FLITWICK TOWN COUNCIL
DRAFT Minutes of the Flitwick Town Council meeting held on
Tuesday 15th September 2026 at the Rufus Centre at 7:45pm

Present:
Cllr J Roberts (Chairman)
Cllr C Thompson
Cllr F Patterson
Cllr R Wilsmore
Cllr H Hodges
Cllr I Blazeby
Cllr L Bandy
Cllr S Long
Cllr L Hart
Cllr P Earles
Cllr D Toinko

Also Present:
Cllr I Adams – Central Beds Council (CBC) Ward Member
Stephanie Stanley – Deputy Town Clerk & RFO

6067. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

It was **resolved** to accept apologies for absence from Cllrs Parsons (work), Platt (medical) and Harald (holiday).

Members asked for the Council's best wishes to be sent to Cllr Platt.

Action: DTC

6068. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive Statutory Declarations of Interests from Members in relation to:

(a) Disclosable Pecuniary interests in any agenda item – no items.

(b) Non-Pecuniary interests in any agenda item – Cllr Long declared an interest for agenda item 12D – Community Fridge Steering Group – as she was a volunteer for the project.

6069. TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

It had been another busy month for the Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor. They had attended the following civic events together:

- Orchid Lawns Summer Party – a brilliant event with very welcoming staff and lovely residents.
- Ampthill Town Mayor's Curry Night Fundraiser.
- Flitwick Town Football Club Award Presentation from Persimmon.

The Deputy Town Mayor had attended the Houghton Regis Civic Service.

The Town Mayor updated members that he had been thinking about having Town Mayor's Cadets represented by the local uniformed groups. The Cadet(s) would be able to help at civic events and engagements, which would help build confidence in young people. Cllr Roberts commented that he was seeing how this might work in the background but wanted to inform members at the meeting that this was part of his upcoming plans and more details would follow.

The Town Mayor advised that he would be organising a Men's Health event at the Rufus Centre on 13th November alongside Heathwatch and a charity that encouraged men to talk. The aim was to promote physical and mental health and have representatives from organisations present. Flitwick & Ampthill Bathrooms and Flitwick Town Football Club had already supported the event.

Members noted that Flitwick Town Football Club advertised the Community Fridge on its players' kits.

The Town Mayor thanked the Public Realm Team for their planting at the War Memorial, especially during the hot weather, which was exceptional. Members noted that many residents had commented on how attractive this area was.

The Deputy Town Mayor asked members to support upcoming charity fundraising events by donating raffle prizes. She said this would support the Quiz Night, Christmas Lunch, Bingo Afternoon, and more.

6070. Leader Update

The Leader advised that he and the Town Mayor had regular meetings booked in with the Town Clerk to follow through any issues and ensure the officer team were supported.

A meeting would soon be held with Cllr Adams and CBC officers regarding Section 106 leisure funds.

6071. REPORTS FROM WARD MEMBERS

Cllr Adams provided an update about the current Local Transport Plan consultation:

- Ward Members had received a briefing that day and the consultation had been discussed at CBC's Committee.
- There were important aspects in the document, especially its weakness relating to the impact on Flitwick's road network and considering Universal's development, which was not included at all.
- He mentioned that there was a need for the Strategic Plan to be future-proof.
- There was a need for studies to be undertaken on arterial roads such as the High Street and Steppingley Road, including the railway bridge.
- The document was silent about parking challenges, which had always been a big issue for Flitwick. A holistic approach to parking was required for towns with a train station, and to understand how this impacted residents. This required a broader discussion.
- There was a 20mph approach around the schools, but this was not dealt with sufficiently.
- The traffic plan needed to cover matters such as not waiting for roads to be adopted in new estates.
- This was something that both the Ward Members and the Town Council should engage with.

Cllr Adams advised that changes to the planning process would take effect from 31st October 2026. After this date, Ward Members and Town Councils would be unable to request an application to be discussed at the Development Management Committee, as this route would largely be removed. This would be replaced by a 'Gateway Test' where senior Planning Officers would make decisions on planning applications.

There was significant concern about the home-to-school transport provision. Cllr Adams had helped four SEND pupils from Flitwick since the school year began, and this was happening across CBC. CBC had called an extraordinary meeting to discuss the issues. Cllr Adams was very unhappy with the situation and pushed for answers, especially as the same thing happened last year.

Questions

Cllr Thompson referred to the planning change and asked if members needed to put something in place as the current Chairman of the Planning Improvement Working Group was unwell. Cllr Adams explained that members could not do anything about the new process, as it was going ahead, but applications submitted before 31st October could still be called in. He added that members needed to consider the consultation responses and how they were engaged with. Cllr Adams identified that 'grey belt' classifications (instead of greenbelt) would be a big issue for the town. He wanted Ward Members and Town Councillors to think about this together, as officer decisions could be the only chance.

Cllr Adams left the meeting at 20:05.

6072. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

No items.

6073. INVITED SPEAKER

No items.

6074. MEMBERS QUESTIONS

Cllr Thompson mentioned the Climate Change Emergency Briefing Film scheduled to take place at the Rufus Centre on 18th November 2026. Cllr Toinko asked whether facilitators had been arranged, as he had contacts he could approach to request their attendance. Cllr Thompson commented that the Environmental & Community Manager would appreciate this help.

Cllr Blazeby advised that SHARE: Flitwick & Ampthill were having a stand at the Eco Fair at Parkside Hall in Ampthill on 20th September.

Cllr Thompson was approached by a resident about the postal service in Flitwick. This related to discrepancies with post box timings, etc., and she asked if other members had been contacted about the same thing. Cllr Thompson had agreed to contact Royal Mail for the resident, but she had explained that this would not generate a quicker response.

Cllr Hart advised that CBC had arranged an Emergency Response Talk for 30th September at Flitwick Library. She aimed to attract other CERT members and said she had been asked to help with publicity for the talk.

6075. MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS

a. For Members to approve the minutes of the Town Council Meeting held, on **Tuesday 18th August 2026**, this meeting was held at the Rufus Centre.

It was **resolved** to adopt the minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on Tuesday 18th August 2026 at the Rufus Centre as an accurate record of the meeting.

b. For Members to receive and consider the resolutions and recommendations of the Community Services Committee meeting, held on **Tuesday 1st September 2026**, this meeting was held at The Rufus Centre.

Members noted the resolutions from the Community Services Committee.

6076. MATTERS ARISING

a. Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on **Tuesday 18th August 2026**.

No items.

b. Members to receive any updates from Officers.

No items.

6077. OUTSIDE BODIES

No items.

