to a single transaction maximum value of £1,500 unless authorised by council or finance committee in writing before any order is placed. On-line purchases for software that are in excess of £1,500, delegated officer powers should be used (RFO or Proper Officer) in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of Finance and Governance whose approval would be sought in advance.
- 6.15. Any corporate credit card or trade card account opened by the council will be specifically restricted to use by the Clerk and any authorised employee and shall be subject to automatic payment in full at each month-end. Personal credit or debit cards of members or staff shall not be used under any circumstances.
- 6.16. The RFO may provide petty cash to officers for the purpose of defraying operational and other expenses. Vouchers for payments made shall be forwarded to the RFO with a claim for reimbursement.
- a) The RFO shall maintain a petty cash float of £500 for the purpose of defraying operational and other expenses.
 - b) Income received must not be paid into the petty cash float but must be separately banked, as provided elsewhere in these regulations.
 - c) Payments to maintain the petty cash float shall be shown separately on the schedule of payments presented to council under 5.2 above.

7. PAYMENT OF SALARIES

- 7.1. As an employer, the council shall make arrangements to meet fully the statutory requirements placed on all employers by PAYE and National Insurance legislation. The payment of all salaries shall be made in accordance with payroll records and the rules of PAYE and National Insurance currently operating, and salary rates shall be as agreed by council, or duly delegated committee.
- 7.2. Payment of salaries and payment of deductions from salary such as may be required to be made for tax, national insurance and pension contributions, or similar statutory or discretionary deductions must be made in accordance with the payroll records and

on the appropriate dates stipulated in employment contracts, provided that each payment is reported to the next available council meeting, as set out in these regulations above.

- 7.3. No changes shall be made to any employee's pay, emoluments, or terms and conditions of employment without the prior consent of the relevant committee. Changes to monthly payments following payment of authorised overtime and the like are to be authorised by the Clerk.
- 7.4. Each and every payment to employees of net salary and to the appropriate creditor of the statutory and discretionary deductions shall be recorded in a separate confidential record (confidential cash book). This confidential record is not open to inspection or review (under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 or otherwise) other than:
 - a) by any councillor who can demonstrate a need to know;
 - b) by the internal auditor;
 - c) by the external auditor; or
 - d) by any person authorised under Audit Commission Act 1998, or any superseding legislation.
- 7.5. The total of such payments in each calendar month shall be reported with all other payments as made as may be required under these Financial Regulations, to ensure that only payments due for the period have actually been paid.
- 7.6. An effective system of personal performance management should be maintained for the senior officers.
- 7.7. Any termination payments shall be supported by a clear business case and reported to the council. Termination payments shall only be authorised by council and/or the relevant committee acting under delegated powers.
- 7.8. Before employing interim staff the council must consider a full business case. This may then be considered and approved by either a Committee or the Clerk in conjunction with the Chair or Vice-chair of the Council.

8. LOANS AND INVESTMENTS

- 8.1. All borrowings shall be effected in the name of the council, after obtaining any necessary borrowing approval. Any application for borrowing approval shall be approved by Council as to terms and purpose. The application for borrowing approval, and subsequent arrangements for the loan shall only be approved by full council.
- 8.2. Any financial arrangement which does not require formal borrowing approval from the Secretary of State (such as Hire Purchase or Leasing of tangible assets) shall be

subject to approval by the full council. In each case a report in writing shall be provided to council in respect of value for money for the proposed transaction.

- 8.3. All loans and investments shall be negotiated in the name of the council and shall be for a set period in accordance with council policy.
- 8.4. The council shall consider the need for an Investment Strategy and Policy which, if drawn up, shall be in accordance with relevant regulations, proper practices and guidance. Any Strategy and Policy shall be reviewed by the council at least annually.
- 8.5. All investments of money under the control of the council shall be in the name of the council.
- 8.6. All investment certificates and other documents relating thereto shall be retained in the custody of the RFO.
- 8.7. Payments in respect of short term or long term investments, including transfers between bank accounts held in the same bank, or branch, shall be made in accordance with Regulation 5 (Authorisation of payments) and Regulation 6 (Instructions for payments).

9. INCOME

- 9.1. The collection of all sums due to the council shall be the responsibility of and under the supervision of the RFO.
- 9.2. Particulars of all charges to be made for work done, services rendered or goods supplied shall be agreed annually by the council, notified to the RFO and the RFO shall be responsible for the collection of all accounts due to the council.
- 9.3. The council will review all fees and charges at least annually, following a report of the Clerk.
- 9.4. Any sums found to be irrecoverable and any bad debts shall be reported to the council and shall be written off in the year.
- 9.5. All sums received on behalf of the council shall be banked intact as directed by the RFO. In all cases, all receipts shall be deposited with the council's bankers with such frequency as the RFO considers necessary.
- 9.6. The origin of each receipt shall be entered on the paying-in slip.
- 9.7. Personal cheques shall not be cashed out of money held on behalf of the council.
- 9.8. The RFO shall promptly complete any VAT Return that is required. Any repayment claim due in accordance with VAT Act 1994 section 33 shall be made at least annually coinciding with the financial year end.
- 9.9. Where any significant sums of cash are regularly received by the council, the RFO shall take such steps as are agreed by the council to ensure that more than one person

is present when the cash is counted in the first instance, that there is a reconciliation to some form of control such as ticket issues, and that appropriate care is taken in the security and safety of individuals banking such cash.

10. ORDERS FOR WORK, GOODS AND SERVICES

- 10.1. An official order or letter shall be issued for all work, goods and services unless a formal contract is to be prepared or an official order would be inappropriate. Copies of orders shall be retained.
- 10.2. Order books shall be controlled by the RFO.
- 10.3. All members and officers are responsible for obtaining value for money at all times. An officer issuing an official order shall ensure as far as reasonable and practicable that the best available terms are obtained in respect of each transaction, usually by obtaining three or more quotations or estimates from appropriate suppliers, subject to any *de minimis* provisions in Regulation 11.1 below.
- 10.4. A member may not issue an official order or make any contract on behalf of the council.
- 10.5. The Clerk shall verify the lawful nature of any proposed purchase before the issue of any order.

11. CONTRACTS

- 11.1. Procedures as to contracts are laid down as follows:
 - a. Every contract shall comply with these financial regulations, and no exceptions shall be made otherwise than in an emergency provided that this regulation need not apply to contracts which relate to items (i) to (vi) below:
 - i. for the supply of gas, electricity, water, sewerage and telephone services;
 - ii. for specialist services such as are provided by solicitors, accountants, surveyors and planning consultants;
 - iii. for work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which consist of repairs to or parts for existing machinery or equipment or plant;
 - iv. for work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which constitute an extension of an existing contract by the council;

- v. for additional audit work of the external auditor up to an estimated value of £500 (in excess of this sum the Clerk and RFO shall act after consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of council); and
 - vi. for goods or materials proposed to be purchased which are proprietary articles and / or are only sold at a fixed price.
- b. A public contract regulated by the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 with an estimated value in excess of £30,000 but less than the relevant thresholds specified by the Office of Government Commerce is subject to the “light touch” arrangements under Regulations 109-114 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 unless it proposes to use an existing list of approved suppliers (framework agreement)².
 - c. Where the value of a contract is likely to exceed the threshold specified by the Office of Governments Commerce , the Council must consider whether the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 or the Utilities Regulations 2016 apply to the contract and, if either of those regulations apply, the Council must comply with procurement rules When applications are made to waive financial regulations relating to contracts to enable a price to be negotiated without competition the reason shall be embodied in a recommendation to the council.
 - d. Such invitation to tender shall state the general nature of the intended contract and the Clerk shall obtain the necessary technical assistance to prepare a specification in appropriate cases. The invitation shall in addition state that tenders must be addressed to the Clerk in the ordinary course of post. Each tendering firm shall be supplied with a specifically marked envelope in which the tender is to be sealed and remain sealed until the prescribed date for opening tenders for that contract.
 - e. All sealed tenders shall be opened at the same time on the prescribed date by the Clerk in the presence of at least one member of council.
 - f. Any invitation to tender issued under this regulation shall be subject to Standing Orders 18d, and shall refer to the terms of the Bribery Act 2010.
 - g. When it is to enter into a contract of less than £30,000 in value for the supply of goods or materials or for the execution of works or specialist services other than such goods, materials, works or specialist services as are excepted as set out in paragraph (a) the Clerk or RFO shall obtain 3 quotations (priced descriptions of the proposed supply); where the value is below £3,000 and above £100 the Clerk or RFO shall strive to obtain 3 estimates. Otherwise, Regulation 10.3 above shall apply.

² Thresholds currently applicable are:

Public supply and public service contracts £214,904 (inclusive of VAT)

Public works contracts £5,372,609 (inclusive of VAT)

- h. The council shall not be obliged to accept the lowest or any tender, quote or estimate.
- i. Should it occur that the council, or duly delegated committee, does not accept any tender, quote or estimate, the work is not allocated and the council requires further pricing, provided that the specification does not change, no person shall be permitted to submit a later tender, estimate or quote who was present when the original decision making process was being undertaken.

12. PAYMENTS UNDER CONTRACTS FOR BUILDING OR OTHER CONSTRUCTION WORKS (PUBLIC WORKS CONTRACTS)

- 12.1. Payments on account of the contract sum shall be made within the time specified in the contract by the RFO upon authorised certificates of the architect or other consultants engaged to supervise the contract (subject to any percentage withholding as may be agreed in the particular contract).
- 12.2. Where contracts provide for payment by instalments the RFO shall maintain a record of all such payments. In any case where it is estimated that the total cost of work carried out under a contract, excluding agreed variations, will exceed the contract sum of 5% or more a report shall be submitted to the council.
- 12.3. Any variation to a contract or addition to or omission from a contract must be approved by the council and Clerk to the contractor in writing, the council being informed where the final cost is likely to exceed the financial provision.