6078. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

a. CBC Local Transport Plan

Members made the following comments:

- Cllr Wilsmore commented that it was a very long document, and it would put people off reading it. There was not much content about Flitwick.
- Cllr Blazeby highlighted that it was difficult to find the key points from the document, as Cllr Adams had done. He added that it was theoretical about transport ideas and had little content in the way of concrete plans.
- Cllr Thompson echoed these views and asked if there was anything the Town Council could do to support Cllr Adams.
- Cllr Long commented that it was important for the Town Council to submit a response especially due to the links this Transport Plan had with the emerging Local Plan. She advised that she would be happy to prepare a response based on the themes presented by Cllr Adams.
- Cllr Hodges stated that at previous PIWG meetings, the traffic information used for Flitwick in surveys etc. was out of date.
- Cllr Hart commented that the chicanes in Froghall Road were inappropriate.
- Cllr Bandy commented that the most issues were in Windmill Road.
- Cllr Wilsmore asked why consultations like this were presented with little notice.

The DTC confirmed that the response deadline was 20th September. She explained that Officers would have put it on the August agenda for consideration if it had been received in time.

It was **resolved** that Cllr Long would prepare a draft response to the CBC Local Transport Plan, giving the Town Clerk delegated authority to submit it.

Action: Cllr Long/Town Clerk

b. **Road Safety Partnership**

Cllr Thompson, Chair of the Community Services Committee, provided some background on this item, explaining that the Committee had considered the information at a previous meeting. The Committee was asked whether it wanted to submit a proposal for the Council to consider, and the documents were discussed at length.

Cllr Thompson explained that the partnership would require a Town Council financial commitment, plus CBC design costs. CBC would adopt and maintain the assets. Members of Community Services had discussed maintenance issues with CBC and that this type of improvement was their responsibility. Cllr Thompson stated that the Committee decided nothing felt urgent enough to redirect the budget, so no recommendations were made.

Cllr Blazeby advised that he had raised a couple of matters for the Town Clerk to follow up on, including a speed sign on Steppingley Road that had not worked for several years. He also asked about the legalities of having a speed sign as you come into Flitwick from Steppingley Road, as there was currently no signage.

The DTC advised that officers had chased CBC regarding the two points raised by Cllr Blazeby, but no response had been received to date.

Cllr Wilsmore reported that CBC would not put a 'repeater' 30mph sign in that location on Steppingley Road unless it was to be accompanied by speed checks. He commented that there were signs already installed on Fordfield Road, Froghall Road and from Steppingley direction.

Cllr Hodges said speeding motorists were a significant issue in Flitwick and asked what would be needed to set up van-based checks. Cllr Wilsmore advised that historically, there were designated areas based on KSI incidents, but the regulations might have changed. Members discussed a previous Speed Watch initiative, but it was challenging to retain volunteers, and it was not enforceable.

The Chairman said he had recently spoken to the Police about speeding in the Avenue, and they mentioned that people needed to send in reports/complaints, as the service was driven by statistics.

Cllr Toinko referred to the discussion at Community Services regarding a 'Welcome to Flitwick' sign idea. He advised that there were 7 roads into the town, and the Committee were reluctant to include this as a proposal, as it would not cover all roads into the town.

Cllr Wilsmore commented that the public had previously expressed interest in the Council providing more benches, but this was an option available for members regardless of the Road Safety Partnership. Members also discussed that the price for a bench through this scheme would be at a CBC-nominated cost, and the Council may re-discuss providing more benches upon receiving the capital receipt from the land sale project.

Cllr Wilsmore referred to the earlier discussions about the signs in Temple Way not working. He advised that these were not CBC property but were installed by the Town Council over 20 years ago. The sign in Maulden way was CBC property however the other ones were not. The DTC confirmed that these signs were not on the Asset Register.

Members decided not to submit any proposals via the Road Safety Partnership based on the debate above.

c. **Local Plan Consultant - Quotes**

Members noted the quotes circulated. Cllr Long referenced that only two quotes had been returned and asked the DTC how many requests for proposals were sent. The DTC stated she thought it was three but would need to check with the Town Clerk.

Cllr Long commented that Quote B was open-ended, with day rates listed, raising concerns, whereas Quote A was clearer on overall costs. Cllr Long had no strong feeling on either quote and mentioned that the Council could wait and see if more quotes were received.

The Chairman thought the quotes were interesting and commented on how the scope of each differed. He wanted to wait for another quote.

Cllr Blazeby also thought the quotes were interesting and reminded members of earlier conversations that it might be appropriate to budget for this work for the 2027-28 financial year. He added that he supported waiting for a third quote, if it fit the budgeting schedule. The DTC confirmed that considering the item at the October meeting would not impact the budgeting schedule as the scrutiny meetings at Committee level were held in November and the Council did not agree the budget/Precept until January.

Members discussed that the quotes served as indicative costs to aid the budgeting process. Cllr Wilsmore highlighted that most of the sites in the Call for Sites would not progress.

Cllr Wilsmore asked whether it was a Council decision to progress with a quote for this, and the DTC confirmed it was.

Cllr Toinko stated that the quotes were only valid for three months, and raised concerns about timing and elections next year, noting that the Council would be restricted in publicity ahead of the election process.

Cllr Toinko asked if it would be appropriate for a site appraisal to be done first, but he was reminded that the sites needed to be confirmed first and the point of this item related to budgeting.

Cllrs Long and Hart commented that the change in the planning process at CBC was a concern.

It was **resolved** to defer the decision on this item until the Council had three quotes.

Action: DTC

d. Community Fridge Steering Group

Members noted the circulated Terms of Reference.

Cllr Thompson presented the key information, including that three Council members were required to join the Steering Group and that only one should be an active volunteer for the Community Fridge project. She said the Chairperson should be someone not on the fridge volunteer team, to maintain balance.

Cllr Blazeby asked Cllr Thompson if she would be interested in being elected to the Group. She responded that she would do this if nobody else was interested in the role.

Cllr Toinko pointed out the confusing terminology of naming the member not associated with the project as ‘independent’ and asked for this to be changed.

Cllr Hart asked about the meeting frequency. Cllr Thompson advised that the group was envisaged to meet monthly to begin with, then stretch to every 6-8 weeks.

Cllr Earles mentioned that she was happy to stand as the non-fridge member, and Cllr Long put her name forward as a fridge volunteer representative.

Cllr Hart asked whether the meetings would be online, and she was told they would be in a hybrid format.

Cllr Blazeby mentioned that Cllr Harald, who had not attended the meeting, might be interested in joining the group, and members were keen to ask him.

Action: Community Services Officer

It was **resolved** to elect Cllr Earles (Chair) and Cllr Long to the Community Fridge Steering Group.

Members noted that the other Group members were volunteers for the service (one from each operations role).

Cllr Hodges requested an update about the Community Fridge, and members noted that it would be appropriate to do this with guidance from the Community Services Officer. Cllr Thompson stated that the Officer Report that the Community Services Committee received at the last meeting did not flag any concerns. Members requested that this be an information item at the next Council meeting.