13. STORES AND EQUIPMENT

- 13.1. The officer in charge of each section shall be responsible for the care and custody of stores and equipment in that section.
- 13.2. Delivery notes shall be obtained in respect of all goods received into store or otherwise delivered and goods must be checked as to order and quality at the time delivery is made.
- 13.3. Stocks shall be kept at the minimum levels consistent with operational requirements.
- 13.4. The RFO shall be responsible for periodic checks of stocks and stores at least annually.

14. ASSETS, PROPERTIES AND ESTATES

- 14.1. The Clerk shall make appropriate arrangements for the custody of all title deeds and Land Registry Certificates of properties held by the council. The RFO shall ensure a record is maintained of all properties held by the council, recording the location, extent, plan, reference, purchase details, nature of the interest, tenancies granted, rents payable and purpose for which held in accordance with Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 14.2. No tangible moveable property shall be purchased or otherwise acquired, sold, leased or otherwise disposed of, without the authority of the council, together with any other consents required by law, save where the estimated value of any one item of tangible movable property does not exceed £250.
- 14.3. No real property (interests in land) shall be sold, leased or otherwise disposed of without the authority of the council, together with any other consents required by law. In each case a report in writing shall be provided to council in respect of valuation and surveyed condition of the property (including matters such as planning permissions and covenants) together with a proper business case (including an adequate level of consultation with the electorate).
- 14.4. No real property (interests in land) shall be purchased or acquired without the authority of the full council. In each case a report in writing shall be provided to council in respect of valuation and surveyed condition of the property (including matters such as planning permissions and covenants) together with a proper business case (including an adequate level of consultation with the electorate).
- 14.5. Subject only to the limit set in Regulation 14.2 above, no tangible moveable property shall be purchased or acquired without the authority of the full council. In each case a report in writing shall be provided to council with a full business case.
- 14.6. The RFO shall ensure that an appropriate and accurate Register of Assets and Investments is kept up to date. The continued existence of tangible assets shown in the Register shall be verified at least annually, possibly in conjunction with a health and safety inspection of assets.

15. INSURANCE

- 15.1. Following the annual risk assessment (per Regulation 17), the RFO shall effect all insurances and negotiate all claims on the council's insurers.
- 15.2. The Clerk and other employees shall give prompt notification to the RFO of all new risks, properties or vehicles which require to be insured and of any alterations affecting existing insurances.

- 15.3. The RFO shall keep a record of all insurances effected by the council and the property and risks covered thereby and annually review it.
- 15.4. The RFO shall be notified of any loss liability or damage or of any event likely to lead to a claim, and shall report these to council at the next available meeting.
- 15.5. All appropriate members and employees of the council shall be included in a suitable form of security or fidelity guarantee insurance which shall cover the maximum risk exposure as determined by the council, or duly delegated committee.

16. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 16.1. The council is responsible for putting in place arrangements for the management of risk. The Clerk shall prepare, for approval by the council, risk management policy statements in respect of all activities of the council. Risk policy statements and consequential risk management arrangements shall be reviewed by the council at least annually.
- 16.2. When considering any new activity, the Clerk shall prepare a draft risk assessment including risk management proposals for consideration and adoption by the council.

17. SUSPENSION AND REVISION OF FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

- 17.1. It shall be the duty of the council to review the Financial Regulations of the council from time to time. The Clerk shall make arrangements to monitor changes in legislation or proper practices and shall advise the council of any requirement for a consequential amendment to these Financial Regulations.
- 17.2. The council may, by resolution of the council duly notified prior to the relevant meeting of council, suspend any part of these Financial Regulations provided that reasons for the suspension are recorded and that an assessment of the risks arising has been drawn up and presented in advance to all members of council.

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Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2023/24 Form 3

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

- where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure exceeded £25,000 but did not exceed £6.5 million; or
- where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure was £25,000 or less but that:
 - are unable to certify themselves as exempt (fee payable); or
 - have requested a limited assurance review (fee payable)

Guidance notes on completing Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2023/24

1. Every smaller authority in England that either received gross income or incurred gross expenditure exceeding £25,000 **must** complete Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return at the end of each financial year in accordance with *Proper Practices*.
2. **The Annual Governance and Accountability Return is made up of three parts, pages 3 to 6:**
 - The **Annual Internal Audit Report** must be completed by the authority's internal auditor.
 - **Sections 1 and 2** must be completed and approved by the authority.
 - **Section 3** is completed by the external auditor and will be returned to the authority.
3. The authority **must** approve Section 1, Annual Governance Statement, before approving Section 2, Accounting Statements, and both **must** be approved and published on the authority website/webpage **before 1 July 2024**.
4. An authority with either gross income or gross expenditure exceeding £25,000 or an authority with neither income nor expenditure exceeding £25,000, but which is unable to certify itself as exempt, or is requesting a limited assurance review, **must** return to the external auditor by email or post (not both) **no later than 30 June 2024**. Reminder letters will incur a charge of £40 +VAT:
 - the Annual Governance and Accountability Return Sections 1 and 2, together with
 - a bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2024
 - an explanation of any significant year on year variances in the accounting statements
 - notification of the commencement date of the period for the exercise of public rights
 - Annual Internal Audit Report 2023/24

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

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

Publication Requirements

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

Before 1 July 2024 authorities **must** publish:

- Notice of the period for the exercise of public rights and a declaration that the accounting statements are as yet unaudited;
- **Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement 2023/24**, approved and signed, page 4
- **Section 2 - Accounting Statements 2023/24**, approved and signed, page 5

Not later than 30 September 2024 authorities **must** publish:

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

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

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

Guidance notes on completing Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2023/24

- The authority **must** comply with *Proper Practices* in completing Sections 1 and 2 of this AGAR. *Proper Practices* are found in the *Practitioners' Guide** which is updated from time to time and contains everything needed to prepare successfully for the financial year-end and the subsequent work by the external auditor.
- Make sure that the AGAR is complete (no highlighted boxes left empty) and is properly signed and dated. Any amendments must be approved by the authority and properly initialled.
- The authority **should** receive and note the Annual Internal Audit Report before approving the Annual Governance Statement and the accounts.
- Use the checklist provided below to review the AGAR for completeness before returning it to the external auditor by email or post (not both) no later than 30 June 2024.
- The Annual Governance Statement (Section 1) must be approved on the same day or before the Accounting Statements (Section 2) and evidenced by the agenda or minute references.
- The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) must certify the accounts (Section 2) before they are presented to the authority for approval. The authority must in this order; consider, approve and sign the accounts.
- The RFO is required to commence the public rights period as soon as practical after the date of the AGAR approval.
- You must inform your external auditor about any change of Clerk, Responsible Financial Officer or Chair, and provide relevant authority owned generic email addresses and telephone numbers.**
- Make sure that the copy of the bank reconciliation to be sent to your external auditor with the AGAR covers all the bank accounts. If the authority holds any short-term investments, note their value on the bank reconciliation. The external auditor must be able to agree the bank reconciliation to Box 8 on the accounting statements (**Section 2, page 5**). An explanation **must** be provided of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8. More help on bank reconciliation is available in the *Practitioners' Guide**.
- Explain fully significant variances in the accounting statements on **page 5**. Do not just send a copy of the detailed accounting records instead of this explanation. The external auditor wants to know that you understand the reasons for all variances. Include complete numerical and narrative analysis to support the full variance.
- If the bank reconciliation is incomplete or variances not **fully** explained then additional costs may be incurred.
- Make sure that the accounting statements add up and that the balance carried forward from the previous year (Box 7 of 2023) equals the balance brought forward in the current year (Box 1 of 2024).
- The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO), on behalf of the authority, **must** set the commencement date for the exercise of public rights of 30 consecutive working days which **must** include the first ten working days of July.
- The authority **must** publish on the authority website/webpage the information required by Regulation 15 (2), Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, including the period for the exercise of public rights and the name and address of the external auditor **before 1 July 2024**.

Completion checklist – 'No' answers mean you may not have met requirements		Yes	No
All sections	Have all highlighted boxes have been completed?	✓	
	Has all additional information requested, including the dates set for the period for the exercise of public rights , been provided for the external auditor?	✓	
Internal Audit Report	Have all highlighted boxes been completed by the internal auditor and explanations provided?	✓	
Section 1	For any statement to which the response is 'no', has an explanation been published?	✓	
Section 2	Has the Responsible Financial Officer signed the accounting statements before presentation to the authority for approval?	✓	
	Has the authority's approval of the accounting statements been confirmed by the signature of the Chair of the approval meeting?	✓	
	Has an explanation of significant variations been published where required?	✓	
	Has the bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2024 been reconciled to Box 8?	✓	
	Has an explanation of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8 been provided?	✓	
Sections 1 and 2	Trust funds – have all disclosures been made if the authority as a body corporate is a sole managing trustee? NB: do not send trust accounting statements unless requested.	✓	

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

Annual Internal Audit Report 2023/24

Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council

www.bletchleyfennystratford-tc.gov.uk

During the financial year ended 31 March 2024, this authority's internal auditor acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with the relevant procedures and controls in operation and obtained appropriate evidence from the authority.

The internal audit for 2023/24 has been carried out in accordance with this authority's needs and planned coverage. On the basis of the findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in this table. Set out below are the objectives of internal control and alongside are the internal audit conclusions on whether, in all significant respects, the control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of this authority.