Action: DTC/Community Services Officer

e. Burial Report

The Chairman commented that the report was good and provided members with options.

Cllr Thompson asked where the money for the work was coming from. The DTC was unsure and assumed the officers involved would include a recommended budget code in the next paper when formal quotations were considered. The DTC explained that funds could be available in the community services revenue budget or reserves, or it might be a project to consider following the upcoming capital receipt.

Cllr Blazeby provided some clarity regarding the officer's recommendation to progress with quotes for the turning circle only, since the other suggestions would not create much benefit in terms of plot space. He advised members that 46 graves were reserved and highlighted that the other recommendation was to contact residents about these. Cllr Blazeby mentioned that some of these people could have moved or passed away already. He thought it was worth the officers spending some time on this.

Cllr Blazeby commented that it was imperative that residents understood, after this work, that this was the Council's final option to provide more grave space. This was because no other ground was available. Cllr Long mentioned that this point was worth raising in the emerging Local Plan process as something that the Council would like to see in Flitwick. Members commented about the lack of land and that it was more likely to be used for housing.

Cllr Patterson referenced the bollard mentioned in the circulated report and asked whether it would be fixed in concrete or have the functionality to unlock it. He asked if it would be better to have a gate if the roadway remained. Members noted that this would form part of the discussions with the Public Realm Team.

Cllr Long advised that the bollard discussion needed to factor in consultation with burial ground users first. Cllr Wilsmore agreed and stated that a notice could go up at the site. He added that people should be told this was the Council's option to extend the number of grave spaces, but that there would be a downside: people would not be able to drive down there. Cllr Blazeby mentioned this could be a specific question in the Annual Residents'

Survey, Cllr Wilsmore suggested it could be a Facebook post and Cllr Long commented that residents could also be encouraged to attend a Council meeting to share views.

Action: Community & Environmental Manager (CEM)

Cllr Hart commented that wildlife used the conifer hedge and she would not like to see this be removed.

Cllr Thompson proposed proceeding with the Officer recommendations and for members to discuss this more in depth at a future meeting. Cllr Long requested to modify the motion to consult with residents which was redacted after advice that it was unknown at this stage if the suggestion of removing the turning circle only, could be done.

It was **resolved** to:
1. Progress with the quotations for removal of the turning circle only.
2. Allow officers time to contact owners of reserved graves.

Action: Town Clerk & CEM

6079. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

a. Finance Reports

Members noted the circulated Balance Sheet as of 31st August and the Projects Fund Summary.

6080. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

No items.

6081. EXEMPT ITEMS

The following resolution will be **moved** that is advisable in the public interest that the public and press are excluded whilst the following exempt item issue is discussed.

No items.

Pursuant to section 1(2) of the public bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 Council **resolve** to exclude the public and press by reason of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted.

The meeting closed at 21:06.

Signed……(Chairman)

Recommendations and Resolutions of the
Business Development and Finance Committee 22nd September 2026

The Town Council are asked to note the **RESOLUTIONS** and **approve** the **RECOMMENDATIONS** of the Business Development and Finance Committee 22nd September 2026

13 Apologies for Absence

It was **resolved** to accept apologies for absence from Cllr Roberts (work commitments) and Cllr Harald (holiday).

19 Minutes

It was **resolved** to adopt the minutes of the Business Development & Finance Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 28th July 2026 as a true record.

21a. Vice Chairman

It was **resolved** to elect Cllr Hodges as Vice Chairman of the Business Development & Finance Committee.

21b Policies Review

i) It was **resolved** to adopt the revised Credit Card Policy circulated, with one amendment to allow recouping of any personal expenditure through payroll.

ii) It was **resolved** to adopt the revised Management & Retention of Documents Policy circulated.

Recommendations and Resolutions of the Community Services Committee 6th October 2026

The Town Council are asked to note the **RESOLUTIONS** and **approve** the **RECOMMENDATIONS** of the Community Services Committee 6th October 2026

1413. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

It was **RESOLVED** to accept apologies for absence from Cllr Platt (medical) and Cllr Hart (holiday).

1419. MINUTES

It was **RESOLVED** to accept the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 1st September 2026 as an accurate record of the meeting.

1421. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

a. Hatfield Crescent Play Area

It was **RESOLVED** that Officers respond to CBC to understand whether there is scope for an asset swap, as discussed, regarding the street lights and play area ownership. Officers were to prepare a financial forecast for taking on the additional play area and bring it back to Committee.

b. National Lottery Awards for All England – Environment

It was **RESOLVED** to apply for the National Lottery Awards for All England – Environment grant for a volunteer programme covering the Nature Park and Manor Park.

c. Request for Hire – Town Square

It was **RESOLVED** to accept the request and work with Flitwick Jewellers to ensure all necessary SAG measures were in place.

1424. Exempt

d. Remembrance Event

It was **RESOLVED** to:

1. Approve the proposed measures.
2. Approve the overspend of £1,893.33 (nominal code 4043/313) to cover additional costs.

1. The reason for wishing to be a Councillor

I am interested in becoming a town councillor because I care deeply about Flitwick and want to play an active role in shaping its future. Having lived in Flitwick for over 23 years, I have developed a strong understanding of the town, its residents and the issues that affect our community.

I want to contribute positively rather than simply observe from the sidelines. I'm motivated by community service, practical problem-solving, and the opportunity to help ensure that local decisions genuinely reflect residents' needs and priorities. Becoming a councillor feels like a meaningful way to give back and help maintain Flitwick as a thriving, welcoming place.

I am now retired and would like to use the time, experience and skills gained throughout my career to make a positive contribution to Flitwick.

I am already actively involved in the town through my voluntary work with Flitwick Town Council, where I serve on the Planning Committee, Environment Committee and Flitwick CERT. I would like to build on this involvement by becoming a Councillor and taking a more active role in representing residents and contributing to the future direction of the town.

My interest is also personal. My young son attends a local school, where I am a school governor, and I therefore have a particular interest in education, young people and the environment in which the next generation of Flitwick residents will grow up.

I believe a Councillor should listen carefully to residents, understand different points of view and then work constructively with others to achieve the best practical outcome for the community. My approach would be to be approachable, open-minded and willing to consider new ideas, while also recognising that Council decisions are collective decisions and respecting the democratic process.

2. Previous community/council work

My current involvement with Flitwick Town Council has given me direct experience of local government and an understanding of the responsibilities involved in planning and environmental matters. Through the Planning Committee, I have developed a greater appreciation of the challenges involved in balancing development with the needs and character of the existing community. Through the Environment Committee, I have gained further insight into the importance of maintaining and improving the local environment.

I am also a volunteer with English Heritage at Wrest Park, where I work as a room guide and educational volunteer. This enables me to contribute to preserving and promoting the local heritage and involves communicating with visitors and supporting educational activities, fitting in with the local school's curriculum.