Internal control objective	Yes	No*	Not covered**
A. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.	✓		
B. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	✓		
D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	✓		
E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
F. Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.	✓		
G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	✓		
H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	✓		
I. Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.	✓		
J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	✓		
K. If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2022/23, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. <i>(If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2022/23 AGAR tick 'not covered')</i>			✓
L. The authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation.	✓		
M. In the year covered by this AGAR, the authority correctly provided for a period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations <i>(during the 2023-24 AGAR period, were public rights in relation to the 2022-23 AGAR evidenced by a notice on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set)</i> .	✓		
N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2022/23 AGAR <i>(see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes)</i> .	✓		
O. (For local councils only)	Yes	No	Not applicable
Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.			✓

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

Date(s) internal audit undertaken

11/10/2023 17/04/2024

Name of person who carried out the internal audit

Adrian Shepherd-Roberts

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit



Date

17/04/2024

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

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

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2023/24

We acknowledge as the members of:

Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2024, that:

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

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

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

DDMMYYYY

and recorded as minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

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

Chair

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Clerk

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

www.bletchleyfennystratford-tc.gov.uk

URL WEBSITE/WEBPAGE ADDRESS

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2023/24 for

Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2023 £	31 March 2024 £	
1. Balances brought forward	1,277,168	1,244,482	Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of previous year.
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	963,259	1,109,705	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.
3. (+) Total other receipts	289,451	400,652	Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.
4. (-) Staff costs	434,787	558,900	Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	0	0	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).
6. (-) All other payments	850,609	887,281	Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).
7. (=) Balances carried forward	1,244,482	1,308,658	Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).
8. Total value of cash and short term investments	1,371,970	1,413,064	The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – To agree with bank reconciliation.
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	707,774	687,651	The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.
10. Total borrowings	0	0	The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).

For Local Councils Only	Yes	No	N/A	
11a. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)		✓		The Council, as a body corporate, acts as sole trustee and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets.
11b. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)			✓	The figures in the accounting statements above exclude any Trust transactions.

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2024 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

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

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Date

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

DATE

as recorded in minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

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

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Section 3 – External Auditor’s Report and Certificate 2023/24

In respect of

Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council

1 Respective responsibilities of the auditor and the authority

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

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

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

- summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2024; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors.

2 External auditor’s limited assurance opinion 2023/24

(Except for the matters reported below)* on the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met. (*delete as appropriate).

(continue on a separate sheet if required)

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

(continue on a separate sheet if required)

3 External auditor certificate 2023/24

We certify/do not certify* that we have completed our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, and discharged our responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, for the year ended 31 March 2024.

*We do not certify completion because:

External Auditor Name

ENTER NAME OF EXTERNAL AUDITOR

External Auditor Signature

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Date

DATE REQUIRED

Street Names in Newton Leys

MKCC has received an application for a new residential development in Newton Leys. This development will consist of 4 new streets. The current theme for street names in Newton Leys is Islands of the World. MKCC has some approved street names available and have decided to use “**Singapore**” for one of the street names.

MKCC’s policy states that the developer can suggest street names, though names will need to gain agreement of the local councillors. The developers have suggested the following three street names which are not on the approved list.

- Coral
- Moonstone
- Finey

MKCC’s list of pre-approved and available island street names currently includes:

- Puerto Rico
- Jamaica
- Pewit
- Burrow
- Horsea
- Mersea

Councillors are asked for agreement to the proposed names.

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Community Right to Bid for Assets of Community Value

Guidance Notes (Updated September 2023)



Contents

1. About Community Right to Bid

- What's the legal basis for the Community Right to Bid?
- What does the Community Right to Bid aim to achieve?
- Does the Community Right to Bid give community groups a right to buy Assets within their community?
- Where can I get help and advice about Community Right to Bid?

2. Listing an Asset of Community Value

- Who is eligible to nominate an Asset for inclusion in the List of Assets of Community Value?
- What types of Assets are eligible for listing?
- How is 'Community Value' defined?
- What kinds of Assets could be considered as having 'Community Value'?
- What kind of Assets would not normally be considered as having 'Community Value'?
- How do we nominate an Asset?
- What information will we need to provide?
- What kinds of documents should support the nomination?
- Where should the nomination be sent?
- How will the nomination be processed?
- How can I find out which Assets have been nominated for inclusion in the List of Assets of Community Value?
- How long will an Asset remain on the List?
- What effect does Listing have?

3. Disposing of an Asset of Community Value

- What does an owner need to do if they wish to dispose of an Asset included in the List of Assets of Community Value?
- What happens once an owner has notified the council of an intention to dispose of an Asset included in the list of Assets of Community Value?
- What do community groups need to do if they wish to make a bid to purchase the Asset?
- Exempt disposals
- Can an owner market the Asset during the moratorium period?
- If an owner of an Asset is happy to sell a Community Interest Company, can they go ahead with the sale without waiting for the moratorium period to end?

4. Appeals

- What if an owner isn't happy that their Asset has been Listed?
- How will a request by an owner to review a Listing be dealt with?
- What happens if the owner of an Asset isn't satisfied with the outcome of this review?
- What recourse does an owner have if they feel that they have suffered costs or expense as a result of their asset being included in the List of Assets of Community Value?

- What happens if an owner is not satisfied with the way a compensation claim has been treated?
- What happens if an owner is not satisfied with the outcome of a compensation review?
- Can a nomination be submitted for an Asset that has been removed from a List?

1. About Community Right to Bid

What's the legal basis for the Community Right to Bid?

The Community Right to Bid was introduced under the Localism Act 2011. The Assets of Community Value (England) Regulations 2012. [The Assets of Community Value \(England\) Regulations 2012 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#) provide further details of the legislative requirements.

What does the Community Right to Bid aim to achieve?

The legislation aims to help communities faced with losing local amenities and buildings which are of importance to them. The Government recognises that over the past decade Community Asset ownership has been growing with over two hundred communities having bought their village shop, and many looking to take over their local pub to prevent it closing.

In the past, many communities have lost the use of buildings and land because they were sold privately or without a community group having the time to raise the necessary funds. The Community Right to Bid gives local community groups such as parish councils, charities, voluntary organisations and social enterprises a right to nominate a building or other land for listing by the council as an **Asset of Community Value (ACV)**. When a listed asset is to be sold, local community groups will have a chance to make a bid and buy it on the open market.

Does the Community Right to Bid give community groups a right to buy Assets within their community?

No. The legislation only stalls the selling process to give suitably constituted community groups a period of time to prepare a proposal and raise the funds required to put in an offer. The sale takes place under normal market conditions and the owner is under no obligation to sell to the group.

Where can I get help and advice about Community Right to Bid?

The Communities and Customer Services Directorate is responsible for coordinating the council's Community Right to Bid process; contact details can be found at the end of this document.

Independent support is available from Locality, the national network of over 700 community-led organisations appointed by the Government to provide advice and help relating to the Community Rights agenda. Locality can be contacted on 0845 458 8336 or by [emailing Locality](#)

2. Listing an Asset of Community Value

Who is eligible to nominate an Asset for inclusion in the List of Assets of Community Value?

The right to nominate a property is restricted to certain types of community groups. Nominations must come from a constituted local community group - or if it's un-constituted, it must be able to

show that it has at least 21 members registered to vote in Milton Keynes. Nominations may be submitted by the following:

- Parish and Town Councils
- Unincorporated bodies with at least 21 individual members and which does not distribute any surplus it makes to its members
- Charities
- Company Limited by Guarantee which does not distribute any surplus it makes to its members
- Industrial and Provident Society which does not distribute any surplus it makes to its members
- Community Interest Groups
- A body designated as a Neighbourhood Forum under the Town and Country Planning Act.

All groups must be able to show a local connection to the Milton Keynes City Council authority area.

What types of Assets are eligible for listing?

Land and buildings, either in public or private ownership, which can demonstrate 'Community Value'. Included in the Regulations' definition of land and buildings is part of a building, part of any other structure, whether or not held within the surface.

How is 'Community Value' defined?

Community Value is defined as follows:

'The current use of the building or land being nominated (that is not an ancillary use) must further the social wellbeing or social interests of the local community, and it is realistic to think that there can continue to be non-ancillary use of the building or land which will further (whether or not in the same way) the social wellbeing or social interests of the local community.'

Where the building or land does not currently demonstrate 'Community Value' as described above, it may still be nominated where it is possible to demonstrate that its main use **did** further the social wellbeing or cultural, recreational or sporting interests of the local community in the recent past, and where it is realistic to think that it will do so again in the next five years.

In this case, the nominating group would need to demonstrate that there was a time in the recent past when an actual use of the building or other land (that was not an ancillary use) furthered the social wellbeing or interests of the local community, and it is realistic to think that there is a time in the next five years when there could be non-ancillary use of the building or other land that

would further (whether or not in the same way as before) the social wellbeing or social interests of the local community. Nominations must meet these definitions.

What kinds of Assets could be considered as having ‘Community Value’?

MKCC’s Approach – Although the Localism Act notes that social interests includes ‘*cultural, recreational and sporting interests*’, social well-being applies to a much broader set of activities and includes a broad range of assets such as

- Nurseries, schools, Children’s Centres, health centres, surgeries and hospitals, day care centres and residential homes
- Parks and open green spaces, allotments, sports and leisure centres, libraries, theatres, museums or heritage sites, cinemas, markets and swimming pools/lidos
- Community centres, youth centres and public toilets
- Town, civic and guild halls
- Village shops, pubs and markets

The building or land can be private or publicly owned property.

What kind of Assets would not normally be considered as having ‘Community Value’?

- Administrative offices
- Land or property where community use is ancillary to its main purpose
- Land attached to residential property (although the Regulations set out certain exemptions for shops and pubs)
- Land covered by Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960
- Land used by public utilities, defined as operational land in Section 263 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990

Properties which have not had a social use for some years or have been empty or derelict are not covered by the Act.

Residential property is excluded, including gardens, outbuildings and other associated land in the same ownership as the associated residence. Also excluded from being listed is any land licensed for use as a residential caravan site or the operational land of statutory undertakers.

A full list of exemptions and related definitions can be found [here](#) (Please see Annex A).

How do we nominate an Asset?

You can nominate an Asset by [completing the Nomination Form](#)

What information will we need to provide?

Nominations will need to include:

- A description of the nominated Asset including its proposed boundaries **clearly edged in red**, its proposed boundaries and its use. (Please see (ii) below for more detailed information).
- A statement of all information which the nominator has with regard to the names of current occupiers and also the names and current (or last known) addresses of all those holding a freehold or leasehold estate in the land;
- Reasons for thinking that the council should conclude that the Asset is one of Community Value; and
- Evidence that the nominator is eligible to make a nomination, in line with the requirements set out in the next section.

What kinds of documents should support the nomination?

Evidence is required to support the nomination demonstrating how the asset furthers the social interest or social wellbeing of the local community. We would expect to see the following evidence:

- photographs/social media posts of the events taking place at the asset
- testimonials, letters of support and statements of those who use the asset
- list of events held at the asset with frequency, numbers who attend, who attends (i.e. local community, wider community)
- list of groups who use the asset, the frequency the groups use the asset, numbers who attend, what does the group use the asset for etc.,
- other event publicity fliers/posters/social media posts
- print media articles of events that have taken place at the asset This will help us to reach a decision on whether or not the Asset is eligible for inclusion in the List of Assets of Community Value.

You must state your reasons for thinking that the Council should conclude that the property is of Community Value with as much information as you can provide to support your application i.e. how the asset furthers the social interest or social wellbeing of the local community (to be continued on a separate sheet if necessary).

For example, evidence to support a nomination for a pub might include the fact that the pub has a regular football or darts team made up from members of the local community. Maybe the pub holds fireworks or Christmas events for the local community, has a regular quiz night that's supported by locals, or is a vital resource to the elderly locally in terms of enabling them to get out and meet others. Other evidence could include information on how else the pub engages with the local community – is it a focal point for social groups? Does a particular community group regularly meet there following their meetings?

Remember, you must be able to show how the asset furthers the social interest or social wellbeing of the local community, or that its main use did further the social interest or social wellbeing of the local community in the recent past, and where it is realistic to think that it will do so again in the next five years.

The nominating group will be informed of the reason(s) why this decision has been made. Resubmissions are permitted if it can be shown that new, additional evidence has come to light since the first submission. In this case, a completely new submission would need to be made and the process would start again from the beginning.

The following should also be provided:

i) Evidence to support that the nominator is eligible to make a nomination (as appropriate to the organisation)

- Memorandum of Association
- Articles of Association
- Companies House return
- Trust Deed
- Constitution / Terms of Reference
- Standing orders
- Interest Statement for Community Interest Company

ii) Information showing the boundaries of the Asset being nominated

- Where the land is registered, the Land Registry Title Information document and map with boundaries clearly marked in red, and less than one month old. A good quality map of the asset clearly showing the boundaries, outlined in red. You can obtain these from [HM Land Registry](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/hm-land-registry) for a small fee.
- Attach a site plan that clearly outlines the location, the extent of the premises including parking areas etc. and is to an appropriate scale (e.g. 1:1250 for a location plan in town / 1:2500 in the country / 1:500 for a more detailed block plan for a property in town.)

- Please also be specific about whether the nomination is for part of / all of a premises - e.g. if it is a building with more than one storey please indicate whether you are nominating specific floors or the entire building. Residential dwellings cannot be nominated.
- A written description with Ordnance Survey location, explaining where the boundaries lie, the approximate size and location of any building(s) on the land and details of any roads bordering the site.

Where should the nomination be sent?

Nominations should be sent to the Communities and Customer Services Directorate whose contact details are at the end of this document.

How will the nomination be processed?

Nominations will be considered in line with the requirements set out in the regulations, including taking all practical steps to notify the following that the Asset is being considered for listing:

- The relevant Town or Parish Council
- The relevant Ward Member(s) for the Ward involved
- The owner of the Asset
- Where they are not the owner, the holder of the freehold estate and the holder of any leasehold estate
- Any lawful occupant

Where we are unable to notify any of the above, we will try to bring the notice to the person's attention – for example by publishing details on the council website.

The nominator's contact details as provided on the nomination form will be used for future correspondence, including, in the event that the Asset is listed, notice that the owner has advised of an intention to dispose of the Asset.

It is therefore essential that the nominator ensures any changes in contact details during the period of listing are notified to the council via the Communities and Customer Services Directorate, whose contact details are at the end of this document.

We will check that the property satisfies the criteria for acceptance and that the community group fits one of the categories laid down in the legislation. We will check the application nomination to confirm that all requisite information has been provided by the nominator.

Once validated, we will decide whether the nominated Asset should be included in the List within 8 weeks.

We will then notify the following of our decision and the reasons behind this:

- The owner of the land, (including setting out the grounds for appeal)
- The occupier of the land (if not the owner)
- The nominator

- Where they are not the owner, the holder of the freehold estate and the holder of any leasehold estate

- The relevant Town or Parish Council

- The relevant Ward member(s) for the Ward involved

We will add the property to a List of Community Assets which will appear on the council website.

Information provided in the nomination form will be processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

A copy of the nomination form will be shared with the owner of the Asset in the event that the nominating organisation subsequently submits an intention to bid. The information provided will be subject to the Freedom of Information Act, but personal information (names and contact details) will not be released in response to Freedom of Information requests.

If the council decides that the nomination cannot be accepted, we will write to the nominee setting out our reasons. The property will then be added to a list of unsuccessful nominations which will appear on the council website.

Please note that we are unable to accept any additional information after the nomination has been submitted, unless explicitly requested by the Council.

How can I find out which Assets have been nominated for inclusion in the List of Assets of Community Value?

We publish on the council website – www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/community-right-bid

- The Listed Assets of Community Value

- The Assets nominated but not Listed (eg refused, de-listed or expired)

Local Authorities are required to add to the List of Assets, as soon as practicable:

- i) that a notification by the owner of an intention to dispose of the land has been received by the local authority and the date this was received;

- ii) in all cases under (i), the end dates of the interim and full moratorium periods and the

protected period;

iii) where relevant, that the full moratorium has been triggered; and

iv) where (iii) applies, the identity of the community interest group that triggered the full moratorium.

How long will an Asset remain on the List?

Where an asset is included in the List of Assets of Community Value, the entry can only be removed following:

- a relevant disposal (other than an exempt disposal)
- when an appeal against listing has been successful
- when the local authority form the opinion that the land or building is no longer of community value; or
- no later than five years from the date of entry on the list.

It is for the local authority to decide how long unsuccessful nominations are held on the List of Assets Nominated but Not Listed. The intention of this is to ensure transparency and to avoid multiple nominations of an asset that does not meet the definition.

What effect does Listing have?

Once an asset is listed, nothing further will happen until the owner decides to dispose of it. Where an Asset is included in the List of Assets of Community Value, the owner is required to notify the council in writing or by email to Communities and Customer Services Directorate whose contact details are at the end of this document, of their intention to dispose of the Asset.

If any unregistered land included in the List of Assets of Community Value becomes registered for the first time (because of disposal, mortgaging or voluntary registration), the owner or new owner must notify the council as soon as is practicable and complete the Land Registry form QQ to enter a restriction on their Land Register.

3. Disposing of an Asset of Community Value

What does an owner need to do if they wish to dispose of an Asset included in the List of Assets of Community Value?

Where an owner wishes to dispose of an Asset which is included in the List of Assets of Community Value and it is not an exempt disposal, they must notify the council in writing or by email to

Communities and Customer Services Directorate whose contact details are at the end of this document of their intention to do so.

Certain types of disposal are exempt from these arrangements, including:

- disposals in the form of a gift;
- disposal containing a business which uses the property and is a going concern;
- disposal within a family or between trustees or companies in a group; disposal in the execution of a will or arising from various legal proceedings; and
- disposal of property that is part of a larger estate, part of which is not listed, but where the whole estate is owned by the same person and is a single lot of land.

What happens once an owner has notified the council of an intention to dispose of an Asset included in the list of Assets of Community Value?

The council will acknowledge receipt of the notification confirming the dates upon which the interim moratorium period took effect and when this period will end.

The List of Assets of Community Value will be updated to show that we have received notice of an intention to dispose of the Asset, together with the date of that notification and the resulting interim and full moratorium periods and the protected period.

The council will notify the nominator in writing or by email that we have received notice of an intention to dispose of the Asset and will publish details in the area where the Asset is situated.

What do community groups need to do if they wish to make a bid to purchase the Asset?

An intention to bid on a Listed Asset that has come up for sale should be sent in writing or by email to Communities and Customer Services Directorate whose contact details are at the end of this document by a community group that can demonstrate a local connection.

The council must receive the intention to bid within the six weeks of the notice to dispose of the Asset (normally ending at midnight on the last working day of that period). Nominators are advised to obtain proof of delivery either through using appropriate recorded receipt postage or by obtaining a receipt for the hand-delivered post.

This notification will trigger a six week 'interim moratorium period' (a period of delay) during which the Asset owner may not dispose of the Asset (other than where the disposal is exempt under the Regulations). This interim moratorium is for a period of six weeks from the date upon which the council receive written notification of the owner's intention to dispose of the Asset. During this six week period, suitably constituted community groups and organisations which can demonstrate a local connection may submit an intention to bid.

Unconstituted community groups must use the interim moratorium period to become constituted.

To become constituted, community groups will need to have one or more of the following structures and request formally in writing or by email to Communities and Customer Services Directorate whose contact details are at the end of this document that a six month moratorium period be invoked to enable funds to be raised.

- A charity
- A community interest company
- A company limited by guarantee that is non-profit distributing
- An industrial and provident society that is non-profit distributing (also called community benefit societies)

The Regulations provide a full definition of 'Community Interest Group' for the purposes of the Community Right to Bid legislation (Regulation 12).

The council will pass the intention to bid to the owner of the Asset or inform them of the details as soon as practicably possible after receipt.

If a notification to bid is received in writing or by email from a constituted group within the six week interim moratorium period, this then triggers the full six month moratorium period (starting from the date which the council received written notification from the owner of their intention to dispose of the Asset) during which the Asset cannot be sold except to a qualifying community group - see '**What effect does Listing have?**' This gives the community group six months in which to develop and submit a bid.