As a school governor, I contribute to the governance of a local school and work with others in the interests of pupils, parents and the wider school community. These roles have strengthened my ability to listen to different perspectives, contribute constructively to discussions and work as part of a team.

My 32-year career as a police officer also provided extensive experience of public service and working with the community. I regularly engaged with local people and attended schools to speak with pupils and discuss community issues. I subsequently worked in custody and as a Detective Sergeant. These positions required sound judgement, discretion, clear communication, teamwork and the ability to deal calmly and constructively with people in sometimes difficult circumstances.

3. **Other skills that you can bring to the Council**

My previous career also gives me a combination of technical and practical skills that I believe could be of value to the Town Council.

Before joining the police, I worked as a civil engineer, including as a Public Rights of Way Officer, Highways Design Engineer and Direct Labour Engineer for my local Council, involved in road construction. This provides me with practical knowledge of highways, infrastructure, public rights of way, engineering projects and the relationship between development and the existing built environment.

I also hold Financial Planning Certificates 1, 2 and 3, giving me knowledge and experience of financial matters. I understand the importance of careful financial management, accountability and ensuring that resources are used responsibly.

My experience as a trustee of a local federation, a board member and a member of a retired association has further developed my understanding of governance, responsibility, teamwork and working towards common objectives.

Throughout both my professional and voluntary life, I have had to communicate clearly and succinctly, listen to others, assess information, form considered opinions and make decisions. I am comfortable speaking to groups and members of the public, but equally recognise that effective representation requires listening as much as speaking.

I would also be willing to undertake all relevant Council induction and training. Although I have already gained experience through my committee work, I recognise

the importance of continuing to develop my knowledge of local government, including the legal and procedural responsibilities of a Town Councillor.

Working with others and representing Flitwick

I believe my experience has prepared me well to work constructively with a wide range of people and organisations. As a police officer, school governor, Council committee volunteer and heritage volunteer, I have experience of working with colleagues, public bodies, community organisations and members of the public with different views and priorities.

If elected, I would aim to represent all residents fairly and to be accessible and approachable. I would listen to concerns, communicate information clearly and work with Council colleagues, local community groups, neighbouring councils, the principal authority and other partners where this could benefit Flitwick.

I understand that being a Councillor involves both expressing one's own views and respecting the views of others. I am comfortable contributing to discussions and putting forward constructive ideas, while accepting collective decisions and working positively with colleagues afterwards.

Commitment and availability

As a retired resident, I can commit the necessary time to attend Council and committee meetings, undertake training and participate in community events and activities. I would also be willing to attend meetings with partner organisations and other bodies when required.

I see becoming a Councillor as an opportunity to build on the community service I already undertake rather than as a new beginning. I have lived in Flitwick for over 20 years, my family is part of the local community, and I am already contributing through the Town Council, the local school and English Heritage.

I would bring to the Council a combination of long-term local knowledge, public-service experience, engineering and infrastructure expertise, financial understanding, community involvement and a strong commitment to listening to residents.

My aim would be simple: to be an approachable, constructive and hardworking Councillor who represents Flitwick's residents responsibly and contributes positively to the future of the town.

15/10/2026

13:29

Flitwick Town Council 2026/27: Current Year

Balance Sheet as at 30th September 2026

31st March 2026			31st March 2027		
Net Value		**Fixed Assets**	Cost of Asset	Depreciation	Net Value
0			**0**	**0**	**0**
		Long Term Assets			
0				**0**	
	0				**0**
		Current Assets			
36,198		DEBTORS	35,976		
1,619		DEBTORS: Burial Grounds & Cem	3,128		
13,383		VAT Control Account	0		
49,247		PREPAYMENTS - Year End	19,451		
10,826		Prepayments - Mthly Business	37,269		
68,932		Prepayment for Land Sale	90,639		
4,720		Accrued Income	0		
2,674		Stock Held - Bar	2,674		
4,125		Stock Held - Food	4,125		
5,000		Current Bank Ac Barclays 009	5,000		
93,668		Barclays Business Reserve 106	97,094		
16		Prepayment Cards: Equals	0		
1,000		PDQ Account 271	1,366		
62,242		Tenants Deposits Account 228	61,394		
400		Petty Cash Control (YE)	400		
200		Float - Main Safe (YE)	200		
600		Float - Cafe Safe (YE)	600		
15		Float - Reception Safe (YE)	15		
80		Float - Cafe Till Drawer	80		
675,595		CCLA Deposit Fund	1,321,595		
1,030,542				**1,681,007**	
	1,030,542	**Total Assets**			**1,681,007**
		Current Liabilities			
8,295		DEBTORS: Functions	6,457		
0		VAT Control Account	19,464		
0		Barclaycard 785	1,307		
13,391		CREDITORS	60,385		
7,658		ACCRUAL - Loan Interest (YE)	0		

15/10/2026

13:29

Flitwick Town Council 2026/27: Current Year

Balance Sheet as at 30th September 2026

31st March 2026			31st March 2027	
18,802		ACCRUALS (YE)	0	
17,221		PAYE/NIC Due	22,768	
9,139		LGPS Pension Control	9,477	
3,836		NEST Pension Control	4,341	
6,189		Income in Advance - FTC	0	
4,748		Income in Advance: Rufus Event	9,068	
333		Income in Advance: NT Live	421	
2,063		Income in Adv: Corp NR Deposit	333	
2,397		Ticket Sales Return Due (NT)	514	
1,973		Past Yr TM Charity (YE)	2,930	
2,879		Past Yr TM Allow & Civic Recep	0	
137		Past Yr Leader Expenses (YE)	0	
630		Allotment Plot Deposit & Keys	1,610	
63,506		Deposit Refundable: Tenants	68,434	
1,000		Deposits Refundable: Functions	500	
0		Deposits Refundable: Community	400	
2,825		Barclaycard Year End balance	0	
167,022			**208,410**	
	863,520	**Total Assets Less Current Liabilities**		**1,472,597**
		Long Term Liabilities		
0			**0**	
	863,520	**Total Assets Less Long Term Liabilities**		**1,472,597**
		Represented By		
	197,155	GENERAL RESERVE		713,665
	666,364	Earmarked Reserves		758,932
	863,520			**1,472,597**

The above statement represents fairly the financial position of the authority as at 30th September 2026 and reflects its Income and Expenditure during the year.

Signed :
Chairman _____ Date : _____

Signed :
Responsible
Financial _____ Date :_____

Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2025/26 Form 3

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Publication Requirements

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Annual Internal Audit Report 2025/26

FLITWICK TOWN COUNCIL

www.flitwick.gov.uk

During the financial year ended 31 March 2026, this authority's internal auditor acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with the relevant procedures and controls in operation and obtained appropriate evidence from the authority.