This six month moratorium period is intended to enable the community group to prepare to be able to submit a bid to the owner to purchase the Asset. Any subsequent sale takes place under normal market conditions. There is no obligation for the group to make a bid, and the group has no rights of purchase over other potential buyers. The owner is under no obligation to sell the Asset to the community group or any other person. If the owner decides to sell to the community group, they may do so within the six month moratorium period.

After the full moratorium period, the owner of the asset can sell it to whomever they choose and at whatever price.

If no community interest group notifies the council within six weeks that it wishes to bid, the owner is free to sell their property as they see fit.

If after the six month moratorium period the community group has not successfully bought the property, a further 12 month protection period is triggered (the total eighteen month period commencing on the day upon which the council received written notification of the owner's intention to dispose of the Asset). During this protection period, the Asset may be sold by the owner on the open market without the risk of the moratorium period being triggered.

Exempt disposals

The Localism Act 2011 and the Assets of Community Value (England) Regulations 2012 detail circumstances where a disposal is exempt – for example where the disposal is as a result of a court order, a separation agreement made between spouses or civil partners, upon inheritance and as a result of insolvency proceedings. A full list of exemptions and related definitions can be found [here](#) (Please see Annex A).

Can an owner market the Asset during the moratorium period?

Yes, there is nothing to prevent the owner actively marketing the Asset during the moratorium period; the restriction refers only to exchange of contracts on the sale of the Asset.

If an owner of an Asset is happy to sell to a Community Interest Company, can they go ahead with the sale without waiting for the moratorium period to end?

Yes, where the owner and a community group are able to agree terms within the six month moratorium period, they may proceed with the sale without waiting for the moratorium period to end.

4. Appeals

What if an owner isn't happy that their Asset has been Listed?

The owner of an Asset included in the List of Assets of Community Value may ask the council to review their decision. This request must be made in writing or by email to Communities and Customer Services Directorate whose contact details are at the end of this document within eight weeks of the date upon which the council provided the owner with written notification by email of the decision to list or longer where this has been agreed to this in writing.

How will a request by an owner to review a Listing be dealt with?

The council will usually acknowledge receipt of the request and advise of the procedure to be followed in connection with the Listing review.

The Listing review will be undertaken by a senior council officer independent of the original decision-making process.

The owner may request an oral hearing and may appoint any representative to act on their behalf in connection with the review. The oral hearing will consist of a short presentation by the owner or their representative to the Listing review panel. They will then be asked to leave prior to the Listing review panels' decision.

Where no request for an oral hearing is made by the owner, the council will decide whether or not an oral hearing would be beneficial to the Listing review process. The owner, or their representative, may make written and/or oral representation to the reviewer.

The council will complete the Listing review process within eight weeks of the receipt of the written request for the review, or a longer period where this has been agreed with the owner.

The council will notify the owner in writing or by email of the outcome of the Listing review, and where the review concludes that a change to the listing is required, the council will also notify:

- The occupier of the land (if not the owner)
- The nominator
- Where they are not the owner, the holder of the freehold estate and the holder of any leasehold estate
- The relevant Town or Parish Council
- The Ward Member(s) for the area

Where the review concludes that a change to the listing is required, the council will adjust the List of Assets of Community Value and advise the Land Registry accordingly.

The authority and the owner shall each bear their own costs of the review.

What happens if the owner of an Asset isn't satisfied with the outcome of this review?

Where an owner remains dissatisfied with the outcome of the review, they may appeal to the General Regulatory Chamber of the First Tier Tribunal against the council's decision on the Listing review. The owner must appeal within 28 days of the council's decision on the review.

Appeals should be sent to the General Regulatory Chamber of the First Tier address detailed at the end of this document. Appeal documentation can be found [here](#).

What recourse does an owner have if they feel that they have suffered costs or expense as a result of their Asset being included in the List of Assets of Community Value?

The owner or former owner of an Asset of Community Value is entitled to make a claim for compensation from the council in respect of incurred losses or expense in relation to the Asset which would be likely not to have been incurred if the land had not been Listed. This does not include costs in connection with a review of the authority's decision on listing or on compensation. The council will not consider any compensation claims that request the full market value.

Following any moratorium period owners may proceed with the sale of the asset and therefore this is not a loss incurred. Claims can only be made for the actual loss, with a clear cause and effect relationship between the loss and the moratorium period or to the asset being listed.

Compensation claims should be made in writing or by email to Communities and Customer Services Directorate whose contact details are at the end of this document and must be made within thirteen weeks after the loss or expense was incurred or finished being incurred. Claims must state the amount of compensation being claimed for each part of the claim and be accompanied by supporting evidence.

The [Regulations](#) should be consulted for details of bodies that are not entitled to compensation.

What happens if an owner is not satisfied with the way a compensation claim has been treated?

The person making the compensation claim may ask for a review of the council's decision reached in relation to their claim. This must be made in writing or by email to Communities and Customer Services Directorate whose contact details are at the end of this document within eight weeks of the date upon which the council advised of their reasons in relation to the claim.

The council will acknowledge receipt of the request and advise of the procedure to be followed in connection with the review. The compensation review will be undertaken by a senior council officer independent of the original decision-making process.

Where no request for an oral hearing is made by the owner, the council will decide whether or not an oral hearing would be beneficial to the compensation review process. The owner, or their representative, may make written and oral representation to the reviewer.

The council will complete the compensation review process within eight weeks of the receipt of the written request for the review, or a longer period where this has been agreed with the owner. The council will notify the owner in writing or by email of the outcome of the compensation review.

What happens if an owner is not satisfied with the outcome of a compensation review?

Where an owner remains dissatisfied with the outcome of the compensation review, they may appeal to the General Regulatory Chamber of the First Tier Tribunal against the council's decision on the Listing review. Appeals should be sent to the General Regulatory Chamber of the First Tier address detailed at the end of this document.

Can a nomination be submitted for an Asset that has been removed from a List?

New submissions will only be accepted for Assets that have previously been removed from either the Listed Assets of Community Value or the List of Non-Listed Assets if it can be shown that new, additional evidence has come to light since the first submission.

A completely new submission would need to be made and the process would start again from the beginning. The council reserves the right to reject re-submissions if, in its opinion, insufficient additional information has been provided.

Contacts

Communities and Customer Services Directorate
Milton Keynes City Council
Civic Offices
1 Saxon Gate East
Milton Keynes
MK9 3EJ

local.councils.liaison@milton-keynes.gov.uk

www.milton-keynes.gov.uk

General Regulatory Chamber of the First Tier Tribunal
Tribunal Clerk
Community Right to Bid Appeals
HM Courts and Tribunals
First Tier Tribunal (General Regulatory Chamber)
PO Box 9300
Leicester
LE1 8DJ

GRC.CommunityRights@hmcts.gsi.gov.uk

Useful links

[Chapter 3 of the Localism Act 2011](#)

[The Assets of Community Value \(England\) Regulations 2012](#)

[Non statutory advice note for local authorities produced by the Department for Communities and Local Government](#)

[Department for Communities and Local Government Community Rights website](#)

[Community assets and ownership - MyCommunity](#)

[Research Briefing - House of Commons Library - Assets of Community Value](#)

Contact details

Communities and Customer Services Directorate

Email - local.councils.liaison@milton-keynes.gov.uk

Website - www.milton-keynes.gov.uk

Postal address - Milton Keynes City Council, Civic Offices,
1 Saxon Gate East, Milton Keynes, MK9 3EJ

Community Right to Bid

Asset of Community Value Nomination form

Part A - About the group making the nomination

A1. Organisation's name and address

Name of organisation
ReturnMK

Address including post code

58 Queensway Bletchley Milton Keynes MK2 2SA

A2. Contact details

Name
Jason Lawrence

Position in organisation
Trustee

Address including postcode
**50 Millward Drive
Fenny Stratford
Bletchley
MK2 2AT**

Daytime telephone number
03003033609

Email address
info@returnmk.org

A3. Type of organisation

Description	Please tick all that apply	Registration number (if applicable)
Parish, Town or Community Council		
Body designated as a Neighbourhood Forum under the Town and Country Planning Act		
Unincorporated bodies with at least 21 individual members and which does not distribute any surplus it makes to its members		
Charity	*	
Company limited by guarantee which does not distribute any surplus it makes to its members		
Industrial and provident society which does not distribute any surplus it makes to its members		
Community interest company		
Other – please detail		

A4. Local Connection

For groups other than Parish, Town or Community Councils, please confirm and provide evidence (see A7) that the group is wholly or partly concerned with the area covered by Milton Keynes City Council area

Refer to A7 Constitution attached.

A5. Distribution of surplus funds

For groups other than Parish, Town or Community Councils, please confirm and provide evidence (see A7) that any surplus made by the group is wholly or partly applied for the benefit of the area covered by Milton Keynes City Council area

Refer to A7 Constitution attached.

A6. Membership of unincorporated bodies

For unincorporated bodies please confirm that at least 21 members are included on Milton Keynes City Council's register of electors and provide their names and addresses below

N/A

A7. Your organisation

Please provide a copy of the following as relevant to your organisation	Please tick documents provided
Memorandum of Association	
Articles of Association	
Companies House return	
Trust Deed	
Constitution / Terms of reference	*
Standing Orders	
Interest Statement for Community Interest Company	

Part B - About the asset being nomination for inclusion in the list of assets of community value

B1. Name and address of asset being nominated

Name

Bletchley Working Men's Club

Address including post code

1 Chandos Place, Bletchley, Milton Keynes, MK2 2SQ

B2. Maps and drawings

Please provide information which helps to clarify the exact location and extent of the asset being nominated. This could include:

- Where the land is registered, the Land Registry Title Information document and map with boundaries clearly marked in red (less than one month old).
- a written description with ordinance survey location, and explaining where the boundaries lie, the approximate size and location of any building/s on the land and details of any roads bordering the site
- a drawing or sketch map with boundaries clearly marked in red – websites which might help you in plotting boundaries include: <http://maps.google.co.uk/>

Please see attached Land Registry Document

B3. Current use of asset

What is the current main use of the asset?

Space for Social Gatherings & Entertainment (Class E)

Do you consider that the **current** and **main** use of the asset furthers the social wellbeing or cultural, recreational or sporting interests of the local community and is likely to continue?

Yes

*

No

If yes, please explain how it does so and produce supporting evidence, e.g. what groups and people use the nominated asset and what events take place there, including any letters of support from groups or person using the asset (and why it is considered that that will continue). If not, go to B4

The nominated asset, The Bletchley Working Men's Club, has been a cornerstone in enhancing social wellbeing and contributing significantly to the cultural, recreational, and sporting interests of our local community. The evidence supporting this claim lies in the diverse groups and organisations that have historically utilised the club, as well as the variety of functions and events it has hosted.

Past Functions:

The Bletchley Working Men's Club has historically hosted a range of functions, including [enumerate past functions, e.g., community celebrations, cultural events, sports gatherings].

These functions have played a crucial role in bringing the community together, fostering a sense of unity and shared identity.

Groups and Organisations:

Various groups and organisations, such as MKM Road Show Shan Beth Events and Lady Lyrical have utilised the club's facilities for their meetings, events, and activities. The club has been a hub for cultural performances, sports competitions, and community gatherings, providing a versatile space for a wide array of community interests.

Anticipated Continuation:

Given the rich history of community engagement and the integral role The Bletchley Working Men's Club has played in our community, we are confident that its current use will continue to positively impact local social wellbeing and cultural, recreational, and sporting interests.

Over what period is this main use of the asset anticipated to continue?

For the unforeseeable future.

Does the local community have legal and authorised use of the land or property?

Yes

B4. Questions for assets not currently used for community benefit

If the main use of the asset does not currently further the social wellbeing or cultural, recreational or sporting interests of the local community, did it do so at some stage in the recent past?

Yes

No

Please provide details of how the asset was used in the past and dates of this usage including any supporting evidence

N/A

How do you anticipate that the asset would return to furthering the social wellbeing or cultural, recreational or sporting interests of the local community?

N/A

When do you consider that the asset could realistically return to furthering the social wellbeing or cultural, recreational or sporting interests of the local community (please include timescales)?

Almost immediately depending on the actual state of the property.

B5. Optional information to help us consider the nomination (it is not essential to answer these questions, but they reflect part of the criteria we which will be used to consider the nomination. Any information you can supply will help to speed up this process).

Is the asset used wholly or partly as a residence? Please provide details.

No

Is the asset covered by the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960? Please provide details.

No

Is the asset defined as operational land under section 263 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, owned by statutory undertakers such as utility companies? Please provide details.

No

B6. Further information

Please provide any further information to support why you feel that Milton Keynes City Council should conclude that the asset is of 'community value'

Historical Significance:

The Bletchley Working Men's Club holds deep historical significance within the local community. It has been a focal point for social gatherings, cultural events, and recreational activities for several decades.

Community Gathering Place:

The club has consistently served as a central meeting place for residents of all ages. It is a venue where people come together to celebrate, share experiences, and build connections, fostering a strong sense of community.

Cultural Hub:

The club has been a platform for various cultural events, supporting local artists, musicians, and performers. This cultural engagement has contributed to the rich tapestry of our community, promoting diversity and inclusivity.

Community Engagement Programs:

The Bletchley Working Men's Club has actively initiated and supported community engagement programs, including educational workshops, health awareness campaigns, and initiatives promoting local talents.

Sports and Recreation:

As a venue for sports gatherings and recreational activities, the club has played a crucial role in promoting physical well-being and healthy lifestyles among community members.

Youth and Education:

The club has a history of supporting youth initiatives, providing a safe and constructive environment for young people. This includes mentorship programs, educational support, and opportunities for personal development.

Support from Local Groups:

Anticipated Community Benefits:

The continuation of The Bletchley Working Men's Club as a community asset is expected to yield ongoing benefits, including a continued space for community gatherings, cultural events, and a hub for social interaction.

In conclusion, The Bletchley Working Men's Club has been a pillar in promoting community values, fostering social cohesion, and providing a space for diverse activities. Its 'community value' is deeply ingrained in its history and ongoing contributions to the well-being and vibrancy of our local community. Also with the regeneration of the local area it will prove to be of greater benefit to the community as a whole.

B7. Owner and occupier details (Please provide all information available to you)

	Name	Address	Please delete as appropriate
Owner/s	PETER FRASER STEVEN BEAVER JOSEPH MCCANN	116 Langland Road, Netherfield, Milton Keynes MK6 4HX 18 Dovecote Cottages, Church End Road, Shenley Brook End, Milton Keynes MK5 7AA 6 Gairloch Avenue, Bletchley, Milton Keynes MK2 3DH	Current/ Last known/ Not known/ Not applicable
Lawful occupiers	Please find Attached Land Registry Documentation		Current/ Last known/ Not known/ Not applicable
Holder/s of freehold estate (if not the owner)	Please find Attached Land Registry Documentation		Current/ Last known/ Not known/ Not applicable
Holder/s of any			Current/

leasehold estate			Last known/ Not known/ Not applicable
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**Summary - is the land and/or building an asset of Community Value?
(Please place your comments in the boxes)**

Nature of Use	Long Past	Recent Past	Present	Future
(1) The main use of the land and/or building furthers the social wellbeing or social interests of the local community at the present time AND it is realistic to think that this can continue into the near future (even if the type of social use or benefit might change)		*		
(2) The main use of the land and /or building furthers the social wellbeing or social interests of the local community in the recent past AND it is realistic to think that this could happen again in the next five years (even if the type of social use or benefit might change)				*
(3) The main use of the land and/or building furthered the social wellbeing or social interests of the local community some years ago but it is not presently in use for a social purpose.		*		
(4) The land and/or building has not recently been, and is not currently, in use for a primarily social purpose			*	
(5) The land and/or building has been empty or derelict for many years and remains so today.			*	

By signing your name here (if submitting by post) or typing it (if submitting electronically) you are confirming that the contents of this form are correct, to the best of your knowledge.

Name
Jason Lawrence

Title
Trustee

Signature


Date
13-03-2024

Please send your completed form to:

**Community Right to Bid
Communities and Customer Services Directorate
Milton Keynes City Council
Civic Offices
1 Saxon Gate East
Milton Keynes
MK9 3EJ**

Email: local.councils.liaison@milton-keynes.gov.uk

We may process the information you provide for a number of lawful bases, in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018. For more information, see the privacy notice on our website or contact our Data Protection Officer at data.protection@milton-keynes.gov.uk

These are the notes referred to on the following official copy

The electronic official copy of the title plan follows this message.

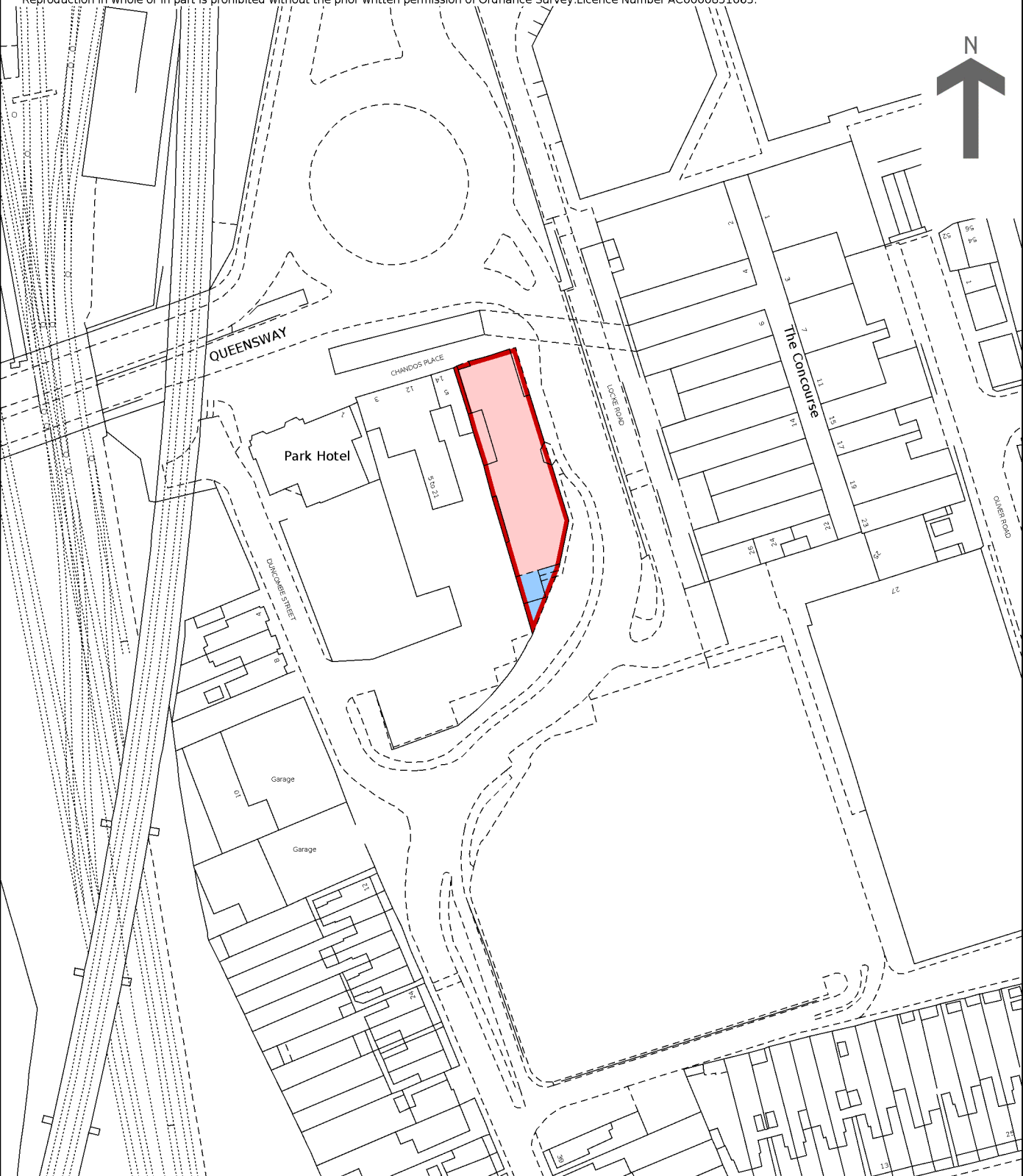
Please note that this is the only official copy we will issue. We will not issue a paper official copy.