The internal audit for 2025/26 has been carried out in accordance with this authority's needs and planned coverage. On the basis of the findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in this table. Set out below are the objectives of internal control and alongside are the internal audit conclusions on whether, in all significant respects, the control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of this authority.

Internal control objective	Yes	No*	Not covered**
A. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.	✓		
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. Cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all 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 2024/25, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. *(If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2024/25 AGAR tick "not covered")*			✓
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 *(during the 2025/26 AGAR period, were public rights in relation to the 2024-25 AGAR evidenced by a notice on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set).*	✓		
N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2024/25 AGAR *(see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes).*	✓		
O. The authority has complied with laws, regulations & proper practices relating to digital and data compliance.	✓		
	Yes	**No**	**Not applicable**
P. (For local councils only) 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

22/09/2025 28/01/2026 06/05/2026

Name of person who carried out the internal audit

Sally King for Auditing Solutions Ltd

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit

Date 06/05/2026

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

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

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2025/26

We acknowledge as the members of:

FLITWICK TOWN COUNCIL

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2026, that:

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

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

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

16/06/2026

and recorded as minute reference:

2033b.ii)

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

Chair SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Clerk SIGNATURE REQUIRED

www.flitwick.gov.uk

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2025/26 for

FLITWICK TOWN COUNCIL

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2025 £	31 March 2026 £	*Please round all figures to nearest £1. Do not leave any boxes blank and report £0 or Nil balances. All figures **must** agree to underlying financial records.*
1. Balances brought forward	1,195,839	1,312,419	*Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value **must** agree to Box 7 of previous year.*
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	1,031,242	1,062,179	*Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.*
3. (+) Total other receipts	1,733,439	1,164,118	*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	1,044,794	964,411	*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	55,911	55,601	*Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).*
6. (-) All other payments	1,547,386	1,655,194	*Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cash-book less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).*
7. (=) Balances carried forward	1,312,429	863,520	*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	1,229,740	838,817	*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	7,289,466	7,334,663	*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	773,365	735,382	*The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).*

For Local Councils Only	Yes	No	
11 Do the figures in the accounting statements above exclude any trust transactions?	✓		*For guidance refer to the Practitioners' Guide sections 2.31 to 2.33.*

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2026 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

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

SCStanley SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Date **16/06/2026**

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

16/06/2026

as recorded in minute reference:

2033b.iii) MINUTE REFERENCE

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

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

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

In respect of **Flitwick Town Council**

1 Respective responsibilities of the auditor and the authority

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

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

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

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

2 External auditor's limited assurance opinion 2025/26

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

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

Not applicable

3 External auditor certificate 2025/26

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

*We do not certify completion because:

Not applicable

External Auditor Name

Forvis Mazars LLP, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE1 1DF

External Auditor Signature Forvis Mazars LLP Date **21 September 2026**

AUDITING SOLUTIONS LTD

Flitwick Town Council

Internal Audit Report 2026-27: 1st Interim

Sally King

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 provides this service to Flitwick Town Council.

This report sets out all the work undertaken in relation to the 2026-27 financial year to date, during our visit on 23rd September 2026.

Internal Audit Approach

In undertaking our review for the year to date, we have had regard to the materiality of transactions and their susceptibility to potential mis-recording or misrepresentation in the year-end Annual Governance and Accountability Return. We have employed a combination of selective sampling techniques (where appropriate) and 100% detailed checks in several key areas 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 several internal control objectives.

Overall Conclusion

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We have therefore concluded that, based on the programme of work undertaken this year to date Council has again maintained a sound, pro-active approach to risk management and corporate governance issues, together with the development and management of effective internal controls and procedural documentation. Once again pleased to acknowledge the quality of records maintained by the Clerk and the Finance Officers and thank them for their assistance, which has ensured the smooth progress of our review process.

This report has been prepared for the sole use of Flitwick Town Council. To the fullest extent permitted by law, no responsibility or liability is accepted by Auditing Solutions Ltd to any third party who purports to use or rely, for any reason whatsoever, on this report, its contents or conclusions.

Detailed Report

Maintenance of Accounting Records & Bank Reconciliations

The Council's accounts are maintained with Rialtas accounting software reporting on an Income and Expenditure basis.

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:

- Confirmed closing balances from 2025-26 have been correctly brought forward to the current financial year.
- Checked to ensure that a comprehensive, meaningful, and appropriate nominal coding schedule together with cost centres remains in place.
- Checked and agreed transactions (both receipts and payments) in the Council's main Current and Business Saver account cashbooks to the relevant Barclays Bank statements for April 2026, including the daily "sweep" transfers to retain a level of £5,000 in the current account.
- Checked and agreed the relevant bank account reconciliations for each account as of 30th April 2026 to ensure that no long-standing, uncleared cheques, or other anomalous entries exist.
- Confirmed with officers the arrangements for backing up the computer system.
- Noted the Council has suspended the issuing grants for the 2026-27 financial year.

Conclusions

We are pleased to report that no matters have arisen in this area of our review process to date warranting formal comment or recommendation. Further work in this area will be undertaken in this area at our future visits.

Review of Corporate Governance

Our objective here is to ensure that the Council has a robust regulatory framework in place; that Council and Committee meetings are conducted in accordance with the adopted Standing Orders; those financial transactions are made in accordance with the extant Financial Regulations and that we have a reasonable chance of identifying any actions of a potentially unlawful nature that have been or may be considered for implementation. Consequently, we have: -

- Commenced examination of the minutes of the Full Council and its various Standing Committees for the year to August 2026, to ensure that no issues affecting the Council's financial stability exist in the short, medium, or long-term, also that no legal issues appear to be in existence whereby the Council may either be considering or have taken decisions that might result in ultra vires expenditure being incurred.
- We note that the Council have reviewed and readopted Financial Regulations & Standing Orders at its meeting held on 17th March 2026 (minute refs. 5979 c & d respectively).
- We have reviewed the external auditor's report, issued since our last visit; to confirm they are raising no matters regarding the Councils accounts and governance.

Conclusions

We are pleased to report that no issues have been identified in this area, warranting further comment.

Review of Expenditure

Our aim here is to ensure that, in addition to confirming that sound financial control procedures are in place: -

- Council resources are released in accordance with the Council's approved procedures and approved 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.
- An official order has been raised for all purchases and service delivery where one would be expected.
- 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.
- There is a satisfactory process for the approval of grants and donations (where no invoice is appropriate) and that they have been approved for payment by members under the correct expenditure code; we note that grants have been suspended during the 2026-27 financial year.
- VAT has been appropriately identified and coded to the control account for periodic recovery. We note that the Council continues to engage the services of a VAT consultant as required.
- We have reviewed this area selecting a test sample for compliance with the above criteria comprising all payments individually more than £5,000 plus every 50th cashbook transaction, irrespective of value to August 2026. Our test sample comprised of 23 payments, totalling £81,409.69 of non-pay expenditure to August 2026, with all the above criteria met.