This official copy was delivered electronically and when printed will not be to scale. You can obtain a paper official copy by ordering one from HM Land Registry.

This official copy is issued on 12 March 2024 shows the state of this title plan on 12 March 2024 at 21:12:27. It is admissible in evidence to the same extent as the original (s.67 Land Registration Act 2002). This title plan shows the general position, not the exact line, of the boundaries. It may be subject to distortions in scale. Measurements scaled from this plan may not match measurements between the same points on the ground. This title is dealt with by the HM Land Registry, Leicester Office .



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Sycamore Buildings Consultation Summary Report

A report summarising the consultation process in relation to the future of the Sycamore Buildings in Bletchley, and the related consultation support provided by Breakthrough Communications & Strategies Limited on behalf of Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council. Report date 3rd April 2024.



BREAKTHROUGH
COMMUNICATIONS
SPECIALISTS IN CONNECTING COUNCILS WITH THEIR COMMUNITIES

1 Executive Summary

1.1 Introduction

Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council ("BFSTC") commissioned Breakthrough Communications and Strategies Limited ("Breakthrough Communications") to support a community consultation process on the future of town's Sycamore Buildings.

The consultation process was designed to share with the community the council's vision and outline proposals, as they currently stand, in relation to the future of the Sycamore Buildings, following the council's previous acquisitions of the buildings.

The consultation then sought to ascertain the public's level of support for a) the proposals in general, b) the specific proposal to borrow up to £750,000 through the Public Works Loan Board (BWLb), as well as to get feedback on what specific features and services the public would like to see included in any future development.

1.2 Process

Breakthrough Communications met with BFSTC officers to better understand what they wanted to achieve through a public consultation process

Following discussion, the council agreed to our recommendations to provide comprehensive consultation support, which included:

- Ongoing and unlimited support to council officers during the consultation period, including unlimited Zoom and phone calls as required
- Provision of artwork for a 12 page printed newsletter
- Provision of a press release to support the consultation
- Provision of social media and other graphics as required
- Provision of written content to support the consultation process
- Creation, hosting and management of an online survey
- Social media geo-targeted advertising to encourage people to take part in the survey

The consultation ran from 31st January through to 22nd March 2024. During the consultation period, the council shared its vision and proposals with the community in various ways, including through a dedicated page on its website, through a printed newsletter delivered to households, through a press release and through its own social media accounts. As well as providing material for the council to use through its own communications channels, we also

supported the council through the provision of geo-targeted social media advertising.

The consultation included a survey that asked the following questions:

1. What is your Post Code?

(Open response, with Post Code validation on the digital survey, to ensure only a valid UK Post Code could be entered into this field)

2. What services and features would you most like to see in the renovated community building?

(Multiple choice)

3. Are you in favour of the town council delivering this renovation project to the Sycamore buildings?

(Yes or No)

4. Do you support the council's proposals to borrow up to £750,000, through the Public Works Loan Board loan, in order to deliver the planned renovations to the Sycamore Buildings?

(Yes or No)

5. Do you have ideas or suggestions for this project?

(Open text response and optional)

1.3 Results and what they tell the council

155 completed responses were received during the consultation window. These included responses submitted via the paper survey, as well as those inputted into the digital survey.

Of all responses received, 155 people stated preferences or ideas for what services and features they would most like to see in the renovated community building ([Q2](#)). Of these 155 responses, 38 responses were 'other ideas'. These included mainly constructive ideas for community group use or suggestions for specific facilities, as well as a small number against the proposal generally. These responses are set out in more detail ([Q2](#)).

Of all responses received, 123 respondents (79.35%) stated they are "in favour of the town council delivering this renovation project to the Sycamore Buildings, whilst 32 (20.65%) stated they are not in favour of the council's proposal ([Q3](#)).

Of all responses received, 115 respondents (74.19%) stated they "support the council the council's proposals to borrow up to £750,000, through the Public Works Loan Board loan, in order to deliver the planned renovations to the Sycamore Buildings", whilst 40 (25.81%) stated they do not support the council's proposal ([Q4](#)).

Of the 123 respondents who supported the overall concept ([Q3](#)), 115 (93.45%) supported funding this through a Public Works Loan Board loan, whilst 8 (6.50%) did not support the idea.

64 people (41.29%) provided open-ended ideas, suggestions or feedback in relation to the project ([Q5](#)). As with Q2 'other ideas', these responses included a range of specific suggestions and ideas for the project, as well as more general feedback and whether or not they supported the project's aspirations.

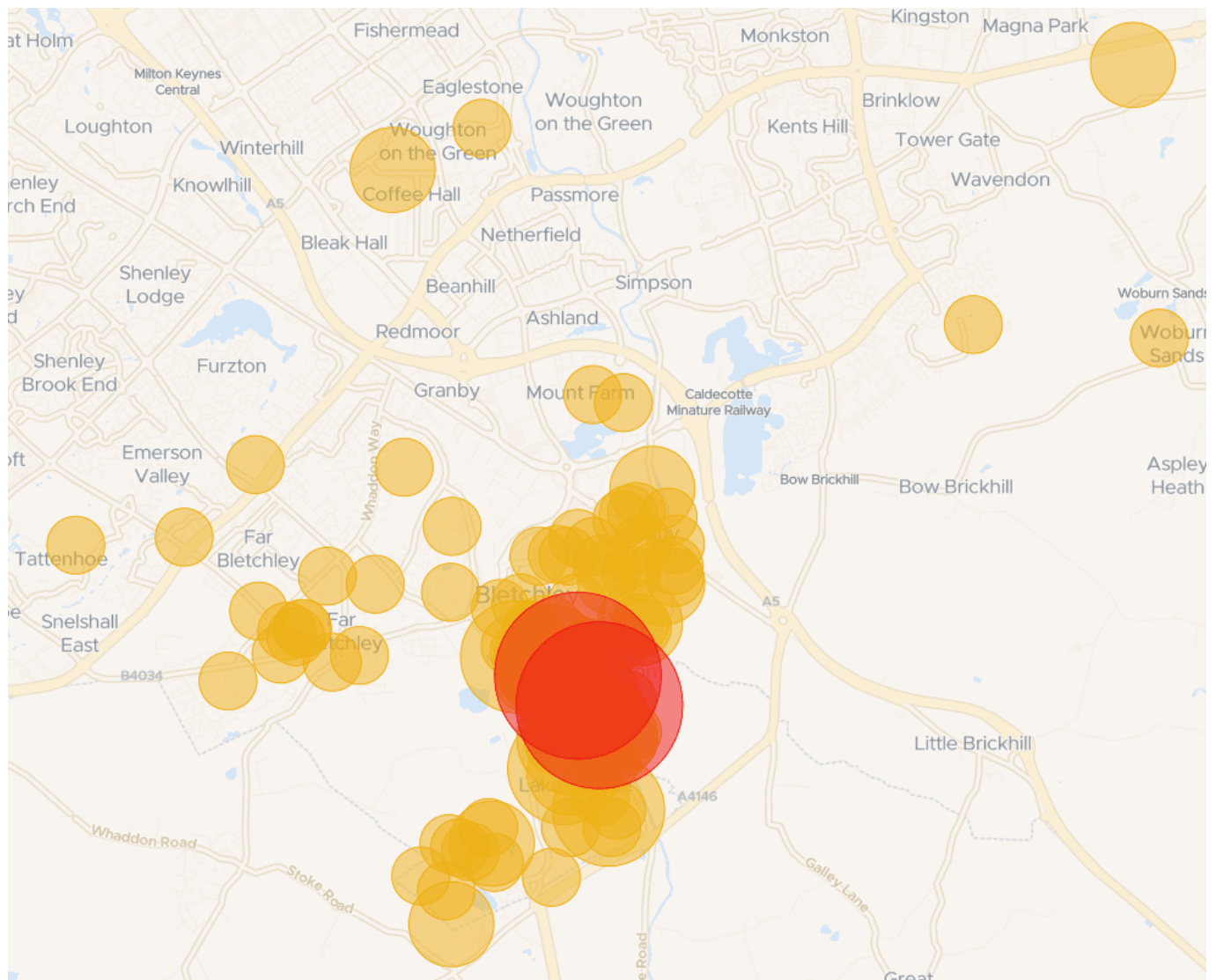
The results of the survey are set out in [Section 2](#). The results provide the council with a clear narrative as to the views of residents as to how to take forward to the future of the Sycamore Buildings.

2. Results by Survey Question

Q1 Please provide your Post Code, so that we can understand which responses have come from residents living within the parish, as well as from outside of the town.

155 respondents answered this question.

As visualised by the heat-map below, of the 155 responses, the vast majority came from people living within the boundaries of the town council boundary, along with residents living in neighbouring parishes and some further afield.



Heat Map Legend

Yellow circles = Fewer than five submissions from this Post Code sector

Red circles = Five or more submissions from this Post Code sector

Q2 What services and features would you most like to see in the renovated community building?

155 respondents answered this question.

This was a multiple-choice question, whereby respondents could select multiple options for pre-defined responses, as well as optionally providing their own additional ideas. The results of the pre-defined choices are set out below.