Conclusions

We are pleased to report that no matters have arisen in this area of our review process to date warranting formal comment or recommendation. Further work in this area will be undertaken in this area at our future visits.

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 to minimise the opportunity for their coming to fruition.

- Noted that the Corporate Risk Register was last reviewed and readopted at the Town Council meeting held on 21st October 2025 (minute ref. 5904 g).
- Reviewed the Council's insurance policy underwritten by Aviva which commenced in September 2026 noting that it includes public liability cover of £10 million and employers' liability cover of £10m.

Conclusions

We are pleased to report that no issues have been identified in this area warranting further comment.

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.

In addition to the annual precept the Council has a variety of income sources arising mainly from the Rufus Centre lettings and rentals, allotment income, café, cemetery fees, also the letting of sports pitches, miscellaneous grants, and bank interest.

The Council manages the Cemetery income stream using the Rialtas software module. On our second interim visit we will examine the Cemetery income procedures included the Burials Register, fees and Exclusive Rights of Burial records, examining a sample of entries.

The Allotments are managed using Rialtas software. There are 2 sites containing 58 plots. New tenancy agreements are issued each year along with the invoices and chased if not returned with payment. We are pleased to note that the Council reviews allotment fees on an annual basis.

On our second interim visit in January 2027, we will also examine the procedures in place regarding hire of rooms for conferences, meetings, weddings & parties and the procedures regarding the office rent paid by Rufus Centre tenants.

Conclusions

We are pleased to report that no matters have arisen in this area of our review process to date warranting formal comment or recommendation. In-depth work in this area will be undertaken in this area at our next visit in January 2027.

Petty Cash Account & Credit Cards

We are required, as part of the annual Internal Audit Certification process in the Annual Return, to indicate the soundness of controls in this area of the Council's financial activities.

The Council has an imprest style petty cash scheme it also holds floats for various activities. We confirmed this was within the limits set in Financial Regulations and confirmed controls over access to the safe where the money was kept. A physical check of cash held was undertaken at our first interim visit.

The Council uses a Barclaycard, and we are pleased to note that robust procedures are in place including provision of receipts and reconciliation of the statements. As part of our payment review, we examined the July 2026 Barclaycard reconciliation, with no issues arising.

We are pleased to note that receipts are attached to the invoices received from the fuel card supplier.

Conclusion

We are pleased to report that no issues have been identified in the areas examined warranting further comment.

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 requirements of HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) regarding the deduction and payment over of income tax and national insurance contributions, together with meeting the requirements of the local government and other pension schemes.

The Council manages its payroll function inhouse utilising Sage payroll software, on our first interim visit we-

- Checked to ensure that appropriate tax codes have been applied and deductions calculated accordingly.
- Checked to ensure that national insurance deductions were being computed accurately.
- Verified the accurate application of the pension requirements for the year.
- Checked to ensure that, where additional/overtime hours have arisen, appropriate timesheets are in place and that these were signed by the employee and approved by a supervising officer or, in the case of the Clerk, by a member.
- Verified that the revised, extant HMRC legislation requiring monthly electronic payroll submissions are being completed and submitted to HMRC in accordance with the required time scale.

Conclusions

We are pleased to report that no matters have arisen in this area of our review process warranting formal comment or recommendation.

Investments and Loans

Our objectives here are to ensure that the Council is investing "surplus funds", be they held temporarily or on a longer term basis, in appropriate banking and investment institutions and that the Council is obtaining the best rate of return on the funds held, with any interest earned brought to account correctly and appropriately in the accounting records, also that any loan repayments due to or payable by the Council are transacted in accordance with the relevant loan agreements.

We are pleased to note the Council has an Investment Management Policy in situ; this was reviewed by the Finance & General Purposes Committee at the meeting held on 17th November 2025 (minute ref. 45 e (i)).

During our visits we test repayments of PWLB loans as recorded in the Council's accounts to independent PWLB statements. We have agreed the repayments to the bank statements as in relation to our work on accounting and bank reconciliation.

Conclusions

We are pleased to report that no matters have arisen in this area of our review process to date warranting formal comment or recommendation. Further work in this area will be undertaken in this area at our final visit, and we will verify the accurate disclosure of the residual year end loan liability in the AGAR

Precept Determination and Budgetary 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 of the precept placed on the Unitary Authority, 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 that the Council has commenced its deliberations for the 2027-28 budget and precept requirements and members continue to receive detailed management accounting reports.

Conclusion

We are pleased to report that no matters have arisen in this area of our review process to date warranting formal comment or recommendation. Further work in this area will be undertaken in this area at our future visits.

Asset Register

The Governance and Accountability Manual require all councils to develop and maintain a register of assets identifying detail of all land, buildings, vehicles, furniture, and equipment owned by the Council.

We are pleased to note that the Council holds a detailed asset register updated which is now maintained and updated through Rialtus software for the 2026-27 financial year.

Conclusion

We are pleased to report that no matters have arisen in this area of our review process to date warranting formal comment or recommendation. Further work in this area will be undertaken in this area at our final visit.

FTC Projects Review 2026-27

Last Updated: **30 September 2026**

Accepted Project budget variance at 5%.

(315)	'27 Central Project Fund Opening Balance	£	-	
315	**PLUS** *26/27: Agreed CPF Precept Funding*	£	*53,254*	*(1st Instal £26,627 rec'd April & 2nd instal £26,627 received Sep)*
800s	**LESS:** 26/27 Approved Projects	£	26,944	*26/27 temporary balance of EMR 315*
	LESS Projects Overspend from CPF	£	42	
	PLUS Projects Underspend to CPF	£	-	
(315)	Central Project Fund **ITD Funds Available**	**£**	**26,267**	*Working balance (315) less 2nd precept instal (Oct)= Complete*

	PROJECT Details					Project Details										FUNDING Details				
	Project Code	N/C	Project Description	Committee	Minute Ref	Project Start Date	Whole Project Funds Committed	*Previous Year's Project Spend*	26/27 Opening Project Balance	GRANT /Funding Received	26/27 Project Spend to Date	Overspend Funded by CPF/Ops Reserve	Underspend Returned to CPF/Ops Reserves	Project Commitment Remaining YTD		TOTAL Approved Grants/ Funding	Prev Yrs Funds Received	26/27 Funds Received	Grants/ Funding Budget Remaining	Comments
Ongoing Projects	**800**	4212 110	Proj - Nature Park	Community	Del. Auth	Apr-21	£ 3,000	*£ 13,490*	**£ -**		£ -			**£ -**	0%	£ 283,385	£ 10,490	£ -	**£ 272,895**	*S106 remaining: Phase 1 £7,106.89, Phase 2 £274,728 & Plans £1,550 (CBC to be invoiced for S106 once works completed). SL 7/9/22. Planning Consultant RCF approved July 23. **Jan 25** : CPF Fund & 24/25 Grant Instal complete. Outstanding approved grant fund (£272,895) not yet claimed. No further CPF spend committed. £10,490 received on FTC8584 June 2024.*
	802	4823 110	Proj - Heritage Website	Corporate	753a 5252a)i	Jun-23	£ 3,800	£ 1,580	**£ 2,220**		£ -			**£ 2,220**	58%					
	106		3 Station Road Project	FTC			£ 126,395	£ 126,395	**£ -**		£ -			**£ -**	0%					Please refer to full project schedule for details
	819	4864 110	Proj - Community Fridge Door	Business	5934c	Dec-25	£ 5,000	£ 4,742	**£ 258**		£ 300	**£ 42**		**£ -**	0%			*£ 5,000*	**£ 5,000**	*Funded by £5,000 from **Ops Reserves** EMR 319 transfer (journal 4462).* **PROJECT CLOSED April 26**
	821	4867 110	Proj - Stocksfield Renovation	Council	5964a	Feb-26	£ 15,434	£ 1,693	**£ 13,741**		£ 11,656			**£ 2,085**	14%					*Funded by £15,433.30 from **Ops Reserves** EMR 319 transfer (journal).*
NEW Projects: 2026/27	**822**	4868 110	Proj - Audio Access System	Council	6015di	May-26	£ 817.52		**£ 818**	£ 7,175				**£ 7,993**	100%					Funding from EMR314 at £7,175 with remaining from CPF.
	823	4869 110	Proj - Room 1 Refurbishment	Business	1634c	May-26	£ 14,163		**£ 14,163**		£ 14,163	**£ 0.23**		**£ 0**	0%					**PROJECT CLOSED June 26**
	824	4870 110	Proj - Rufus External Lighting	Business	6060ci	Aug-26	£ 7,720		**£ 7,720**		£ 7,720			**£ 0**	0%					**PROJECT CLOSED September 26**
	825	4871 110	Proj - Hub Feasibility Study	Business	6060cii	Aug-26	£ 4,244		**£ 4,244**					**£ 4,244**	100%					

Dear Clerk
The Government has introduced new legislation to reform planning committees and the way planning applications are considered by local authorities in England, whether they are decided by officers or planning committee. The attached slides explain the regulatory changes, which come into force from 31st October 2026.
The changes will mean that ward member call-in's to Development Management Committee (DMC) will no longer be possible and parish/town council objections to major applications will not be able to trigger a referral to DMC.

If you have any queries about the changes please do send them to this email address Partnerships.CommunityEngagementTeam@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk ideally by 30th October and we will collate and share with Planning colleagues.

Community and Engagement Team
Governance Team

Central Bedfordshire Council Priory House, Monks Walk, Chicksands, Shefford, Bedfordshire, SG17 5TQ
Email: Community & Engagement Team
Partnerships.CommunityEngagementTeam@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Government reforms to planning committees and the National Scheme of Delegation

All Member Briefing

14th & 24th September 2026

Jennie Selley – Head of Planning Delivery & Building Control

Milla Iyavoo - Deputy Monitoring Officer/ Deputy Solicitor for the Council

Content:

- What is the National Scheme of Delegation?
- Why has the Government introduced it?
- The regulations
- What the statutory guidance tells us
- Position on ward member call in's made before 31st October
- Next steps

What is the National Scheme of Delegation?

- **The national scheme of delegation regulations set out which planning functions or applications go to committee for determination and which to officers.** This is currently set out in Part 3E of our Constitution.
- All local authorities in England need to amend their constitutions to align with the national scheme of delegation and a failure to do so may make them liable to judicial review.
- The Town and Country Planning (Discharge of Local Planning Authority Functions) (England) Regulations 2026
- **The regulations come into effect from the 31st October 2026.**



What is the National Scheme of Delegation?

- Under the national scheme of delegation, current practices set out in local authority constitutions, such as the power for ward councillors to require cases to be called in for committee consideration or having trigger points for referral to committee if the Parish/Town Council object, will not be possible.

- Also applies to joint planning committees and minerals & waste authorities.

Why has the government introduced it?

"The government's aim behind the national scheme of delegation is to ensure that there is greater clarity and consistency about the role of planning committees in planning decision making. Committees should focus on the key proposals that matter to an area, enabling other, often more minor and technical, decisions to be made by planning officers."

The Regulations

The regulations set out the following two-tier approach to decision making:

- **Schedule 1** functions or applications, must be delegated to officers (unless they are own-interest applications)
- **Schedule 2** functions or applications, where there is a presumption in favour of officer delegation unless the nominated officer and nominated member agree the application should be referred to a planning committee.

Schedule 1 functions and applications (delegated to officers):

- Householder development
- Minor commercial development (< 1000 sq m)
- Minor residential development (up to nine dwellings on sites below 0.5 hectares)
- Section 73 applications where the related planning permission was a Schedule 1 planning permission
- Reserved matters where the outline planning permission is for fewer than 500 dwellings or less than 50,000 sq m of floorspace
- Discharge of conditions
- Prior approval applications
- Permission in principle applications
- Non-material amendments
- Section 106A applications where a planning obligation is connected to a Schedule 1 planning permission
- Biodiversity Gain Plans
- Certificates of Appropriate Alternative Development
- Certificates of lawfulness of existing/proposed use or development, and certificates of lawfulness for proposed works to listed buildings

Schedule 2 functions and applications:

- Applications which are not householder, minor commercial or minor residential applications
- Section 73 applications where the related planning permission was a Schedule 2 planning permission
- Reserved matters applications relating to large outline permissions (500+ dwellings or 50,000+ sq m of floorspace)
- Section 106A applications where a planning obligation is connected to a Schedule 2 planning permission
- Listed building consent (LBC) applications (including variation or discharge of conditions on an LBC, and Section 73 applications on planning applications connected to LBC applications)
- Advertisement consents
- Tree preservation order consents

The Gateway Test

A Schedule 2 application can only be referred to planning committee where both the **nominated officer** (in most cases the chief planning officer or equivalent) and the **nominated member** (in most cases the chair of the planning committee) agree that referral is appropriate and at least one of the following criteria is met:

A. The application raises an economic, social or environmental issue of significance to the local area.

B. The application raises a significant planning matter, having regard to the development plan and other material considerations.