	Response Count
Multipurpose event spaces	104
Private hire for parties and social events	98
Meeting rooms for community groups and businesses	71
Childcare facilities	62
Educational programs and classes	67
Art and cultural activities	59
Community outreach and advocacy services	53
Family support services	78
Activities for seniors	90
Activities for children and young people	93
Exercise and sporting activities	71
Councillor surgeries and community meetings	55
Other idea (Please specify)	38

The 38 'other ideas' are set out as follows and included a range of specific ideas and suggestions, as well as general comments and feedback:

- All the above are suitable uses
- A theatre venue
- Youth services for teenagers
- Affordable community spaces for charity groups
- CAB. Money advice service. Tennant's advice clinic
- Banking Hub, CAB
- Slimming programs e.g. Dietary healthy eating, etc.
- Potentially a gym
- Coffee mornings, bingo over 55s
- Faith groups
- Community hub for young people to advance skills
- Foodbank and a community fridge
- Winter night shelter facilities, mental health services, less chat more action for the local community
- Youth workers and community centre for the teenagers
- Community cafe drop-in winter warm space
- As so many banks closing, make it have a Banking hub
- A safe temporary place in the winter especially, for the homeless whilst they can get helped and sorted out for permanent housing
- Consult with the community
- Not a full time holder
- Don't use
- Do not use or renovate
- We have enough halls
- Not require we have a few local halls under used
- Knock it down
- Knock down
- Accommodation for homeless
- No use knock down
- Why did the council take it on totally mad
- Eid festival (x2)
- 'Nothing' or 'none' or 'no other ideas' (x8)

Q3 Are you in favour of the town council delivering this renovation project to the Sycamore buildings?

155 respondents answered this question.

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes, I am in favour of the council's proposal	79.35%	123
No, I am not in favour of the council's proposal	20.65%	32

Q4 Do you support the council's proposals to borrow up to £750,000, through the Public Works Loan Board loan, in order to deliver the planned renovations to the Sycamore Buildings?

155 respondents answered this question.

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes, I support the council's proposal	74.19%	115
No, I do not support the council's proposal	25.81%	40

Q5 Do you have ideas or suggestions for this project?

64 respondents answered this question.

The 64 responses were generally detailed in nature and included a range of specific ideas and suggestions, as well as general comments and feedback. A summary of the responses and their thematic areas of concern are set out as follows:

Specific suggestions for use and other ideas in relation to the existing proposals:

Comments included:

- It would be great if the design brief includes the concept of a creative way to preserve some of the character of the existing internal area. Some ceiling cladding (looks like aged pine) could be reused in creative ways in the new interior finishes, the exposed masonry finishes on the inside can also be kept in some areas just to serve as a window to the past. This may also be a useful way to save on the embodied carbon of the project, by reusing existing materials. Whatever can not be reused should be recycled .
- I think any work you do to the building should allow the building to stay future-proofed, to be adaptable for any future use. Making the plans, functionality of the different rooms and the HVAC system / plant rooms adaptable to change will allow the council or other clients to make financial and carbon savings in the future.
- Social events, community events
- I do support borrowing to fund the renovations as I assume that the money isn't available from grants or other funding sources.
- I think it should be returned to its original use with updates for disabled access. Then to use it for parties, Wedding receptions again like it used to. Also youth club for 10 - 16 Yr olds and slimming club meetings.
- There's so much it could be used for as we have nothing this end of Bletchley/Fenny Stratford anymore. I had my own 18th & 21st Parties when it was a good hall many a wedding reception I have also been to there. A great Dance floor and space for food and people to sit that dont want to be in with the music.
- Given the complete lack of inclusive activity spaces for teens in MK, I would like to see spaces for activities for them. I know that The Pits in Woughton had its problems, but for my teens growing up, it was a great space to hang out in an environment that was safer than the city centre clubs.
- Some form of stage/backstage facilities would be useful to allow drama and performance arts to be staged in Bletchley/Fenny
- I support the project for community activities my reservation would be parking.
- I would love for there to be exercise classes on here, walking distance from my house. I would also love for there to be an outdoor garden space that could be used with the hire - AND some playground equipment there. This would enhance the hall offering greatly for local residents.

- Regarding the space, it would be wonderful to have a local space with parking for private hire events. Currently we hire Deanshanger Memorial hall for our daughter's birthday parties, even though it is far away, due to the affordability of it and the good parking for guests.
- This is a great achievement. Cannot wait for this to be delivered!
- I would like to see language opportunities for residents who do not have English as a first language.
- It would be good to have a venue for all events to be a community hub for activities for young folk
- More community activity for family in holiday season for working people.
- Bingo night for pensioners
- Some of the finance perhaps could be sourced from grants, e.g Lottery Fund, Government Community funding. N.B Although I've ticked the box in agreement I do not consider Sycamore Hall in the "centre of Bletchley" . It's a distance from the Queensway where people come to shop & meet for coffee.
- Function rooms for meetings and weddings and other family occasions
- I would like to see the hall used for more events like weddings, childcare, activities for younger children. It would be nice to be able to hire it for private events like wedding receptions or parties.
- Solar panels on roof areas that will not be seen from the front of the building so they don't infringe on the listed building rules. This would aid in the running costs of the council offices and Sycamore hall.
- Green space open plan community gardens for all. Project for the local community to get involved with sport social events, Youth project for local young people. Event days with fun raising activities for all to enjoy.
- There is so much potential here, salsa classes , boxing classes, keep fit, food bank, Good sound system/pa system would be essential with Bluetooth for headphones/speakers etc.
- We have parts for the little ones and elder ones have jobs etc but what about those children in the middle yr 7 +. Youth workers have always offered a good role model to kids bring them back and give the kids a space that is for them. Games nights art clubs sports bring sexual health advisors planning the future advisors etc. these teenagers are

our future and they are left not quite a child not quite a adult with nothing to do

- More kids clubs such as arts and crafts, performing arts clubs which you can showcase talents in a show providing more income to help with the development of the building.
- Make it into a really family friendly hub filled with activities and services for local families.
- Make hall hire prices affordable and reduced costs for local residents.
- Make sure there is enough parking space around the hall with good disabled access
- Sycamore hall used to be a very popular venue. Over the years I've been to many sessions there ie: Tia Chi, Yoga, self defence, dancing plus family parties. It was a popular venue with easy access & plenty of parking. It needs to be back in full use.
- I want to see the hall to be used for events and childcare facilities to be held there. More private events to be held like parties, weddings etc.
- To be a good community asset. Multi-functional asset to bring the community together.
- Food bank point, creche afternoons, health and wellbeing groups, senior coffee mornings/afternoons
- It would be good to put this space to good use. I would like to see the hall available for community functions and open to young people to help keep them off the streets and have a safe place to go.
- Just that once completed that the hall remains clean and the decor fresh as that's what lets a lot of community halls down over the years.
- We have used the Sycamore building for a fashion show and like to be able to use it for functions, parties etc. Looking forward to be able to use it again.

Suggestions that the project is too expensive or funds should be spent elsewhere or that other halls were still usable

Comments included:

- I feel it would be better for all the facilities to be available in the centre of Bletchley, but it looks as though that has already been explored and isn't possible. I wonder if the new flats on the corner of Saxon Street and Princes Way have any meeting rooms? Still the current location is handy for my area and not so far for the Lakes estate.
- It could be a great community asset if accessible and affordable to all. Not happy about the borrowing levels. Simple economics - debts have to be repaid with interest. You need to work within your budget or it will be the very people you say you want to support that

will end up paying.

- £1.5 million is too much money on a hall when others are available and under used
- Many halls and community space close by and in local area, just don't need it and not worth that amount of money. So much can be done with nearly 2 million which will be overall price with house purchases and repairs
- Funds should be raised before the project starts or have plans for repayment of loan
- Too much money use instead on high street which on its last legs
- The sum being borrowed is substantial and it's typical for building costs to soar far beyond their initial planned budgets.
- What happens when the project costs inevitably rise during the project? As much of the building is going to be glass, it seems at higher risk of vandalism, so is there budget available for ongoing building repair works should someone vandalise the glass panels? (Potentially regularly). Has the Council scoped the ongoing costs of running an additional community venue? For example, costs associated with staff to manage bookings, cleaning, utilities, and maintenance in and outside of office hours?
- Space for faith groups or for religious activities

Other comments

Comments included:

- I suggest success or failure can only be judged by occupancy levels following the works. If the council has been given sufficient indication of demand then communities need facilities.
- Do nothing
- Demolition
- The house is listed so limited scope but why not do something for homeless local people there is a lot on the streets

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BLETCHLEY AND FENNY STRATFORD TOWN COUNCIL

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE FOLLOWING VACANCIES HAVE OCCURRED IN THE OFFICE OF COUNCILLOR FOR THE FOLLOWING WARDS OF BLETCHLEY AND FENNY STRATFORD TOWN COUNCIL

- i EATON NORTH WARD (single vacancy)
- ii EATON SOUTH WARD (two vacancies)
- iii FENNY STRATFORD WARD (single vacancy)
- iv MANOR SOUTH WARD (single vacancy)
- v NEWTON LEYS WARD (single vacancy)
- vi QUEENSWAY AND DENBIGH NORTH WARD (single vacancy)

THESE VACANCIES HAVE ARISEN DUE TO AN INSUFFICIENCY OF CANDIDATES FOR THE ELECTIONS HELD ON 2 MAY 2024 THEREFORE THE TOWN COUNCIL WILL FILL THE VACANCIES BY CO-OPTION AT THE EARLIEST POSSIBLE DATE

ANY QUALIFIED PERSON WISHING TO BE CONSIDERED FOR THESE POSITIONS SHOULD CONTACT THE CLERK FOR FURTHER INFORMATION.

DATED THIS FIRST DAY OF MAY 2024

SIGNED: 
Delia Shephard, Clerk to the Council

Contact Details :

Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council
01908 649469

www.bletchleyfennystratford-tc.gov.uk
clerk@bletchleyfennystratford-tc.gov.uk

Sycamore House, Drayton Road, Bletchley MK2 3RR

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