Statutory guidance on the gateway test

For the purpose of criteria A:

It is for the nominated officer and member to assess whether the development proposal raises a significant economic, social or environmental issue for the local area, providing an opportunity for local democratic oversight where necessary. What constitutes 'significant' will vary depending on the local area but examples could include:

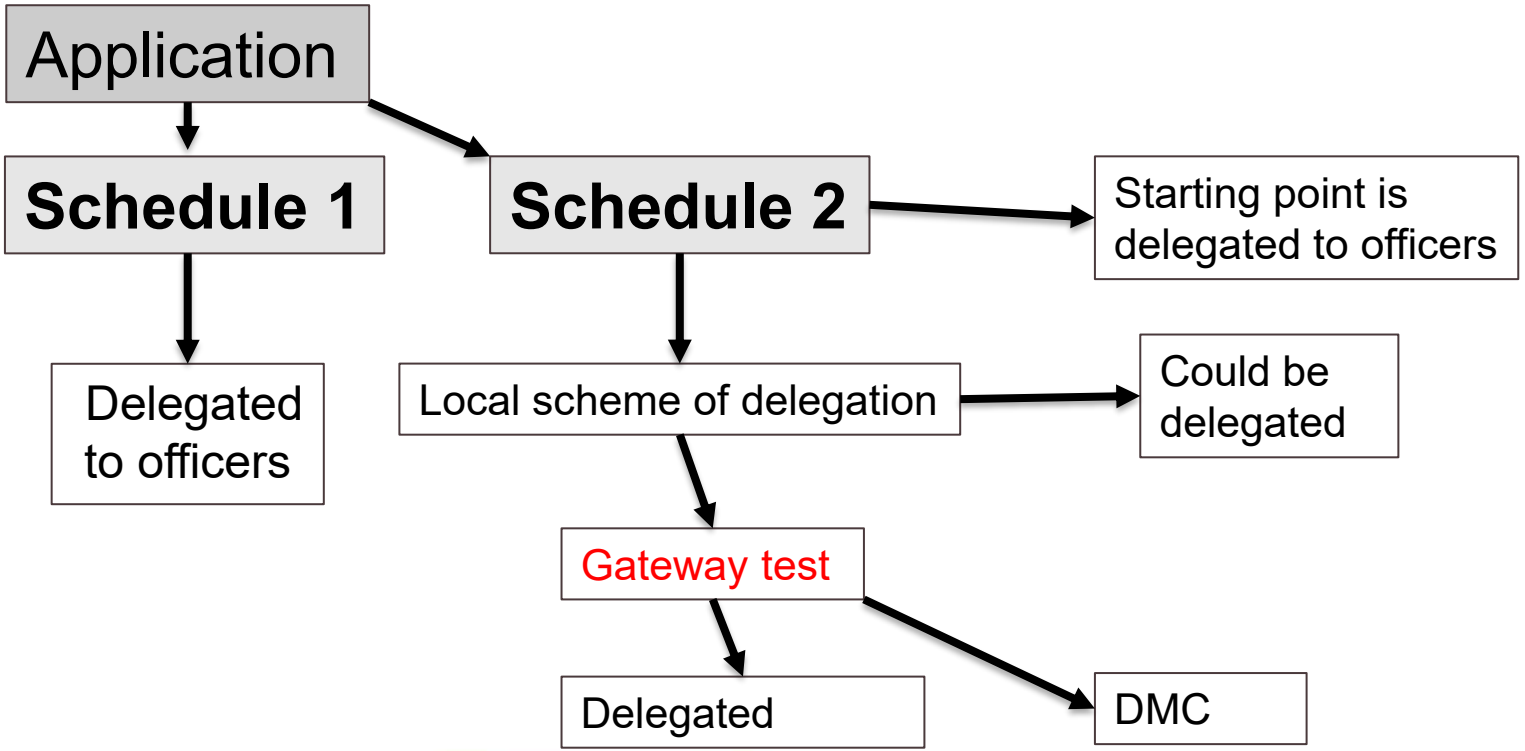
- an application for outline planning permission for a large multi-phase residential development allocated in the local plan
- an application for planning permission for change of use of a community shop in a rural area
- an application for planning permission or listed building consent for changes to a notable listed building in a town centre

Statutory guidance on the gateway test

For the purpose of criteria B , the following circumstances are unlikely to raise a significant planning matter:

- where the application for development broadly complies with a detailed site allocation and other relevant policies set out in a local or neighbourhood plan and national decision-making policies set out in the National Planning Policy Framework. Significant planning matters may arise if new material considerations are raised by the application.
- where a specific planning matter (e.g. highways or flood risk) was initially raised by a statutory consultee as a concern, but the development proposal has been modified to make it acceptable in the view of the statutory consultee (unless the nominated officer has compelling reasons to consider otherwise).

Summary:


Application
Schedule 1
Schedule 2
Starting point is delegated to officers
Delegated to officers
Local scheme of delegation
Could be delegated
Gateway test
Delegated
DMC

Own-interest applications:

- A key exception to the above is own-interest applications, which are applications made by the authority itself (whether alone or jointly with another person), a member or officer or where the authority, members or officers have an interest in the application.
- These applications may be referred to committee where the nominated officer and nominated member agree that referral is appropriate. The gateway test does not need to be satisfied in these circumstances.
- There will be appropriate safeguards where the nominated officer or nominated member has an interest in an application.

Transparency and reporting

- A record must be kept of the cases that the nominated member and officer have considered for referral to committee and the reasons for their decision.
- This will be reported to planning committee on a regular basis and made available on the Council's website.

Ward member call in's made before 31st October

- There are currently no transitional arrangements or government guidance setting out how existing called-in applications, or applications called in the lead-up to 31 October, should be dealt with when the National Scheme of Delegation (NSD) comes into force.

- Officers will make every effort to report called-in applications to DMC before 31 October. However, some called-in applications may not be ready for determination by this date, for example, where amendments or additional information are required or because the consultation period has not yet expired. In addition, some call-ins may be made too late to allow sufficient time for reports to be prepared and published for the 21st October DMC meeting.

- The latest possible date for a call-in, to allow officers to prepare a report for October DMC, is 30th September but for the reasons set out above a call in by this date does not guarantee that the application will be reported to DMC.

Ward member call in's made before 31st October

- Any called-in applications that have not been determined by 31 October will be considered under the new statutory arrangements, regardless of whether they were previously called in. This means that Schedule 1 applications will be determined by officers. For Schedule 2 applications that have been called in, any referral to committee will need to comply with the new gateway arrangements.

- Please contact the application case officer if you would like to know whether a particular called-in application is expected to be determined by DMC and/or if you are unsure whether it will fall under Schedule 1 or Schedule 2 for the new NSD arrangements after 31 October.

Size of planning committees



- A limit on the size of planning committees to 13 members.
- The Council's Development Management Committee already has 13 so no change required.

Next Steps:

- Report to Full Council on 24th September with amended scheme of delegation for approval.
- Copy of presentation sent to town and parish councils.


Questions?